

RULES OF THE FA INTER-LEAGUE CUP COMPETITION (the “Competition”)

In the event of a nationwide epidemic or global pandemic occurring such that specific Rules need to be introduced to address any potential or actual impact on the Competition, then The Association will act to make any changes to the Rules it deems necessary. Where any Rule changes are required, they will be communicated to the Leagues participating in the Competition as soon as reasonably possible. This or a similar approach may be adopted by The Association in response to any event or series of events it deems are affecting, or could affect, the Competition during the **2025-26** season.

1. CONTROL OF COMPETITION – RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competition and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in The Association.
- (b) The National Game Board shall have the power to make, delete and amend regulations for the organisation, control and management of the Competition as it, from time to time, deems expedient (the “Competition Rules”) subject only to the authority of The Association Board where such matters relate to financial or commercial matters. Unless explicitly provided for within the Competition Rules definitions of terms used within the Competition Rules are those included within the Rules of The Association for the relevant season.
- (c) All Leagues participating in any way in the Competition shall be bound by and comply with the Competition Rules; (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules)
- (d) **The National Game Board shall have the power to make decisions on all matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to eligibility and qualification) which shall be final and binding on all participants in the Competition. In relation to these and any other matters relating to the Competition but not specifically mentioned in the Competition Rules, the National Game Board shall have the power to take such action and make such decisions, orders, rulings and impose such penalties as it deems necessary and following such procedures as it considers appropriate and such shall, subject to Rule 27, be final and binding on all participants. In considering such matters, the National Game Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding before a Court of Law.**

The National Game Board shall have the power to appoint a Sub-Committee to exercise the powers of National Game Board in order to expedite decisions to ensure the progress of the Competition.

- (e) **The National Game Board may, at its sole discretion, appoint from time to time a Committee (Grassroots Advisory Board) to take such action and make such decisions, orders, rulings and impose penalties on its behalf which shall be deemed decisions of the National Game Board.**
- (f) **In addition to any other action or penalty, The National Game Board shall have the power to disqualify any competing League, or Player for any competing League(s), which it determines to have breached the Rules of The Association or the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules), and the decision of the National Game Board shall, subject to Rule 27, be final and binding.**

2. CONTROL OF COMPETITION – COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS

- (a) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled to, or otherwise to authorise or grant to others, rights of access to and attendance at the ground of the home League (“Access Rights”) for the purposes of transmitting or filming

or otherwise recording on or by any media, any audio and/or visual materials depicting or describing all or any part or parts of a match ("the Copyright Materials").

- (b) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled throughout the world, or to grant to or otherwise authorise others:
 - (i) on a live, delayed, recorded or highlighted basis to broadcast or otherwise transmit by any method whatsoever (now known or hereinafter devised) the Copyright Materials by way of any and all forms of television or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) including, without limitation, free to air television, pay television, pay per view, "not-video-on-demand" internet or other online media and "video-on-demand" ("the Television Rights").
 - (ii) on a live or delayed basis to broadcast or to otherwise transmit the Copyright Materials (or audio) by way of radio broadcast or internet, or other online media or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) ("the Radio Rights").
 - (iii) to use, sell, publish, distribute and otherwise exploit the Copyright Materials in any manner whatsoever including, without limitation, clip licensing, videos, videograms, CD Rom, CDI, internet or other online media ("the Footage Rights").
- (c) In relation to each Match in the Competition The Association shall be exclusively entitled, either by itself or to authorise others, to use sell or otherwise exploit all commercial and other marketing rights associated with the Competition including, without limitation, fixture list copyright, sponsorship, supplier rights, licences, perimeter board branding or other commercial arrangements ("the Marketing Rights").
- (d) Leagues shall comply with the terms of all contracts entered into by The Association from time to time in relation to Access Rights, the Television Rights, the Radio Rights, the Footage Rights and the Marketing Rights (collectively "the Commercial Contracts") in relation to the Competition.
- (e) Leagues shall provide access to grounds and provide all other rights, facilities and services as may be necessary to enable The Association to fulfill the Commercial Contracts.
- (f) The Leagues acknowledge that The Association may issue more detailed rules and regulations regarding the provisions of the Commercial Contracts (including, but not limited to in relation to, broadcasting, perimeter board advertising, interview backdrops, centre circle banners, side of goal mats, substitute/added time boards, tickets and match programmes) and the Leagues agree that they shall be bound by such rules and regulations as amended from time to time by The Association.
- (g) Each League undertakes to indemnify and keep indemnified The Association and its officers, directors, employees and authorised representatives from and against any claims for direct or consequential loss or damage by any party to a Commercial Contract caused or otherwise attributable to any failure or any breach by the League fully to perform or observe its obligations and responsibilities under these provisions.
- (h) Nothing in the above shall be construed or interpreted so as to prevent or restrict Leagues, subject to applicable FIFA, UEFA or other rules or regulations or decisions of The Association, from entering into commercial arrangements in relation to matches in the Competition which do not in any way conflict with the Commercial Contracts and duties of Leagues as set out herein (and in any other rules or regulations issued by The Association in accordance with this paragraph).
- (i) The Association shall make provision for payments to Leagues as it shall from time to time consider appropriate.

3. NAME/LOGOS AND IMAGES OF THE COMPETITION AND IMAGES OF THE CUP

- (a) The Competition shall be called "The Football Association Inter-League Cup", and should be marketed under the title "The FA Inter-League Cup" (the "Official Title") unless determined otherwise by the National Game Board from time to time.
- (b) Each League shall include the Official Title at least once on all (if any) materials produced by or on behalf of it which relate to the Competition (including, but not limited to, tickets, programmes, press releases and (where possible) scoreboard displays) and (where possible) shall refer to the Official Title at least once over (any) public address system operating on the day of each FA Inter-League Cup match.
- (c) The Association shall from time to time issue a Competition logo. The FA Inter-League Cup logo may incorporate branding for the lead FA Inter-League Cup sponsor.
- (d) Each participating League shall include The FA Inter-League Cup logo on all FA Inter-League Cup communication materials produced by or on behalf of it (including, but not limited to, the front page of each FA Inter-League Cup match programme, match tickets (if it is not possible to include The FA Inter-League Cup logo on tickets the League shall include a reference to the Official Title), fixture posters, stadium giant screens (if any) and League websites).
- (e) The Association may from time to time issue images of The FA Inter-League Cup to Leagues. The ribbons attached to The FA Inter-League Cup in the image will incorporate branding for the lead FA Inter-League Cup sponsor.
- (f) If a League which wishes to use an image of The FA Inter League Cup it shall use the image issued by The Association and will follow any directions issued by The Association in relation to the use of such image.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE COMPETITION

- (a) The organisation of the Competition shall be at the discretion of the National Game Board.
- (b) The draws for all rounds prior to the Semi Final shall be made on a geographical basis. **The National Game Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.**

5. ELIGIBILITY

- (a) **Participation in the Competition shall be open to all FA Regional Feeder Leagues and to any other Leagues that may be invited by the Grassroots Advisory Board**
- (b) The Competition shall be on a knock-out basis and shall be confined to matches between teams representative of those Leagues as defined in Competition Rule 5 (a) above.
- (c) Entries from off-shore Leagues will be considered on an annual basis and if accepted, special provisions may apply to such Leagues.

6. ENTRY DATE

- (a) A League wishing to participate in the Competition shall complete the application process as determined by the **Grassroots Advisory Board** from time to time.
- (b) Leagues entering the Competition will be required, to have the following in place
 - Annual accounts prepared in accordance with the Rules of The Association as are in force from time to time.
 - An up to date set of Memorandum and Articles/League Rules.
 - A bank account in the name of the legal entity of the League entered into the Competition.

Leagues may be required to provide evidence of the above to The Association at any stage. Leagues found to have failed to adhere to these Regulations may be subject to sanction by The Association.

7. PROVISIONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE COMPETITION

- (a) Any League intending to withdraw from the Competition must notify its intention to do so to The Association and the opposing League, not less than eight days before the date fixed for playing the match.
- (b) A League failing to comply with this shall be reported to the National Game Board, who shall have power to compel such offending League to pay the expenses incurred and to take such other action as the National Game Board considers appropriate.
- (c) If a League decides to withdraw from the Competition after a postponed or abandoned match, notice must be given to The Association and its opponent at the end of the match.
- (d) A League failing to give satisfactory reason for withdrawing from the Competition shall in addition to any other action considered appropriate not be allowed to enter the Competition in the next season the Competition is played and shall be liable to such fine as the National Game Board considers appropriate.
- (e) Where a League fails to fulfil any fixture the National Game Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate.

8. DRAWS FOR ROUNDS AND KICK-OFF TIMES

- (a) The Leagues competing in each Round of the Competition shall be drawn in couples. The couples shall play a match subject to the Laws of the Game and the winners compete in the next Round and are drawn in the same manner. This shall be continued until the Final of the Competition.
- (b) After the draw for each round is made, notice shall be given to each League of the name of its opponents, and the closing date by which the match is to be played. All matches in each Round shall be played on such a date and at such a time as the National Game Board shall determine. The time of kick-off shall be mutually agreed between both Leagues subject to the approval of the National Game Board. When a League has received permission to arrive the night before a match in accordance with Competition Rule 20(c)(i) the League drawn at home must arrange the time of kick-off to ensure that their opponents arrive back at its starting point before midnight. The National Game Board shall have the power to order the kick-off to be changed, as it deems appropriate. Any late kick-off shall be reported by the Referee to The Association and the National Game Board shall have the power to impose a fine.
- (c) Leagues first drawn must advise the agreed date and all other match details by completing the Match Arrangement Form which must be received by The Association and the away League within five days of the draw.
- (d) The League drawn at home must give its opponents the choice of two Saturday dates of when the match is to be played. If the Leagues fail to agree on one of the dates offered, the League drawn at home shall decide the date of the match and must give its opponents at least 14 days notice in writing of the date selected.
- (e) All matches to be played on a Saturday, **3pm kick off**, unless mutually agreed otherwise.
- (f) Any dispute in choice of date and kick-off time shall be referred to the National Game Board, whose decision is final.

9. VENUE FOR MATCHES

(a) *Venue*

- (i) The League first drawn shall be entitled to have the match played on the ground of its choice, subject to that ground fulfilling the requirements of the Competition Rules and the consent of National Game Board obtained.
- (ii) The National Game Board shall have the power to order that any match be played on an alternative ground, including a 3G football turf pitch that meets the requirements of Competition Rule 13(a)(i)(a) and (b) below, or date, including a Sunday, if it is considered appropriate and necessary.

(b) *Protests Regarding the Suitability of Ground*

- (i) A League may protest to the National Game Board that the home venue is unsuitable for the match. Such protest must be made to the National Game Board within two days of the notification of the ground (Sundays not included) and must be accompanied by a fee of £250.00, which may be forfeited if the protest is not sustained.
- (ii) The National Game Board shall have the power to consider the protest in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The National Game Board may amongst other things order the match to be played on the ground of the protesting League, or on a neutral ground. The payment of the costs incurred by either League or The Association incidental to the protest shall be at the discretion of the National Game Board.

10. DURATION OF MATCHES, EXTRA TIME AND PENALTY KICKS

- (a) The duration of each match shall be 90 minutes, except in special cases, provided for in these Competition Rules, where an extra 30 minutes shall be played. The Referee shall allow for time wasted or lost through accident or other cause. The Referee is the sole judge of allowance of time whether lost through accident or other cause and his decision on this matter is not subject to appeal.
- (b) The half-time interval shall be 15 minutes, for all ties in the Competition.
- (c) Both teams shall enter the field of play together five minutes prior to the kick-off time, along with the Match Officials.
- (d) In all rounds **of the Competition**, when a match is drawn **at full time**, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.
- (e) In the Final:
 - (i) when a match is drawn at full time, an extra 30 minutes **may** be played (of two equal halves of 15 minutes), **providing both Leagues are in agreement**. Any such mutual agreement between the Leagues must be (1) communicated to The Association no later than 48 hours **after both Semi Finals have been completed** and (2) approved by The Association.
 - (ii) when a match is drawn after extra time, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.

11. POSTPONED AND ABANDONED MATCHES

(a) *Matches which are Postponed*

- (i) When a match has been postponed it shall be played within 14 days of the date fixed for the first match on a ground of the first drawn League.
- (ii) If the first match be again postponed it shall be played as directed by The Association.

(b) *Abandoned Matches*

When any match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, The National Game Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.

- (c) The National Game Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

12. REPORTING RESULTS

- (a) Each League shall confirm the result of the match, with the names of the players competing and goalscorers, together with the marking of the Referee's performance to be received at The Association within two days of the match.
- (b) Each League shall communicate the result and other details as required to The Association and designated press agencies immediately after the end of the match, according to the instructions issued prior to the match.

13. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

(a) Artificial Football Turf Pitch

Artificial football turf pitches may be used in the Competition provided conditions (i) to (iii) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

- (i) The pitch must be surfaced with artificial football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – to a minimum of FIFA Quality Standard and must have satisfied the performance and construction requirements at the time of its most recent annual assessment.
- (ii) The artificial football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of artificial football turf pitches by no later than 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition.
- (iii) Where an artificial football turf pitch is not listed on The Association's register by 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), in order to be able to use the pitch for a match in the Competition a League must obtain a Performance Test Certificate and submit it to The Association by no later than seven days prior to the default date of the round in which that match is scheduled to take place.
- (iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a League to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Leagues expense.
- (v) The Association may order a tie to be played at an alternative venue where it is not satisfied the pitch meets the Performance Standard.
- (vi) The artificial football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goal line. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.

- (vii) The home League shall allow their opposition the opportunity to use the pitch and train on the surface two hours prior to the kick-off and there must not be another game or event on the pitch following the training period. If it is intended to water the pitch before the match, the pitch shall be watered prior to the training period.
- (viii) The League using the artificial football turf shall advise their opposition at least 10 days before the match of limitations or recommendations on the types of boot or stud that may be used on the surface.
- (ix) The League shall provide all necessary assistance and data relating to player assessments, injury records, maintenance etc as requested by The Association, FIFA or UEFA.

(b) *Ground Facilities*

- (i) All matches must be played at a ground which fully conforms to a Grade 6 of The FA National Ground Grading (appropriate to entry to Step 6 of The FA National League System) or higher.
- (ii) The consumption of alcohol in the ground or premises during the period of a match shall be subject to the terms of the licence agreement and the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) Act 1985 and/or any successor legislation. Glasses, Glass bottles or cans containing alcohol are not permitted outside of the Clubhouse and must not be brought into grounds.

(c) *Playing Condition of the Ground*

- (i) Each League must take every precaution to ensure that the ground they are using is in a fit playing condition.
- (ii) A League may protest to the National Game Board in relation to the playing condition of a ground as in Competition Rule 9(b).
- (iii) A Referee shall whenever possible examine the ground and decide as to its fitness for play in sufficient time to save the expense of unnecessary journeys being incurred by Leagues. The pitch inspection must be made by the Match Referee or a Referee appointed by The Football Association or a League who must immediately contact The Football Association with details of an inspection (and the Match Referee if relevant).
- (iv) Subject to this Rule, the Referee shall have the power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches.
- (v) The Referee must report to the ground 90 minutes before the time of kick-off. If necessary, the Home League or The Association may, by notice, require the Referee to visit the ground more than 90 minutes before the time of kick-off any time during the season.
- (vi) No other activity is permitted to be played on the pitch, on the day of the match, prior to an FA Inter League Cup tie in all rounds of the Competition without prior written consent of The Association

(d) *Floodlighting*

- (i) All matches shall be played on grounds enabling matches to be played either partly or wholly under floodlight conditions, provided that the installation conforms to the requirements relevant to the Grade 6 of The FA National Ground Grading.

- (ii) The Referee will decide at what point in the game the floodlights shall be switched on. This will necessitate a discussion with responsible Officials of the competing Leagues before the game, when a signal must be agreed.
- (iii) The cost for floodlighting must not exceed £100.00, and this cost may be charged as match expenses, if incurred.

(e) *First Aiders, Medical Emergency Action Plans and First Aid / Emergency Medical Facilities and Equipment*

Nothing in these Rules replaces, reduces or affects the obligations imposed on Leagues by statute and/or common law in the fields of medicine, occupational health and/or health and safety.

(i) First Aiders

It is the responsibility of the Home League to ensure that Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider (as applicable) is in attendance throughout the Competition Match. The Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider should, as a minimum, meet the standard of first aid provision required by the League.

(ii) Medical Emergency Action Plans

The Home League must ensure that an up-to-date Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) is in place (or such other medical plan as may be required by the League in which the League's first team participates). The MEAP should include information regarding: the deployment of medical personnel and resources, communication systems (including any unified command-control process which integrates the provision of emergency medical care and first aid into match-day safety systems) and emergency protocols for time critical emergencies.

The Home League must ensure that all personnel responsible for emergency medical care and first aid at the relevant match in the Competition (including those of the Visiting League) are briefed on the contents of the MEAP prior to kick-off. The MEAP should be provided in writing within each dressing room and summarised in a medical briefing to all personnel responsible for emergency medical care and first aid prior to kick-off.

(iii) First Aid / Emergency Medical Personnel, Facilities and Equipment

The Home League must ensure that all personnel primarily responsible for emergency medical care and first aid are provided pitch-side seating with easy access to, and an unobstructed view of, the pitch. The medical staff of each League shall be seated on the Trainer's bench.

The Home League is responsible for the provision of first aid/emergency medical personnel, facilities and equipment (to include extrication/ stretcher equipment) for the provision of medical care to players, match officials and spectators.

The provision of first aid/ emergency medical personnel, facilities and equipment for each match in the Competition should include a calculation of the appropriate number of personnel required and, where applicable, meet the minimum medical requirements as required by the League.

The Home League must ensure that: (i) all medical resources and/or equipment are easily accessible from the pitch and technical area, (ii) the location of those medical resources and/or equipment is appropriately signposted within the ground (including in the dressing rooms of each League and match officials), and (iii) appropriately qualified and competent personnel are available to utilise those resources and/or equipment to deliver first aid or emergency medical care.

14. LEAGUE COLOURS

- (a) The two competing Leagues must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and also the Match Officials. Where there is a clash (as determined by The Association), the Away League must change.

- (b) In the event of the Leagues not agreeing upon the colours to be worn, The Association shall decide. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from the other players, and the Match Officials.
- (c) League's colours must not clash with the black and white outfit worn by the Match Officials.
- (d) Players' shirts shall be clearly numbered on the back in accordance with the Official Team Sheet. No change of numbers during the match shall be allowed except on a change of Goalkeeper or where a player has been required by the Referee to change his shirt because of a blood injury. The Captain of each team shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status.
- (e) Advertising may be worn on players' clothing in accordance with the Rules of The Association. When participating in a match no Player shall reveal undergarments that show political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images or advertising other than a manufacturer's logo.
- (f) The inclusion of any reference whatsoever in or on clothing or equipment of a League team to a product or service or other activity which is detrimental to the welfare, health or general interest of young persons, or is otherwise considered inappropriate having regard to the age of the players, is prohibited.

15. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PLAYERS

- (a) Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing League.
- (b) A maximum of **five** substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a League may at its discretion use **all five** of those substitute players **ominated** at any time in a match.
 - (i) **In the Final, a maximum of seven substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a League may at its discretion use five of those seven substitute players nominated at any time in a match. Where extra time is played in the Final in accordance with Rule 10(e), a League may use one additional substitute in that period of extra time (i.e. a sixth in total).**
 - (ii) **A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Prior to the substitution being made the League must identify to the Match Officials the number of the player out and the player in, in accordance with the Official Team Sheet.**
- (c) All players shall be qualified as players according to the Rules of The Association.
- (d) A player shall not play for more than one League in the Competition in the same season.
- (e) A player who has been suspended according to the disciplinary procedures under the Rules of The Association may play in a postponed or replayed match after the term of his suspension has expired.
- (f) A substitute who does not play in a match is entitled to play for another League in the Competition in the same season.
- (g)
 - (i) Each League shall provide a list of names of players taking part in the match (including the names of substitutes) (the "Official Team Sheet") to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee:
 - 75 minutes before kick-off for the Final.
 - 45 minutes before kick-off for all other matches.

Each player's date of birth must be indicated on the Official Team Sheet. Any League failing to do so will be liable to be fined by the National Game Board a

sum not exceeding £100.00. Any objection to the age qualification of a player should be made to a representative of their opponents before kick-off.

- (ii) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the Official Team Sheet to the Referee and before the kick-off, he may be replaced without fine if he is injured warming up after the exchange of the Official Team Sheet, provided the Referee and opponents are informed before the commencement of the match. In such circumstances the Official Team Sheet must be updated by the relevant League to include the replacement player and exclude the injured player prior to the commencement of the match.
- (iii) A player may be deemed ineligible to take part in a match unless their name appears on the Official Team Sheet.

(h) In the case of postponed matches only those players shall be eligible to play who were eligible on the date fixed for the playing of the original match, except under the provisions of Rule 15 (e) above.

- (i) Only those players are eligible to take part who have reached the age of 18 years by midnight on 31 August of the current season and not reached the age of 40 years as at midnight on 31 August of the current season. For season **2025-26**, a player must have been born on or after 1 September **1985** and before 1 September **2007**).
- (j) A player who is currently, or has previously been under written contract, including as a Scholar on a Scholarship Agreement, at any stage during his career shall not be eligible.
- (k) The Secretary of each League shall be the person held responsible for ensuring that each player taking part in his team in any match in the Competition is qualified to do so.
- (l) Birth Certificates or other satisfactory proof of date of birth must be produced for scrutiny by a representative of the opposing League if requested providing that such requests be made at least five days prior to the match.
- (m) A player shall be eligible to play for the League provided that he has been registered for a Club in membership of that League by 12 noon on the day immediately prior to the date fixed for playing the match (the "Registration Deadline"). Any such registration must have been received (with all relevant documents completed) by the League by the Registration Deadline. The League must have confirmed in writing to the Club submitting the application to register the player that the registration has been accepted in order for the player to be eligible to play in the match. The League may confirm its acceptance of a registration after the Registration Deadline provided that such registration was received, along with all relevant documents, by the Registration Deadline. However, if the League has not confirmed in writing its acceptance of a registration 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match, the player shall not be eligible to play in the match. The registration must be continuous through to the date of the match.
- (n) An International Transfer Certificate for players coming from overseas associations (including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) must be received at least 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match in order for the Player's registration to be valid.
- (o) A League may not include more than seven players that are registered for the same Club on its Official Team Sheet for any match in the Competition, and may not include more than five players that are registered for the same Club in the 11 players that start the match.

16. VALIDITY OF PLAYERS' QUALIFICATIONS

- (a) The National Game Board shall have power to call upon a Player, and/or League to which he is registered, or for which he played, to prove that the Player is qualified according to the Competition Rules.

- (b) Subject to (c) below, where a player that is or is found to be ineligible under either the Rules of the Competition and/or the Rules of the Association plays for a League in a Competition match, the National Game Board may remove the League from the Competition, and may impose further penalties against the League.
- (c) However, where the League satisfies the National Game Board that the League (or any of its officers) did not know and could not reasonably have known, even had it made every reasonable enquiry (with the exercise of the utmost caution), that the player was ineligible, the League shall not be removed from the Competition but may still be subject to any other penalty. (e.g. fine, ordered to replay the match).

17. PROGRAMME

A printed or digital version of a Programme or Team Sheet must be produced by the Home League and made available for spectators on the day of a match.

18. TEAM BENCHES

- (a) In all Rounds of the Competition, the number of League players and officials seated on the team benches, in the designated technical area, must not exceed 11 unless the team bench facility provides more than 11 individual seats.
- (b) Only one person has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the players during the match. He is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.
- (c) All Team Officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the Official Team Sheet when it is submitted to the Match Officials. Only those persons listed on the Official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.
- (d) The occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to The Association, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.
- (e) With the exception of the Team Manager, the Team Coach and any substitutes who are warming up or warming down, all other personnel are to remain seated on the trainer's bench. The Team Manager or Team Coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.
- (f) In the Final, Leagues will be advised by The Association of the number of technical staff and substitutes who may occupy the team benches and a list of the permitted number of authorised personnel must be provided by each League to the Referee at least 75 minutes before kick-off.

19. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a)
 - (i) Match Officials shall be appointed by The Association in accordance with its appointing procedures from time to time.
 - (ii) The Association reserves the right to appoint a Reserve Official to officiate in the event of an appointed Match Official failing to arrive or being incapacitated.
 - (iii) In the event of any of the Match Officials failing to arrive or being incapacitated, it shall be completed under the control of the remaining Match Officials unless the competing County Associations are able to agree upon a substitute who is acceptable to the Match Referee; should the appointed Match Referee fail to appear then the most senior Assistant Referee must take charge. Any substitute agreed for a match shall be considered a Match Official for the purposes of that match.
- (b) The fees and expenses of all Match Officials appointed by The Association to officiate in any match prior to the Final shall be paid by the Home League unless otherwise

instructed by National Game Board. For cash payments, these should be made on the day of the match. For electronic bank transfers, these should be made within 48 hours following the conclusion of the match.

(c) *Scale of Expenses to be paid to Match Officials*

- (i) In all rounds of the Competition standard class rail fares operating on the day of the match will be allowed.
- (ii) An allowance of £0.40 per mile will be allowed to all Match Officials officiating in the competition that travels by private car.
- (iii) In Rounds prior to the Semi-Final, Match Officials shall be entitled to claim a meal allowance of £4.00 where the travelling time exceeds six hours.
- (iv) In the Semi-Finals and Final, Match Officials shall be entitled to claim meal allowances as below:

Where the travelling time exceeds eight hours £10.00
Where the travelling time exceeds six hours £8.00
Where the travelling time exceeds four hours £6.00

Meal allowance travelling times shall be calculated from the time the Match Officials leaves home until the match Officials return home, less the duration of the match.

(d) *Scale of Fees to be Paid to Match Officials*

- (i) *In all rounds prior to the semi finals:*
Referee £75.00; Assistant Referees £55.00 each
- (ii) *Semi-Finals:*
Referee £120.00 Assistant Referees £80.00 each; Fourth Official £50.00
- (iii) *Final:*
Referee £309.00; Assistant Referees £155.00 each; Fourth Official £103.00 and a Souvenir Medal each.

- (e) In the event of The Association giving permission for a pitch inspection prior to a match, by an Official other than the Match Referee, such Official shall be entitled to expenses plus half the match fee if not local. The Home League will pay any expenses.
- (f) Match Officials are entitled to their travelling expenses if incurred. Half their fees will be paid if the match to which they are appointed is postponed after they have arrived at the ground.
- (g) In the event of a Match Official being unable to reach their destination going to or returning from a match without staying at an hotel, they shall be entitled to charge £40.00 for each night to cover their hotel expenses. A receipted hotel account must be provided.
- (h) Match Officials shall acknowledge acceptance of appointments for all matches in the Competition to The Association.
- (i) The Home League must notify the Match Officials of the precise details of the match, this is to include a map with the location of the ground indicated, kick-off time, colours of both teams and other necessary details to be received by the Match Officials not later than five days prior to the match who shall acknowledge receipt.
- (j) The duties of the Match Officials shall be as defined in the Laws of the Game.

20. ADMISSION TO MATCHES - SALE OF TICKETS

- (a) Wherever possible, an admission charge must be made, the minimum admission to matches in the Competition shall be £5.00.
- (b) A higher admission charge may be mutually agreed between the Leagues concerned, no later than seven days prior to match day.
- (c) When an admission charge is agreed, each League shall be entitled to 10 complimentary tickets.
- (d) The admission prices are to be confirmed in writing to The Association and the visiting League as part of the Match Arrangement Form.
- (e) All questions in dispute must be immediately referred to The Association for settlement.

21. PROCEEDS OF MATCHES PRIOR TO THE FINAL

- (a) The net gate receipts of a match preceding the Final (except replayed matches in consequence of a breach of the Rules) shall be the total ticket sales for the match less VAT if applicable, the travelling expenses of the Visiting League, the fees and expenses of the Match Officials, and other match expenses allowed under the Rules. The National Game Board shall have the power from time to time to issue instructions as to what shall and shall not be allowed as a match expense.
- (b) The net gate receipts shall be approximately divided immediately after the match. A full statement of account for the match shall be prepared by the League playing at its home ground, on the prescribed Statement of Receipts and Payments Form, and payment shall be made in full to the Visiting League within 14 days of the match. A League failing to comply with this clause may be ordered to pay a fine and any other punishment, including non-admission to the Competition, may be imposed as determined by the National Game Board.
- (c) No competing League shall make any Agreement with any other competing League by which their obligations under the Rules regarding the sharing of net gate receipts may be varied or amended in any way. "Agreement" for the purpose of the Rules of the Competition means any agreement, arrangement, obligation, undertaking or understanding whether oral or written, formal or informal, contractual or otherwise, binding in law or otherwise, and of any nature whatsoever and which includes for these purposes any attempt to enter into any such Agreement.
- (d) Any League failing to comply with these provisions may at the discretion of the National Game Board:
 - (i) be ordered to pay daily interest on the money due calculated at 5% per annum over Barclays Bank Base Rate in force for the time being from the due date to the actual date of payment, and/or;
 - (ii) be removed from the Competition for the current and/or future seasons and any other order as is deemed appropriate until such time as the money has been paid.
- (e) A League that alleges that it has been financially disadvantaged by another League failing to meet its financial obligations under these Rules must bring the circumstances to the attention of the National Game Board in writing. The National Game Board shall consider the circumstances and take any action that it considers appropriate under the Competition Rules.
- (f) When a match is postponed through causes over which neither League has any control, the expenses shall be paid out of the receipts of the match when played.
- (g) In any match ordered to be replayed in consequence of a breach of the Competition Rules, the League in default shall not receive any share of the gate receipts of any nature of such replayed match (except the approved travelling costs in accordance with Competition Rule 22) without the consent of the National Game Board, and such consent shall only be given under special circumstances. If consent is not given, any such share shall be remitted to The Association.
- (h) A League may at its own expense erect temporary stands and take the proceeds only in cases where the remaining areas of the ground are otherwise sold out and the opposing

League declines to join in the expense of the erection. A temporary stand becomes a permanent one if used after the match for which it was erected.

- (i) In cases where the gate receipts are not sufficient to cover the entire expenses of the match, the deficit shall be shared by the two competing Leagues.

22. MATCH EXPENSES

(a) Travelling Expenses

- (i) In all Rounds, match expenses shall include travelling expenses, actually incurred, which must not exceed £3.60 per coach mile. If private cars or minibus are used, then the expenses which can be claimed will be for a maximum of five cars at £0.48 per mile.
- (ii) The travelling expenses for the Visiting League are to be calculated on a direct route from the League's headquarters and the total mileage based on a return journey must be agreed between both Leagues prior to the first match.
- (iii) When travelling by rail, the cost of 20 standard class fares at the cheapest available rate may be claimed.

(b) Hotel Expenses

- (i) Where agreement concerning hotel accommodation has been reached, Leagues must confirm the agreement in writing and send a copy to The Association.
- (ii) Where mutual agreement concerning hotel accommodation cannot be reached, and the visiting League considers it necessary or desirable to claim hotel expenses, written application must be made to The Association with a copy to the home League at least seven days in advance of the first match. The National Game Board shall have the power at its absolute discretion whether or not to grant permission.
- (iii) The grounds for making such an application are that it would be necessary for the visiting League to leave its Headquarters before 8.00am on the day of the match in order to arrive at the venue for the match no less than 90 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off, based on reasonable travel time only (determined by reference to the AA Route Planner service) and including a stop of not more than 45 minutes. Expenses, which may be claimed, if actually incurred, shall not exceed £36.00 per person for up to 20 persons. In the Semi Final and Final, expenses, which may be claimed, if actually incurred, shall not exceed £60.00 per person for up to 20 persons.
- (iv) A League that has been granted hotel expenses by The Association must stay within a 30 mile radius of the ground where the match will be played.

(c) *Gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators*

The gross cost plus employer's national insurance in employing gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators for the match may be deducted from match receipts. Where the actual gross and employer's national insurance is not known at the date by which the Statement of Receipts and Payments Form must be submitted then a reasonable estimate should be included as a deduction.

Where a League contracts gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators the charge to the League (net of VAT) is to be deducted.

(d) *Medical*

The cost of first aid helpers and emergency medical personnel may be deducted as a match expense.

First Aid Helpers

The contributions for first aid helpers for all ties are as follows:

- (i) Leagues outside London to pay £20.00 per first aider, with a minimum payment of £60.00 per match.
- (ii) **Leagues** in London to pay £22.00 per first aider, with a minimum payment of £66.00 per match.

(iii) London Leagues are defined as those within the Metropolitan Police boundary.

Payments relating to local first aid provision should be made direct to the local St John Ambulance Brigade or Red Cross based upon the number of helpers agreed, regardless of the actual attendance. If they provide their own ambulance, then an additional payment must be mutually agreed between the Leagues for inclusion as a match expense.

23. MATCH GRANT

- (a) A Match Grant shall be sent to each League for all Rounds up to and including the Semi Final, within fourteen working days of the completion of each Round. The sum paid shall be determined by the National Game Board from time to time.
- (b) No competing League shall make any Agreement (as defined under these Competition Rules), whether direct or indirect, with any competing League regarding the sharing of any payment to which they are entitled under the Competition Rules.
- (c) Where a League defaults in making a payment to an opposing League as required under these Rules then the National Game Board may deduct or withhold any such amount from payments due to the defaulting League.
- (d) In the event that a League is found to have breached the Competition Rules the National Game Board may, in accordance with Rule 1(d), order the repayment of any monies gained by such League.

24. PROVISIONS FOR THE FINAL

- (a) The Association shall determine the ground for the Final and shall have direct control of the arrangements.
- (b) *Postponed Match*
When a Final match has been postponed it shall be played as directed by The Association.
- (c) *Abandoned Match*
When a Final match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, the National Game Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.
- (d) The venue staging a Final shall be entitled to a payment agreed by The Association.
- (e) Save for (a) and (d) the National Game Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

25. THE FA INTER-LEAGUE CUP FINALIST MEDALS

- (a) The Cup is the property of The Association. When the winning League has been ascertained, The Association shall loan the Cup to such League, which shall be responsible for its return to the Association on or before the first day in the March two calendar years later, in good order and condition. Should the Cup be lost, destroyed or damaged by fire or any other cause whilst under the care or custody of the League, the latter shall refund to The Association the amount of its current insured value or the cost of thorough repair in addition to any other penalty which The Association may impose.
- (b) In addition to the Cup, The Association shall present 25 medals to each League in the Final. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct, the medal to which he may be entitled may be withheld at the discretion of the National Game Board.

26. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PROTESTS

- (a) All issues relating to the interpretation of the Competition Rules, shall be referred to the National Game Board, whose decision shall be, subject to Rule 27, final and binding. The National Game Board shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The National Game Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding before a Court of Law.
- (b) Where a League wishes to protest that there has been a breach of the Competition Rules, such protest must be made in writing and must contain the particulars of the grounds upon which it is made. The protest must be received by The Association accompanied by a fee of £100.00, within two days of the match to which it relates (Sundays not included). The fee may be forfeited to The Association in the event of the protest not being sustained.
- (c) The National Game Board may make such orders as it considers appropriate in relation to any issue or protest referred to it. The National Game Board may make such orders as it considers appropriate as to the costs incurred by the parties or The Association.
- (d) Any protest relating to the ground, goal posts, or bars, or other appurtenances of the game shall not be considered by the National Game Board unless an objection has been lodged by a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Visiting League with a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Home League in the presence of the Referee at least one hour before the official time of the kick-off. The Referee shall require the Home League to correct the cause of the objection, if this is possible without unduly delaying the progress of the match. The Referee shall record the lodging of any protest made under this Rule in his match report.
- (e) Where an objection has been lodged with the Referee and Home League as above, a protest must be made to The Association and neither objection nor protest may be withdrawn, except by leave of the National Game Board.
- (f) The Association shall send a copy of any protest to the League protested against, which shall lodge a defence to the protest with particulars of the defence within two days of receipt of the protest.
- (g) Members of the National Game Board directly connected with a League concerned in a protest shall not have any involvement in the consideration of the matter.
- (h) A League, or player or any person directly connected with the management of the League may be summoned to attend at a hearing of a protest. A League may be represented by one or more persons. A Barrister or Solicitor may represent a League only with the prior written consent of the National Game Board. Any person summoned to attend a hearing of a protest must attend personally and shall not be legally represented except with the prior written consent of the National Game Board.

27. PROVISIONS CONCERNING APPEALS

- (a) A League that is expelled from the Competition may appeal against that decision to an appeal board in accordance with the procedures for Competition appeals set out in Appendix 1.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, a League may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

28. UEFA REGIONS CUP

Subject to the ratification of the National Game Board, the winning League shall be nominated by The Association to represent England in the UEFA Regions Cup. If the winning League does not wish to be nominated, the National Game Board shall decide the League to represent England in the UEFA Regions Cup, at its sole discretion.

29. NOTICES

All notices required to be given to The Association by any of these Competition Rules shall be addressed to the Competitions Manager, at the offices of The Association.

Appendix 1

- (a) Where a League intends to lodge an appeal against a decision of the National Game Board (or a subcommittee) to remove the League from the Competition under Rule 27(a), it must:
 - (i) notify The Association by email (to Competitions@TheFA.com and **Judicialservices@thefa.com**) by 12 noon on the first business day following receipt of the decision; and
 - (ii) provide The Association by email (to Competitions@TheFA.com and **Judicialservices@thefa.com**) with an appeal fee of £100 and copies of all submissions, evidence and any other relevant material upon which they intend to rely by 6pm on the first business day following receipt of the decision.
- (b) The grounds of appeal available to the League shall be that the National Game Board (or subcommittee):
 - (i) failed to give the League a fair hearing; and/or
 - (ii) misinterpreted or failed to comply with the rules of the Competition relevant to its decision; and/or
 - (iii) came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come; and/or
 - (iv) the removal of the League from the Competition was excessive.
- (c) An appeal board of three people will be appointed to determine the appeal. The members will be appointed by The Association's Judicial Panel Chair (or their nominee) and shall be comprised of members of The Association's Judicial Panel.
- (d) An appeal shall be by way of a review of documents and oral submissions only and shall not involve a rehearing of the evidence considered by the National Game Board (or subcommittee). The Association will ensure that all documents relating to the original decision are provided to the appeal board. If the League does not wish to be present or represented in person, the appeal board may conduct the hearing on the basis of a review of the documents only.
- (e) The Association must, by 6pm on the first business day following receipt of the appellant's submissions, evidence and material, provide its responses to the appellant and the appeal board.
- (f) New evidence may only be permitted with the permission of the Chair of the appeal board. An application for leave to present new evidence must be made when providing submissions. Such application must set out the nature of relevance of the new evidence and why it was not presented at the original hearing. Save in exceptional circumstances, the appeal board shall not grant leave to present new evidence unless satisfied with the reason given as to why it was not, or could not have been, presented to the National Game Board (or subcommittee) and that such evidence is relevant. Where leave to present new evidence has been granted, in all cases the other party will be given an opportunity to respond. The decision of the Chair of the appeal board shall be final.
- (g) The appeal board will hear the appeal at the earliest available opportunity and, in any event, before the next round of the Competition. The appeal board shall determine the procedures to be followed at any personal hearing.
- (h) A decision of the appeal board shall be final and binding and there shall be no right of further challenge.
- (i) The appeal board shall have the power to allow or dismiss the appeal and to make such further or other order as it considers appropriate.
- (j) The costs of bringing an appeal will be borne by the League.