THE NATIONAL RESERVE LEAGUE 2026/2027 SEASON

1. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

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

1.1.1. **'Authorised Kit'** means each Match playing kit approved by the FAW in accordance with Rule 11 below;

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'** in relation to the period of notice means 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. **'Conference'** means the Premier Conference or Championship Conference established for Phase Two in accordance with Rule 12.

1.1.6. **'Division'** means the North Division or South Division.

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

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

1.1.9. **'FAW Rules'** means the Rules for the time being of the FAW.

1.1.10. **'FIFA'** means the Federation Internationale de Football Association.

1.1.11. **'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 and 'Visiting Club' means the other Club due to play in the relevant Match.

1.1.12. **'IFAB'** means International Football Association Board.

1.1.13. **'Junior Player'** is as defined in the FAW Rules.

1.1.14. **'League'** means the FAW National Reserve League, as such name may be amended from time to time by the FAW with the approval of the FAW directors to include the name of a title sponsor.

1.1.15. **'Match'** means any association football Match played in the League pursuant to the format determined by the FAW in accordance with Rule 12.

1.1.16. **'Match Officials'** means the Referee and/or and Assistant Referee and/or any Fourth Official for a Match.

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

1.1.18. **'Over-age Player'** means a Player who attained the age of twenty-one (21) years before 1 September in the relevant Playing Season.

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

1.1.20. **'PGAC Disciplinary Panel'** means a panel of 3 members of the PGAC constituted by the FAW from time to time to consider disciplinary matters pursuant to Rule 3.5 below.

1.1.21. **'Phase One'** and **'Phase Two'** mean the respective phases of the League described in Rule 12.

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

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

1.1.24. **'Region'** means the South East Region or South West Region established for Phase One in accordance with Rule 12.

1.1.25. **'RRA'** means Referee Review Area.

1.1.26. **'Referee Observer'** means an individual appointed by the FAW Match Officials department who observes the performance of Match Officials in Matches.

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

1.1.28. **'Scale of Fines'** means the scale of fines referred to in Rule 26 below.

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

1.1.30. **'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 but excluding Transmission Rights.

1.1.31. **'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.

1.1.32. **'Team Sheet'** means the sheet 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.

1.1.33. **'Technical Area'** means a designated area at the side of a football pitch where the relevant Club team's Officials, unused substitutes and substituted Players are situated during a Match.

1.1.34. **'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.

1.1.35. **'Transmission 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 Transmission Rights.

1.1.36. **'Welsh Cup'** means the FAW Challenge Cup.

1.1.37. **'Youth Player'** is as defined in the FAW Rules.

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.

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 an advisory 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, 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 not exceeding £15,000 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 and (if applicable) the Scale of Fines hereinafter mentioned.

3.6. 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. SUBSCRIPTIONS

4.1. The annual subscription of each Club to the League shall be £50 or such other sum as shall be determined by the FAW from time to time. All annual subscriptions shall be paid before the start of the League in each Playing Season, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time.

5. NOTICES

5.1. 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, address, email address and telephone number(s) shall be notified by the Club to the FAW. Any notice or other communication to be served on the League shall be addressed to the Domestic Leagues department of the FAW, Vale Resort, Pontyclun, CF72 8JY, or by email to such email address issued for such purpose by the League 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.

6. ALTERATIONS TO THESE RULES

6.1. No alteration in these Rules shall be made until they have been approved by the FAW in accordance with Rule 30 of the FAW Rules.

7. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS, DISPUTES, APPEALS, INDEPENDENT ARBITRATION AND SANCTIONS

7.1. 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 including Section E and Rule 146 of the FAW Rules.

8. REGISTRATIONS, CONTRACTS AND TRANSFERS AND PLAYER LISTS

8.1. Provisions relating to Player registrations, contracts and transfers shall (inso 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.

8.2. 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 no later than 5pm on the last Business Day prior to the Match in which the Club wishes the Player to participate.

9. SUBSTITUTES

9.1. A Club may name up to seven (7) substitutes for each Match at its discretion and may use up to five (5) substitutes during a Match except to replace a Player or Players who have been sent off 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.

9.2. During a Match, each Club:

9.2.1. shall have a maximum of three (3) substitution opportunities; and

9.2.2. may in addition make substitutions at half-time in normal time.

Where both Clubs make a substitution at the same time, this will count as a substitution opportunity used by each Club.

9.3. The name(s) and numbers of the substitute(s) must be nominated to the Referee on the Team Sheet in accordance with Rule 16 below.

10. INELIGIBLE PLAYERS

10.1. Subject to Rule 10.2, a Player shall be eligible to participate in a Match only if that Player:

10.1.1. is male;

10.1.2. has attained the age of sixteen (16) years on the date of the Match, and;

10.1.3. has not attained the age of twenty-one (21) before 1st September in the relevant Playing Season.

10.2. As an exception to Rule 10.1.4, a Club may include up to four (4) Over-age Players on its Team Sheet for a Match, provided that:

10.2.1. each Over-age Player has been nominated by the Club using the systems and procedures determined by the FAW from time to time; and

10.2.2. no more than four (4) Over-age Players are on the field of play for the Club at any one time during the Match.

10.3. Any Player who does not satisfy the requirements of Rule 10.1 or, where applicable, Rule 10.2, or who is otherwise ineligible to participate under the FAW Rules or FAW Regulations, shall be considered an ineligible Player.

10.4. No Club may play an ineligible Player in any Match. Any Club which plays an ineligible Player in a Match, or Matches, will have three (3) points deducted from its League record for that Playing Season up to a maximum of 18 points* (or in the case of a Play-Off Match, will forfeit the Match) and will also be liable to a fine. If the Player is a nominated but unused substitute for a Match, he shall be deemed as not having played for the Club in that Match.

*this maximum 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.

10.5. A Player who is named as a substitute on the Team Sheet but does not participate in the Match shall not be considered to have played in that Match for the purposes of this Rule 10.

11. AUTHORISED KITS

11.1. 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.

11.2. Each goalkeeper shall play each Match in a kit clearly distinguishable from the colours of the shirts worn by all outfield players and Match Officials and the other goalkeeper.

11.3. If undershorts or tights or undersocks or undershirts are to be worn by a Player in a Match, they must be of a colour approved by the FAW in relation to the applicable Authorised Kit prior to the relevant Playing Season and they must comply with Laws of the Game and any applicable IFAB protocols, instructions, or procedures.

11.4. No Club shall be permitted to register or play a Match in kit colours (comprising shirts, shorts and socks) which are likely to cause confusion with the outfits worn by Referees and Assistant Referees.

11.5. The Players' shirts for each Match must be clearly numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet handed to the Referee before the Match and there must be no change of numbers during the Match except if there is a change of goalkeeper. The captain of each team shall wear a distinguishing arm band to indicate his status.

11.6. Each Club shall allocate two (2) additional squad numbers and shirts at the beginning of the Playing Season so that they can immediately be assigned to new Player signings. An unmarked blood shirt is also required by every team at every Match.

11.7. The FAW may require all Players participating in Matches to carry the League's and/or a League sponsor's logo on both sleeves of their shirts.

11.8. Each Home Club must ensure that sufficient ball retrievers and/or other personnel are on duty at each Match to ensure a speedy and safe return of the football to the field of play. The colours of the clothing worn by any such ball retrievers and/or other personnel for each Match must not clash with those of either of the competing teams or Match Officials.

11.9. All kits for Matches must comply with FAW Kit Regulations.

12. LEAGUE FORMAT

12.1. The League shall comprise a North Division and a South Division and each shall be played in two phases. The North Division and South Division shall at all times operate separately of each other.

12.2. During Phase One:

12.2.1. The North Division shall operate as one division; and

12.2.2. The South Division shall be regionalised into a South East Region and a South West Region.

12.3. Following the completion of Phase One, each Division shall be split into a Premier Conference and a Championship Conference. Clubs shall be allocated to a Premier Conference or Championship Conference for Phase Two based on their positions at the conclusion of Phase One.

12.4. In the South Division, each Conference shall comprise the relevant Clubs from both the South East Region and the South West Region.

12.5. Before the commencement of each Playing Season, the FAW shall determine and notify Clubs of the detailed format of each Division, including the number of participating Clubs, the number of Clubs allocated to each conference and the number of Matches to be played in each phase.

12.6. The FAW shall seek to ensure that Clubs within the same Division, Region or Conference play an equal number of Matches and that home and away Matches are allocated as equally as reasonably practicable.

12.7. Where changes to the number of participating Clubs or other exceptional circumstances make the notified format impracticable, the FAW may amend the format and shall notify the affected Clubs accordingly.

12.8. The FAW shall determine the date on which Phase One shall conclude. Where any Phase One Match has not been completed by that date, the FAW may determine the treatment of that Match and the method by which the final positions in the North Division, South East Region or South West Region, and the consequent allocation of Clubs to the Conferences for Phase Two, shall be determined.

12.9. The FAW shall determine the date on which Phase Two shall conclude. Where any Phase Two Match has not been completed by that date, the FAW may determine the treatment of that Match and the method by which the final positions in each Conference, and the consequent identity of the North Division Champion and South Division Champion, shall be determined.

12.10. Once the FAW has confirmed the allocation of Clubs to the Premier Conference and Championship Conference for Phase Two, those allocations shall be final. However, the FAW may amend an allocation where it considers this necessary because of a withdrawal, disciplinary decision, administrative error or other exceptional circumstances.

12.11. At the commencement of Phase Two, all Clubs shall begin with zero points. No points, results, goals or other playing records obtained during Phase One shall be carried forward into Phase Two.

12.12. All Matches shall be of ninety (90) 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.

12.13. Where two or more Clubs possess the same number of points in a Division, Region or Conference, their positions shall be determined using only the Matches played during the phase to which the relevant table relates (the "applicable Phase") and by applying the following criteria in the order given:

12.13.1. superior goal difference obtained in all Matches played during the applicable Phase;

12.13.2. higher number of goals scored in all Matches played during the applicable Phase;

12.13.3. higher number of points obtained in the Matches played between the Clubs concerned during the applicable Phase;

12.13.4. superior goal difference obtained in the Matches played between the Clubs concerned during the applicable Phase;

12.13.5. higher number of goals scored in the Matches played between the Clubs concerned during the applicable Phase;

12.13.6. higher number of wins in all Matches played during the applicable Phase;

12.13.7. lower disciplinary points total based on yellow and red cards received during the applicable Phase; and

12.13.8. the Clubs concerned shall play-off, in a format as directed by the FAW.

12.14. At the conclusion of Phase Two:

12.14.1. The Club finishing in first position in the Premier Conference of the North Division shall be the North Division Champion; and

12.14.2. The Club finishing in first position in the Premier Conference of the South Division shall be the South Division Champion.

12.15. Each Division champion Club shall hold the Division trophy for approximately one year. The FAW will be responsible for the engraving of each trophy. Each Cup must be returned to the FAW not later than 1st March in the following Playing Season. In addition to the League trophy, the FAW shall present twenty

five (25) souvenirs to each Division champion Club. Any additional medals must be purchased by the League champion Club. The date, time, and location of any such presentation shall be decided by the FAW.

13. SCHEDULING OF MATCHES AND KICK-OFF TIMES

13.1. The FAW shall determine how the Matches shall be arranged and rearranged over the Playing Season. The draft schedule of 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 determined 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, with the exception of the Welsh Cup, UEFA club competitions and any invitational competition as agreed by the FAW.

13.2. Unless otherwise determined by the FAW, each Match shall initially be scheduled for 2.00pm on a Sunday. During the draft consultation period, the Home Club may propose an alternative date or kick-off time, provided that the proposed date and kick-off time comply with Rules 13.3.3 to 13.3.5.

13.3. Once the final fixture schedule has been published, the Home Club may change a Match to any other date within the relevant Playing Season, without requiring the agreement of the Visiting Club, provided that:

13.3.1. the Home Club gives notice of the change to the FAW and the Visiting Club using the systems and procedures determined by the FAW from time to time;

13.3.2. there are at least fourteen (14) Clear Days between the date on which notice of the change is given and the new date of the Match;

13.3.3. where the Match is to be played on an evening between Monday and Friday, the distance between the Home Club and the Visiting Club is no more than forty (40) miles, unless the Visiting Club agrees otherwise;

13.3.4. where the Match is to be played on an evening between Monday and Friday, the Match kicks off no earlier than 7.30pm and no later than 8.00pm, unless otherwise agreed by both Clubs; and

13.3.5. where the Match is to be played on a Saturday or Sunday, the Match kicks off no earlier than 11.00am and no later than 5.00pm, unless otherwise agreed by both Clubs.

13.4. Where all the requirements of Rule 13.3 are satisfied, the agreement of the Visiting Club shall not be required.

13.5. Where a Home Club wishes to change a Match without satisfying all of the requirements in Rule 13.3, the change may only be made with the agreement of the Visiting Club and the prior approval of the FAW.

13.6. 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

Where a Club seeks to change a Match without satisfying all the requirements of Rule 13.3 and the Clubs cannot reach agreement, 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.*

Whilst it is important to stress that each case will be treated in isolation and be judged on its merits, it should also be noted that 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.

Clubs are also reminded that moves to a Friday evening would not prevent either Club from participating in Matches during the previous midweek where required to do so. Similarly, moves to a Sunday would not prevent utilising the following midweek for a Match.

13.7. All Clubs must adhere to the kick-off time as set by the FAW. Clubs and Match Officials must report any delays to the FAW. It is the responsibility of both Clubs to make arrangements to ensure there are no unnecessary delays to the kick-off time, to include appropriate travel arrangements, Player warm-up periods, and pre-Match timings.

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

13.9. Each Home Club shall confirm its proposed full Authorised Kit colours (including goalkeeper) for a Match, via the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time at least three (3) days prior to the Match. The Visiting Club and Referee must also confirm their proposed full Authorised Kit colours (including goalkeeper) for the Match, via the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time at least three (3) days prior to the Match. The Match Referee must confirm approval of both Clubs' proposed kit colours with both Clubs and the FAW via email at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to kick off, unless it is impracticable to do so. If the Match Referee believes that there will be a clash of kit colours for a Match, then they may (after consultation with the FAW, except where it is impracticable to do so on a Match day) require the Visiting Club or the Home Club to change their kit colours for the Match. Each Club shall arrive for a Match with the kit which has been approved by the Match Referee as set out above.

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

13.11. Where a Match is re-arranged or cancelled after the Match Officials have been appointed, it is the duty of the Home Club to notify the Match Officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately.

13.12. 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.

13.13. 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.

Guidance

This Rule 13.13 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.

14. CONDITION OF GROUNDS AND POSTPONEMENTS

14.1. Any Match not completed may be ordered to stand as a completed Match or replayed for the full period of ninety (90) minutes, 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 shall be divided on Welsh Cup tie terms, except that season ticket holders of the Home Club shall be admitted on producing their cards of membership.

14.2. A Match may only be postponed:

14.2.1. with the approval of the Match Referee or the available referee and the FAW on Match day-1;

14.2.2. with the approval of the Match Referee or the available referee on Match day;

14.2.3. by order of the police;

14.2.4. by order of any other authority exercising its statutory powers; or

14.2.5. with the approval of the FAW.

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

14.4. In the case of the Visiting 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.

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

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

14.7. The postponement by a referee of a Match due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance with this Rule 15. 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, to give a ruling as to the fitness after consultation with the FAW. The time of any inspection shall be by mutual agreement between the two Clubs taking into account the travelling time of the visiting Club. In case of dispute, the FAW shall decide the time of any inspection.

14.8. In the event of the available referee declaring the ground unfit, the Home Club shall notify the Visiting Club and the Match Officials forthwith by email and telephone call to avoid all unnecessary expense in travelling. The Visiting 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.

14.9. If the available referee 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). A Match Official conducting ground inspections shall be entitled to an inspection fee, as set by the FAW Referees Committee from time to time, and travelling expenses to be met by the League.

14.10. When a Club obtains the approval of the FAW to postpone a Match because of an epidemic or similar affecting the availability of its Players, that Club shall be liable to pay any direct expenses (if any) incurred by the opposing Club as a result of the postponement.

14.11. 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 Professional Players and Amateur Players currently engaged by the Club during the Season, giving full reasons against each name for that Player's unavailability.

14.12. 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.

14.13. 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 15.14 below applies. The burden of proof will rest with the Club.

14.14. The Club will not be deemed to be guilty of misconduct in accordance with Rule 15.13 above where it is able to demonstrate that:

14.14.1. 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

14.14.2. 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.

14.15. 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.

14.16. Each Club shall ensure, or shall procure, that its home ground is insured against damage or destruction by such insured risks as are required by the FAW from time to time with a reputable insurer (regulated under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000) for the full cost of repairing, rebuilding and reinstating the ground (including all stands) and for these purposes this includes VAT, professional fees (for example architects, surveyors, engineers and solicitors) and any fees payable on any applications for planning permission or other permits or consents which may be required in relation to site preparation, repairing, rebuilding or reinstating the stadium. A Club shall provide the FAW with full copies of such documentation as the FAW may reasonably require regarding such insurance policy(ies). Any Club in default of this obligation may have such amounts owed to it by the FAW withheld until such time as the insurance is in place.

14.17. Except with the prior written consent of the FAW, LED screens or the like at a Club's ground shall not be used to relay to spectators closed circuit pictures of the Match at which they are present.

15. TEAM SHEETS AND STRENGTH OF TEAMS

15.1. Both Match Team Sheets must be completed at least sixty (60) minutes before kick-off of each Match (except at least ninety (90) minutes before kick-off of any Match to be transmitted "live" on terrestrial or digital television) using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time.

15.2. Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged will be subject to any action decided upon by the FAW. 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:

15.2.1. 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, five (5) Players may still be substituted.

15.2.2. 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.

15.2.3. If none of the goalkeepers listed on the Team Sheet are able to be fielded due to physical incapacity, they may be replaced by registered goalkeeper Player not listed on the initial Team Sheet.

15.2.4. 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.

15.3. The League's standard form Team Sheet shall be used by each Club, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time.

15.4. Each Club shall play its full-strength team in all Matches and shall be prepared to kick off at the advertised time unless an explanation is offered which is deemed satisfactory by the FAW.

16. SUBSTITUTES' BENCHES AND TECHNICAL AREAS

16.1. At each Match:

16.1.1. up to thirteen (13) Players and Officials in total (of which no more than seven (7) may be the substitutes nominated in accordance with Rule 9.3 above, 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.

16.1.2. 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 tactical instructions from the designated technical area.

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

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

16.1.5. Three home and three away bibs to 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).

16.1.6. The use of any electronic communication equipment and/or systems is regulated by the Laws of the Game and any applicable IFAB protocols, instructions and/or procedures. Under no circumstances may any such systems be used by teams in connection with any kind of refereeing decision or matter.

17. RESULT/REPORT FORMS

17.1. Each Club competing in a Match shall send the completed standard electronic Result Form to the FAW within thirty (30) minutes of the final whistle, using the systems and procedures set by the FAW from time to time. 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. 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).

18. MATCH OFFICIALS

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

18.2. In the event of the Match Officials not being in attendance at the Match in accordance with Rule 19.3 below, the two (2) Clubs must agree to a substitute on the ground and such substitute shall be considered a Match Official for the time being.

18.3. Match Officials should be present at the ground at least seventy five (75) 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.

18.4. 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.

18.5. 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.

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

18.7. If a Match Official prefers being paid their 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

expenses either (a) in cash on the day of the Match or (b) by bank transfer within three (3) Business Days after the Match.

18.8. The football(s) proposed to be used in a Match must be the applicable official Match ball type as determined by the FAW and notified to the Clubs by the FAW from time to time. The Home Club must ensure that the proposed Match balls are in good condition and without any writing or extra marking on them. The proposed Match ball(s) (comprising a minimum number of eight (8)) shall be submitted by the Home Club to the Referee for their approval before commencement of the Match. The multi-ball system must be used with the required number of balls strategically placed by the Home Club on cones around the perimeter of the pitch.

18.9. The scale of payments for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials shall be determined by the FAW and notified to the Clubs by the FAW prior to the commencement of the League in each Playing Season.

18.10. 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.

18.11. Referees, Assistant Referees (if appointed) and Fourth Officials (if appointed) must travel together when instructed to do so by the FAW.

18.12. Match Officials shall be entitled to a meal allowance determined from time to time by the FAW when travelling a total of one hundred and fifty (150) miles or more. In addition, Home Clubs must provide adequate refreshments to the Match Officials in their dressing room at least sixty (60) minutes prior to kick-off and food within thirty (30) minutes of the final whistle.

18.13. In the case of postponed Matches where gate money is not taken, the Match Officials shall be paid their travelling expenses and half their ordinary fee by bank transfer within three (3) Business Days of the Match.

18.14. Referees must report any late presentation or non-presentation of Team Sheets or alteration of teams after presentation of Team Sheets in accordance with Rule 16 above.

18.15. 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 30 seconds before returning on the Referee's signal.

18.16. Referees must ensure that Clubs play Matches in the correct Authorised Kit as defined in Rule 11 above. Any breach of this Rule must be reported to the FAW.

18.17. The kit worn by Match Officials at Matches shall be approved by the FAW Referees Committee.

18.18. Any comments, questions or complaints regarding the decisions of a given Match Official shall be directed to the FAW Referees manager (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.

19. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

19.1. A Club shall not resign from the League after being confirmed as a participant by the FAW and before completing all of its Matches in the relevant Playing Season.

19.2. Where a Club withdraws, is removed or otherwise ceases to participate during a Phase:

19.2.1. all points, goals and results arising from Matches played by that Club during that Phase shall be expunged from the relevant table; and

19.2.2. any remaining Matches involving that Club during that Phase shall be cancelled.

19.3. Where a Club withdraws, is removed or otherwise ceases to participate after the conclusion of Phase One and the allocation of Clubs to the Conferences for Phase Two has been confirmed, its results from Phase One shall not be expunged and the Conference allocations shall not be altered, unless otherwise determined by the FAW in exceptional circumstances.

19.4. The FAW may make such consequential adjustments to the relevant Division, Region, Conference or format of the League as it considers necessary following the withdrawal, removal or cessation of a Club.

20. EXCLUSION OF CLUBS – MISCONDUCT BY CLUB, THEIR OFFICIALS, PLAYERS OR OTHERS

20.1. The PGAC Disciplinary Panel shall have power to exclude from further participation in the League any Club whose conduct has in their opinion been objectionable and detrimental to the good conduct of the name of the League.

20.2. 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.

21. PUBLIC LIABILITY AND PLAYERS' INSURANCE

21.1. All Clubs must have and maintain Player v Player and Public Liability Insurance in the minimum sum determined from time to time by the FAW, evidence of such cover having to be provided to the FAW at least fourteen (14) days before the start of the League in each Playing Season and as otherwise requested by the FAW. In the event of the FAW arranging block cover for Public Liability Insurance, all Clubs will be required to participate on such terms as the FAW shall decide.

22. REGISTRATION OF GROUNDS AND GROUNDSHARING

22.1. Each Club must register its ground for Home Matches with the FAW by 30th June prior to the start of each League in each Playing Season.

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.

24. SPONSORSHIP

24.1. 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.

25. SCALE OF FINES AND PAYMENT OF FINES

25.1. The Scale of Fines to be imposed by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel for a failure to comply with specified Rules (assuming the relevant failure is a first offence) shall be determined by the FAW from time to time and notified to the Clubs by the FAW at least two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of the

League in each Playing Season.

25.2. All fines imposed by the PGAC Disciplinary Panel under these Rules must be paid to the FAW within thirty one (31) days of notice being given by the FAW.