

Northamptonshire Combination League

RULES 2021 – 2022

1. DEFINITIONS

(A) In these Rules:

“Affiliated Association” means an Association accorded the status of an affiliated Association under the Rules of The FA.

“AGM” shall mean the annual general meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Competition.

“Deposit” means a sum of money deposited with the Competition as part of the requirements of membership of the Competition.

“Club” means a Club for the time being in membership of the Competition and “Team” means a side from a Club especially where a Club provides more than one Team in a division in accordance with the Rules.

“Competition” means the Northamptonshire Combination Football League.

“Competition Match” means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Competition.

“Contract Player” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

“Fees Tariff” means a list of fees approved by the Clubs at a general meeting to be levied by the Management Committee for any matters for which fees are payable under the Rules.

“Fines Tariff” means a list of fines approved by the Clubs at a general meeting to be levied by the Management Committee for any breach of the Rules.

“Ground” means the ground on which the Club’s team(s) plays its Competition Matches.

“Management Committee” means in the case of a Competition which is an unincorporated association the management committee elected to manage the running of the Competition and where the Competition is incorporated it means the Board of Directors appointed in accordance with the articles of association of that company.

“Match Officials” means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Competition Match.

“Non Contract Player” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

“Officer” means an individual who is appointed or elected to a position in a Club or Competition which requires that individual to make day to day decisions.

“Participant” shall have the same meaning as set out in the rules of The FA from time to time.

“Player” means any Contract Player, Non Contract Player or other Player who plays or who is eligible to play for a Club.

“Player Registration System” means The FA system to register players as determined by The FA from time to time.

“Playing Season” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the Competition is played each year until the date on which the last competitive fixture in the Competition is played.

“Rules” means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

“Sanctioning Authority” means [The FA] [the Northamptonshire County Football Association Limited].

“Scholarship” means a Scholarship as set out in Rule C 3.1.1 of the Rules of The FA.

“Season” means the period of time between one AGM and the next AGM.

“Secretary” means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition.

“SGM” means a special general meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Competition.

“Team” means a team affiliated to a Club, including where a Club provides more than one team in the Competition in accordance with the Rules.

“Team Sheet” means a form provided by the Competition on which the names of the Players taking part in a Competition match are listed.

“The FA” means The Football Association Limited.

“Virtual Meetings” means meetings held electronically

“written” or “in writing” means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise.

(B) Unless stated otherwise, terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and also the other way around.

GOVERNANCE RULES

2. COMPETITION NAME, CONSTITUTION

(A) The Competition will be known as “Northamptonshire Combination” (or such other name as the Competition may adopt). The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Competition. A Club which ceases to exist or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall automatically cease to be a member of the Competition.

(B) The Competition shall consist of not more than 100 Clubs approved by the Sanctioning Authority.

(C) The geographical area covered by the Competition membership shall be no more than 50 miles radius of Northampton.

(D) The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Management Committee in accordance with the rules, regulations and policies of The FA.

(E) All Clubs shall adhere to the Rules. Every Club shall be deemed, as a member of the Competition to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Management Committee in relation to them, subject to the provisions of Rule 7.

(F) The Rules are taken from the Standard Code of Rules (the “Standard Code”) determined by The FA from time to time. In the event of any omissions from the Standard Code then the requirements of the Standard Code shall be deemed to apply to the Competition.

(G) 1. All Clubs must be affiliated to an Affiliated Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date in a manner prescribed by the Sanctioning Authority and must have a constitution approved by the Sanctioning Authority. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

2. This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Sanctioning Authority and the constituent Teams of Clubs may be grouped in divisions, each not exceeding 16 in number.

(H) Inclusivity and Non-discrimination

(1) The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination and should abide and adhere to The FA Equality Policy and any legislative requirements (including those contained in the Equality Act 2010).

(2) This Competition and each Club must make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability or otherwise.

(3) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate Sanctioning Authority for investigation.

(I) Clubs must comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA which are adopted by the Competition including but not limited to, Charter Standard and RESPECT programmes. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

NB: Charter Standard

A Club not achieving FA Charter Standard status by 31st January in the season of their election to the Competition will incur an additional fee in accordance with the Fees Tariff. As per Rule 2(I).

An additional fee per team in accordance with the Fees Tariff will be levied against a Club not achieving FA Charter Standard status by 31st December. As per Rule 2(I)

(J) All Participants shall abide by The Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children and Regulations for Safeguarding Adults at Risk as determined by The FA from time to time.

(K) Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of FA and County FA Competitions) except with the written consent of the Management Committee. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(L) At the AGM or at a SGM called for the purpose, a majority of the delegates present shall have power to decide or adjust the constitution of the divisions at their discretion. When necessary this Rule shall take precedence over Rule 22.

(M) Only one Team from a Club shall be permitted to participate in a single division unless there is no viable alternative because of logistical issues and/or reasons linked to participation and geographical boundaries in which case the Competition will obtain the prior approval of the Sanctioning Authority. This Competition will ensure that, where permission is given, Teams from a Club operating in the same division are run as separate entities with no interchange of players other than by transfers of registration in accordance with these Rules.

3. CLUB NAME

Any Club wishing to change its name must obtain permission from the Sanctioning Authority. In the event that permission is granted, the Club must advise the Competition Secretary. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

4. ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

(A) Applications by Clubs for admission to the Competition or the entry of an additional Team(s) from the same Club must be made in writing to the Secretary and must be accompanied by an Entry Fee for each Team [plus a deposit] as set out in the Fees Tariff, which shall be returned in the event of non-election.

Applications, of which due notice has been given, will be received at the AGM or an SGM if confirmed by a majority of the accredited voting members present.

When Rule 22(B) is applied or a Team seeks a transfer or, is compulsorily transferred to another division, no Entry Fee shall be payable.

(B) The annual subscription shall be payable in accordance with the Fees Tariff for each Team payable at a date agreed at the AGM or set by the Competition of 1st June. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(C) In the event of any issue concerning the membership of any Club with the Competition the Management Committee may require a Deposit to be paid (in accordance with the Fees Tariff) by or on behalf of the Club on such terms and for such period as it may in its entire discretion think fit. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. The deposit shall be returnable to Clubs on leaving the Competition provided they have fulfilled their fixtures and complied with all orders of the Management Committee.

(D) A Club shall not participate in this Competition until the entry fee, annual subscription and deposit (if required) have been paid.

(E) Clubs must advise the Secretary annually in writing by 1st June of its Sanctioning Authority affiliation number for the forthcoming Playing Season. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the prescribed form, of details of its headquarters, its Officers and any other information required by the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

5. MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

(A) The Management Committee shall comprise the Officers of the Competition and six who shall all be elected at the AGM.

(B) Retiring Officers shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination provided that the Officer notifies the Secretary in writing not later than 1st March in each year.

All other candidates for election as Officers of the Competition or members of the Management Committee shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the secretaries of two Clubs, not later than 1st March in each year. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the AGM. In the event of there being no nomination for any office by the date stated in the earlier part of this Rule, nominations may be received at the AGM.

NB: Nominations for Life Members, Life Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents from League Officers having completed 21 years in office to be submitted in writing to the Hon Secretary by the 1st day of March each year for approval by the Committee.

(C) The Management Committee shall meet a minimum of twice a season as and when required.

On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Management Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Management Committee.

(D) Except where otherwise mentioned all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.

(E) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their Officers and sent to the Secretary. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

6. POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

(A) The Management Committee may appoint sub-committees and delegate such of their powers as they deem necessary. The decisions of all sub-committees shall be reported to the Management Committee for ratification. The Management Committee shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of The FA or Affiliated Association.

(B) Subject to the permission of the Sanctioning Authority having been obtained the Management Committee may order a match or matches to be played each season, the proceeds to be devoted to the funds of the Competition and, if necessary, may call on each Club to contribute equally such sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency at the end of the season.

(C) Each Member of the Management Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Committee Meetings and have one vote at all such meetings, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly relating to that Member or to the Club so represented or where there may be a conflict of interest. This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee.

NB: Any Committee member missing three consecutive meetings may be asked to resign his/her position on the Committee.

(D) In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

(E) The Management Committee shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce the Rules of the Competition and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competitions. Any action by the Competition must be taken within 28 days of the Competition being notified.

With the exception of Rules 6(I), 8(H) and 9, for all alleged breaches of a Rule the Management Committee shall issue a formal written charge to the Club concerned. The Club charged shall be given 7 days from the date of notification of the charge to reply.

In such a Club may:

(1) Accept the charge and/or submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Management Committee; or

(2) Accept the charge and notify the Competition [] it wishes to put its case of mitigation at a hearing before the Management Committee; or

(3) Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Management Committee; or

(4) Deny the charge and notify the Competition [], that it wishes to have a hearing before the Management Committee.

Where the Club charged fails to respond within 7 days, the Management Committee shall determine the charge in such manner and upon such evidence as it considers appropriate.

Having considered the reply of the Club (whether in writing or at a hearing), the Management Committee shall make its decision and, in the event that the charge is accepted or proven, decide on the appropriate penalty (with reference to the Fines Tariff where applicable).

Where required, hearings shall take place as soon as reasonably practicable following receipt of the reply of the Club as more fully set out above.

With the exception of Teams playing at Regional NLS Feeder League of the National League System, the maximum fine permitted for any breach of a Rule is £250 and, when setting any fine, the Management Committee must ensure that the penalty is proportional to the offence; taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

The maximum fine permitted for a breach of a Rule by a Team playing at Regional NLS Feeder League level is £500.

No Participant under the age of 18 can be fined.

All breaches of the Laws of the Game, or the Rules and Regulations of The FA shall be dealt with in accordance with FA Rules by the appropriate sanctioning Association.

(F) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7.

(G) A minimum of 50% of its members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the Management Committee or any of its sub-committee.

(H) The Management Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill, any vacancies that may occur in their number.

(I) A Club must comply with an order or instruction of the Management Committee and must attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition to the satisfaction of the Management Committee. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(J) Subject to a Club's right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7 below, all fines and charges must be paid within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision. Any Club failing to do so will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Further failure to pay the fine including the additional fine within a further 14 days will result in fixtures being withdrawn until such time as the outstanding fines are paid.

(K) A member of the Management Committee appointed by the Competition to attend a meeting or Competition Match may have any reasonable expenses incurred refunded by the Competition.

(L) The Management Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the AGM or SGM called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the Playing Season.

(M) The business of the Competition as determined by the Management Committee may be transacted by electronic mail or facsimile.

7. PROTESTS, CLAIMS, COMPLAINTS, APPEALS

(A) (1) All questions of eligibility, qualification of Players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Management Committee or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Management Committee.

(2) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities will not be entertained by the Management Committee unless a protest is lodged with the referee prior to the commencement of the Match.

(B) Except in cases where the Management Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged with the Secretary within 3 days (excluding Sundays) of the Competition Match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Management Committee. A member of the Management Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.

(C) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Management Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Secretary a sum in accordance with the Fees Tariff. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the inquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties.

(D) All parties to a protest or complaint must receive a copy of the submission and must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement at least 7 days before the protest or complaint being heard.

(1) All parties must have received a minimum of 7 days' notice of the hearing should they be instructed to attend.

(2) Should a Club elect to state its case in person then it should indicate such when forwarding the written response.

(E) The Management Committee shall also have power to compel any party to the protest to pay such expenses as the Management Committee shall direct.

(F) Any appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee (as set out in the Fees Tariff), which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Secretary. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority, the Sanctioning Authority may (but is not obliged to):

(1) invite submissions by the parties involved;

(2) convene a hearing to hear the appeal;

(3) permit new evidence; or

(4) impose appropriate deadlines.

Any appeal shall not involve a rehearing of the evidence considered by the Management Committee.

(G) No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an AGM or SGM unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

(H) All protests, claims or complaints relating to these Rules and appeals arising from a Player's contract shall be heard and determined by the Management Committee, or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Management Committee. The Clubs or Players protesting, appealing, claiming or complaining must send a copy of such protest, appeal, claim or complaint and deposit a fee (as set out in the Fees Tariff) which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld, and in these circumstances may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Management Committee.

All such protests claims complaints and appeals must be received in writing by the Secretary within 14 days of the event or decision causing any of these to be submitted.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(A) The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than 30th June in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least two thirds of Members are present and entitled to vote:-

- (1) Confirm the Minutes of the last AGM.
- (2) Adopt the annual report, balance sheet and statement of accounts from the previous season or accounting period.
- (3) Election of Clubs to fill
- (4) Constitution of the Competition for the ensuing Season.
- (5) Election of Competition Officers and Management Committee members.
- (6) Appointment of auditors/verifiers.
- (7) Alteration of Rules, if any (see Rule 14).
- (8) Agree the date for the beginning of the Playing Season and kick off times applicable to the Competition.
- (9) Agree the date for the end of the Playing Season (save for Regional NLS Feeder League which shall be determined by The FA).
- (10) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted by the Chair as being relevant to an AGM.

(B) A copy of the duly audited/verified balance sheet, statement of accounts and agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least 14 days prior to the meeting, together with any proposed change of Rules.

(C) A signed copy of the duly audited balance sheet and statement of accounts shall be sent to the Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of its adoption by the AGM.

(D) Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to an AGM. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. 14 days' notice shall be given of any AGM.

(E) Clubs who have withdrawn their membership of the Competition during the Playing Season being concluded or who are not continuing membership shall be entitled to attend but shall vote only on matters relating to the Season being concluded. This provision will not apply to Clubs expelled in accordance with Rule 12.

(F) All voting shall be conducted by a show of hands, or count of email or virtual responses (for virtual meetings), unless a ballot be demanded by at least 50% of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chair so decides.

(G) No individual shall be entitled to vote on behalf of more than one Member Club.

(H) Any continuing Club failing to be represented at the AGM. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff

(I) Officers of the Competition and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an AGM.

(J) Where a Competition is an incorporated entity, the Officers of the Competition shall ensure that the Articles of Association of the Competition are consistent with the requirements of these Rules.

NB: Club Meetings shall take place on **September 2021 TBC** and **February 2022**. Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to the meetings. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. These are **MANDATORY** meetings. Any club not represented at a Club meeting shall be sanctioned under Rule 6(H)

A roll call of clubs in attendance shall be taken at the close of the meeting preceding the item Any Other Business. Any club which has left the meeting without the courtesy of informing the Chair shall be considered to have not attended the meeting and will be fined as per rule.

No minutes will be issued for Club meetings. An agenda will be available before the Club meeting.

9. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

(A) On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call an SGM.

(B) The Management Committee may call an SGM at any time.

(C) At least 7 days' notice shall be given of a meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted at such meeting.

(D) Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all SGMs. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only.

(E) Any Club failing to be represented at a SGM shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(F) Officers of the Competition and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at all SGMs.

NB: For Minor Special General Meetings an electronic voting ballot can be sent via email at the discretion of the Management Committee.

A Ballot paper with voting boxes will be sent out for clubs to vote, there will also be a box for clubs that wish to abstain. On the bottom will be a section that requests an extraordinary meeting. If five Clubs tick this box a full meeting will be convened.

A ballot email will be sent out and must be completed by The Club Secretary and replied to within seven working days; if no reply is received the League will contact the Club to ensure their vote has been cast.

10. AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED

Each Club shall complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the Competition together with the application for membership for the coming Season,

"We, (A) (name) [] of (address) [] (Chair)/(Director) and (B) (name) [] of (address) [] (Secretary)/(Director) of [] Football Club (Limited) have been provided with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the [] Competition and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the said Club, if elected or accepted into membership, to conform to those Rules and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the Management Committee of the Competition, subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7."

The agreement shall be signed:

Where a Club is an unincorporated association, by the Club Chair and secretary; or

Where a Club is an incorporated entity, by two directors of the Club.

Any change of Chair Secretary or Directors of the Club as named on the above agreement must be notified to the [] County Football Association to which the Club is sanctioned and to the Secretary of this Competition.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

11. CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP, WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

(A) A Club intending, or having a provisional intention, to withdraw a Team from the Competition on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the Competition must notify the Secretary in writing of such intention by 31st March each season. This does not apply to a Club moving in accordance with Rule 22(B). Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(B) The Management Committee shall have the discretion to deal with a team being unable to start or complete its fixtures for a Playing Season, including, but not limited to, issuing a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(C) Notwithstanding the powers of the Management Committee pursuant to Rule 6(l), in the event of a Club failing to discharge all its financial obligations to the Competition in excess of £50, the Management Committee shall be empowered to refer the debt under The FA Football Debt Recovery provisions.

NB: Any club desiring membership or any existing club wishing to add a team or teams shall apply in writing to the Hon Secretary by the 1st day of June preceding the season applied for. Applications received after this date may not be accepted, with the exception of Step 6 relegated Clubs.

Applications shall be dealt with by the Vetting Committee. The Vetting Committee shall carry out an inspection of the facilities of each club making an application and will report on their findings and recommendations to the Committee.

12. EXCLUSION OF CLUBS, TEAMS. MISCONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

(A) At the AGM or SGM called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9, notice of motion having been duly circulated on the agenda by direction of the Management Committee, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to: (i) remove a member of the Management Committee from office; (ii) exclude any Club or Team from membership, both of which must be supported by more than two thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A member of the Management Committee or Club which is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

(B) At the AGM, or at an SGM called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude from further participation in the Competition any Club whose conduct has, in their opinion, been undesirable, provided this is supported by more than two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A Club whose conduct is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

(C) Any Officer or member of a Club found guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a Player or Players of another Club in the Competition to join them shall be liable to such penalty as a General Meeting or Management Committee may decide, and their Club shall also be liable to expulsion in accordance with the provisions of 12 (A) and/or 12 (B) of this Rule.

13. TROPHY

(A) The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the cup or trophy:-

“We (A) (name) and (B) (name), the Chair and Secretary of FC (Limited), members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of cup or trophy, and the cup or trophy having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the cup or trophy to the Competition Secretary on or before third Wednesday in September unless requested by management committee to return earlier. If the cup or trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair.”

Failure to comply will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(B) At the close of each Competition awards may be made to the winners and runners-up if the funds of the Competition permit.

NB: Sixteen winners and runners up momentos to be presented. Any damage or loss of trophy must be reported to the League Secretary within seven days.

14. ALTERATION TO RULES

(A) Alterations, for which consent has been given by the Sanctioning Authority, shall be made to these Rules only at the AGM or at a SGM specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 9. Any alteration made during the Playing Season to these Rules shall not take effect until the following Playing Season.

(B) Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the AGM shall be submitted to the Secretary by 1st March in each year. The proposals, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by 1st April and any amendments to these proposals shall be submitted to the Secretary by 14th April. The proposals and proposed amendments thereto shall be circulated to Clubs with the notice of the AGM. A proposal to change a Rule shall be carried if a majority of those present and entitled to vote and voting are in favour.

A copy of the proposed alterations to Rules to be considered at the AGM or SGM shall be submitted to the Sanctioning Authority or The FA (as applicable) at least 28 days prior to the date of the meeting.

15. FINANCE

(A) The Management Committee shall determine with which bank or other financial institution the funds of the Competition will be lodged.

(B) All expenditure in excess of £20 shall be approved by the Management Committee. Cheques shall be signed by at least two Officers nominated by the Management Committee.

(C) The financial year of the Competition will end on 31st March.

(D) The accounting records, or a certified balance sheet, of a Competition shall be prepared and shall be audited/verified annually by some suitably qualified person(s) who shall be appointed at the AGM.

(E) A Finance Committee shall be appointed whose business it will be to deal with the finances of the League. The Finance Committee to consist of the League Chair, the Hon Secretary, the Hon Treasurer and at least two other members appointed from the Committee.

16. INSURANCE

(A) All Clubs must have valid public liability insurance cover for a minimum of ten million pounds (£10,000,000) at all times.

(B) All Clubs must have valid personal accident cover for all Players registered with them from time to time. The Players' personal accident insurance cover must be in place prior to the Club taking part in any Competition Match and shall be at least equal to the minimum recommended cover determined from time to time by the Sanctioning Authority. In instances where The FA is the Sanctioning Authority, the minimum recommended cover will be the cover required by the Affiliated Association to which a Club affiliates.

(C) Failure to comply with Rule 16(A) or 16(B) will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

17. DISSOLUTION

(A) Dissolution of the Competition shall be by resolution approved at an SGM by a majority of three quarters (3/4) of the members present and shall take effect from the date of the relevant SGM.

(B) In the event of the dissolution of the Competition, the members of the Management Committee are responsible for the winding up of the assets and liabilities of the Competition.

(C) The Management Committee shall deal with any surplus assets as follows:

(1) Any surplus assets, save for a trophy or any other presentation, remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Competition shall be transferred only to another Competition or Affiliated Association or The Football Association Benevolent Fund or to such other charitable or benevolent object in the locality of the Competition as determined by resolution at or before the time of winding up, and approved in writing by the sanctioning Association.

(2) If a Competition is discontinued for any reason a trophy or any other presentation shall be returned to the donor if the conditions attached to it so provide or, if not, dealt with as the Sanctioning Authority may decide.

MATCH RELATED RULES

18. QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

(A) A Player is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:

(1) Registered through the Player Registration System and received approval from the Competition. For any players registered on the day of a match (18.A.2), a Club Officer must email the Competition with details of the registration [] hours prior to the scheduled kick off time in order for the player to be eligible to play in that match. The Player shall not play again in any subsequent match in the Competition until the Club has registered the player through The FA Player Registration System and is in possession of the approval from the Competition. A maximum of [] Players may be registered in this manner.

Or

(2) signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing which is, countersigned by an Officer of the Club and witnessed by an Officer of the opposing Club, and submitted to the Competition within two days (Sundays excluded) subsequent to the Competition match. The Player shall not play again in a subsequent match in the Competition until the Club has registered the player through The FA Player Registration System and is in possession of the approval from the Competition.

day until the Club is in possession of the approval of the Competition. A maximum of NIL Players may be registered in this manner

Any registration that is not fully and correctly completed will be returned to the Club unprocessed and the player classed as unregistered. If a Club attempts to register a player via the Player Registration System but does not fully and correctly complete the necessary information via the Player Registration System, the registration will not be processed.

For clubs registering players under Rule 18.A.2, registration forms will be provided in a format to be determined by the Competition. For Clubs registering Players by the Player Registration System, Clubs must access the Player Registration System in order to complete the registration process. Unless it is submitted to the Competition by 21:00 on the day prior to the player playing and whose registration has been confirmed by the Competition prior to that Player playing in a Competition Match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(B) (1) Contract players are not permitted in this Competition with the exception of those Players who are registered under Contract with the same Club who have a team operating at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

(2) It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any Player registered to the Club has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate. Clearance is required for any Player aged 10 and over crossing borders including Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

(3) Each team must have at least 12 Players registered per team 14 days before the start of each Playing Season.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

A club registering no players 7 days before the season start date will incur an additional fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. A club registering no players before the season start date will have its membership of the League terminated.

(C) A Player that owes a Football Debt (as defined under the Football Debt Recovery Regulations) shall be permitted to register for a Club but will be suspended from football activities if the Player does not comply with the terms of the Football Debt Recovery Regulations in respect of that Football Debt

(D) A fee as set out in the Fees Tariff shall be paid by each Club/Team for each Player registered.

(E) The Management Committee shall decide all registration disputes.

In the event of a player signing a registration form or having a registration submitted for more than one Club, priority of registration shall decide for which Club the Player shall be registered. The (Registrations) Secretary shall notify the Club last applying to register the player of the fact of the previous registration.

(F) It shall be a breach of Rule for a player to:-

(1) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same Playing Season without first being transferred.

(2) Having registered for one Club in the Competition, register for another Club in the Competition in that Playing Season except for the purpose of a transfer.

(3) Submit a signed registration form as per Rule 18.A.2 or submit a registration through the Player Registration System that the Player had willfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(G) (1) The Management Committee shall have power to accept the registration of any Player subject to the provisions of Rules 18.G.2 and 18.G.3 below.

(2) The Management Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any Player or may fine any Player, at their discretion (in accordance with the Fine Tariff) who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities. (Subject to Rule 7).

(3) The Management Committee shall have power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any Player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct (subject to Rule 7) subject to the right of appeal to the Sanctioning Authority. Application should be made to the parent County of the Club the player is registered or intending to be registered with.

Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated proven misconduct, which may deter a Participant from being involved in this Competition.

(4) A Player who has previously had a registration removed in accordance with Rule 18.G.3 but has a registration accepted at the expiry of exclusion will be considered to be under a probationary period of 12 months. Whilst under a probationary period, should the Player commit a further act of proven misconduct under the jurisdiction of the Competition, (excluding standard dismissals), the Competition may consider a further charge of bringing the Competition into disrepute.

(Note: Action under Rule 18.G.3 shall not be taken against a Player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the Sanctioning Authority, and then only in cases of the Player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any event be subject to an appeal to the Sanctioning Authority or The FA. All decisions must include the period of restriction. For the purpose of this Rule, bringing the Competition into disrepute can only be considered where the Player has received in excess of 112 days' suspension, or 10 matches in match based discipline, in any competition (and is not restricted to the Competition) in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.)

(H) Subject to compliance with FA Rule C2(a) when a Club wishes to register a Player who is already registered with another Club it shall submit a transfer form/notification (in a format as determined by the Competition) to the Competition via the Player Registration System. A fee as set out in the Fees Tariff will be required.

Such transfer shall be referred by the Competition to the Club for which the player is registered. Should this Club object to the transfer it should state its objections in writing to the Competition and to the Player concerned within 3 days of receipt of the notification. Upon receipt of the Club's consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within 3 days, the Competition Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date or one day after receipt of such transfer. Unless permission is obtained from the league, players registered with a club within the league for less than 28 days, may not be allowed to transferred to another club within the league.

In the event of an objection to a transfer the matter shall be referred to the Management Committee for a decision.

In the event of a Non Contract Player without a written contract changing his status to that of a Contract Player with the same Club, another Club in the Competition or with a club in another competition their registration as a Non Contract Player will automatically be cancelled and declared void unless the Club conforms to the exception detailed in Rule 18.B.1.

(I) A Player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after 1st April except by special permission of the Management Committee.

(J) Registrations are valid for one Playing Season only.

(K) A player shall not be eligible to play for a team in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding Competition Match (as specified in Rule 22A) unless the Player has played at least one Competition Match for that Team in this Competition in the current Playing Season.

(L) A Teams shall not be allowed to play more than three Players who has/have taken part in 50% or more of his matches for his club's first team or more senior Competition Matches during the current Playing Season unless a period of 21 days has elapsed since they last played. For the purpose of this Rule a senior competition(s) is a higher division within the league and games in other leagues at Step 6 and above, this to include any reserve divisions attached to those leagues.

This rule is to operate from the 1st day of October of each season which will include all player appearances made from start of season.

(M) (1) Subject to Rule 18.M.2 any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a Competition Match or Matches where points are awarded shall have the points gained from that Competition Match deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points, and have levied upon it a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(2) The Management Committee may vary the sanction as relates to the deduction of points set out at Rule 18.L.1 only in circumstances where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or where the ineligibility is related to the Player's status.

(3) Where a Club is found to have played an ineligible Player in accordance with Rule 18.M.2 above, the Management Committee may also, at its discretion:

a) Award the points available in the Competition Match in question to the opponents, subject to the Competition Match not being ordered to be replayed; or

b) Levy penalty points against the Club in default; or

c) Order that such Competition Match or Matches be replayed (on such terms as are decided by the Management Committee). If a match is replayed the offending team will be responsible for the associated costs.

(N) The following clause applies to Competitions involving Players in full-time secondary education:-

(1) Priority must be given at all times to activities of school and school organisations. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(2) The availability of children and young people must be cleared with the Head Teachers or Principals (except for Sunday leagues competitions).

(3) To play open age football the player must have achieved the age of 16.

(O) A Player who has played for a Team in the [] division [] times or more shall not in that Playing Season be eligible to play in a lower division except by permission of the Management Committee.

(P) Officials representing the League may conduct player registration checks at matches. All players and substitutes are required to provide information as required by the League official in their own hand at the time that this is required to be done. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

NB: Fine of not less than £50.00 and not less than 3 points deducted.

19. CLUB COLOURS

(A) Every team must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the Secretary by 1st June and the Competition Secretary shall decide as to their suitability.

(B) Any team changing its colours during the Playing Season must notify the Competition Secretary immediately.

(C) Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from all other Players and the Match Officials.

(D) No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.

(E) Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify its opponents the colours in which they will play (including the colour of the goalkeepers jersey) at least 5 days before the Competition match.

(F) If, in the opinion of the referee, two Teams have the same or similar colours, the away Team shall make the change. Should a Team delay the scheduled time of kick off for a Competition Match by not having a change of colours they will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(G) Shirts must be numbered, failing which a fine will be levied in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

20. PLAYING SEASON. CONDITIONS OF PLAY, TIMES OF KICK-OFF. POSTPONEMENTS. SUBSTITUTES

(A) All Competition Matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their Grounds in a playable condition. All Competition Matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the Management Committee. If through any fault of the home Team a match has to be replayed, the Management Committee shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

The Management Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for Competition Matches and to order the Club concerned to play its Competition Match(es) on another ground.

(NB: A League Management Committee member or League Officer may not call off a fixture on their own pitch.

A member of the approved league panel may be called in to check the fitness of a ground. This panel will be available on the full time website. Clubs who cancel matches without consulting a referee may be deemed to have caused a fixture to be cancelled and dealt with accordingly.)

Football Turf pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches. All Football Turf Pitches must be tested (by a FIFA accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The FA will give a decision on the suitability for use and add the pitch to the Register.

The home Club is also responsible for advising Participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 20 (C).

Within the National League System ("NLS") all matches shall have a duration of 90 minutes. All matches outside of the NLS shall have duration of 90 minutes unless a shorter time (not less than sixty (60) minutes) is mutually arranged by the two Clubs in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves. Two matches involving the same two Teams can be played on the same day providing the total playing time is not more than 120 minutes.

The times of kick-off shall be agreed at the AGM and can only be altered by the mutual consent of the two competing clubs and the Competition. Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

The home Team must provide goal nets, corner flags and at least two official League (from season 2021-2022) footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if the official footballs are not provided. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a Fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

From season 2021-2022 Clubs must use match footballs in the Competition, authorised and supplied through a supplier approved by the management committee. Clubs failing to play with the approved match footballs must still play the match and will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. These footballs will be purchased by member clubs prior to the season or at any time during the season as and when required.

NB Kick Off Times as per AGM

- The kick off times for matches shall be 2.30 pm with the exception of those during November, December and January when they shall be 2.00 pm or earlier times as mutually agreed by the Committee or member clubs concerned. Mid-week matches shall have a kick off time no later than 6:30 pm.
- Clubs with floodlights may kick off at 3.00 pm on Saturdays and 7.30 pm midweek, subject to opponents agreement. The half time interval shall not exceed fifteen minutes.
- Double header matches on a Saturday will kick off at 14:30 & 16:30 respectively unless otherwise agreed by both clubs 5 days prior, with the first team taking priority.

(B) Except by permission of the Management Committee all Competition Matches must be played on the dates originally agreed but priority shall be given to The FA and parent County Association Cup Competitions. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a Competition match with the consent of the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

In the case of a revised fixture date, the Clubs must be given by the Competition 5 clear days' notice of the match (unless otherwise mutually agreed).

(C) The Secretary of the home Club must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the Ground and time of kick-off to the Match Officials and the Secretary of the opposing Club at least five clear days prior to the playing of the match. If not so provided, the away Club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the competition. Any Club failing to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

NB: The match official & opposition out of courtesy must acknowledge receipt of match details.

(D) In accordance with the Laws of the Game, the minimum number of Players which will constitute a Team for a Competition Match is 7.

(E) **(1)** Home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall have power to impose a fine (in accordance with the Fines Tariff), deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points from the Competition Match in question to the opponents, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except by the award of goals. Notwithstanding the foregoing home and away provision, the Management Committee shall have power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent's ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.

(2) Any Club with more than one Team in the Competition shall always fulfil its fixture, within the Competition, in the following order of precedence:- First Team, Reserve Team, A Team. Clubs in breach of this requirement, the Management Committee shall have power to impose a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff, deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points from the Competition Match in question to the opponents.

(3) Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a Competition Match has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the League Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the Match Officials. Clubs unable to fulfil a fixture on match day MUST notify the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials via telephone and the league secretary by text. Any Club failing to comply shall be dealt with by the Management Committee who may inflict any penalty it may deem suitable. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(4) In the event of a Competition Match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it should be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Competition. Failing such agreement and notification to the Competition within NIL days the Competition shall have power to order the Match to be played on/or before a given date. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition, the Management Committee shall also be empowered to order the score at the time of an abandonment to stand.

Providing gate money is taken and retained the visiting Club shall receive their actual standard class rail or bus fares or the equivalent for 16 persons, or car allowance at 35p per mile for transporting 16 persons, or hire charge of a coach (receipt to be submitted)., The residue (if any) to be equally divided between the two Clubs after deducting the cost of advertising, printing, posting, police and match officials charges. The home Club shall take the whole of the proceeds of the Competition Match.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(5) The Management Committee shall review all Competition Matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a Match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) they shall award the points for the Match to the opponent. In cases where a Match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both Teams or their Club member(s), the Management Committee shall rule that neither Team will be awarded any points for the Match and it shall not be replayed.

No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Competition Match.

(6) The Management Committee shall review any Match that has taken place where either or both teams were under a suspension imposed upon them by The FA or Affiliated Association. Any Club that is under FA Suspension and not clear by 12:00 the day prior to match day will have been deemed to have forfeited their Competition Match. In each case the Team that was under suspension would be dealt with in the same manner as if they had participated with ineligible players in accordance with Rule 18(M) above. Where both Teams were under suspension the game must be declared null and void and shall not be replayed.

(F) A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use substitute Players in any Competition Match. A Club may name up to 5 substitute Players of whom not more than 5 may be used.

A Player who has been substituted becomes a substitute and may replace a Player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

Where a Competition does allow return substitutes, a Team may use up to 5 from 5 substitute Players in a Competition Match.

The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitute Players not later than 15 minutes before the start of the Competition Match and a Player not so named may not take part in that Competition Match.

A Player who has been named as a substitute before the start of the Competition Match but does not actually play in that game shall not be considered to have been a Player in that Competition Match within the meaning of Rule 18 of this Competition.

(G) The half time interval shall be of 5 minutes' duration, but it shall not exceed 15 minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.

(H) The Teams taking part in a Competition Match shall identify a Team captain who shall wear an armband and shall have a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of their teammates. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(J) A separate dressing room for referees to be provided.

Clubs in ALL Divisions of the League to provide clean and hygienic dressing rooms for teams and match official/s as agreed by the management committee, hot washing facilities and drinks at the ground for the Referee and visiting team. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

21. REPORTING RESULTS

(A) The Competition must receive within three days of the date played, the result of each Competition Match in the prescribed manner. This must include the forename(s) and surname of the Team Players (in block letters) and also the referee markings required by Rule 23, or any other information required by the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

NB: to clarify above rule - Both the home club and away club are required to submit results and statistics (goalscorers) including referees' marks and respect marks of the match played in the prescribed manner on the FA Full-Time System within 3 days of the date. Appointed team administrators submitting their results and statistics electronically must confirm the full name and surname of team players who have taken part in that match for approval by the League.

(B) Both Clubs shall use telephone/SMS/email/ FA Full Time / FA Matchday as directed by the Competition to notify the result of each Competition Match to the FA Full Time by one hour after completion of the Competition Match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(C) The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by an Officer of the Team, or as prescribed by the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(D) Proven falsification of teamsheet on the FA Full-Time System will result in a charge under Rule 18 M.

22. DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP

(A) Team rankings within the Competition will be decided by points with three points to be awarded for a win and one point for a drawn Competition Match. The Teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective divisions at the end of the Playing Season shall be adjudged the winners. Competition Matches must not be played for double points.

In the event of two or more Teams being equal on points at the end of the Playing Season, rankings shall be determined by goal difference (where the goals scored against each Team shall be deducted from the goals scored by that Team and the Team with the most favourable goal difference shall be placed highest).

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team which has scored the most goals during the Playing Season shall be placed highest.

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team that has won the most matches during the Playing Season shall be placed highest.

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team which has the better playing record against the other Team in their head to head Competition Matches during the Playing Season will be placed highest.

If the records of two or more Teams are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the Teams affected shall play a deciding match or matches under conditions as determined by the Management Committee.

(B) Automatic promotion shall be applied for the first two teams and automatic relegation shall be applied for the last two teams in each Division except as provided for below, subject to the provisions of Rule 2(L).

(1) Should one or more Teams withdraw from any one division after the Playing Season has commenced an equal number of Teams to those withdrawing in that division shall not be automatically relegated.

(2) Vacancies occurring after the conclusion of the Playing Season may be filled on any of the following ways:

(a) retention of otherwise relegated team(s)

(b) additional promotion of the next ranked team(s) from the Division below

(c) election

(3) The last team in the lowest division shall retire, but be eligible for re-election except as below, and be subject to the conditions of Rule 22 (B)(i) above.

(4) When a senior Team is relegated to a lower division of which its reserve Team is a member, or entitled to be a member, such reserve Team must accept relegation to, or retain its position in, the next lower division; and should the senior Team be relegated to the lowest division its reserve Team automatically retires from the Competition.

(5) Should either or both of the leading Teams in any of the divisions have its senior Team in the next higher division, promotion shall fall, at the discretion of the General Meeting, to the next highest Team or Teams in the division concerned.

(C) N/A

(D) In the event of a team withdrawing from the Competition before not completing 75% of its fixtures for the Playing Season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting Team shall be expunged from the Competition table. For the purposes of this Rule 22(D) a completed fixture shall include any Competition Match(es) which has been awarded by the Management Committee.

(E) REGIONAL NLS FEEDER LEAGUES ONLY: The bottom 2 Clubs in the Premier Competition may be relegated; Any Club not maintaining the ground grading set for the Competition may be relegated at the end of the Playing Season. Each relegated Club will be allocated to the highest division in either [] Competition or the Competition recommended as most appropriate by the Joint Liaison Committee.

(F) The Committee shall decide on all matters relating to formation, promotion or relegation within all divisions except where the jurisdiction of the Pyramid of Junior Football is operative. All clubs forming the Premier division or promoted to same to provide ground and dressing room facilities of a standard to the satisfaction of the Committee.

Only one team shall be permitted from any Club to participate in the same division as another team from the same Club unless there is no viable alternative because of logistical issues and/or reasons linked to participation and geographical boundaries. The Competition will obtain the prior approval of the Sanctioning Authority in the event of a division comprising of more than one team from the same Club. This Competition will ensure that, where permission is given, teams from a Club operating in the same division are run as separate entities with no interchange of players other than via transfers of registration in accordance with these Rules.

(G) Any club requiring a grading inspection in order to progress their application to join a more Senior league will be charged as per Fees Tariff.

23. MATCH OFFICIALS

(A) Registered referees (and assistant referees where approved by The FA or County FA) for all Competition Matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the Sanctioning Authority. Referees must acknowledge appointments, as failure to do so will result in another referee being appointed. Appointed referees shall arrive thirty minutes prior to kick off time.

NB: Where and when considered necessary neutral assistant referees shall be appointed, subject to commitments, by the Committee.

(B) (1) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee the appointed senior assistant referee shall take charge and a substitute assistant referee appointed by the competing Teams.

(2) In cases where there are no officially appointed Match Officials in attendance, the Clubs shall agree upon a referee. An individual thus agreed upon shall, for that Competition Match, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered referee. Individuals under the age of 16 must not participate either as a referee or assistant referee in any Competition Match.

(C) Where assistant referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club assistant referee for the duration of the match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(D) Regional NLS Feeder Leagues: No Club shall postpone a Competition match on account of the apparent state of the ground. In the event that such circumstances prevail, Clubs should comply with procedures provided for in the document published by The FA "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions". Should the ground be declared unfit it is the responsibility of the home Club to immediately advise the Competition, the Appointing Authority, the visiting Club and the Match Officials.

For those leagues which are not Regional NLS Feeder Leagues:

The appointed referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the Ground in all Competition Matches and that decision shall be final, subject to the determination of the Local Authority or the owners of a Ground, which must be accepted.

(E) Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the Sanctioning Authority, Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee in accordance with the Fees Tariff inclusive of travel expenses. Match Officials will be paid their fees and/or expenses by the home Club immediately after the Competition Match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(F) In the event of a Competition Match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to a match fee as per Fees Tariff. Where a Competition Match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Match Officials, if they attend the Ground, their full fee and expenses. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

- (G)** A referee not keeping their engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be reported to the Affiliated Association with which he or she is registered.
- (H)** Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The FA, award marks to the referee for each Competition Match and the name of the referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed form provided. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined (in accordance with the Fines Tariff) or dealt with as the Management Committee shall determine.
- (I)** The Competition shall keep a record of the markings and, on the form provided by the prescribed date each Season, shall submit a summary to the Sanctioning Authority.
- (J)** The referee shall submit a report form, supplied by the Competition, giving the result of the Competition Match, the number of Players in each team and the kick-off time to the Secretary within two days of the Competition Match.
- (K)** Match Officials shall have access to the Competition Rules each Season via email. Copies can be found on the FA Full Time website or by the Leagues APP.
- (L)** Match Officials shall comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA and/or Sanctioning Authority adopted by the Competition.
- (N)** In all Competition Matches, Teams must complete a team sheet. One copy of which be given to the opposition and one to the Match Official at least 15 minutes before the commencement of the match, the third copy to be retained by the originator. Opposition and Match Official to report non compliance with this rule. Teams not providing a team sheet prior to the match will have deemed to have played an ineligible player (Rule 18(M)).
- (O)** A separate dressing room for referees to be provided. Hot washing facilities must be provided. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

24. STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY TO PREMIER DIVISION (Regional NLS Feeder Leagues)

Clubs in a position for promotion to the Premier division will be inspected for compliance with this Rule in the season prior to promotion.

- (a).** Minimum size of playing area 100 yards x 65 yards, 91 metres x 59.5 metres.
- (b).** Goal posts and nets to be of professional manufacture and to meet the requirements of the Laws of the Game.
- (c).** Shortest distance between touch line and perimeter barrier 1.85 metres.
- (d).** Shortest distance between the goal line and pitch perimeter barrier 2.75 metres.
- (e).** Pitch cordoned off on all sides by rail or rope. If rope is used this must remain taught and be in place for the full duration of the game. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (f).** Playing surface grass must be of good standard.
- (g).** Pitch to be free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.
- (h).** Trainers boxes, if available, to be clearly marked Home and Away. Each box to be able to accommodate at least eight persons, to be a minimum of 1.85 metres from the touch line, to be a minimum three metres apart, to be securely fixed and ideally adjacent to the half way line.
- (i).** Technical areas must be suitably marked and used by teams and officials. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (j).** Toilets, Ladies and Gents, to be situated within the ground.
- (k).** Separate dressing rooms for each team and match officials. These must be situated close enough to the pitch in order to allow sufficient time for them to be used at half time.
- (l).** Separate hot shower facilities for players with at least three shower heads per team. Separate shower facilities for match official. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (m).** Sole use of designated dressing rooms and shower facilities, pitch and surrounding area in order to avoid encroachment from other matches. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (n).** Drinks must be provided to visiting team at half time, also to match officials on arrival, half time and full time. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (o).** Flags must be provided for Assistant Referees by the home club. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (p).** None of the named substitutes to act as Assistant Referees. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (q).** In order to maintain League standards referees must before each match inspect facilities and report any contravention of League rules to the Hon Secretary. They are not expected to enter the players' dressing rooms unless invited.
- (r).** Officers, Management Committee members and Club secretaries must also report any infringement of rules.
- (s).** Provide clean and hygienic toilet facilities to include hot hand washing with soap and towels. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (t).** Must have the ability to mark the whole of their own playing area with white lines before each match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (u).** Undertake the re seeding of all worn areas during the closed season.
- (v).** In addition to the above All Clubs must meet the FA Step 7 requirements as per **appendix A**.

25. CUP COMPETITIONS.

- (a).** All teams will be included in Competitions. The Management committee will fix dates for all rounds.
- (b).** Qualification of players: as for League games. However only two players who have played in their first team Cup competition to be allowed to play in reserve team Competition provided that at least one of these has played more than fifty per cent of his games for his reserve team.
- (c).** Qualification for Cup Finals will be a player who shall have played in a previous round or a minimum of eight games for the team participating in the Final within this League.
- (d).** No player shall play in any league Competition for more than one club in the same season. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. A Club contravening this rule will be struck out of the Competition.
- (e).** All teams competing in a Final Tie of the Competition must check with the Hon Registration Secretary not less than fourteen days preceding the match date the eligibility of the players they wish to include in the team for this game. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (f).** Clubs playing a reserve team in any round of the Competition are strongly advised to check the eligibility of the players they may require for their particular game.
- (g).** Ninety minutes will be played. If the scores are still level at the end of 90 minutes the tie will be decided by the taking of penalty kicks in accordance with the provisions for the taking of penalty kicks as set out by the Football Association.
- (h).** (1) Referees fees to be as in league matches, except final ties. Where Assistant Referees are appointed, the two competing clubs will share the costs of assistants equally. Opposition to reimburse home club. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a Fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
(2) Fees are not payable to referees in final ties. The League may at its discretion make a contribution towards referees travelling expenses.
(3) Each match official appointed to a final will receive a suitable memento.
- (i).** Final : - the League to be responsible for match expenses.
- (j).** The Committee shall make the draw for each round and arrange for the venues for the Finals.
- (k).** Kick off times for Cup Competitions to be 2pm unless otherwise agreed by the management committee.
- (l).** Broken fixtures. Any fixture which is not played due to weather conditions or circumstances over which neither side has control shall be re arranged by the Fixtures Secretary.
If a fixture is not played for any other reason, then the defaulting club will be dealt with as the Management Committee deem fit and may be struck out of the competition. Clubs playing an ineligible player will be struck out of the competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- (m).** Upon the first postponement of a cup fixture, the Committee may give notice that the venue for that match may be reversed or moved to an alternative venue. Notice of a fixture reversal will be given by 8pm on the preceding Thursday to both Clubs.
- (n).** For Premier Division Cup Competition teams must abide by Rule 24

SCHEDULE A

FEES TARIFF		
Rule Number	Description	Fee
4 A	Club Entry Fee	£60.00
4 B	Club/Team Annual Subscription	£60.00
	Additional Teams	£50.00
4 C	Deposit	£100.00
7 C	Protest/Appeal Fees	£50.00
18 D	Player Registration Fee	£NIL
18 H	Transfer Fee	£5.00
22 G	Grading Inspection	£100.00
23 E	Referee Fees (Premier Division)	£34.00
	All Other Divisions	£32.00
23 E	Assistant Referee Fees	£25.00
	Team Sheet Pads	£15.00

FINES TARIFF		
Rule Number	Description	Maximum Fine
2 G	Failure to Affiliate	£50.00
2 I	Failure to Comply with FA Initiatives – see 6(H)	£250.00
2 K	Unauthorised Entry of Teams into Competitions	£50.00
3	Failure to Obtain Consent for a Change of Club Name	£50.00
4 C	Failure to Pay a Deposit	£50.00
4 E	Failure to Provide Affiliation Number/Details Form	£50.00
5 E	Communications Conducted by Persons other than Nominated Officers	£50.00
6 H	Failure to Comply with an Instruction of the Management Committee	£250.00
	Failure to be Represented at Club Meeting	£100.00
	Failure to be Represented at Either Club Meeting	£250.00
	Failure to be FA Charter Standard by due date as per Rule 2(I)	£100.00
6 I	Failure to Pay a Fine within Required Timeframe (14 Days of Notice)	£100.00
8 H	Failure to be Represented at AGM	£100.00
9	Failure to be Represented at SGM	£50.00
10	Failure to Submit the Required Written Agreement or to Notify Changes to Signatories	£20.00
11A	Failure to Provide Notice of Withdrawal before Deadline	£100.00
11 B	Failure to Commence/Complete Fixtures	£100.00
13 A	Failure to Submit the Required Written Agreement Regarding the Trophy	£100.00
16 A	Failure to have the Required Insurance	£100.00
16 B	Failure to have the Required Insurance	£100.00
18 A	Failure to Correctly Register a Player	£100.00
18 B 2	Failure to have the Required Number of Registered Players Prior to the Season Commencing 14 Days	£50.00
	Failure to have the Required Number of Registered Players Prior to the Season Commencing 7 Days	£50.00
18 F	Registering or Playing for Multiple Clubs, or Inaccurate Completion of a Registration Form	£250.00

18 G 2	Registration Irregularities	£250.00
18 K	Fielding More Than The Permitted Number Of Players Who Have Participated In Senior Competitions Matches	£50.00
18 M	Playing an Ineligible Player	£100.00
18 N	Failure to Give Priority to School Activities	£50.00
18 Q	Failure for a Registration Check	£100.00
19 F	Delaying Kick Off Due to No Change of Colours	£20.00
19 G	Failure to Number Shirts	£20.00
19 G	Failure to Have Different Number Shirts	£20.00
20 A	Delaying Kick Off Due to Failure to Provide Required Equipment	£20.00
	No Goal Nets	£20.00
	No Corner Flags	£20.00
	At Least 2 Match Balls Available	£20.00
20 B	Failure to Play Matches on the Date Fixed	£100.00
20 C	Failure to Provide Details of a Fixture	£50.00
20 D	Playing Match with Less Than Required Number of Players	£NIL
20 E 1 & 4	Failure to Play Fixture 1 st Offence	£30.00
	Failure to Play Fixture 2 nd Offence	£50.00
	Failure to Play Fixture Further Offences	£100.00
20 E 2	Failure to Play Fixture in Order of Preference	£100.00
20 H	No Captain's Armband	£20.00
20 J	Dressing Rooms Not Clean & Hygienic	£50.00
21 A	Late Result Notification Form	£50.00
21 B	Failure to Provide Result	£20.00
21 C	Result Notification Not Signed by Appropriate Signatories	£NIL
23 C	Failure to Provide Club Assistant Referee	£20.00
23 E	Failure to Pay Match Officials' Fees and Expenses	£20.00
23 F	Failure to Pay Match Officials Where a Match is Not Played	£20.00
23 H	Failure to Provide Referee's Mark	£20.00
	Premier Division Clubs Only	
24 E	Pitch not cordoned off	£20.00
24 H	Trainer Boxes not Marked 'Home' and 'Away'	£20.00
24 I	No Technical Area Marked	£20.00
24 L	Hot Shower Facilities Players/Referee	£20.00
24 M	Sole use of Dressing Rooms & Showers	£20.00
24 N	No Refreshment to Opposition	£20.00
24 N	No Refreshment to Referee	£20.00
24 O	No Assistant Referee Flags	£20.00
24 P	Substitute Used as Assistant Referee	£20.00
24 S	No Clean & Hygienic Toilet Facilities incl Soap & Towels	£50.00
24 T	Pitch Not Marked with White Lines	£20.00
	Cup Competition	
25 D	Player Playing for More Than One Club + Struck Out of Cup Competition	£100.00
25 E	Not Checking Availability of Players For Cup Final	£100.00
25 H 1	Failure by Opposition to Reimburse Home Club	£20.00
25 N	Broken Cup Fixtures + Struck Out of Cup Competition	£100.00

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Rule 24	Ground Grading Requirements FA Step 7 -

**NATIONAL GROUND GRADING - FA Step 7 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS –
Amendments agreed in July 2019 are shown in red italics**

(Appropriate to Regional NLS Feeder Leagues)

When considering any developments of the ground to comply with the requirements of this grade, clubs are recommended to bear in mind the criteria for higher gradings which might be achieved for minimal additional expense.

NB The suitability of all installations shall be at the sole discretion of the FA Ground Grading Technical Panel

1. GROUND

1.1 Security of Tenure

Where a club does not own the freehold of their ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure must be provided. *This will be in-line with the principles of Rule 2.3.2 from The FA's Standardised Rules.*

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing would be at the discretion of each league within the National League System, taking into account local circumstances. Where ground sharing is permitted the club must have sole control over and use of facilities on match days. Ground sharing must not be allowed in order for a club to gain promotion.

1.3 Capacity

There is no stated ground capacity.

1.4 Boundary of Ground

There is no requirement for a ground to be enclosed in any way.

1.5 Clubhouse

A clubhouse facility, whilst being desirable, is not compulsory.

If a clubhouse facility exists either on or adjacent to the ground, this should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or adjacent to the ground.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

As a minimum, there must be post and rope surrounding the pitch on all those sides that may be occupied by spectators.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill. *Any barriers installed at new grounds should be purposely designed, with integrated infill panels as required and be made from UPVC or coated metal.*

Ideally, there should be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the respective League Rules and must be of an acceptable standard. It must be free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

3G football turf

3G football turf may only be used provided conditions (i) to (v) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

(i) The pitch must be surfaced with 3G football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – FIFA Recommended One Star/Quality level/ BS/EN 15330-1 2013 / BS/EN 14877 2013 standard.

(ii) The 3G football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of 3G football turf pitches before use is permitted.

(iii) Where a 3G football turf pitch is not yet listed on The Association's register (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), a Club must obtain a Laboratory Performance Test Report and submit it to The Association.

(iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club 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 Club's expense.

(v) The 3G 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.

It should be noted that:

- *To achieve the FIFA Quality performance standard that a pitch must be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres.*
- *For a Club to use a 3G football turf pitch at Step 6 or above it would be subject to annual testing, which would be at the Club's expense.*
- *To be eligible for other competitions such as but not limited to FA Competitions, the pitch may need to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres. Please check this with the relevant competition Rules.*

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area is to be in accordance with the requirements of the Laws of the Game. Law 1 states that the length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length	-	Minimum 90 m (100 yds)	Maximum 120 m (130 yds)
Width	-	Minimum 45 m (50 yds)	Maximum 90 m (100 yds)

It should be noted that at Grade H the playing area must be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres *and this is the recommended minimum size at Step 7.*

Goal posts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety Information booklet published by The Football Association.

1.10 Technical Area

Portable trainers' boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

It is desirable for a Technical Area to be marked out in accordance with the guidance contained in the 'Laws of the Game' booklet.

1.11 Secure Walkway

A secure walkway is not a requirement.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlighting is not compulsory at this Grade.

However, where it is provided it must be to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light.

Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux. reading of 180 should be provided.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system is not compulsory.

1.14 Entrances

There is no requirement for fixed entry points.

However, where a turnstile is installed, it must be fully operational and of the controlled revolving type.

1.15 Exits

Where fixed exit points are provided, there must be sufficient to ensure the safe evacuation of the ground if necessary.

All exits must be clearly signposted.

1.16 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services should be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Seated Accommodation

Seated accommodation is not a requirement.

2.2 Covered Standing Accommodation

Covered accommodation is not compulsory.

Hard standing is not compulsory.

However, where it is provided it must be a minimum width of 0.9 metre, measured from the spectator side of the pitch perimeter barrier where provided.

2.3 Toilets

Provision should be made for adequate toilet facilities.

2.4 Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities for spectators are not compulsory.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

All dressing rooms must be secure and suitable for purpose.

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams. Existing dressing room dimensions will be in order, provided that they are of a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However, clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum of 18 square metres. Where clubs are planning to build new changing rooms, these must be planned to be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room should have the following:

A shower area comprising of at least 3 working showerheads for each team – if not located in the dressing room then they must be located adjacent to it.

Adequate toilet facilities exclusively for the use of players - if not located in the dressing room then they must be located adjacent to it and must not be accessible to the general public.

Hot and cold running water

Shared shower facilities are not acceptable.

Ideally separate toilet facilities should be provided for each team. It is not acceptable for players and match officials to share toilet facilities.

In order to be considered for promotion to Step 6, clubs must have en suite shower and toilet facilities with a minimum of 4 showerheads.

3.2 Match Officials

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for match officials, the minimum size of which shall be 4 square metres excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match official's dressing room should have the following:

At least 1 working showerhead.

Adequate toilet facilities, exclusively for the use of match officials, which must be separate from those provided for the players. These do not necessarily need to be situated in the dressing room but must not be accessible to the general public.

Hot and cold running water

Provision should be made for changing accommodation for both male and female match officials.

When new changing rooms are being planned or existing changing rooms refurbished an area of 6 square metres and facilities for mixed gender match officials should be provided.

In order to comply with the G Grade after promotion to Step 6, clubs must provide en suite shower and toilet facilities for the match officials.

All dressing room areas to be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a suitable qualified person (minimum F.A. Save a Life) in attendance.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground.

All Clubs are required to have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP), or equivalent, in place. A copy of which must be submitted to the League Secretary on the standard form provided by no later than 1st August in each year displayed in a prominent public area in the clubhouse and/or dressing rooms.