

## RULES OF THE A.F.A. CUP COMPETITIONS

*(Recent Rule Changes are underlined.)*

Unless otherwise indicated the rules apply to all competitions

### 1. Custody of Trophies:

- (a) The President and Honorary Treasurer shall be the legal owners of all trophies in trust for the Amateur Football Alliance.
- (b) The winning Club shall be responsible for the custody of the trophy. The Alliance will be responsible for the engraving. On or before 1st February in the year following, the trophy shall be returned in a presentable condition. Failure to return a trophy as directed, in time and condition, shall result in a fine of not less than £50 plus the cost of making presentable.
- (c) Should a trophy be lost or damaged whilst in the custody of a Club, the Club shall forthwith report this to the Alliance and may have to refund to The Alliance the cost of replacement or complete repair. The Alliance may additionally impose such other penalty as it may think fit.

### 2. Control of Cup Competitions:

- (a) The entire control and management of the competitions shall be vested in the Council who shall have power to delegate some or all of their authority to the Cup Committee.
- (b) The Council shall have power to interpret any existing Rule and to alter or add to these Rules as they may from time to time deem expedient.
- (c) Clubs or any of their Teams infringing the Cup Rules shall be liable to a fine and such other sanction as from time to time may be decided by Council.
- (d) In all matters relating to or arising from an Alliance Cup Competition, not otherwise provided for in these Rules, an Appeal against a decision of the Cup Committee may be made by a Club to the AFA Council whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further Appeal (See Section H of the Rules of The Football Association, Page 116).

### 3. Eligible Clubs and Teams:

- (a)
  - (i) It shall be a requirement of all Clubs wishing to compete that they are in current affiliation with The Alliance and further that their entry be approved by the Cup Committee.
  - (ii) It shall be a condition of entry to the Competitions below that in any match each Player and Substitute wears a uniquely numbered shirt. Clubs unable to comply shall have their entry refused. Any breach of this condition in a match shall be subject to the provisions of Cup Rule 2(c). Referees may not prevent players from playing in shirts without numbers but should note the facts on their Report Card.
  - (iii) In all A.F.A. Cup Competitions, it shall be the responsibility of Clubs to ensure their Team selection follows generally accepted principles (i.e. each club shall play its strongest team in the Senior Cup, its second strongest team in the Intermediate Cup and so on, subject to Rule 3(b), with movement throughout the Club of promoted and relegated Players based on playing strengths. A Team in default may be liable to immediate disqualification and/or exclusion from future competitions.
- (b) The Cup Committee shall have power to reject the entry of any Team or to accept it and place the Team in what is deemed to be the appropriate competition. Teams must be entered in what is deemed to be the appropriate competition but WILL NOT be allowed to move more than one cup below their nominal level, e.g. a 1<sup>st</sup> team will not be permitted to enter a 3<sup>rd</sup> team cup or lower, but if playing strength dictates, may exceptionally be allowed in a second team competition.

- (c) (i) Senior and County Divisional Senior Challenge Cups:  
1st teams of Clubs (excluding those in the probationary year)
- (ii) Intermediate & County Divisional Intermediate Challenge Cups:  
2<sup>nd</sup> teams of Clubs (but may include 1<sup>st</sup> teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (iii) Junior Challenge Cup:  
3rd teams of Clubs (but may include 2nd teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (iv) Minor Challenge Cup:  
4th teams of Clubs (but may include 3rd teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (v) Senior Novets Challenge Cup:  
5th teams of Clubs (but may include 4th teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (vi) Intermediate Novets Challenge Cup:  
6th teams of Clubs (but may include 5th teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (vii) Junior Novets Challenge Cup:  
7th and lower teams of Clubs (but may include 6th teams, see Rule 3(b))
- (viii) Veterans' Challenge Cup:  
Veterans' XIs of any Club affiliated to The Alliance irrespective of the Club's Parent County, whose members must be over 40 years of age on 1st October in the season of the competition. Where a club enters more than one team in the competition, the Alliance must be advised prior to the start of the competitions of the squads as there will be no movement allowed between the teams.
- (ix) Women's Cup:  
Women's XIs of any Club affiliated to The Alliance, irrespective of the Club's Parent County. Where a Club enters more than one team in the competition, the Alliance must be advised prior to the start of the competition of the squads as there will be no movement allowed between the teams.
- (x) W.E. Greenland Memorial Cup:  
Between such teams as the Cup Committee may invite. To be played on or before each of the last Saturday of August, and the first and second Saturdays of September, with the Final tie on the third Saturday of September.
- (d) No team shall be eligible for more than one Competition in any season, with the exceptions that an eligible Team may compete in both Full and County Divisional competitions listed in (c)(i) and (c) (ii) and the W.E. Greenland Memorial Cup; and the Veterans' Competition listed in (c)(viii) and (c)(x).
- (e) Eligibility for the County Divisional Competitions shall be determined by ground location in addition to the requirements of Rule 3(a). In the event of there being fewer than eight entrants as a result of implementation of this Rule, the Cup Committee shall have power to allot entrants to other County Divisions.
- (f) When, as a result of misconduct, AFA Council decides as a punitive measure to exclude for a period of time a Club or Team from any or all AFA Competitions, it shall follow additionally that AFA-Affiliated League Cup or other Cup Competitions shall exclude such Club or Team for the same duration, and shall include such provision in their Rules or Regulations.

#### 4. Entry Fees and Dates:

- (a) Entry for all Competitions closes on 31 May in each year.
- (b)
- (i) The Entry Fees for all Competitions shall be £18.00.
- (ii) All such fees shall be paid upon making application for entry.

#### 5. Eligibility of Players:

- (a) Players must be *bona fide* members of the Clubs for whom they play for at least 14 days prior to the date originally arranged for the tie.
- (b) No player may represent more than one Club in any competition in the same season.
- (c) A player (including a substitute) who has played in any tie may not then, in the same season, without the permission of the Cup Committee, appear in any subsequent tie which is of lesser ranking. For the purpose of this rule the ranking of competitions shall be - from the most senior – Senior and County Divisional Senior Challenge Cups, Intermediate and County Divisional Intermediate Challenge Cups, Junior Challenge Cup, Minor Challenge Cup, Senior Novets Challenge Cup, Intermediate Novets Challenge Cup, Junior Novets Challenge Cup.
- (d) Objections which relate to the qualifications of any players who may have taken part must be lodged in writing to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the provisions of Rule 20(a) to be received within four days of the tie in question. The Cup committee shall have power to call upon any player or Club concerned and may require either to prove qualification to their satisfaction. In the event of failure to give such proof the Cup Committee shall have power to act as it thinks fit, such power to include awarding the tie, ordering a replay and/or initiating disciplinary action in respect of the player and/or the Club.
- (e) No player under 16 years of age shall participate in any game.

#### 6. Exemption from Rounds of the Competition:

- (a) Teams may be drawn as byes, but only in the Qualifying or Preliminary Rounds of any competition.
- (b)
- (i) In the Senior Challenge Cup there shall be 16 Teams exempt until the 1st Round of the Competition Proper, which teams shall be the Winners of the previous season's 2nd Round Proper.
- (ii) There shall be a further 16 Teams exempt until the Final Round of the Qualifying Competition, which Teams shall be the Losers of the previous season's 2nd Round Proper.
- (c) In all competitions, except the Senior Challenge Cup, the 8 Teams reaching the Quarter Final of the previous season's competition shall be exempted from any Preliminary Round of that competition only if the total entry to the competition exceeds 32 Teams. If the total entry is less than 32 Teams only the Winning Team of the previous season's competition shall be granted exemption from any Preliminary Round which may be required.

#### 7. Organisation of Competitions:

- (a) The Competition Proper shall commence when there are left a maximum of 64, 32, 16 and 8 Teams, depending upon the number of entries.
- (b)
- (i) Depending upon the number of entries [and in the case of the Senior Challenge Cup the provision of Rule 6(b)] the Cup Committee shall determine a minimum number of Preliminary or Qualifying Rounds to precede the Competition Proper.
- (ii) In all Competitions the Draw shall be arranged so as to minimize the number of Rounds to be played.
- (c) The Cup Committee shall arrange dates for playing each Round and all ties shall be played on these dates and at times so arranged.
- (d) In the Women's Cup, Clubs may mutually agree to play the tie at any time up to and including the scheduled date. If the Clubs fail to agree, the tie must be played on the specified date.

When the date is agreed by both Clubs, the home Club shall immediately advise both the AFA Office and the Referees' Secretary by email (see also Rule 18(a)).

(e) The precedence of AFA Cup competitions each with another is indicated in Rule 5(c). In the case of competitions of another County Association information on precedence must be sought from the AFA Office.

#### 8. The Draw and Provision for Abandoned Games:

- (a) As soon as possible after the annual closure of entries and thereafter as soon as possible after the date of each Round, the Cup Committee shall draw the Teams in pairs, constituting the Cup Ties.
- (b) Unless mutually arranged to the contrary and with the prior consent of the Cup Committee, the ties shall be staged on the ground of the first-drawn of each pair.
- (c) Venues shall, except with the express permission of the Cup Committee, be confined to the registered grounds of the Clubs so drawn.
- (d) The Home club shall ensure that their opponents and the Match Official(s) are in receipt of acknowledged details of ground location and means of access, not less than six (6) days prior to the date arranged for the game.
- (e) When a tie has been abandoned before the completion of 90 minutes neither club being at fault, it shall be played as an original tie on the same ground on or before the following Saturday. If extra time has not been commenced or if a match has been abandoned during extra time, neither Club being at fault, it shall be deemed a replay on the ground of the Club second-drawn on or before the following Saturday. Matches abandoned through the fault of either or both the Clubs concerned shall be dealt with by the Cup Committee. The Cup Committee shall have power to determine that the score of the match at the time of abandonment shall be the result of the match, or to expel one or both teams from the competition.
- (f) Kick-off times for all Cup ties shall be as under. The times may not be altered without mutual agreement by both Clubs and the consent of the Cup Committee.

Up to & including 3rd Saturday in October 15.00

4th & 5th Saturday in October 14.30

1st and 2nd Saturdays in November 13.45

Remaining Saturdays in November,

All December & 1st and 2nd Saturdays in January 13.30

Remaining Saturdays in January 13.45

1st and 2nd Saturdays in February 14.00

Remaining Saturdays in February 14.15

Rest of season 15.00

- (g) In the event of a Team being unable to kick off 30 minutes or more after the scheduled kick off time for a match, the appointed Referee shall be the sole arbiter as to whether there is sufficient time to play the match, depending on the prevailing conditions. If the match does not take place, the Cup Committee will determine the outcome.
- (h) If a Team defaults such that a rearrangement of a tie is required on the same Ground, then the Club of the defaulting Team shall meet all the match expenses.

#### 9. Provision for Postponements

- (a) The Honorary Referees' Secretary must be advised immediately by the Home Club of any postponed game. Drawn or abandoned games must be advised similarly by noon on the Sunday following.
- (b) When a tie is postponed through circumstances over which neither Club has control, it shall be rearranged for the nearest Saturday following except with the express permission of the Cup Committee to do otherwise.
- (c) In the event of a Cup match being postponed, neither Team being at fault, Match

Officials who travel to the venue shall receive the full match fee indicated in Rule 19(a). However, if a Team defaults to cause postponement, then its Club shall be responsible for reimbursing in full the match fee to any Match Officials travelling to the venue and the reasonable expenses of the non-defaulting club.

(d) In the event of inclement weather causing a pitch to be known to be unavailable for play, the up Committee shall have the power to decide an alternative venue where a Tie shall be played in order to avoid delaying the progress of the competition. The Cup Committee will subsequently determine and recommend to Council the allocation of costs in such circumstances.

### 11. Team Colours and Match Balls

- (a) Teams must play in colours registered with The Alliance.
- (b) When the colours to be worn by both Teams are similar the Home Team shall change unless mutual arrangements are made to the contrary - except where matches are played on a neutral ground, when both Teams shall change into contrasting colours.
- (c) Teams must play in colours registered with The Alliance.
- (d) When the colours to be worn by both Teams are similar the Home Team shall change unless mutual arrangements are made to the contrary - except where matches are played on a neutral ground, when both Teams shall change into contrasting colours.
- (e) Each goalkeeper must wear colours that distinguish them from the other players, the Referee and the Assistant Referee.
- (f) Team Captains are required to wear an identifying arm-band.
- (g) The Home Team must provide at least two footballs that conform to the Laws of the Game .

### 12. Dimensions of the Field of Play

- (a) In all competitions: 100 - 130 yards x 60 - 100 yards.
- (b) Goal nets must be used in all competitions.
- (c) Notification of any appeal as to the unsuitability of a ground shall be intimated to the Referee prior to the commencement of the game, but shall additionally be forwarded to The Alliance, in writing, so as to be received within three days (Sunday included) of the date of the tie. The Honorary Referees' Secretary shall be notified of the protest by noon on the Sunday following the game.

### 13. Fitness of Ground for Commencing Play

- (a) The appointed Referee or a local Referee approved by The Alliance Honorary Referees' Secretary shall decide as to the fitness of a pitch for commencing play.
- (b) The Home Club is required to take the initiative in determining from the appropriate Authority the fitness or otherwise for commencing play and is responsible for informing their opponents and the Match Official(s) at an early enough stage to prevent, if possible, unnecessary travel. This requirement applies whether or not the pitch is under the Club's jurisdiction.
- (c) Where some but not all pitches under the Home Club's jurisdiction and allocated to AFA Cup ties become unfit for play, the seniority indicated in Cup Rule 5(c) must be applied to determine which tie or ties are played on the remaining fit pitch or pitches.
- (d) Where circumstances require it, the Cup Committee shall determine whether a tie shall be played upon the ground of the second-drawn of each pair or if directed at a neutral venue.

### 14. Duration of Play

- (a) The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of 45 minutes.
- (b) The half-time interval shall be 10 minutes, which may be altered only with the consent of the Referee.
- (c) Extra time shall be played in all matches where a result is not determined at full time, followed by kicks taken from the penalty mark to decide a winner. Extra time shall

normally be 15 minutes each way, but the Referee shall have discretion to reduce this time to a minimum of 10 minutes each way. If, in the opinion of the referee, conditions do not allow sufficient time for the minimum permitted period of extra time, then the match shall be decided by taking kicks from the penalty mark immediately after the end of normal time. A result must be achieved on the day.

#### **15. Provision for Substitutes**

- (a) A Team may use up to three substitute players from up to three nominated players at any time during a match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee. A substitution can be made only when play has been stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission.
- (b) The names of the substitutes must be given to the Referee before the commencement of the match. Substitutes not so named may not take part in the match.
- (c) In the Veterans' Challenge Cup, substitutes may be used in a roll-on, roll-off basis. An AFA Result Card, listing the names of the players and substitutes, must be handed to the Referee prior to kick off and retained by him for the duration of the match. Failure to comply will result in a fine.

#### **16. Reporting Results**

- (a) Clubs shall forward written notification of the result on the card provided. This pre-paid card must be sent no later than 9 a.m. on the Monday following the match. The card must be completed in its entirety, including the Referee's name and marking which, if less than 51, must be justified by a written report to be submitted within 7 days of the date of the match. The Home Club must telephone results of Cup matches in accordance with the requirements set out on Cup Circulars.
- (b) Fines levied for breaches of Rule 16(a) will be doubled if not paid within 14 days and in default of payment Clubs may be barred from the Competition in the season following.

#### **17. Provision for the Semi-Final and Final Tie**

- (a) The Cup Committee shall arrange neutral grounds for the Semi-Final ties of the Senior Cup and the Final ties of all Competitions and shall have direct control of all the arrangements, receipts and disbursements in connection with these matches.
- (b) When the Winners and Runners-Up have been determined, The Alliance shall present the Cup, with a Club Memento, to the Winners and Medals to up to 14 participating Players of each Team.
- (c) A Player sent off the field of play for misconduct in a Cup Final shall not be presented with a medal for playing in that Final; neither shall any Player who wilfully refuses to attend the Presentation Ceremony to receive a medal be presented with such medal, nor, being the Captain, shall he be presented with the Cup or Club Memento, but it shall be received by his deputy. In all such cases the Cup Committee shall decide subsequently whether to make any award.
- (d) Team sheets will be provided for all Final ties, for completion and handing to the match referee 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time for kick off. Clubs must put the player's shirt number on a team sheet alongside the player's name. Failure to comply will result in a fine.

#### **18. Appointment of Referees and Assistant Referees**

- (a) In all ties, Match Officials will be appointed by The Alliance. In the event of a Club being advised by The Alliance that it is not possible to make an appointment, it shall be the responsibility of the Home Club to provide a Referee. The provision of Assistant Referees shall be at the discretion of The Alliance.

- (b) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee or an Assistant Referee, the competing Teams may mutually agree upon substitute Officials and, provided the game is played to a finish, it shall rank as a cup-tie.
- (c) Match Officials are appointed until a tie is decided and will be required to officiate in either replays or postponed games unless otherwise directed by The Alliance.
- (d) The referee shall inform the AFA and/or league or competition directly responsible if unable to referee a team or teams for any reason. **(NEW RULE)**

### **19. Scale of Fees for Match Officials**

All competitions

- (a) Referees  
£30.00  
Assistant Referees  
£24.00
- (b) The first-drawn Club shall be responsible for the Fees of all Match Officials, which must be paid immediately after the game.
- (c) In the event of a Cup match being postponed, Match Officials who have not been contactable and who travel to the venue shall receive the appropriate fee indicated in Rule 19(a).
- (d) For all Final Ties played to determination, a Personal Memento will be presented to the Match Officials.

### **20. Protests**

- (a) All protests shall be made in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer at the Office of The Alliance so as to be received not later than four days from the date originally arranged for the match in question. Such protests shall be accompanied by a deposit of £50 which shall be forfeit if the protest is deemed unjustified.
- (b) Any protest relating to the ground or its appurtenances must comply with the provisions of Rule 12(c) and shall not be entertained by the Cup Committee unless this has been done.
- (c) The Cup Committee may order any Club engaged in protest to pay such sum as may be necessary towards defraying the costs of the appeal.