

## STANDARD CODE OF RULES

This document contains the Standard Code of Rules developed by The Football Association for open age football. These Rules are mandatory for all Competitions at Step 7 of the National League System and below (Development division), and The FA Women's Pyramid excluding The FA Women's Super League.

Competitions seeking sanction must draft their Rules in conformity with this Code, putting them in the correctly numbered Rule and showing the standard headings. The mandatory element is printed in normal text and the optional elements in italics. Competitions may add to the core of the Standard Code, which is mandatory, providing the additions are approved by the sanctioning association and do not conflict with the mandatory Rules or any relevant principles and policies established by the FA.

## DEFINITIONS

### 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.

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

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

"Competition" means the Spartan South Midlands Football League.

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

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

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

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

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

"Ground" means the ground on which the Club's team(s) plays its Competition Matches.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Rules" means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

"Sanctioning Authority" means The FA

"Scholarship" means a Scholarship as set out in Rule C 3 (a) (i) of the Rules of The FA.

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

"The FA" means The Football Association Limited.

"WGS" means the Whole Game System and the procedures for the operation thereof as determined by The FA from time to time.

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

- (B) 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.
- (C) 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 thereto, subject to the provisions of Rule 16.
- (D) The Competition will be known as the Spartan South Midlands Football League (or such other name as the Competition may adopt). The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Competition. A Club which ceases to exist or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall thereupon automatically cease to be a member of the Competition.
- (E) The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Competition acting (save where otherwise specifically mentioned herein) through the Management Committee in accordance with the rules, regulations and policies of The FA.

#### NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION

- 2. (A) This Competition shall consist of not more than 18 Clubs at Step 7 and no more than 22 Development Clubs approved by the Sanctioning Authority.
  - (B) All Clubs must be affiliated to an Affiliated Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date on the Form “D” to the Football Association and must have a constitution approved by the Sanctioning Authority.

This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Football Association and the constituent teams of Member Clubs may be grouped in divisions.
  - (C) Only one team shall be permitted from any Club to participate in the same division as another team from the same Club unless there is no viable alternative because of logistical issues and/or reasons linked to participation and geographical boundaries. The Competition will obtain the prior approval of the Sanctioning Authority in the event of a division comprising of more than one team from the same Club. This Competition will ensure that, where permission is given, teams from a Club operating in the same division are run as separate entities with no interchange of players other than via transfers of registration in accordance with these Rules.
  - (D) Inclusivity and Non-discrimination
    - (i) The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination
    - (ii) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate Sanctioning Authority for investigation.
  - (E) Clubs must comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA which are adopted by the Competition including, but not limited to, Charter Standard and RESPECT programmes.
  - (F) Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of FA and County FA Competitions) except with the written consent of the Management Committee.
  - (G) At the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting 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 12.

#### ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

- 3. (A) Applications by Clubs for admission to the Competition or the entry of an additional team(s) from the same Club must be made in writing to the Secretary and must be accompanied by the Entry Fee as set out in the Fees Tariff per team which shall be returned in the event of non-election.

At the discretion of a majority of the accredited voting members present applications, of which due notice has been given, may be received at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

When Rule 12(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 as per the Fees Tariff payable on or before the Annual General Meeting of the Competition, in each year.
- (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 by or on behalf of the Club on such terms and for such period as it may in its entire discretion think fit.
- (D) A Club shall not participate in this Competition until the Entry Fee, Annual Subscription and Deposit (if required) have been paid.
- (E) Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by the date of the AGM of its Sanctioning Authority affiliation number for the forthcoming Season. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the prescribed form, of details of its Headquarters, Officers and any other information required by the Competition.

#### MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

- 4. (A) The Management Committee shall comprise the Officers of the Competition and not less than six ordinary members who shall all be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- (B) All candidates for election as Officers or Members of the Management Committee, who shall be independent of member Clubs, shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the Secretaries of two Member Clubs, not later than 30 April in each year. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the foregoing for any office, nominations may be received at the Annual General Meeting.
- (C) The Management Committee shall meet as and when required with no more than three calendar months between each meeting.  
On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the members of the Management Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee.
- (D) Except where otherwise mentioned all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.
- (E) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their nominated Officers.

#### POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

- 5. (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 Football Association 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 upon each Club (including any Club which may have withdrawn during the season) 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 thereat, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Member or to the Club so represented or where there may be a conflict of interest. (This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee).  
In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- (D) 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 5(I), 6(H), and 19, for all breaches of Rule a formal written charge must be issued to the Club concerned The Club charged shall be given seven days from the date of notification of the charge to reply to the charge and given the opportunity to :-

- (i) Accept or deny the charge
- (ii) Submit in writing a case of mitigation, or
- (iii) Put their case before the Management Committee at a personal hearing

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

Any fines levied shall be in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

The maximum fine permitted for any breach of a Rule is £250 and, when setting any fine, the Competition must ensure that the penalty is proportional to the offence, taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

- (E) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 16. Decisions of the Management Committee must be notified in writing to those concerned within ten days.
- (F) More than fifty percent (50%) of its members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the Management Committee or any sub-committee thereof.
- (G) The Management Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur amongst their number.
- (H) A Club must comply with an order or instruction of the Management Committee and must attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition to the satisfaction of the Management Committee.
- (I) All fines and charges are payable forthwith and must be paid within 28 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 14 days will result in fixtures being withdrawn until such time as the outstanding fines are paid.
- (J) A member of the Management Committee appointed by the Competition to attend a meeting or match may have any reasonable expenses incurred refunded by the Competition.
- (K) The Management Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the Annual General or Special General Meeting called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the Competition season.
- (L) The business of the Competition as determined by the Management Committee may be transacted by electronic mail or facsimile.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 6. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than 30 June in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least 80% of Members are present and entitled to vote :-
  - (i) To receive and confirm the Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting.
  - (ii) To receive and adopt the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts.
  - (iii) Election of Clubs to fill vacancies.
  - (iv) Constitution of the Competition for ensuing season.
  - (v) Election of Officers and Management Committee.
  - (vi) Appointment of Auditors.
  - (vii) Alteration of Rules, if any.
  - (viii) Fix the date for the commencement of the season.
  - (ix) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted as being relevant to an Annual General Meeting.
- (B) A copy of the duly audited/verified Balance Sheet, Statement of Accounts and Agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least fourteen days prior to the meeting, together with any proposed change of Rules.
- (C) A signed copy of the duly audited/verified Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall be sent to Sanctioning Authority within fourteen days of its adoption by the Annual General Meeting.
- (D) Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to an Annual General Meeting. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. Fourteen days' notice shall be given of any Meeting.
- (E) Clubs who have withdrawn their Membership of the Competition during the 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.

(F) All voting shall be conducted by a show of voting cards unless a ballot be demanded by at least 50% of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chairman so decides.

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

(H) Any continuing Club must be represented at the Annual General Meeting.

(I) Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an Annual General Meeting.

#### AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED

7. The Chairman and the Secretary of each Club which is an unincorporated Association and two directors of each Club which is an incorporated entity shall complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the Competition together with the Application for Membership for the coming season, or upon indicating that the Club intends to compete.

"We, (A) (name) [ ] of (address) [ ] (Chairman)/(Director) and (B) (name) [ ] of (address) [ ] (Secretary)/(Director) of [ ] Football Club (Limited) have been provided with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the [ ] Competition and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the said Club to conform to those Rules and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the Management Committee of the Competition, subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 16."

Any alteration of the Chairman and /or Secretary on the above Agreement must be notified to the [ ] County Football Association(s) to which the Club is affiliated and to the Secretary of the Competition.

#### QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

8. (A) (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.

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.

- (ii) Each Club must have at least 11 Players registered 7 days before the start of each Playing Season.

Where a Club has a team entered in the Development division, this Rule shall also apply to that team. A further 11 registrations will be required for the Development team under this Rule.

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

(i) signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink, countersigned by an Officer, which is submitted to the Competition 4 hours prior to the scheduled kick off time. No Player whose registration is received less than 4 hours before the match organised by the Competition in which he is required to play will be eligible;

(ii) Where a registration form is sent to the Competition electronically, e.g, email, the originating form must subsequently be received by the Competition within 5 days of the sending of the electronic transmission. In default of this Rule the player shall not be eligible to play in the Competition unless and until a valid registration form is received. The form when received must contain the same information as that received by email. It is an offence to falsify a competition form. Any Club found to have been in breach of any part of this Rule will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and will be dealt with in accordance with the Competition Rules; or

(iii) not applicable in this competition.

- (C) not applicable in this competition

- (D) A Player that owes a Football Debt (as defined under the Football Debt Recovery Regulations) to any Club(s) shall be permitted to register and play for a Club in the Competition, save that the Player may be liable to be suspended from playing for that Club should the Player fail to comply with the terms of the Football Debt Recovery Regulations in respect of that Football Debt.

- (E) A fee as set out in the Fees Tariff shall be paid by each Club/team for each player registered.

- (F) The Management Committee shall decide all registration disputes.

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

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

- (i) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.
- (ii) Having registered for one Club in the Competition, register for another Club in the Competition in that season except for the purpose of a transfer.
- (iii) Submit a signed registration form or submit a registration through WGS for registration that the player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

(H) (i) The Management Committee shall have the power to accept the registration of any player subject to the provisions of clauses (ii) and (iii) 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 who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities (subject to Rule 16).

(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 16) subject to the right of appeal to the FA or the relevant County Football Association. Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated proven misconduct, which may deter a participant from being involved in this Competition. Application should be made to the parent County of the Club the player is registered or intending to be registered with.

(iv) For a player who has previously had a registration removed in accordance with clause (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 would be empowered to consider a further charge of bringing the Competition into disrepute.

(Note: Action under Clause (iii) shall not be taken against a player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Association, and then only in cases of the player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any case be subject to an Appeal to the Football Association. 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 a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.)

(I) Subject to compliance with FA Rule C2(a) when a Club wishes to register a Player who is already registered with another Club it shall submit a transfer form (in a format as determined by the Competition) to the Competition accompanied by a fee as set out in the Fees Tariff. 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 three days of receipt of the notification. Upon receipt of the Club's consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within three days, the Competition Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the Player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date or 7 days after receipt of such transfer.

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

(J) A player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after 5 p.m. on 31 March except by special permission of the Management Committee.

(K) A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played, and shall produce such records upon demand by the Management Committee.

(L) A register containing the names of all players registered for each Club, with the date of registration, shall be kept by the Registrations Secretary and shall be open to the inspection of any duly appointed Member Club representative at all Management Committee meetings or at other times mutually arranged. Registrations are valid for one Season only.

In the event of a player without a written contract changing his status to that of a contract player with the same Club, another Club in the Competition or with a Club in another Competition his registration as a player without a written

contract will automatically be cancelled and declared void unless the Club conforms to the exception detailed in Rule 8(A)(i).

(M) A player shall not be eligible to play for a team in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding match (as specified in Rule 12(A)) unless the player has played 4 games for that team in this Competition in the current season.

(N) not applicable in the is competition

(O) Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a match or matches shall have any points gained from that match or matches deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points, and have levied upon it a fine. The Management Committee may also order that such match or matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Management Committee which may also levy penalty points against the Club in default.

The Management Committee may vary this decision in respect of the points gained 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.

In exceptional circumstances the Management Committee may, at its discretion, award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

(P) (The following Clause applies to Competitions involving players in full-time secondary education) :-

(i) Priority must be given at all times to school and school organisations activities.

(ii) The availability of children must be cleared with the Head Teachers (except for Sunday Leagues).

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

#### CLUB COLOURS. CLUB NAME

9. (A) Every Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts on a date to be specified, with the Secretary by who shall decide as to their suitability.

Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from all other players and the match officials.

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

Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify its opponents the colours in which they will play (including the colour of the goalkeepers jersey) at least 7 days before the match.

If, in the opinion of the referee, two Clubs have the same or similar colours, the away team shall make the change. A club must not delay the scheduled time of kick off for a competition match by not having a change of colours. Shirts must be numbered 1-20 such that the numbers can be clearly identified by officials and spectators. Striped, hooped or otherwise patterned shirts shall have numbers affixed to contrasting patches or numbers in a contrasting colour with bold outline.

(B) Any Club wishing to change its name must obtain permission from the Sanctioning Authority and from the Management Committee. Any Club wishing to change its colours during the Playing Season must obtain permission from the Management Committee.

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

10. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall determine the date for the commencement of the season.

(B) All 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 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 matches in the Competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground.

Football Turf pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf pitches. For clubs playing at Step 7 and below a pitch 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 10(D).

Within the National League System ("NLS") all matches shall have a duration of 90 minutes. All matches outside of the NLS shall have duration of 90 minutes.

The standard kick-off times shall be as follows:

Saturday matches - 3.00 pm

Midweek matches - 7.45 pm unless a Club notifies the Competition Secretary in writing before the commencement of each Playing Season to state that it wishes all its home midweek matches to kick off at pm. All agreed changes to time of kick-off to be notified to the Board immediately for confirmation.

Clubs with ground sharing agreements must arrange for home matches to be played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If a clash of fixtures occurs with the sharing Club and for any reason a match is unable to be played on a Saturday, the match must be played on either the day before i.e. on Friday, or the day after i.e. on Sunday. If Clubs are unable to agree on the date then it will be played on the Sunday unless the Board decides otherwise. The decision of the Board shall be final and binding. Official bank holidays and Sundays – 3 p.m. unless agreed otherwise by the two Clubs and the Board; application shall be made to the Competition Secretary by both Clubs at least 21 days before the relevant date.

To re-schedule a midweek fixture for an evening other than a Club's usual midweek night will require written agreement of both Clubs and the Competition Secretary.

The Competition Secretary reserves the right to amend scheduled fixtures and kick-off times to meet television requirements as necessary. Notification will be provided by the Competition Secretary in writing to both Clubs for fixtures so rescheduled.

The times of kick-off can only be altered by the mutual consent of the two competing clubs prior to the scheduled date of the match with written notification given to the Competition at least 7 days prior.

Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

(C) Except by permission of the Management Committee all matches must be played on the dates originally fixed but priority shall be given to The Football Association and parent County Association Cup Competitions. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a match with the consent of the Fixtures Secretary.

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).

(D) The Secretary of the home Club must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the ground and time of kick-off to the match officials and the Secretary of the opposing Club at least 5 clear days prior to the playing of the match, including the team colours, the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing. The visiting Club and Match Officials must acknowledge receipt to be received at least three days before the match. If not so provided, the away club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the competition. The visiting Club must include in its acknowledgement the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing.

(E) A minimum of 7 players will constitute a team for a Competition match. Any Club commencing a Competition match with less than 11 Players may be subject to a fine.

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

(ii) not applicable in this competition

(iii) Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a fixture has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the Competition Results Service, Fixtures Secretary, the Competition Referees Appointments Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials. Any Club without just cause failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Competition match on the appointed date shall for each offence be liable to expulsion from the Competition and/or such other disciplinary action the Board may determine, including the deduction of points from the offending Club's record, any expenses incurred by their opponents, and a fine. In the event of a Club being in breach of the previous paragraph of this Rule then the Board may award points to the Club not at fault as if the



match had been played and the League Table shall reflect the position as if the match had been played with the result awarded by the Board.

- (iv) In the event of a 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 determined by the Competition Fixtures Secretary. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and the Clubs involved agree, 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 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 be empowered to 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 be empowered to 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 all points for the match as void. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned match.
- (vi) 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 Association 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 8(O) above. Where both teams were under suspension the game must be declared null and void.
- (vii) The postponement of matches due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance with procedures provided for in the document published by the FA "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions". Should the ground be declared unfit it is the responsibility of the home club to immediately advise the Competition Results Service, Fixtures Secretary, the Competition Referees Appointments Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials.
- (viii) All Clubs must have a mobile telephone and an email address operational at all times. These will be listed in the Competition Handbook unless a Club requests otherwise.

and

- (ix) Each Club must hand the Team Sheet containing name(s) of Players taking part in a match including the name(s)

number(s) of the nominated substitute(s) to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee at least forty five (45) minutes before the scheduled kick off time. The Players' numbers and the colours of the playing strip must be clearly stated. Any Clubs in breach may be fined.

(x) Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged may be fined. A Player who is named on the Team Sheet may be replaced without fine if he is injured warming up after exchange of the Team Sheet. Any subsequent changes must be notified to the Referee and a representative of the opponents before the actual kick off.

(xi) Where a match is re-arranged or cancelled after the officials have been appointed, it is the duty of the home club to notify the Match Officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately. Clubs in default of this Rule may be subject to any action decided by the Board.

- (G) A Step 7 Club (Division Two) may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use 3 substitute players in any match in this Competition who may be selected from a maximum of 5 players who must be nominated on the official Team Sheet handed to the Referee before the match in accordance with Rule.

A Club in the Development division may, at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game, use 5 substitute players in any match in this Competition, who may be selected from 5 players. A player who has been substituted himself becomes a substitute and may replace a player at any time, subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitutes not later than 45 minutes before the start of the match and a Player not so named may not take part in that match.

A player who has been selected, appointed or named as a substitute before the start of the match but does not actually play in the game shall not be considered to have been a player in that game within the meaning of Rule 8 of this Competition.

- (H) The half time interval shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.
- (I) The Cubs taking part in fixture Competition Match shall identify a team captain who has a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of his/her team mates.
- (J) A Club may not enter its team in any outside competition, other than those listed in Rule 10 (C), without prior permission of the Board. The Competition Fixture Secretary must be informed of all fixtures, postponements and results of all matches played in any other competition.
- (K) All Clubs will be responsible for comments in their match day programme in respect of the Competition, the Company or other member Clubs, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary. No part of a Club's programme issued for a match in any competition shall, in the opinion of the Board, bring the Competition into disrepute. All Clubs will be responsible for their official website or similar computer related information systems, which is within the public domain. Nothing shall be included on the website which in the opinion of the Board brings the Competition or the Company into disrepute.
- (L) Two covered trainers' boxes clearly marked "Home" and "Away or Visitors" must be provided unless adequate provision is made in a seated stand. They must be on the same side of the pitch, ideally either side of the halfway line, ideally both equidistant from it and ideally a minimum 3 metres apart and provide an unobstructed view of the playing area. Each box should accommodate at least 8 persons on fixed seats or benches. Where bench seating is provided, a minimum 0.5 metres must be allowed for each person. Portable trainers' boxes are permitted but must be securely fixed when in use. A technical area must be marked out in accordance with the guidance contained in the 'Laws of the Game' booklet.
- (M) Only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the Players during the match from within the technical area.

All team officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the official Team Sheet when it is handed to the Match Officials. Only those persons listed on the official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.

The occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to the FA or County FA, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.

With the exception of the team manager, the team coach and any substitutes who are warming up or warming down, all other personnel are to remain seated on the trainer's bench. The team manager or team coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.

#### REPORTING RESULTS

11. (A) Each Club shall enter information from the match Result Form by the method instructed by the Competition and shall submit the fully completed copy of the appropriate match Result Form by email to the Appointing Authority and the Competition within 3 days of the match. When a Club considers that the Referee has discharged his duties incompetently and awards a mark of 50 or less, a detailed report must be sent to the Appointing Authority within three days of the match by the method instructed by the Appointing Authority. Clubs in default of any provision of the Rule will be subject to a fine for each offence.
- (B) The both Clubs shall SMS the result of each match immediately after the end of the match in response to an SMS text prompt.
- (C) The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by a responsible member of the Club.

#### DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP

12. (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 match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners. Matches must not be played for double points.

In circumstances where two or more teams are equal on points team rankings shall be determined by goal difference where the goals scored against by each team shall be deducted from the goals scored by that team and the largest positive difference shall be placed the highest. In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed team shall be the team which has scored the most goals. In the event that two or more teams have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals then the highest placed team shall be the team which has won the most matches.

In the event of the two teams still being equal the team which has the better playing record against the other team in their head to head Competition matches during the Season will be the highest placed team.

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

(B) The top two teams in Division Two shall be promoted to Division One, provided they meet the appropriate ground grading required as per the appropriate Ground Grading document, being approved by the Board by 31 March each year. Should one of the top two clubs in Division Two not be eligible then the third placed club in Division Two will be promoted, provided they meet the appropriate ground grading required as per the appropriate National Ground Grading document, being approved by the Board by 31 March each year. With the agreement of the FA, if there are still vacancies in Division One, then Clubs down to fifth place may be considered for promotion.

Clubs finishing in the two lowest places in Division Two shall have the right to apply to the Management Board for re-election, together with other applicants. Clubs re-elected to Division Two must pay a re-election fee in accordance with the Fees Tariff.

(C) In the event of a team withdrawing from the Competition before completing 75% of its fixtures for the season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting team shall be expunged from the Competition table. For the purposes of this Rule 12(D) a completed fixture shall include any Competition Match(es) which has been awarded by the Management Committee.

(D) Where a League is outside of the Spartan South Midlands League structure, The FA will manage the promotion process of all clubs seeking promotion from Step 7 to Step 6 of the National League System.

(E) The constitution of the Development division(s) and any promotion and relegation shall be confirmed by the Annual General Meeting each year.

## REFEREES

13. (A) Registered Referees (and Assistant Referees where approved by the FA or County FA) for all matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the Sanctioning Authority. The home Club shall be responsible for providing Assistant Referees with distinctive flags of a suitable size in an acceptable condition.

(B) 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. In cases where there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, the Clubs shall agree upon a Referee. An individual thus agreed upon shall, for that game, 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 open age competition. In the event that a Club causes a match to be postponed or abandoned in relation to the operation of this Rule then that Club shall be charged with failing to fulfil a fixture (Rule 10 (F) (iii) refers).

(C) Where Assistant Referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club Assistant Referee. A player or substitute may not be used as an Assistant Referee in games in which they are taking part. Club Assistant Referees must report to the Match Referee at least 15 minutes before the scheduled kick off time.

(D) The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final. The postponement of matches due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance 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". In cases where it is found necessary to stop play owing to weather or other cause, the Referee must wait a reasonable length of time before deciding on abandonment.

(E) Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the sanctioning Association, Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee and travel expenses set by the Appointing Authority.

The Home Club shall pay the Officials their fees and/or expenses on the day of the match in their dressing room, within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the match (including matches abandoned for any reason). Where provided by the home Club, each Match Official must complete and submit a claim form for expenses.

(F) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to / half fee plus expenses. Where a match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Officials, if they attend the ground, their full fee and expenses.

(G) A Referee not keeping his or her engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be reported to the Association with which he or she is registered.

(H) Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The Football Association, award marks to the Referee for each match and the name of the Referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed Form provided. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined 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 Football Association/County Association.

(J) The Referee shall submit a report Form, supplied by the Competition, all cases where teams commence a match late or without eleven Players on the field of play. Referees must report all breaches of Rule to the Appointing Authority in writing within 3 days of the match on the appropriate form electronically.

Referees must also report their own or any assistant referees' late arrival in any matches, and notify those concerned of their

intention. Assistant Referees must also send an explanation of their late arrival in writing by email to the Appointing Authority within 3 days of the match.

and the time of kick-off to the (Registration) Secretary within two days of the match.

(K) Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled kick off. The appointed referee may be required to visit the ground earlier if requested to do so by the home Club.

(L) Three match balls proposed to be used in the match and, if applicable, supplied by the Company under a ball sponsorship

agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Referee before the commencement of the match in his/her dressing room. It is the responsibility of the Club playing at home in each match played under the jurisdiction of the Competition to provide match balls in accordance with any match ball agreement signed by the Company.

#### CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

14. (A) A Club intending, or having a provisional intention, to withdraw a team from the Competition on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the Competition must notify the Secretary in writing by 31st March each Season. Clubs who withdraw their Development team only must comply with the notice date or be liable to a fine in accordance with the fines tariff.

(B) The Management Committee shall have the discretion to deal with a team being unable to start or complete its fixtures for a Playing Season.

(C) In the event of a Member Club failing to discharge all its financial obligations to the Competition in excess of £50, the Management Committee are empowered to refer the debt under The FA Football Debt Recovery provisions.

#### PROTESTS AND COMPLAINTS

15.(A) (i) All questions of eligibility, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Management Committee.

- (ii) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be entertained by the Management Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match.
- (B) Except in cases where the Management Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged with the Secretary within 7 days (excluding Sundays) of the match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Management Committee. A Member of the Management Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.
- (C) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Management Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Secretary a sum in accordance with the Fees Tariff. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the enquiry 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 prior to the protest or complaint being heard.
  - (i) All parties must have received 7 days' notice of the Hearing should they be instructed to attend.
  - (ii) Should a Club elect to state its case in person then the Club should indicate such when forwarding the written response.

#### PROTESTS, APPEALS

- 16. (A) 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 which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld, and the party not succeeding may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Management Committee.
- (B) All such protests claims complaints and appeals must be received in writing by the Secretary within fourteen days of the event or decision causing any of these to be submitted.
- (C) The Management Committee shall also have power to compel any party to the protest to pay such expenses as the Management Committee shall direct.
- (D) Any appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the FA within fourteen (14) days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Secretary. All appeals to the FA must be lodged in accordance with the appeals procedure detailed in the handbook or that in force at any one time.
- (E) If so requested the Management Committee may arbitrate on any disputes, protests, appeals, claims or complaints between two Clubs in which event both Clubs shall send a non-returnable fee. Such arbitration shall be final and binding upon the parties to the arbitration.
- (F) No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

#### EXCLUSION OF CLUBS OR TEAMS

##### MISCONDUCT, CLUBS, OFFICIALS, PLAYERS

- 17. (A) At the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting called for the purpose, 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 exclude any Club or Team from membership 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 Club which is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.
- (B) At the Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 19, 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, 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 Club whose conduct is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

- (C) Any official or member of a Club proved guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a player or players of another Club in the Competition to join them shall be liable to expulsion or 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 Clause (A) of this Rule.

#### TROPHY:-

#### LEGAL OWNERS, CONDITIONS OF TAKING OVER, AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED, AWARDS.

18. (A) The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the Cup or Trophy:-

"We (A) (name) and (B) (name), the Chairman and Secretary of FC (Limited), members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of Cup or Trophy, and it having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the Cup or Trophy to the Competition Secretary on or before [ ]. 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."

The trophies are the property of the Company and may never be won outright.

The recipient Club shall be responsible for engraving their details on the trophy before returning same.

Any Club not returning the Competition trophy by the due date, returning them in poor condition or without being engraved will be fined.

- (B) The Company shall present to the Winners and Runners Up of all divisions in the Competition 16 souvenirs. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Board, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.

#### SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

19. Upon receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting.

The Management Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time.

At least seven days' notice shall be given of either meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted at such meeting. Each Member Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all Special General Meetings. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only, as will members of the Management Committee.

Any continuing Member Club must be represented at a Special General Meeting.

Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Special General Meetings.

#### ALTERATION TO RULES

20. Alterations, for which consent has been given by the Sanctioning Authority, shall be made to these Rules only at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 19. Any alteration made during the Playing Season to these Rules shall not take effect until the following Playing Season.

Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the AGM shall be submitted to the Secretary by 31 January in each year. The proposals together with the name of the proposers and seconders, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by 31 March and any amendments thereto shall be submitted to the Secretary by 30 April. The proposals and proposed amendments thereto shall be circulated to Clubs with the notice of the AGM. A proposal to change a Rule shall be carried if a majority of those present, entitled to vote and voting are in favour.

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

#### FINANCE

21. (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 an Officer of the Management Committee. Payments will be made electronically, approved by an Officer.
- (C) The financial year of the Competition will end on 31 December.
- (D) The books, or a certified balance sheet, of a Competition shall be prepared and shall be verified annually by some suitable person(s) who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

#### INSURANCE

22. All Clubs must have valid public liability insurance cover of at least 10 million pounds (£10,000,000) at all times.
- All Clubs must have valid personal accident cover for all Players registered with them from time to time. The Players' personal accident 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 Association. In instances where The Football Association is the sanctioning Association, the minimum recommended cover will be the cover required by the Affiliated Association to which a Club affiliates.

#### DISSOLUTION

23. (A) Dissolution of the Competition shall be by resolution approved at a Special General Meeting by a majority of three quarters (3/4) of the members present and shall take effect from the date of the relevant Special General Meeting.
- (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 Association.
  - (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.

