

**REGULATIONS FOR THE WOMEN'S PYRAMID LEAGUE SYSTEM EFFECTIVE FOR PLAYING SEASON
2025/2026**

Definitions

In these Regulations, the following words and expressions have the following meaning:

Adran Premier:	The premier league (Tier 1), being the top division in the Pyramid League System, for the playing of association football by women in Wales.
Area Association:	Any regional football association defined pursuant to Rule 11.1.2.
Club Licence	A women's club licence under the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations, or the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations, as the case may be.
Club Licensing Criteria:	The relevant criteria in the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations, or the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations, as the case may be.
Club Licensing Regulations:	The Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations, and the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations, (as applicable).
Directors:	Shall have the meaning defined in the Preamble to the Rules.
FAW:	Football Association of Wales Limited.
Football Related Liabilities:	Shall have the meaning defined in the Preamble to the Rules.
National League:	Any women's league defined pursuant to Rule 11.1.3.
Playing Season:	Shall have the meaning defined in the Preamble to the Rules.
Play-Off Matches:	The matches played in accordance with Regulation 3(f) of these Regulations.
Pyramid League System:	The pyramid league system for the playing of competitive women's league football in Wales at various levels ("Tiers"), as approved by the FAW from time to time.
Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2:	The top Tiers 1 - 2 inclusive of the Pyramid League System the structure of which is attached as Appendix 1 to these Regulations.
Qualifying Club:	Any club, being a full Member of the FAW, defined pursuant to Rule 11.1.1.
Rules:	The rules of the FAW as passed by the Members of the FAW from time to time.
Tier 1:	The Adran Premier, comprising Qualifying Clubs who have obtained the Tier 1 Club Licence pursuant to the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations and who are playing at Tier 1, aspiring to play in European football. The Adran Premier is administered by the FAW.

Tier 2:	The two divisions, currently known as “Adran North” and “Adran South”, comprising Qualifying Clubs who have obtained the Tier 2 Club Licence pursuant to the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations and who are playing at Tier 2, aspiring to play at Tier 1 level. The divisions are administered by the FAW.
Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations:	The women’s club licensing quality standards and procedures set by the FAW from time to time to which all existing members of the Adran Premier and those seeking promotion to the Adran Premier must adhere.
Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations:	The women’s club licensing quality standards and procedures set by the FAW from time to time to which all existing members of Tier 2 and those seeking promotion to Tier 2 must adhere.

1. Responsibilities and Objectives

- (a) The Pyramid League System provides football clubs throughout Wales with a framework of competitive women’s football appropriate to their playing standards, ground facilities, geographical location and economic means and permits the seasonal promotion, relegation, or lateral movement of clubs between the Tiers and the divisions of the Tiers in an orderly manner.
- (b) The FAW has responsibility for Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 which form the National Leagues in the Pyramid League System, and the Area Associations have responsibility for those leagues in the Pyramid League System below the National Leagues (Tier 3 and below).
- (c) Except where otherwise stated, these Regulations apply to Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2.

2. League Structure

- (a) The Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 for National Leagues shall be determined by the FAW. Each National League (and its divisions in Tiers 2) will be placed at a given Tier in the system, with the Adran Premier at the head.
- (b) No National League or Area Association shall incorporate any changes in the structure of any part of the Pyramid League System except at the direction, and with the approval, of the FAW.
- (c) The FAW will control these Regulations. No National League in the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 shall change the number of its divisions or number of teams playing in a division without the written permission of the FAW.
- (d) Divisions in Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 shall contain no more than 8 teams, unless with the written permission of the FAW.
- (e) Every National League in the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 shall conform with the decisions of the FAW as laid down from time to time.
- (f) All clubs in the Adran Premier must hold a current annual Tier 1 Club Licence under the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations to play in the Adran Premier. Any club playing in the Adran Premier that fails to obtain a renewal of its Tier 1 Club Licence but obtains

a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season shall be relegated one Tier from the Adran Premier to Tier 2 at the end of the Playing Season in which the unsuccessful application for a Tier 1 Club Licence was made. Any such club that fails to obtain a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season shall be relegated to Tier 3 or the next highest Tier for which it meets the criteria set by the relevant Area Association.

- (g) All Tier 2 clubs must hold a current annual Tier 2 Club Licence under the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations to play in Tier 2. Any such club that fails to obtain a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season shall be relegated to Tier 3 or the next highest tier for which it meets the criteria set by the relevant Area Association.

3. Promotion / Relegation

- (a) Save where the FAW otherwise directs under Regulation 3(g) below, there shall be automatic promotion and relegation between the Tiers of the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 (and promoted/relegated into and out of Tier 2), provided that the promoted club obtains the relevant Club Licence. A Qualifying Club (and a club otherwise promoted into Tier 2 from Tier 3) will not be promoted if it is not successful in its application for the relevant Club Licence.
- (b) No National League or Area Association will be allowed to operate a Club Licensing Criteria for promotion which is more stringent than the level of the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 they feed into.
- (c) The Club Licensing Criteria application process shall be as follows:
 - (i) Clubs must apply to the FAW using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time as per the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations, if they wish to be assessed against the criteria in the FAW Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations for playing in the Adran Premier; and
 - (ii) clubs must apply to the FAW using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time as per the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations, if they wish to be assessed against the criteria in the FAW Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations for playing in Tier 2.
- (d) A Qualifying Club playing in any division of Pyramid Tier 2 that applies for and obtains a Tier 1 Club Licence for the next Playing Season, and achieves a promotional place in its division of Tier 2, must take up the promotion to Tier 1 in the next Playing Season. A Qualifying Club playing in any division of Pyramid Tier 3 that applies for and obtains a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season, and achieves a promotional place in its division of Tier 3 must take up the promotion to Tier 2 in the next Playing Season.
- (e) No reserve or development (for under 19s or below) team shall be permitted to play in the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2, except in a dedicated reserve or development teams division which operates outside of the Pyramid League System.
- (f) Subject to the overriding provisions of Regulations 2(d), 2(f) and 2(g) above and the FAW's right to prescribe the number of clubs to be promoted and relegated within the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 under Regulation 3(g) below, promotion and relegation at the end of the Playing Season shall be as follows:

- i. between Tiers 1 and 2:
 - a. the club finishing in last position in the Adran Premier will be relegated to a division of Tier 2 and placed in the most geographically appropriate division of Tier 2 by the FAW using its power under Regulation 3(g) below;
 - b. the clubs finishing in first position in each of the two divisions of Tier 2 shall take part in a Play-Off Match. Where a club finishing in first position does not obtain a Tier 1 Club Licence for the next Playing Season, the club finishing in second position in that division shall take part in the relevant Play-Off Match provided that it obtains a Tier 1 Club Licence for the next Playing Season but no club below second position in a division shall take part in a Play-Off Match;
 - c. there will be one Play-Off Match featuring those two clubs (unless there are less than two eligible clubs, in which case a bye may be awarded by the FAW), arranged at the absolute discretion of the FAW;
 - d. each such Play-Off Match will be played over a single leg and staged at a neutral ground selected and organised by the FAW (or its nominee) and
 - e. in the event of the scores being level at the end of 90 minutes play in any such Play-Off Match, the winners will be determined by the taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark in accordance with the International Football Association Board Decision in the Laws of the Game; and
- ii. between Tiers 2 and 3:
 - a. the clubs finishing in last position in each of the two divisions of Tier 2 will be relegated to Tier 3 and (after considering the representations made at the joint liaison committee meeting held under Regulation 6(b) below) placed in a division of Tier 3 by the FAW in the most geographically appropriate division of Tier 3;
 - b. two clubs will be promoted from Tier 3, provided that they obtain a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season. The promoted clubs will be determined by the Tier 3 leagues as follows:
 - the club finishing in first position in the South Wales Combined League of Tier 3 shall be promoted to the Adran South of Tier 2 provided that it obtains a Tier 2 Club Licence for the next Playing Season. Should the club finishing in first position fail to obtain a Tier 2 Club Licence, the South Wales Combined League may promote the club finishing in second position (but no lower) provided that it obtains a Tier 2 Club Licence;
 - the clubs finishing in first position of the Central Wales North League and the Ceredigion League shall play a semi-final Play-Off Match. The winner of this semi-final Play-Off Match shall play the

club finishing in first position in the North Wales Coast League in a final Play-Off Match;

- If a club finishing in first position of the Central Wales North League, Ceredigion League, or North Wales Coast League fails to obtain a Tier 2 Club License, the relevant league may nominate the club finishing in second position in that league (but no lower) to play in a Play-Off Match;
- The winner of the final Play-Off Match shall be promoted to the Adran North of Tier 2;
- if a club nominated by the Central Wales North League or the Ceredigion League fails to obtain a Tier 2 Club License, it will not be eligible to play in the semi-final Play-Off Match and the other club due to play in that match will receive a bye to play in the final Play-Off Match (subject to it obtaining a Tier 2 Club License). If neither of the clubs nominated by the Central Wales North League and the Ceredigion League obtain a Tier 2 Club License, then the club nominated by the North Wales Coast League shall be promoted to the Adran North of Tier 2;
- if the club nominated by the North Wales Coast League fails to obtain a Tier 2 Club License, then the winner of the semi-final Play-Off Match will be promoted to the Adran North of Tier 2;
- each such Play-Off Match will be played over a single leg and staged at a neutral ground selected and organised by the FAW (or its nominee); and
- in the event of the scores being level at the end of 90 minutes play in any such Play-Off Match, the winners of each Play-Off Match will be determined by the taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark in accordance with the International Football Association Board Decision in the Laws of the Game.

- (g) The number of clubs promoted to a Tier must equate to the number of clubs relegated from the Tier, unless this would result in the Adran Premier having more or less than 8 teams or a division of Tier 2 having more or less than 8 teams in the next Playing Season or, in the case of Tier 2, any club playing in a division inappropriate to its geographical location. In such circumstances, the FAW may consider:
- i. reducing the number of clubs relegated from the higher Tier;
 - ii. increasing the number of clubs relegated from the lower Tier;
 - iii. increasing or decreasing the number of clubs promoted into or out of any Tier;
- or

- iv. placing a club promoted or relegated to or from a Tier, or a club in a Tier that has not been promoted or relegated, in a different division of the relevant Tier to that which it would otherwise be promoted or relegated, or would have remained.
- (h) No National League shall promote a club which does not finish as champions, or runners up, in its division.
- (i) All clubs who wish to make an application to be assessed against the relevant Club Licensing Criteria for a Club Licence and therefore who, if successful, will be eligible to be play in the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 (as applicable) in the following Playing Season must do so using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time and in accordance with the relevant Club Licensing Regulations.
- (j) Any club proposing ground sharing arrangements for matches in the next Playing Season in the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 must ensure written confirmation is provided to the FAW by 1st March. This arrangement must satisfy the FAW and must be for a minimum of one Playing Season. Any club entering into a ground sharing arrangement for one Playing Season and being promoted on this basis, will automatically be relegated after one Playing Season if they are unable to continue the arrangement and are unable to confirm their facilities for the following Playing Season by 1st March. Time shall be of the essence in respect of all deadlines in this sub-clause of the Regulations.
- (k) Any club proposing to change its registered home ground after approval of their Club Licence for the next Playing Season in the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 must apply in writing to the FAW for its approval. As a minimum, the proposed new registered home ground must meet the relevant Club Licensing Criteria.
- (l) The inspection of clubs' facilities for matches in the Adran Premier shall be the responsibility of the FAW as per the Tier 1 Club Licensing Regulations. The inspection of clubs' facilities for matches in Tier 2 shall be the responsibility of the FAW as per the Tier 2 Club Licensing Regulations. . The FAW shall be solely responsible for determining whether the applicant complies with the Club Licensing Criteria of the relevant National League.

Applicant clubs must pay one Club Licence application fee and the highest Tier of the pyramid to which the Club applies, is the applicable fee.

Application for Tier 1 Club Licence = £100

Application for Tier 2 Club Licence = £50

All Club Licence application fees will be returned to clubs that are successful at the First Instance Body. Furthermore, any Club which pays for and subsequently successfully appeals against the decision of the First Instance Body, shall have their appeal fee returned, but would forfeit their Club Licence application fee.

- (m) In respect of the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2, National Leagues and Area Associations must advise the FAW and each other within seven days of end of the Playing Season of the clubs who, subject to these Regulations, will be relegated or, having satisfied the Club Licensing Criteria, will be eligible for promotion.

4. **The Movement of Clubs within the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 3 other than by Promotion or Relegation**

- (a) Whenever a club applies pursuant to Rule 11.1.1.3 for admission to Membership of the FAW as a Qualifying Club playing in a National League, the following will apply:
- i. The application by the club should be submitted as soon as possible and in any event must be received by the Chief Executive of the FAW by 1st June.
 - ii. The application should include details of:
 - a. the reason for the application;
 - b. the proposed playing name;
 - c. the evidence that the club meets the relevant Club Licensing Criteria; and
 - d. the management structure of the club.
 - iii. The application will be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. Without limiting such discretion, the Directors shall have the power to:
 - a. grant consent as applied for; or
 - b. grant consent in principle but order the applicant club play at a different Tier in Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 to that applied for; or
 - c. refuse consent for the applicant club to play in Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 but order the applicant club play in a league at a Tier in the Pyramid League System below Tier 2; or
 - d. in any of the above cases where consent is granted or an order made, impose such conditions as the Directors think necessary including, without limitation, the playing name of the applicant club or, where there is a strong connection between the applicant club and the club that has, for example, (1) been wound up or (2) is being taken over as a going concern by the applicant club, the Directors will have the power to impose a condition requiring the applicant club to make a contribution (in whole or in part in the Directors' absolute discretion) to the Football Related Liabilities of the club that has been wound up or is being taken over; or
 - e. refuse the application.

Solely as guidance to any potential applicant under this Regulation 4 (a) that has a strong connection to a club that has been wound up, and without limiting the absolute discretion of the Directors, the FAW will ordinarily expect the applicant club to apply to join the Pyramid League System either at Tier 3 or two Tiers below the level at which the other (connected) club competed prior to being wound up, whichever is the lower.

- (b) If a Qualifying Club ceases to compete in a National League during a Playing Season but that Qualifying Club wishes to apply to continue playing in the Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 in the following Playing Season, the following will apply:
- i. An application by the Qualifying Club should be submitted as soon as possible and in any event must be received by the Chief Executive of the FAW by 1st June.
 - ii. The application should include details of:
 - a. the reason for the application, including the reason the Qualifying Club ceased to compete in the National League;
 - b. the evidence that the club meets the relevant Club Licensing Criteria; and
 - c. the management structure of the applicant.
 - iii. The application will be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. Without limiting such discretion, the Directors shall have the power to:
 - a. grant consent as applied for; or
 - b. grant consent in principle but order the Qualifying Club play at a different Tier in Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 to that applied for; or
 - c. refuse consent for the Qualifying Club to play in Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 but order the Qualifying Club play in a league at a Tier in the Pyramid League System below Tier 2; or
 - d. in any of the above cases where consent is granted or an order made, impose such conditions as the Directors think necessary including, without limitation, a condition requiring the applicant club to discharge (in whole or in part in the Directors' absolute discretion) the Football Related Liabilities of the club before the commencement of the next Playing Season; or
 - e. refuse the application.

Solely as guidance to Qualifying Clubs making an application under this Regulation 4(b) and without limiting the absolute discretion of Directors, the FAW will ordinarily expect a Qualifying Club to play in Tier 2 of the Pyramid League System or one level below the level at which it competed prior to ceasing to compete, whichever is the lower.

- (c) If two or more Qualifying Clubs or one Qualifying Club and another club propose a transaction or series of transactions which result in the merging or consolidation of those two clubs into one club (“the Proposed Merged Club”) and wish to apply for consent to play in Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 in the following Playing Season, the following will apply:
- i. A joint application by the two clubs must be received by the Chief Executive of the FAW by no later than 1st June.

- ii. The application should include details of:
 - a. the reason for the application;
 - b. the proposed playing name;
 - c. the evidence that the club meets the relevant Club Licensing Criteria;
 - d. the proposed management structure;
 - e. identification of all Football Related Liabilities;
 - f. a declaration that the Proposed Merged Club will accept responsibility for (and evidence that it can discharge within a reasonable period of time) all the Football Related Liabilities of the two clubs; and
 - g. a declaration that each applicant club is compliant with the Rules and rules of membership of its relevant National League or Area Association.
- iii. The application will be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. Without limiting such discretion, the Directors shall have the power to:
 - a. grant consent as applied for; or
 - b. grant consent in principle but order the Proposed Merged Club play at a different Tier in Pyramid Tiers 1 - 2 to that applied for; or
 - c. refuse consent for the Proposed Merged Club to play in Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 but order the Proposed Merged Club play in a league at a Tier in the Pyramid League System below Tier 2; or
 - d. in any of the above cases where consent is granted or an order made, impose such conditions as the Directors think necessary including, without limitation, a condition requiring the Proposed Merged Club to discharge (in whole or in part in the Directors' absolute discretion) the Football Related Liabilities of both applicant clubs before the commencement of the next Playing Season; or
 - e. refuse the application.
- (d) Subject to the Regulation 5 below, any application to fill a vacancy or otherwise compete in the Pyramid Tiers 1 – 2 in any other circumstances shall be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. The Directors shall only consider an application from a club playing at the immediate Tier below the Tier to which it applies to join and who has obtained the Club Licence for the higher Tier for the next Playing Season. Each club who meets those criteria shall be deemed automatically to have applied and each such club shall be considered by the Directors unless any club has notified the FAW by 1st June that it does not wish to be considered.

5. Incorporation and De-incorporation of a Club

- (a) Any application to continue competing in the Pyramid Tiers 1- 2 following incorporation or de-incorporation of a Qualifying Club under Rule 134 shall be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. The following will apply:
 - i. An application by the Qualifying Club should be submitted as soon as possible.
 - ii. The application should include details of:
 - a. the reason(s) for the application;
 - b. the evidence that the proposed transferee meets the relevant Club Licensing Criteria; and
 - c. the management structure of the proposed transferee;
 - d. identification of all Football Related Liabilities;
 - e. a declaration by the proposed transferee that it will accept responsibility for (and evidence that it can discharge within a reasonable period of time), all the Football Related Liabilities of the Qualifying Club; and
 - f. a declaration that the Qualifying Club and the proposed transferee (as applicable) are compliant with the Rules and rules of membership of the relevant National League or Area Association.
- (b) The application will be determined by the Directors in their absolute discretion. Without limiting such discretion, the Directors shall have the power to:
 - a. grant consent as applied for; or
 - b. where consent is granted, impose such conditions as the Directors think necessary including, without limitation, a condition requiring the proposed transferee to discharge (in whole or in part in the Directors' absolute discretion) the Football Related Liabilities of the Qualifying Club before the end of the current Playing Season; or
 - e. refuse the application.

6. Joint Liaison Committee

- (a) A joint liaison committee ("JLC") shall discuss matters of policy relating to Club Licensing Criteria and promotion and relegation issues which are common to the leagues in the Pyramid League System.
- (b) The JLC shall meet annually no sooner than 1st February and no later than 31st May each year and will be arranged by the FAW who will provide 14 days' notice of the date and venue of the meeting along with a copy of the agenda specifying the business to be considered. Representatives of all National Leagues must attend. Area Associations should also be invited to attend to discuss relevant matters concerning promotion and relegation between Tiers 2 and 3 but the final decision will be made by the FAW using its power under Regulation 3(f)(ii) above.
- (c) Any other meetings of the JLC that are deemed necessary can be called at any time by the FAW upon giving the notice referred to in Regulation 6(b) above.

- (d) Meetings of the JLC shall be chaired by a FAW representative.
- (e) The expense of holding meetings of the JLC shall be borne by the FAW. The expenses of the relevant representatives attending JLC meetings shall be met by the National League or the Area Association the delegate is representing.
- (f) JLCs shall have no jurisdiction over, or responsibility for, boundary adjustments for clubs playing in any National League or Area Association. Such jurisdiction and responsibility shall rest solely with the FAW.

Appendix 1

PYRAMID STRUCTURE

TIER 1



ADRAN PREMIER
8 CLUBS

TIER 2



ADRAN NORTH
8 CLUBS



ADRAN SOUTH
8 CLUBS

TIER 3

NORTH WALES COAST LEAGUE **CENTRAL WALES NORTH LEAGUE** **CEREDIGION LEAGUE** **SOUTH WALES COMBINED LEAGUE**

TIER 4

AREA ASSOCIATION LEAGUES

