

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOUNDED 1904

Incorporating Luton District & South Beds Football League
Founded 1898 Incorporated 2018



LEAGUE RULES 2026-2027

RULES OF THE LEAGUE SEASON 2026-2027

KEY: Text in bold indicate changes agreed at the June 2026 A.G.M. Text in *bold italic* indicate mandatory FA Standard Code [SCOR] changes.

DEFINITIONS

RULE 1[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.

“Club” means a club for the time being in membership of the Competition.

“Club Portal” means the system used by Clubs to affiliate teams as determined by The FA from time to time;

“Competition” means Bedfordshire County 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.

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

“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, as set out at Schedule A.

“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, as set out at Schedule A.

“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 Bedfordshire County Football Association Limited.

“Scholarship” means a Scholarship as defined in The FA rules.

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

“Secretary” or “General 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.

“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.

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

GOVERNANCE RULES

COMPETITION NAME, CONSTITUTION

RULE 2[A] The Competition will be known as Bedfordshire County Football League. 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] This Competition shall consist of not more than 80 Clubs approved by the Sanctioning Authority.

[C] The geographical area covered by the Competition membership shall be the County of Bedfordshire, together with Clubs playing on grounds outside, but close to, the County border.

[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][i] All Clubs must be affiliated to an Affiliated Association.

[ii] This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Sanctioning Authority and the constituent Teams of Clubs may be grouped in divisions, namely a Premier Division, not exceeding 18 in number, and others as may be decided, each not exceeding 16 in number.

All Premier Division Teams shall have approved grounds and accommodation in accordance with Appendix 'A' and Appendix 'B' of these rules.

[H] Inclusivity and Non-discrimination:

[i] 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].

[ii] 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**.

[iii] 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, England Football Accredited and RESPECT programmes. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[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 **parent County Association Cup** 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. A Club must immediately inform the Competition of the details of any fixture(s) in any other competition in which the Club has entered, for which written consent of the Management Committee has been obtained.

[L] At the AGM or 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.

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CLUB NAME

RULE 3[A] Any Club wishing to change its name must obtain permission from the Sanctioning Authority following consultation with the Competition. 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.

ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

RULE 4[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 by the date of the June Management Committee meeting, and must be accompanied by an Entry Fee for each Team as set out in the Fees Tariff, which shall be returned in the event of non-election, **but not if the club withdraws its application**, or otherwise used as the Club Deposit.

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 Club. **It shall be payable by a date set by the Management Committee.** The subscription shall include:

- Entry to League Cup competitions.
- Registration Fees for thirty players per Club
- Access to a virtual copy of the League Handbook/Directory
- Team Sheets for the season, as appropriate to the number of teams entered.

[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.

[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 ensure that all its teams participating in the Competition are recorded as affiliated on the Club Portal for the forthcoming Playing Season by the date of the Annual General Meeting. Clubs must advise the Competition Secretary in a manner prescribed by the Sanctioning Authority, 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.

MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

RULE 5[A] The Management Committee shall comprise the Officers of the Competition and a minimum of one member (but no more than NINE [9] members), who shall all be elected at the AGM. The Management Committee shall not exceed fifteen [15] members

[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 the May meeting of the Management Committee 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 Member Clubs, not later than the date of the May meeting of the Management Committee 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.

[C] The Management Committee shall meet twice a season or 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 General 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 General Secretary.

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

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POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

RULE 6[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 also apply to the procedure of any sub-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 these Rules and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competition. Any action by the Competition must be taken within 28 days of the Competition being notified.

With the exception of Rules 6[J], 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 seven [7] days from the date of notification of the charge to reply. In such reply a Club may:

[i] Accept the charge and/or submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Management Committee; or

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

[iii] Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Management Committee; or

[iv] Deny the charge and notify Competition Secretary that it wishes 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 sanctioning Association.

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

Decisions of the Management Committee must be notified in writing to those concerned within 7 days.

[G] A minimum of fifty percent [50%] of its members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the Management Committee or any of its sub-committees.

[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

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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, subject to the provisions of the National League System Regulations or Women's Football Pyramid Regulations (which shall take precedence if applicable).

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

[N] The Competition shall not cancel, postpone, or withdraw an entire programme of Competition Matches (e.g. all Competition Matches, or all Competition Matches within a single age group or division, taking place over a single day/week) without prior written approval from the Sanctioning Authority, except in exceptional circumstances of a serious nature (in which event, the Competition must provide notification of cancellation, postponement or withdrawal to the Sanctioning Authority at the same time as affected Teams).

PROTESTS, CLAIMS, COMPLAINTS, APPEALS

RULE 7[A][i] 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.

[ii] 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 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 three [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 General 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.

[i] All parties must have received a minimum of 7 days notice of the hearing should they be instructed to attend.

[ii] 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] An intention to appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority, with a copy sent to the Secretary, within 7 days of the Management Committee providing written notification of its decision.

A notice of appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority, with a copy sent to the Secretary, within 14 days of the Management Committee providing written notification of its decision, accompanied by the relevant fee (as set

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out in the Fees Tariff) which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority.

[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 fourteen [14] days of the event or decision causing any of these to be submitted.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

RULE 8[A] The AGM shall be held not later than the third week in June in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least 25 members are present and entitled to vote:-

[i] Confirm the minutes of the last AGM.

[ii] Adopt the annual report, balance sheet and statement of accounts from the previous season or accounting period.

[iii] Election of Clubs to fill vacancies [as recommended by the Management Committee]

[iv] Constitution of the Competition for the ensuing Season.

[v] Election of Competition Officers and Management Committee members.

[vi] Appointment of auditors/verifiers.

[vii] Alteration of Rules, if any [see Rule 14].

[viii] Agree the date for the beginning of the Playing Season and kick off times applicable to the Competition.

[ix] Agree the date for the end of the Playing Season [save for Regional NLS Feeder League which shall be determined by The FA].

[x] Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted by the Chair as being relevant to an AGM.

Clubs currently in membership of the Competition shall be entitled to vote on items [i] to [iii] above.

Those clubs set to be accepted as Clubs in accordance with item [iii] above shall be entitled to attend the AGM, but cannot vote on items [i] - [iii] above.

All Clubs (i.e. those Clubs currently in membership of the Competition and those accepted as Clubs in accordance with item [iii]) shall be entitled to vote on items [iv] to [x] above.

[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 Rule changes.

[C] A signed copy of the duly audited/verified 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, of which one shall be entitled to vote.

[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/email response [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 Club.

[H] [i] Any continuing Club must be represented at the AGM. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[ii] Any club that has submitted a valid application to join the Competition for the forthcoming season must have the opportunity to be put forward for membership and to have a vote taken on their membership application.

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[I] Officers of the Competition and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an AGM, but cannot also cast a vote on behalf of a club (See Rule 8.G)

[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.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

RULE 9[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 seven [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, but cannot also cast a vote on behalf of a club (See Rule 8.G)

AGREEMENT TO RULES OF THE COMPETITION

RULE 10[A] *Membership of the Competition shall constitute an agreement between the Competition and a Club to be bound by and comply with these Rules (including any decision of the Management Committee made pursuant to these Rules).*

[B] *Any change of Chair, Secretary or Directors of the Club must be notified to the parent 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

CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP, WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

RULE 11[A] Any Club withdrawing 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 no later than seven [7] clear days prior to the Annual General Meeting 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. A Club withdrawing on or before the date of the Annual General Meeting, having given notice as per this rule, shall have the deposit paid by that Club returned, subject to Rule 4[C].

[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[I], 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.

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

RULE 12[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

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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 a breach of Rule, other than field offences, shall be liable 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.

TROPHY

RULE 13[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 at least seven days before the date of the Annual General Meeting in any year. 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 shall be made to the winners and runners-up if the funds of the Competition permit.

ALTERATION TO RULES

RULE 14[A] Alterations, for which consent has been given by the Sanctioning Authority, shall be made to these Rules only at the AGM or at an 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, except in exceptional circumstances and approved by Sanctioning Authority or The FA.

[B] Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the AGM shall be submitted to the Secretary by 15th March in each year. The proposals, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by the first Thursday in May and any amendments to these proposals shall be submitted to the Secretary by 31st May. The proposals and proposed amendments to these proposals 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 are in favour.

[C] 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.

FINANCE

RULE 15[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 £250 shall be approved by the Management Committee. A report on the financial position of the Competition shall be made to the Management Committee at least once every two months.

[C] The financial year of the Competition will end at the conclusion of the season.

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

INSURANCE

RULE 16[A] All Clubs must always have valid Public Liability Insurance cover for a minimum of ten million pounds [£10,000,000].

[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.

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[C] Failure to comply with Rule 16[A] or 16[B] may result in the Club failing to obtain County FA Affiliation.

DISSOLUTION

RULE 17[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:

[i] 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 Authority.

[ii] 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

QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

RULE 18[A] A Player is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:

[i] Registered through the Player Registration System and received approval from the Competitions Registration Secretary by 12 noon on the day of the match.

Any registration that is not fully and correctly completed will result in 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.

[B][i] 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, or Tiers 1-4 of the Women Pyramid System.

[ii] 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.

[iii] Each Club must have at least 11 Players registered for each team entered [11 for one team, 22 for two teams, etc] 14 days before the start of each Playing Season.

The actual date and time to be specified and agreed at the Annual General Meeting. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[iv] In the event of a Non Contract Player changing his status to that of a Contract Player with the same Club, 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][i].

[v] Players aged under 18 are not permitted to play in a mixed adult football Competition.

[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. Clubs shall not pay for individual registrations but shall be invoiced for registrations at the end of the season.

[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, the valid registration submitted first shall take precedence. The 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:-

[i] Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same Playing Season without first being transferred.

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[ii] 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, *or where the Competition adopts rule 18.P*

[iii] Submit a registration through the Player Registration System that a Player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

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

[G][i] The Management Committee shall accept the registration of any Player subject to the provisions of Rules 18[G] [ii], [iii] and [iv] below.

[ii] 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 Fines Tariff] who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities [subject to Rule 7].

[iii] 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 with.

[iv] In respect of a mixed adult football Competition, the Management Committee shall refuse the registration of any Player that is not aged 18 or above.

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

A Player who has previously had a registration removed in accordance with Rule 18[G][iii] 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] [iii] 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 C when a Club wishes to register a player who is already registered with another club it shall submit a transfer notification 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 Registration Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club, subject to Rule 18[I].

If a Club has not received confirmation of a player's registration, it is the responsibility of the Club Secretary to check with the Competition Registration Secretary that the player is properly registered before playing.

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

[I] A Player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after 15th April in each season, 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 22[A]) unless the Player has played in a Competition Match for that Team in the current Playing Season.

[L] A team shall not include players who have played in more senior Competition Matches for their Club during the current Playing Season, except as defined below. Any additional players shall be deemed ineligible and dealt with under rule 18[M].

[a] All players correctly registered for a Club are either FIRST TEAM or RESERVES players, irrespective of the number of teams at the Club, or in which league they play.

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[b] A FIRST TEAM player is one who has played in the LATEST *qualifying league or cup match for the first team, and shall remain as such until the next first team game. Only THREE such players IN TOTAL are allowed to play in their next RESERVES team game of the club in a match immediately following that first team game. A RESERVES TEAM player is one who has played in the LATEST *qualifying league or cup match for the reserves team, and only THREE such players IN TOTAL, and NO FIRST TEAM players, are allowed to play in their next third, or lower, team game of the club in a match immediately following that reserves team game.

*a match in which any FA Discipline would be served by the first team.

[c] There shall be no restrictions on player movement between Club teams in league matches other than detailed in [b] above. See CUP RULES for restrictions on player eligibility for cup ties.

Where a Team fields a Player in a Competition Match or Matches in breach of this Rule, the Management Committee may determine that it has fielded an ineligible player and that the provisions of Rule 18.M shall apply.

[M][i] Subject to Rule 18[M][ii], 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.

[ii] The Management Committee may vary the sanction as relates to the deduction of points set out at Rule 18[M][i] 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.

[iii] Where a Club is found to have played an ineligible Player in accordance with Rule 18[M][i] above, the Management Committee may also, at its discretion, order one or more of the following:

[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; **and/or**

[b] ***Deduct points from the record of the Club in default up to a maximum of 3 points; and/or***

[c] Order that such Competition Match or Matches be replayed [on such terms as are decided by the Management Committee].

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

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

[ii] The availability of children and young people must be cleared with the Head Teachers or Principals [except for Sunday leagues competitions].

[iii] To play open age football the player must have achieved the age of 16.

[O] Not adopted

[P] Not adopted

CLUB COLOURS

RULE 19[A] Every team must register the colour and design of its shirts and shorts with the General [Competition] Secretary by the date of the Annual General Meeting, who shall decide as to their suitability.

[B] Any team wishing to change the colour(s) and/or design(s) of its shirt(s) and short(s) during the Playing Season must obtain permission from the General [Competition] Secretary in advance of making that change.

[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 of the colours in which they will play [including the colours of the goalkeeper's jersey] at least 3 days before the Competition Match.

[F] If, in the opinion of the referee, two Teams have the same or similar colours, the HOME 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 all be numbered and no two shirts shall have the same number, failing which a fine will be levied in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

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

RULE 20[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.

Artificial Football Turf Pitches [3G] are allowed in this Competition provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches - <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>. All Football Turf Pitches used 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 Regional NLS Feeder Leagues all Competition Matches shall have a duration of 90 minutes. All other Competition Matches 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.

- Start of the season to the end of October LEAGUE and CUP 2.30 p.m.
- November, December, and January LEAGUE and CUP 2.00 p.m.
- February to end of season LEAGUE and CUP 2.30 p.m.
- Midweek matches not under floodlights shall kick off at 6.15 p.m., but no later than 6.30 p.m. unless a reduction in playing time has been agreed in accordance with this rule.

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 footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if not provided.

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

No overhead netting is allowed for 11v11 affiliated matches

Regional NLS Feeder Leagues: Overhead wires used to support pitch divider netting are removed for all affiliated matches at Regional NLS Feeder League level.

For those leagues which are not Regional NLS Feeder Leagues: Overhead wires used to support pitch divider netting are ideally removed for affiliated matches but if they cannot be removed then discretion is given to the match official to restart the match in accordance of the laws of the game.

[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.

Following the publication of a season's fixtures, each team shall be allowed to apply for ONE free date per season but the request, in writing [by email], must be received by the General or Fixture Secretary giving one calendar months' notice.

Additionally, each club shall be allowed to request a maximum of five dates during the season that they are given away fixtures due to their facility, for any reason, being unavailable, but the request, in writing [by email], must be received by the General or Fixture Secretary giving 14 days' notice. Beyond those five dates it becomes the Club's responsibility to find an alternative facility of the appropriate standard.

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].

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[C] An Officer of the home Club must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the Ground, time of kick-off and kit colours [including goalkeeper] to the Match Officials and an Officer of the opposing Club at least 3 clear days prior to the playing of the Competition Match. The opposing Club must confirm receipt and give notice of its kit colours [including goalkeeper] by return but at least 1 clear day prior to the playing of the Competition Match. If either is not provided, the relevant Club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[D] In accordance with the Laws of the Game, the minimum number of Players which will constitute a Team for a Competition Match is seven [7]. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[E][i] Home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall decide whether it should either:

[a] award the points from the Competition Match in question to the Club's opponent (without the awarding of goals)

OR

[b] order the Competition Match to be rescheduled. The Management Committee shall also have the power to order the rescheduled Competition Match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent Club's Ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.

In addition, the Management Committee may at its discretion order one or more of the following (if appropriate):

[a] impose a fine (in accordance with the Fines Tariff),

[b] deduct points from the defaulting Club,

[c] order the defaulting Club to pay any reasonable expenses incurred by the opponents.

[ii] 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.

[iii] 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 Competition Results Secretary, the secretary of the opposing Club and the Match Officials. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Any postponement attributed to the condition of the pitch must be made in accordance with Rule 23[D].

[iv] 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 3 days the Competition shall have the 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.

[v] 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 that Match and it shall not be replayed. No fine[s] can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Match.

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. 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.

[vi] ***If a Competition Match is abandoned, each participating Club must give notice of the abandonment to the Competition's Fixture Secretary and Results Secretary by the deadline set out in Rule 21[B].*** Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

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[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 FIVE substitute Players, all of whom 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 the Game.

The referee and a representative of the opposing Club shall, together, be informed of the names of the Players taking part in the Match [including the substitutes] not later than FIFTEEN [15] minutes before the start of the Competition Match and a player not so named shall be deemed ineligible and may not take part in that Competition Match. ***Where a Team fields a Player in a Competition Match or Matches in breach of this Rule, the Management Committee may determine that it has fielded an ineligible player and that the provisions of Rule 18(M) shall apply.***

Clubs must retain all Team Sheets for the current season for possible inspection.

Failure to do so will incur a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

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 TEN [10] 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.

[I] Where a suspension imposed in relation to

[i] a Football Debt (as defined under the Football Debt Recovery Regulations), ***or***

[ii] ***The Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children or Regulations for Safeguarding Adults at Risk***

upon a Club ***or team*** by The FA or Affiliated Association is not lifted, and/or the Club does not provide confirmation from The FA or Affiliated Association that such suspension is lifted to the Competition Secretary by one [1] day before a fixture, that fixture will be treated as an unfulfilled fixture and dealt with in accordance with Rule 20(E).

REPORTING RESULTS

RULE 21[A] See Rule 21[C].

[B] The HOME Club shall use SMS to notify the result of each Competition Match within 75 minutes of the end of the match in response to an SMS text prompt. Failure to comply will incur 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.

BCFL DIRECTIVE: The match result notification shall be correctly completed online to include the names of the players [see Rule 20{F}] and the scorers, and the name of, and a mark [Rule 23{H}] for, the referee, together with the details of any RED cards shown in the match for the team submitting the notification, within 3 days of the date played.

A Club which submits an incomplete match result notification or incorrect information not related to the names of the players shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

A Club which submits an incomplete match result notification or incorrect information related to the names of the players, shall, upon realisation, immediately inform the League Registration Secretary with the details. Clubs failing to do so shall be deemed to have deliberately submitted false information and shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

A Club which deliberately submits a match result notification containing false information with regard to the names of the players of their team shall be fined a sum in accordance with the Fines Tariff subject to first taking action under Rule 6[D]. Following the third occasion in a season, the Management Committee will consider proposing to the Annual General Meeting the non-acceptance of the Club for the following season.

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DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP

RULE 22[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 the following criteria, in the order of priority in which they appear: (NB: for Regional NLS Feeder Leagues criteria 1 & 2 are mandatory; for all other Competitions they are optional):

[1] 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.

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

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

[4] In the event of two or more Teams 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.

[5] One-off fixture or play-off games as determined by the League 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 Rules 2[G] and 2[L]. Where the League Constitution allows for a pyramid structure or play-offs, promotion and relegation numbers may be varied but must be agreed by a majority of votes at an Annual General Meeting.

[i] 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.

[ii] Vacancies occurring after the conclusion of the Playing Season may be filled in any of the following ways:

[a] retention of otherwise relegated Team[s]; or

[b] additional promotion of the next ranked Team[s] from the division below; or

[c] election.

[iii] Not adopted.

[iv] Save for when rule 2[M] applies. when a senior Team is relegated to a lower division of which the reserve or other less senior Team of the same Club is a member, or entitled to be a member, such reserve or other less senior Team must accept relegation to, or retain its position in, the next lower division. Should the senior Team be relegated to the lowest division, the reserve or other less senior Team of the same Club automatically retires from the Competition.

[v] 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] Not adopted.

[D] In the event of a Team withdrawing from the Competition before 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 [BCFL PREMIER DIVISION]: Clubs, provided they meet the appropriate promotion criteria, will be eligible to make application to The Football Association for promotion, copied to both Leagues. Should the Champion Club not wish for promotion or, alternatively, not have the necessary grading criteria, then the next placed Club, subject to FA directives, will be eligible under the same conditions. The Football Association shall decide upon promotion, relegation or allocation matters.

Any Club not maintaining the ground grading set for the Competition may be relegated at the end of the Playing Season.

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MATCH OFFICIALS

RULE 23[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.

[B][i] 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.

[ii] 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, qualified as recognised by the Management Committee, **SEE ALSO PREMIER DIVISION ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, APPENDIX 'B'**. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

[D] Regional NLS Feeder Leagues [BCFL PREMIER DIVISION]: 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**”.

When the regional weather conditions are known to be extreme e.g. prolonged severe frost or heavy snow then the game can be postponed at the discretion of the home club after consultation with the League General or Fixture Secretary. Under such circumstances, the earliest the decision can be made is the day prior to the scheduled date of the game whilst the latest is 4 hours prior to kick-off on the day of the match.

In all other circumstances a referee should be called in to decide on an early inspection, in the following order of availability:

- the match referee (subject to time and travelling distance)
- another more local referee who should not be connected with either club.

Prior to reaching his or her decision the referee who is making the inspection should consult with the match referee prior to the inspection, and after the inspection to mutually agree on a decision prior to notifying the home club.

All such inspections must be made no later than 4 hours prior to kick-off on the day of the match.

To avoid a build-up of fixtures, the Clubs may agree alternative arrangements to play the match on the scheduled date.

If an early inspection has not been carried out and the match referee arrives at the ground to find the playing conditions in doubt due to an unexpected deterioration in the weather, he or she should consult with both teams before committing to a decision.

PAYMENT OF THE REFEREE: If a local referee is called in to inspect a pitch he or she will not be paid a fee, although travelling expenses will be paid when actually incurred, by the home club.

Should the Match Referee attend to inspect the pitch a half-fee will be paid, by the home club, if the game is postponed. If the game is played, a normal fee shall be paid by the home club, plus travelling expenses when actually incurred, if an early inspection is conducted.

For those leagues which are not NLS Regional Feeder Leagues [ALL OTHER BCFL DIVISIONS]: 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 Representative of the Local Authority or the owners of a Ground, which must be accepted.

To avoid delays and unnecessary expense, the home Club is advised to follow the same procedures as apply to Premier Division Clubs.

[E] Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the Sanctioning Authority, Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee, inclusive of travel expenses, in accordance with the Fees Tariff. When Assistant Referees have been appointed by the League, the fees of the two Assistants shall be shared between the competing Clubs. Match Officials will be paid their fees by the home Club before or immediately after the Competition Match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

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[F] In the event of a Competition Match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Official[s], if present, shall be entitled to half fee. 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. 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 online Match Result Notification. Referee marks of sixty [60] or less must be accompanied by a report to the Referees Secretary.

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 of a Premier Division Competition Match shall submit a report in a format, and requiring such information, as determined by the Management Committee, to be received as instructed within two days of the Competition Match.

[K] Match Officials shall be supplied, each season, with an online copy of the Competition Rules free of charge, to be found in the League Handbook on the League website.

[L] Match Officials shall comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA and/or Sanctioning Authority adopted by the Competition.

SCHEDULE A

FEES TARIFF		
RULE	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM FEE
4 [A]	CLUB ENTRY FEE – USED AS DEPOSIT	£75
4 [B]	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	£100
4 [B]	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION [NON-ACCREDITED]	£125
4 [B]	DEPOSIT	£75
7 [C]	PROTEST FEES	£10
18 [D]	PLAYER REGISTRATION FEE [number 31 onward]	£1
18 [H]	TRANSFER FEE	£10
23 [E]	REFEREE FEE [PREMIER DIVISION]	£50
23 [E]	REFEREE FEE [ALL OTHER DIVISIONS]	£45
23 [E]	REGISTERED REFEREES appointed as ASSISTANTS [PREMIER DIVISION]	£35
23 [E]	REGISTERED REFEREES appointed as ASSISTANTS [ALL OTHER DIVISIONS]	£30

FINES TARIFF		
RULE	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM FINE
2 [G]	FAILURE TO AFFILIATE TO A COUNTY F.A. WILL RESULT IN THE CLUB/TEAM NOT BEING ACCEPTED INTO THE LEAGUE.	
2 [I]	FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH FA INITIATIVES – ACCREDITATION	£50
2 [K]	UNAUTHORISED ENTRY OF TEAMS INTO COMPETITIONS	£10
3	FAILURE TO OBTAIN CONSENT FOR A CHANGE OF CLUB NAME	£10

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4[E]	FAILURE TO ENSURE TEAMS ARE RECORDED AS AFFILIATED IN THE CLUB PORTAL	£15
6 [I]	FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN INSTRUCTION OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	£25
6 [J]	FAILURE TO PAY A FINE WITHIN REQUIRED TIMEFRAME	£15
8 [H]	FAILURE TO BE REPRESENTED AT AGM	£50
9	FAILURE TO BE REPRESENTED AT SGM	£50
10	FAILURE TO NOTIFY CHANGES TO SIGNATORIES	£15
11[A]	FAILURE TO PROVIDE NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL BEFORE DEADLINE	£75
11 [B]	FAILURE TO COMMENCE/COMPLETE FIXTURES	£75
13 [A]	FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE REQUIRED WRITTEN AGREEMENT REGARDING THE TROPHY	£15
18 [B] [ii]	FAILURE TO HAVE THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF REGISTERED PLAYERS PRIOR TO THE SEASON COMMENCING	£40
18 [F]	REGISTRATION IRREGULARITIES	£25
18 [M]	PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER – FIRST OCCURRENCE	£20-£40 minus 2 max match points
18 [M]	PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER – SECOND OCCURRENCE	£50-£100 minus 4 max match points
18 [M]	PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER – THIRD AND SUBSEQUENT OCCURRENCE[S]	£150 max minus 6 max match points
18[N]	FAILURE TO GIVE PRIORITY TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	£10
19	DELAYING KICK OFF DUE TO NO CHANGE OF COLOURS	£10
19	FAILURE TO NUMBER SHIRTS	£10
19	FAILURE TO HAVE DIFFERENT NUMBER SHIRTS	£10
20[A]	DELAYING KICK OFF DUE TO FAILURE TO PROVIDE REQUIRED EQUIPMENT	£15
20 [C]	FAILURE TO PROVIDE DETAILS OF A FIXTURE	£15
20 [D]	PLAYING MATCH WITH LESS THAN REQUIRED NUMBER OF PLAYERS	£10
20 [E] [i]	FAILURE TO PLAY FIXTURE	See table below
20 [E] [vi]	FAILURE TO NOTIFY ABANDONMENT OF A FIXTURE	£15
20 [H]	NO CAPTAIN'S ARMBAND	£10
21 [A]	FAILURE TO EXCHANGE TEAMSHEET	£10
21 [B]	FAILURE TO PROVIDE RESULT	£15
21[C]	FAILURE TO COMPLETE ONLINE MATCH NOTIFICATION WITHIN REQUIRED TIMEFRAME	£15

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21[C]	INCOMPLETE ONLINE MATCH NOTIFICATION NOT RELATED TO THE NAMES OF THE PLAYERS	£10
21[C]	DELIBERATELY FALSIFYING ONLINE MATCH NOTIFICATION RELATING TO NAMES OF PLAYERS – FIRST OCCURRENCE	£150 minus 3 match
21[C]	DELIBERATELY FALSIFYING ONLINE MATCH NOTIFICATION RELATING TO NAMES OF PLAYERS – SECOND OCCURRENCE	£150 minus 6 match points
21[C]	DELIBERATELY FALSIFYING ONLINE MATCH NOTIFICATION RELATING TO NAMES OF PLAYERS – THIRD OCCURRENCE	£150 minus 9 match
23 [C]	FAILURE TO PROVIDE CLUB ASSISTANT REFEREE, TRAINED IF REQUIRED	£15
23 [E]	FAILURE TO PAY MATCH OFFICIALS' FEES	£15
23 [F]	FAILURE TO PAY MATCH OFFICIALS WHERE A MATCH IS NOT PLAYED	£15
23 [H]	FAILURE TO PROVIDE REFEREE'S MARK OR REFEREE LOW MARK REPORT	£10

FINES TARIFF FOR UNFULFILLED FIXTURES

Premier Division	All 1st	£40 – minus 1pt
Premier Division	All 2nd	£75 – minus 2pts
Premier Division	All 3rd	£100 – minus 3pts
Premier Division	All 4th	Management Committee to decide
Other Divisions	All 1st	£25 – minus 1pt
Other Divisions	All 2nd	£40 – minus 2pts
Other Divisions	All 3rd	£50 – minus 3pts
Other Divisions	All 4th	Management Committee to decide

RULES FOR KNOCK-OUT COMPETITIONS

The following rules apply to all cup competitions, BRITANNIA, CENTENARY, JUBILEE, and the WATSON SHIELD except where stated. Any additional cup competitions introduced shall be subject to a separately agreed and published set of rules. Following the Annual General Meeting, the Management Committee shall be empowered to produce any rules for new cup competitions then introduced. These set of rules must be brought before the AGM for agreement should any additional cup competition continue into a second season.

CUP RULE 1 The cups shall be competed for annually in the form of knock-out competitions. The BRITANNIA CUP shall be confined to teams from the PREMIER DIVISION. Entry to other cup competitions will be in-line with County Cup eligibility and, where appropriate, divisional placement.

The knock-out competitions shall be under the control and management of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, and its general business arrangements shall be dealt with as a section of the BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY FOOTBALL LEAGUE in accordance with the League regulations, except where herein specified to the contrary.

CUP RULE 2 – QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS All players registered with the League Registration Secretary shall be eligible to represent their Club, but such registration must have been recorded by 12 noon on the day on which the match takes place.

CUP RULE 3 No player shall be allowed to compete if:

- [a] he has played for another team in the same competition in the same season.
- [b] he has played in any County FA or Bedfordshire County League Cup Competition, in the same season, which is ranked higher and for which his team is not eligible to enter.

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CUP RULE 4[a] Players involved in Semi-Finals and Finals must have played at least four [4] times in the current season for the CLUB they wish to represent [Bedfordshire County Football League and Cup, County Cup and FA Competition matches only apply].

[b] In the case of postponed, abandoned or replayed matches, only those players who were eligible on the day on which the match was originally scheduled or played shall be allowed to play, except that a player under suspension on the date of the original fixture shall be deemed eligible at the time of the replayed or rearranged game, providing his period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.

CUP RULE 5 – MATCHES Ties shall be arranged by ballot. In matches up to the final tie the Club drawn first shall have choice of ground, and shall be responsible for all arrangements in connection with the game, and shall account for gate money received.

CUP RULE 6 The duration of each game shall be 90 minutes. If undecided at the end of full time the tie shall be decided by the taking of penalty kicks in accordance with FA regulations. The Semi-Final and Final Ties shall also be decided in this manner.

CUP RULE 7 – REFEREES The Match Official[s] in each tie shall be appointed by the Management Committee. The fee[s], which includes all expenses, shall correspond to those stated in Rule 23[E], and shall be shared in all Britannia Cup ties up to and including the semi-finals, but only shared in the semi-finals for all other cups, where, if necessary, each Club shall provide an Assistant Referee

CUP RULE 8 – MONIES The Match Officials fees shall be the first charge after which any money remaining shall be divided equally between the two Clubs.

CUP RULE 9 - SEMI-FINALS Semi-finals shall normally be played on the ground chosen by the first named Club, but may be played at neutral venues at the discretion of the Management Committee. The first named Club shall be responsible for the notification of their opponents, match officials, and for supplying of suitable match balls.

NOTE - PLAYERS MUST BE QUALIFIED AS PER CUP RULE NUMBER 4.

CUP RULE 10 – FINALS Finals shall be played on neutral grounds as the Management Committee may decide. The Clubs competing in the Final Tie shall share all of the money taken at the Final, after match expenses have been deducted.

CUP RULE 11 When funds allow, the Finalists shall receive **twenty mementoes. No additional mementoes will be made available.**

CUP RULE 12 – GENERAL On all matters connected with the knock-out competitions, The Management Committee of the Bedfordshire County Football League shall have full executive power and shall deal with protests in accordance with rule 7.

The Management Committee shall have the power to rule any Club out of the competition where an ineligible player has taken part, subject to first taking action under Rule 6[D].

CUP RULE 13 No cup can be won outright, and the winning Clubs shall give a bond as regards their safety, see Rule 13[A].

PREMIER DIVISION ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

APPENDIX 'A' The Football Association has reviewed the requirements for the grounds of Clubs in the National League System. The Football Association has placed the Bedfordshire County Football League as a **REGIONAL NLS FEEDER LEAGUE** to the National System. This placement may be reviewed annually, and Clubs have until 31st December in any year to meet the requirements in full. The following is a summary of the main points of the Ground Grading document, available on the League website **www.bedfordshirefootballleague.co.uk**:

To provide good sized, separate dressing rooms for each team [minimum size 12 sq.m. excluding shower/toilet area] and separate accommodation for the match officials [minimum size 4 sq.m. excluding shower/toilet area]. Please note these sizes are minimum and larger areas are required for new builds – the Ground Grading document provides details of the requirements for new buildings.

Separate showers shall be provided for each team, each with a minimum of 3 working shower heads. Separate shower facilities must also be provided for the referee. There should be sufficient toilets provided for the sole use of all players, with additional toilet facilities for the sole use of the referee. Club officials and spectators must also have access to their own toilets.

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The pitch should be of a good standard, conforming to the Laws of the game and be as close to 100m x 64m as possible. It must either have fixed barriers or rope on all four sides off the pitch in accordance with instructions from the League Management Committee, unless agreed otherwise. A combination of fixed barriers and rope, erected only for the football season, would be a good solution. The Management Committee will help Clubs to achieve this requirement.

In addition, all Premier Division Clubs must mark two Technical Areas on the same side of the pitch in the area adjacent to the halfway line, INSIDE THE BARRIER leaving sufficient space for the Assistant Referee to operate. These areas may be formed by using the touchline rope, or by markings on the ground. Permitted occupants of the technical areas will be named substitutes and a maximum of three [3] club officials [eight {8} people in total]. Any person acting as a physio/emergency first aider within the technical area MUST be identified to the referee when the Team Sheet is submitted. Minors under the age of sixteen [16] are not permitted. Smoking or the consumption of alcohol are prohibited.

Occupants of the technical area are always to behave responsibly. Misconduct by any occupant of the technical area will be reported by the referee to the FA.

APPENDIX 'B'

In addition to any requirements of The Football Association, the following are League requirements:

The Standard Match Ball, as specified and provided by the Management Committee, or one to a compatible standard, must be used in all Premier Division matches.

Wherever possible, Registered Referees shall be appointed to all matches as Assistants. **Where Registered Referees are not appointed, Clubs shall provide a Club Assistant Referee who shall be trained to the satisfaction of the Management Committee; who must not be a substitute player for the same game; and must not be a Team Manager or Physio for the same game.**

The home team must provide refreshments for the Match Official[s]. This may be a hot or cold drink and hot food or a sandwich after the game.

The home team shall also provide after-match refreshments for their opponents. Unless the opponents have notified the home Club, they will be expected to remain for the refreshments after the match. An away Club must not do this on a regular basis.

The Management Committee shall consider any failures to comply under Rule 6[I].

APPENDIX 'C'

All items of non-compliance with the requirements of Appendices 'A' and 'B' shall be identified to, or by, the Management Committee who may conduct inspections prior to the commencement of the playing season. Non-compliances will only be allowed BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE and recorded in writing. Non-compliances may not be accepted by The FA or County FA.

SCHEDULE B – INDEX

Rule 1 Definitions

GOVERNANCE RULES

Rule 2	Name and Constitution	Rule 3	Club Name
Rule 4	Entry Fee, Subscription, Deposit	Rule 5	Management, Nomination, Election
Rule 6	Powers of Management	Rule 7	Protests, Claims, Complains, Appeals
Rule 8	Annual General Meeting	Rule 9	Special General Meeting
Rule 10	Agreement to be Signed		
Rule 11	Continuation of Membership, Withdrawal of a Club		
Rule 12	Exclusion of Clubs, Teams. Misconduct of Clubs, Officers, Players, Management Committee	Rule 13	Trophy
Rule 14	Alteration to Rules	Rule 15	Finance
Rule 16	Insurance	Rule 17	Dissolution

MATCH RELATED RULES

Rule 18	Qualification of Players	Rule 19	Club Colours
Rule 20	Playing Season. Conditions of Play, Times of Kick-Off. Postponements. Substitutes		
Rule 21	Reporting Results	Rule 22	Determining Championship
Rule 23	Match Officials		

SCHEDULE 'A'	Fees Tariff	Fines Tariff
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