FAW Boys National Academi League Under 14s, Under 15s & Under 16s – National League

Rules 2026/2027

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 In these Rules, the following words and expressions have the following meanings:

1.1.1 **'Assistant Referee'** means the assistant referee appointed by the FAW in accordance with these Rules for who is responsible for taking decisions on all facts connected with a Match and for ensuring that the Match is conducted in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

1.1.2 **'Business Day'** means a day that is not a Saturday or Sunday or a public or bank holiday in Wales.

1.1.3 **'Clear Days'** means, in relation to the period of notice, that period excluding the day when notice is given or deemed to be given and the day for which it is given or on which it is to take effect.

1.1.4 **'Club'** means an association football club which is for the time being a member of the League or (where the context requires) a prospective member or a former member of the League.

1.1.5 **'FAW'** means the Football Association of Wales Limited.

1.1.6 **'FAW Regulations'** means the regulations, standing orders, byelaws, orders, codes, policies, procedures, directives and instructions for the time being of the FAW.

1.1.7 **'FAW Rules'** means the rules as defined in the FAW articles of association.

1.1.8 **'Fourth Official'** means the fourth official appointed by the FAW in accordance with these Rules for who is responsible for taking decisions on all facts connected with a Match and for ensuring that the Match is conducted in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

1.1.9 **'Home Club'** means the Club on whose ground any Match should be or should have been played and where ground sharing is in operation the Club whose name first appears on the relevant Match details issued by the FAW.

1.1.10 **'League'** means the 'FAW Boys National Academi Under 14s – National League','FAW Boys National Academi Under 15s – National League', and 'FAW Boys National Academi Under 16s – National League' (as applicable), or as such name may be amended from time to time by the FAW.

1.1.11 **'League Phase'** means the eight (8) National League Matches played by each Club before the Play-Offs.

1.1.12 **'League Table'** means the table used to rank Clubs following the completion of the League Phase.

1.1.13 **'Match'** means any association football match played in the League.

1.1.14 **'Match Officials'** means the Referee, Assistant Referees and any Fourth Official for a Match.

1.1.15 **'National Association'** means the organisation responsible for governing association football within a particular country and which is recognised as such by FIFA and/or UEFA as the sole governing body of association football in that country.

1.1.16 **'National League Champion'** means the winner of the Play-Off Final.

1.1.17 **'Official'** means any director, secretary or other duly authorised representative of a Club.

1.1.18 **'PGAC'** means the Professional Game Advisory Committee of the FAW constituted in accordance with the FAW Standing Orders.

1.1.19 **'PGAC Disciplinary Panel'** means the subcommittee of the PGAC consisting of a panel of 3 members of the PGAC constituted by the FAW from time to time to consider disciplinary matters pursuant to Rule 3.6 below.

1.1.20 **'Player'** means any association football player, whether or not registered with the FAW to play for a Club.

1.1.21 **'Playing Season'** is as defined in the FAW Rules.

1.1.22 **'Play-Offs'** means the two Play-Off Semi-Finals and the Play-Off Final.

1.1.23 **'Play-Off Semi-Final'** means either Match played between the Clubs finishing first and fourth, and second and third, respectively, in the League Table.

1.1.24 **'Play-Off Final'** means the Match played between the winners of the two Play-Off Semi-Finals.

1.1.25 **'Referee'** means the referee appointed by the FAW in accordance with these Rules who is responsible for taking decisions on all facts connected with a Match and for ensuring that the Match is conducted in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

1.1.26 **'Rules'** means these Rules of the League as amended from time to time.

1.1.27 **'Season'** is as defined in the FAW Rules.

1.1.28 **'Sponsorship Rights'** means any and all sponsorship rights worldwide in perpetuity relating to the League, including rights to use League designations (such as title sponsor, official sponsor, official partner and/or official supplier of the League), League advertising rights, rights to use League logos, rights to League press and other public relations campaigns, rights to League licensing, merchandising and promotions.

1.1.29 **'Sponsorship Contracts'** means any and all contracts entered into by the FAW and/or its agents and licensees in or ancillary to the exercise of the Sponsorship Rights.

1.1.30 **'Team Sheet'** means the information as provided by the League from time to time listing the numbers, surnames and first names of the Players in the relevant Club team's Match day squad, together with the surnames and first names of Officials to be seated on the substitutes' bench for a Match.

1.1.31 '**Transmission Rights**' means the sole and exclusive worldwide right in perpetuity to record (a) television or other moving pictures of any Match; (b)

sounds of and/or commentary upon any Match and (c) data relating to any Match (and, in each case, have sole and exclusive access to the ground of each Club to do so) and transmit and/or exploit and/or otherwise make available the whole or any part of such recordings in any language and whether live and/or delayed by any and all manner and means in all current and future media including by terrestrial, cable and satellite television, radio, internet and mobile networks and whether to the public or closed groups, and to authorise others to do so.

1.1.32 **'Transmission Partner(s)'** means any Transmission Rights partner of the FAW from time to time.

1.1.33 **'Away Club'** means the other Club due to play in a relevant Match who is not the Home Club.

1.2 A reference to a person includes a body corporate and an unincorporated body of persons.

1.3 Referring to natural persons include all genders. The singular case applies to the plural and vice versa.

1.4 The headings in these Rules are inserted for ease of reference and do not affect the interpretation of these Rules.

1.5 The terms 'include', 'including', 'for example', 'such as' and 'in particular' or any similar expression shall be construed as illustrative, without limiting the sense or scope of the words preceding them.

2. General

2.1 Acceptance of membership of the League shall constitute an agreement between the Club concerned and the FAW, to be bound by and comply with these Rules, such agreement to be effective from the date of the Club's admission to the League and to terminate from the date a Club ceases to be a member of the League.

2.2 In addition to these Rules, all Clubs shall be bound by and comply with:

2.2.1 The FAW Rules and FAW Regulations; and

2.2.2 The Laws of the Game and any applicable IFAB protocols, instructions and/or procedures.

2.3 In the event that any of these Rules conflict with the FAW Rules or FAW Regulations the FAW Rules or FAW Regulations shall prevail.

3. Business of the League

3.1 The business of the League shall be conducted by the FAW which, subject to the FAW Rules and FAW Regulations, shall have jurisdiction over all matters relating to the administration of the League and the conduct of Clubs.

3.2 The PGAC shall consist of members as decided by the FAW from time to time. It is a committee of the FAW responsible for overseeing the strategy of the League and will normally meet bi-monthly.

3.3 The President of the League shall be the President of the FAW for the time being.

3.4 The FAW shall defray out of the funds of the League all expenses in respect of the administration of the League. A member of the PGAC may be paid out of League funds such expenses incurred through attendance at meetings of, or in connection with, the League, as the FAW may approve.

3.5 The FAW may do all such acts and exercise all such powers as may be required to give effect to the provisions of these Rules. Save for those matters which in the first instance are to be dealt with or determined by other bodies of the FAW in accordance with the FAW Rules or FAW Regulations.

3.6 The PGAC Disciplinary Panel shall in the first instance determine all breaches of these Rules or other matters of misconduct or dispute by or between Clubs, Players, Officials or other personnel directly or indirectly involved with the League. The PGAC Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to impose fines and any other sanctions (including deduction of points or suspension from the League) as the PGAC Disciplinary Panel shall consider appropriate, subject always to the rights of appeal.

3.7 Each member of the PGAC shall be furnished with a pass (which shall not be transferable) and all Clubs shall admit the holder to their grounds and stands to all Matches.

3.8 In relation to any matter not specifically addressed in these Rules the FAW shall, subject to the FAW Rules and FAW Regulations, have the power to take such action and make such decisions, orders and impose such penalties as it deems necessary and to follow such procedure as it considers appropriate.

4. League Title and Club Membership

4.1 Any Club wishing to participate in the League must inform the FAW of their desire to join the League by 1st July preceding the start of the Playing Season, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time.

4.2 Subject to the relevant Club complying with Rule 4.1 and provided there is space available, the FAW may admit Clubs who fulfil the following criteria:

4.2.1 Any Club who obtains an FAW Boys National Academi Licence; or

4.2.2 any other Club the FAW deems appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

5. League Format, Play-Offs and Champions

5.1 At each age group, the League will comprise all participating Clubs competing within one National League. Clubs shall not be required to play every other participating Club. Each Club's fixtures will be determined in accordance with Rules 5.6 and 5.7 below.

5.2 The FAW shall determine annually the date on which Matches in each Playing Season shall commence and the date on which the normal Playing Season of the League shall be intended to terminate.

5.3 The FAW must be promptly informed by the relevant Club in advance of all proposed fixtures to be played (and afterwards all results of fixtures played).

5.4 All Matches shall be eleven (11) v eleven (11). Under 14 Matches shall be seventy (70) minutes' duration. Under 15 and Under 16 Matches shall be eighty (80) minutes' duration. Three (3) points will be awarded to a Club for a win in a Match at home or away, and one (1) point for a drawn Match at home or away.

5.5 During the League Phase, each Club shall play eight (8) matches, comprising four (4) Matches at home and four (4) Matches away.

5.6 The FAW shall determine the allocation of opponents and the fixture programme for each Club using such methods as it considers appropriate. In doing so, the FAW shall take account of geographical distribution, cross-regional travel, age-group alignment and any other relevant sporting or operational considerations.

5.7 The FAW shall use reasonable endeavours to align the Under 12 and Under 13 fixture programmes so that teams from the same Club play the same opposing Club during the same match round and at the same venue. Fixtures may also be aligned with the Under 14 programme where the same Clubs participate.

5.8 The FAW shall use reasonable endeavours to align the Under 15 and Under 16 fixture programmes so that teams from the same Club play the same opposing Club during the same match round and at the same venue. Where possible, those Matches shall be played at the opposite venue to the corresponding Under 12, Under 13 and Under 14 Matches.

5.9 Where two or more Clubs in the League Phase possess the same number of points, the following criteria will be applied in the order given to determine their rankings:

5.9.1 Superior goal difference obtained in all Matches;

5.9.2 Higher or highest number of goals scored in all Matches;

5.9.3 Higher or highest number of wins in all Matches;

5.9.4 Higher or highest number of away wins in all Matches; and

5.9.5 Lower or lowest disciplinary points total based only on yellow and red cards received in all Matches.

5.10 In the event two or more Clubs in the League Phase remain level and cannot be separated following the application of the criteria set out in Rule 5.9, the Clubs concerned shall play-off in a format as directed by the FAW.

5.11 At the conclusion of the League Phase, the four highest ranked Clubs at each age group shall qualify for the Play-Offs.

5.12 The Play-Off Semi-Finals shall be arranged as follows:

5.12.1 The Club finishing in 1st position shall play against the Club finishing in 4th position.

5.12.2 The Club finishing in 2nd position shall play against the Club finishing in 3rd position.

5.12.3 Each Match shall be played at the registered home ground of the higher-ranked Club, unless otherwise determined by the FAW.

5.13 The winners of the Matches played pursuant to Rule 5.12 shall compete in the Play-Off Final. The date, venue and kick-off time of the Play-Off Final shall be determined by the FAW.

5.14 The winner of the Play-Off Final shall be declared the National League Champion at the relevant age group.

5.15 The Matches in the Play-Off Semi-Final(s) and the Play-Off Final shall be played for the duration applicable to the relevant age group under Rule 5.4. If the result is a draw at the end of the applicable duration under Rule 5.4, the winners shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the Laws of the Game and any applicable IFAB protocols, instructions and/or procedures.

5.16 The National League Champion Club shall hold the National League trophy for approximately one year. The FAW will be responsible for engraving the trophy. The Cup must be returned to the FAW no later than 1st March in the following Playing Season. In addition to the National League trophy, the FAW shall present twenty-five (25) souvenirs to the National League Champion Club. The date, time and location of any such presentation shall be decided by the FAW.

5.17 If a Club wishes to resign from the League after being accepted by the FAW and before completing its fixtures, it may be liable to a sanction.

5.18 If a Club wishes to resign from the League at the end of a Playing Season it must do so by 1st April within that Playing Season. Giving notice after this date may result in the Club being liable to a sanction.

5.19 Each Club shall play its full strength in each Match. The fine for non-observance of this Rule to be at the discretion of the PGAC Disciplinary Panel.

6. Exclusion of Clubs – Misconduct by Club, their Officials, Players or Others

6.1 It is the responsibility of all Clubs to ensure that their Officials, Players or other members of the Club do not, by their written or spoken words or actions, bring the League, any Match Official, or any other Club into disrepute.

7. FAW Boys Academi License

7.1 Only those Clubs and prospective Clubs which attain a FAW Boys National Academi License under FAW Regulations shall be eligible for membership of the League.

8. Annual Subscriptions

8.1 The FAW may charge all member Clubs and annual subscription/entrance fee. The FAW shall inform all member Clubs of annual subscription/entrance fees by 1st June each year. The member Club shall pay the stipulated annual subscription and/or entrance fee via COMET by 31st July each year.

8.2 Clubs failing to pay any debt owing to the FAW by the due date will automatically incur a fine of £20 per month that the money is outstanding.

9. Notices

9.1 Any notice or other communication to be given in accordance with these Rules shall be delivered in accordance with rule 144 of the FAW Rules. All notices sent to the Clubs shall be sent to the secretary of the Club whose name and, address, email address and telephone number(s) shall be notified by the Club to the FAW.

9.2 Any notice or other communication to be served on the FAW shall be addressed to FAW, Vale Resort, Pontyclun, CF72 8JY, or by email to such email address issued for such purpose by the FAW from time to time, or via such online system or procedure prescribed by the FAW from time to time. Proof of service shall be in accordance with rule 144 of the FAW Rules.

10. Alterations to these Rules

10.1 Club proposals for alterations to these Rules, together with the name of their Club proposers and seconders, shall be received by the FAW no later than the 31st March.

Commented [NL1]: FAW Rule 30 relates to changes of Member or Associate Member Rules.

11. Disciplinary Proceedings, Disputes, Appeals, Independent Arbitration and Sanctions

11.1 Save for those matters considered by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel pursuant to Rules 3.5 and 3.6 above, the provisions relating to disciplinary procedures, disputes, appeals, independent arbitration, penalties, sanctions and other powers shall be dealt with in accordance with the FAW Rules and FAW Regulations.

12. Registrations, Contracts and Transfer of Players

12.1 Provisions relating to Player registrations, contracts and transfers shall (if as so far as applicable) be dealt with in accordance with these Rules and the FAW Rules and FAW Regulations including Section H of the FAW Rules.

12.2 All Player registration and transfer forms and any other applicable documents must be received by the FAW (in each case, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time) by 5pm on the last Business Day prior to the Match in which the Club wishes the Player to participate.

12.3 All Clubs must register a minimum of fifteen (15) Players and may register a maximum of twenty (20) Players in respect of each age group in which they participate, at any one time during the Playing Season. A minimum of fifteen (15) Players must be registered by 5pm on the last Business Day before the first game of the Playing Season whose registrations comply with Rule 13. Clubs failing to play scheduled Matches because they have insufficient Players registered, will be subject to sanction by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel.

13. Player Eligibility

13.1 Players will be eligible to play in each League as follows:

FAW Boys National Academi Under 14

13.1.1 a Player must be:

13.1.1.1 male; or female with prior written approval from the FAW pursuant to Regulation 2.9 of the FAW Small-Sided Regulations and Regulation 2.5.2 of the FAW Junior Football Regulations;

13.1.1.2 under the age of fourteen (14) as of midnight on 31st August in each Playing Season; and

13.1.1.3 must be in year eight (8) or nine (9) of compulsory education.

FAW Boys National Academi Under 15

13.1.2 a Player must be:

13.1.2.1 male; or female with prior written approval from the FAW pursuant to Regulation 2.9 of the FAW Small-Sided Regulations and Regulation 2.5.2 of the FAW Junior Football Regulations;

13.1.2.2 under the age of fifteen (15) as of midnight on 31st August in each Playing Season; and

13.1.2.3 must be in year nine (9) or ten (10) of compulsory education.

FAW Boys National Academi Under 16

13.1.3 a Player must be:

13.1.3.1 male; or female with prior written approval from the FAW pursuant to Regulation 2.9 of the FAW Small-Sided Regulations and Regulation 2.5.2 of the FAW Junior Football Regulations;

13.1.3.2 under the age of sixteen (16) as of midnight on 31st August in each Playing Season; and

13.1.3.3 must be in year ten (10) or eleven (11) of compulsory education.

13.1.4 The age and school year requirements shall not apply to a female Player to the extent permitted by the FAW's written approval under Regulation 2.9 of the FAW Small-Sided Regulations and 2.5.2 of the FAW Junior Football Regulations.

13.2 Any Player who does not satisfy the criteria set out in Rule 13.1 will be considered an ineligible Player.

13.3 No Club may play an ineligible Player in any Match. Any Club that plays an ineligible player in a Match will have three (3) points per infringement deducted from its League record for that Playing Season, up to a maximum of twelve (12) points, and will also be liable to a fine as determined by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel. If the Player is a nominated but unused substitute for a Match, they shall be deemed as not having played for the Club in that Match.

13.4 The maximum point deduction referred to in Rule 13.3 applies on each occasion a Club appears before the PGAC Disciplinary Panel or a judicial body for playing an ineligible player in any given Season.

13.5 The PGAC Disciplinary Panel may suspend all or part of a points deduction imposed pursuant to Rule 13.3 above only if satisfied the ineligibility was due to a genuine administration error resulting in a breach relating to a breach of rule 85 (A) of the FAW Rules.

13.6 A Club must not nominate a Player as a substitute for a Match unless they are a duly registered Player for the Club with the FAW and eligible to play in the Match.

14. Registration of Grounds and Ground Sharing

14.1 Each Club must register its ground for Home Matches with the FAW by 30th June prior to the start of the League in each Playing Season and the Club may not use any other ground for Home Matches without the FAW's prior written approval.

15. Scheduling of Matches and Kick-Off Times

15.1 The FAW shall determine how the Matches shall be arranged and rearranged over the Playing Season. The draft schedule of the Matches shall be issued by the FAW for consultation with the Clubs, which may then be amended by the FAW. The FAW may also change the schedule of Matches during the Playing Season to suit the overall interests of the League. The final schedule of Matches approved by the FAW shall not be subject to any appeals or protests by Clubs. The Matches shall take precedence over all competitions in which a Club may engage.

15.2 The Matches will predominantly be played on Sundays, with flexible kick off times.

Guidance

The kick-off time for each Match shall be determined by the Home Club. When setting the kick-off time, the Home Club should give due consideration to the distance to be travelled by the Away Club. If the Clubs are unable to agree on a suitable kick-off time, either Club may refer the matter to the FAW, whose determination shall be final.

15.3 When a Match is postponed for any reason, the FAW will decide the new date on which the Match is to be played following consultation (the time period for which will be at the discretion of the FAW) with both Clubs but without right of appeal by either Club.

15.4 Any dispute between two or more Clubs as to the arrangement of a Match shall be referred to and decided by the FAW, and the FAW shall have absolute discretion in that respect.

Guidance

In cases where moves cannot be mutually agreed, Clubs can refer the matter to the FAW for determination.

On these occasions, the following non-exhaustive list of points all form part of the FAW's consideration:

- *Home Clubs must provide compelling motives and clear rationale for the alteration, together with any supporting evidence. These can include both operational arguments as well as those relating to commercial gain.*
- *Away Clubs must provide their reasons for objecting to the move and provide any substantiating evidence.*

- *What are both Clubs' fixtures either side of the Match in question.*
- *Is there an inequitable run of away fixtures over a short period of time.*
- *Any effect on the ability to schedule undated fixtures.*
- *Timing of the request being made.*

In the absence of any specific and compelling footballing reasons being given by the Away Club that would prevent a move, permission for such requests will in normal circumstances not be unreasonably withheld.

15.5 All changes to time of kick-off of a Match which may be agreed between the two (2) participating Clubs shall be promptly notified to the FAW by the Home Club at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the Match, for approval by the FAW.

15.6 In all Matches, the half-time interval shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.

15.7 Where both Clubs are in agreement, a Match may be brought forward to the preceding week of the original Match and not less than seventy- two (72) hours after the last Match either Club has fulfilled. No kick-off times later than the scheduled time will be permitted, unless under floodlights. At least fourteen (14) Clear Days prior notice is required from Clubs wishing to re-arrange a Match or change a kick off time, and each such notice period must exclude the new proposed date of a Match; a request made in less than this period of time will only be considered by the FAW in exceptional circumstances.

15.8 Clubs affected by the selection of two (2) or more players for International matches may be permitted by the FAW to postpone their League Match on the days of such matches. Any requests to postpone Matches for this reason shall be made in writing to the FAW within forty eight (48) hours of the relevant International squad announcement. Consideration shall be given regarding late call ups to the above-mentioned International matches. The League reserves the right to arrange Matches for those Clubs who do not have a scheduled Match.

15.9 Clubs must give priority to Matches whether home or away. This means that a Club must not allow any non-Match related activities to interfere with or take precedence over a Match.

<u>Guidance</u>

This Rule 15.9 will apply throughout the Playing Season, including in cases where the Association rearranges Matches following confirmation of the initial fixture schedule. Clubs are expected to cancel or postpone any pre-existing events at their venues to prioritise Matches as required.

15.10 Any Club without just cause failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Match on the appointed date or causing a Match to be abandoned without giving a reason deemed to be satisfactory by the FAW shall have three points deducted, be liable for any reasonable expenses as deemed necessary by the FAW and shall be fined fifty pounds (£50.00). Any subsequent charges for the same offence will be fined one hundred pounds (£100.00) and shall have three points deducted for each offence.

15.11 The League reserves the right to arrange Matches for those Clubs who do not have a scheduled Match on a Sunday. Clubs shall be given a minimum of fourteen (14) clear

days' notice to any new Match dates, unless in extreme circumstances or when mutually agreed by all parties.

15.12 The FAW retains the right to be the final arbiter of the date and kick off time in the best interests of the League, including for televised Matches.

15.13 Away Clubs shall also confirm in such Match correspondence to Home Clubs if they will be attending post-Match hospitality or not.

16. Condition of Grounds and Postponements

16.1 Any Match not completed may be ordered to stand as a completed Match or replayed for the full duration applicable to the relevant age group under Rule 5.4, as the FAW may direct. In the event of a Match not being played to a finish owing to fog or other causes over which neither Club has control, the Home Club shall take its own gate receipts of such uncompleted Match and the gate receipts of the replayed Match.

16.2 A Match may only be postponed:

16.2.1 With the approval of the Match Referee or the available Referee and the FAW on the day of the Match -1.

16.2.2 With the approval of the Match Referee or the available Referee on the day of the Match.

16.2.3 By order of the police.

16.2.4 By order of any other authority exercising its statutory powers; or

16.2.5 With the approval of the FAW.

16.3 Each participating Club shall take all reasonable steps to avoid the postponement of a Match.

16.4 In the case of the Away Club, should it have undertaken all or part of the journey, travelling expenses and meal allowance may be claimed based on the total mileage on the whole journey. The allowance will be as assessed by the FAW up to a maximum of £500.

16.5 A Club may obtain the approval of the FAW to postpone a Match because of an epidemic or similar affecting the availability of its Players. If granted that Club shall be liable to pay any direct expenses (if any) incurred by the opposing Club as a result of the postponement.

16.5.1 Requests for the postponement of a Match on medical grounds will not be considered more than forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled time of kick-off.

16.5.2 Medical certificates for those Players affected sent signed by the Player's own doctor must be forwarded to the FAW within fourteen (14) days of the postponement, along with the full list of Players currently engaged by the Club during the Season, giving full reasons against each name for that Player unavailability. Failure to provide such evidence may see the club sanctioned as per an unfulfilled fixture.

16.6 Details of the compensation claim by either/both Clubs shall be placed before the FAW, with all the details clearly itemised.

16.7 When a Match is postponed for any reason, the FAW will decide the new date on which the Match is to be played following consultation (the time period for which will be at the discretion of the FAW) with both Clubs but without right of appeal by either Club.

16.8 No Club shall postpone the playing of a Match on account of apparent unfitness of its ground, the Referee being the sole person to decide as to the fitness after inspection. In bad weather, or where it seems apparent that there is not a possibility of the Match being played, it shall be obligatory for the Home Club to call in the most senior FAW qualified Referee available (or designated person as deemed competent by the FAW), to give a ruling as to the fitness. The time of any inspection shall be by mutual agreement between the two Clubs taking into account the travelling time of the Away Club, but shall not be considered more than forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled time of kick-off. In case of dispute, the FAW shall decide the time of any inspection. A Match Official conducting ground inspections shall be entitled to an inspection fee, as set by the FAW from time to time, and travelling expenses to be met by the League.

16.9 In the event of the available Referee declaring the ground unfit, the Home Club shall notify the Away Club and the Match Officials forthwith by email and telephone call to avoid all unnecessary expense in travelling. The Away Club shall forthwith acknowledge receipt of such notice. If the Home Club does not receive an acknowledgement promptly, the Home Club shall forthwith notify the FAW.

16.10 If the available Referee (or designated person as deemed competent by the FAW) does not declare the ground unfit, a final decision shall be made by the Match Referee upon their arrival at the ground (each such Referee taking into account that Referees should not hastily postpone or abandon Matches).

16.11 The FAW may require a Home Club to identify a suitable alternative ground for a Match if they have any concerns about the condition of the Home Club's ground in the build up to a Match. Any such proposed alternative ground shall be subject to the approval of the FAW.

16.12 Any Club failing to fulfil its fixture obligations in respect of any Match on the appointed date or dates or causing the FAW to cancel, postpone, abandon or suspend any Match shall be deemed guilty of misconduct unless the Club is successfully able to demonstrate that Rule 16.13 below applies. The burden of proof will rest with the Club.

16.13 The Club will not be deemed to be guilty of misconduct in accordance with Rule 16.12 above where it is able to demonstrate that:

16.13.1 the dominant and effective cause of the non-fulfilment was the occurrence of an event which was outside the control of the Club ("**Event**"); and

16.13.2 the Club could not have reasonably foreseen or reasonably anticipated and remedied the consequences of the Event prior to the Match despite using its best endeavours to do so.

16.14 The Club failing to fulfil its fixture or causing the FAW to suspend a Match shall be liable to pay compensation for any expenses actually incurred by the opposing Club as a direct result of the failure or suspension. The amount of compensation will be at the discretion of the FAW who will consider every such case on its merits.

17. Match Officials

17.1 The FAW shall decide on the appointments of Match Officials.

17.2 Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least sixty (60) minutes prior to the advertised time of kick-off. The appointed Referee may be required to visit the ground earlier if requested to do so by the Home Club. If any Match Official becomes aware that they are likely to arrive late, they must immediately notify the participating Clubs, other Match Officials and the FAW via telephone calls.

17.3 In cases where it is considered necessary to stop playing a Match owing to adverse weather or another cause, the Referee must wait a reasonable length of time before deciding on abandonment.

17.4 For Matches where only one (1) Referee is appointed, the Assistant Referees should adjudicate the ball out of play.

17.5 Should the appointed Referee fail to appear, the senior Assistant Referee shall take charge. The senior Assistant Referee is the Assistant Referee with the longer service on the League. In the event that there are also no appointed Assistant Referees, the two Clubs must agree prior to the start of the Match to appoint an official at the ground. Such Referee shall be considered to be the Match Official. Priority must be given to anyone who holds a Referee qualification and is prepared to undertake the appointment.

17.6 Each Home Club shall confirm full kit colours (including goalkeeper) using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time at least three (3) days prior to the Match. The Away Club and Referee must also confirm full details (including goalkeeper) via the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time at least three (3) days prior to the Match. Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in a fine. The Match Referee must check the proposed kit at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to kick off and inform the FAW should there be any concerns.

17.7 Match Officials fees (as set by the FAW) shall be paid by the Home Club and the Home Club shall also be liable for their travel expenses, unless otherwise approved by the FAW.

17.8 If a Match Official prefers being paid their fees and expenses either in cash or by bank transfer, they must notify the Home Club of their preference at least forty-eight (48) hours before the Match. Otherwise, the Home Club shall decide on the payment method. The Home Club must pay the Match Officials their fees and expenses either (a) in cash on the day of the Match or (b) by bank transfer within three (3) Business Days after the Match.

17.9 All Match Officials shall be entitled to claim the cheapest form of rail travel available on the day of the Match or motoring expenses determined from time to time by the FAW when travelling by car. Match Officials must travel together when instructed to do so by the FAW.

17.10 In the case of postponed Matches where they have travelled but where the game has not kicked off the Match Officials shall be paid their travelling expenses by the Home Club. They shall also receive half their Match Fee from the Home Club. If a match is abandoned once the Match has commenced, all Match Officials are entitled to claim their full Match fee plus travelling expenses.

17.11 All players who receive treatment, or where the physio/doctor enters the field of play will be required to remain off the field of play for a minimum of 1 minute before returning on the referees' signal.

17.12 The Referee shall send the completed standard Referee's report form to the FAW within sixty (60) minutes of the final whistle, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time.

17.13 The Referee's report form must be complete in all details, including the result of the Match, the full names of the Players taking part in the Match, the names of the substitutes and details of any substitutions made (including the Match time when the substitution was made), and details of any yellow cards and red cards issued (including the Match time when the card was issued).

17.14 Referees must report to the FAW all cases where Clubs commence a Match late, or without eleven (11) Players on the field, where the Team Sheet was amended after submission and also if applicable in case of their own or any Assistant Referee's (including the Fourth Official's) late arrival for any Match as soon as possible after the Match. If applicable Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials must also send an explanation of their late arrival to the FAW as soon as possible after the Match.

17.15 The FAW may appoint a referee observer, whose identity will be confirmed using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time. The Referee Observer will also act as the Match delegate and is responsible for ensuring the orderly organisation of the Match and that the Competition and FAW Rules and Regulations are complied with. The Referee Observer may submit a report to the FAW if they deem it necessary following any alleged breaches of the FAW Rules and FAW Regulations.

17.16 Any comments, questions or complaints regarding the decisions of a given Match Official shall be directed to the FAW (initially via email), not to any individual Match Official. Under no circumstances are conversations between Club personnel and Match Officials to be recorded with any device without the knowledge and permission of all parties.

18. Team Sheets and Strength of Teams

18.1 Both Match Team Sheets must be completed at least thirty (30) minutes before kick-off of each Match.

18.2 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged will be subject to any action decided upon by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel. After the validated Team Sheets have been submitted by both Clubs, and if the Match has not yet kicked off, no replacement is allowed except in the following cases:

18.2.1 If any of the eleven (11) Players indicated on the Team Sheet as forming the starting eleven (11) Players are not able to start the Match due to physical incapacity, they may only be replaced by any of the substitutes listed on the initial Team Sheet. The substitute(s) in question may then only be replaced by a registered Player (or Players) not listed on the initial Team Sheet, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. During the Match, seven (7) Players may still be substituted.

18.2.2 Should the named goalkeeper indicated on the Team Sheet as forming the starting eleven (11) is not able to start the Match due to physical incapacity, they

may be replaced by another nominated goalkeeper, regardless if they have previously been listed as a substitute on the Team Sheet.

18.2.3 If any of the substitutes listed on the Team Sheet are not able to be fielded due to physical incapacity, they may only be replaced by a registered Player not listed on the initial Team Sheet.

18.2.4 The Club concerned must, upon request, provide the FAW with the necessary medical certificates.

Guidance

Once a Club has "CONFIRMED" its team sheet on COMET, it cannot be changed at any point.

18.3 Each Club shall in all Matches be prepared to kick off at the advertised time unless an explanation is offered which is deemed satisfactory by the FAW.

19. Substitutes

19.1 Clubs may nominate up to seven (7) substitutes on the Team Sheet.

19.2 A Club at its discretion may use up to seven (7) rolling substitutes during a Match except to replace a Player or Players who have been sent off or suspended from the Match by the Referee. Substitutions can only be made when the play has been stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission.

19.3 The name(s) and numbers of the substitute(s) must be nominated to the Referee on the Team Sheet in accordance with Rule 18 above.

20. Substitutes Benches and Technical Areas

20.1 At each Match up to eighteen (18) Players and Officials in total (of which no more than seven (7) may be the substitutes or the Players they have replaced on the field of play) may sit on the substitutes' bench of the relevant Club in the designated technical area. The full name of each person and their function must be listed on the Team Sheet.

20.2 Only one (1) person at a time from the relevant Club may stand in the designated technical area. Only one (1) person at a time from the relevant Club may convey tactic instructions from the designated technical area.

20.3 During the Match, substitutes are allowed to leave the designated technical area to warm up. The Referee may determine exactly where they may warm up and how many substitutes are allowed to warm up simultaneously but in any event, no more than three (3) in total from each Club. A Club Official (as indicated on the Team Sheet) may join the substitutes warming up and, if so, is responsible for compliance with the Referee's instructions.

20.4 Each Club participating in a Match must have two (2) sets of warm up bibs available to present to the Referee before the Match. Should there be a colour clash the Referee will decide which bibs the substitutes must wear during their warm-ups.

20.5 Smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) is not allowed in the technical area during Matches.

20.6 Seven (7) home and seven (7) away bibs must be placed opposite the technical areas in preparation for substitutions (as Players are now expected to leave the field at the nearest point after being substituted).

21. Players Insurance

21.1 It is the responsibility of the Club that all insurance matters relating to the activities of the Club are covered. This should include players, staff, facilities, Matches, travel and any other areas for which the Club may be liable. Insurance offered by the FAW in respect of COMET registration may form part of this provision. It is advised that Clubs seek professional guidance regarding all insurance matters.

22. Sponsorship

22.1 The FAW shall have the sole and exclusive right to exercise the Sponsorship Rights and to enter into Sponsorship Contracts and/or authorise others to do so. The Clubs shall do nothing to infringe such rights and shall at their own cost do all such things and sign all such documents as are necessary to facilitate the exercise of the Sponsorship Rights and enable the FAW, its agents and licensees to comply with the terms of Sponsorship Contracts, including the provision of access, facilities and services and the right to use Club, Official and Player names, logos, images and biographies.

23. Transmission of League Matches

23.1 The FAW shall have the sole and exclusive right to exercise the Transmission Rights and enter into Transmission Contracts and/or authorise others to do so. The Clubs shall do nothing to infringe such rights and shall at their own cost do all such things and sign all such documents as are necessary to facilitate the exercise of the Transmission Rights and enable the FAW, its agents and licensees to comply with the terms of Transmission Contracts, including the provision of access, facilities and services and the right to use Club, Official and Player names, logos, images and biographies.

23.2 No Transmission Rights shall be exploited by any Club or any person authorised by any Club, except with the written consent of the FAW. No Club shall take part in any Match at which any Transmission Rights are to be exploited without first obtaining the written consent of the FAW.

23.3 The FAW and its Transmission Partner(s) (and their respective employees, contractors and agents) shall be allowed access to the grounds, structures, facilities and spaces of all Clubs (including without limitation to the television gantries, camera, commentary, presentation, reporter and interview positions, cabling, utilities (including provision of uninterrupted, resilient and adequate power and connectivity supply) and parking facilities) as the FAW may require and/or direct from time to time for the benefit and use for the purpose of the Transmission Rights.

23.4 Each Club will behave towards the FAW's Transmission Partner(s) with the utmost good faith.

Appendix A

Match Officials Fees:

Referee	£30

An allowance of £0.55 per mile will be allowed to all officials officiating who travel by private car. This is to be paid by the home team.