

**ENGLISH SCHOOLS' FA CHAMPIONS CUP
INTER-ASSOCIATION COMPETITION REGULATIONS**

1. THE TROPHY

- (a) The name of the competition is 'ESFA Champions Cup'.
- (b) The Trophies shall be offered for annual competition amongst the affiliated Associations who provide football for boys and girls. Welsh Associations, with the permission of the Welsh Schools' FA, may apply to enter the competition.
- (c) The trophy is the property of the English Schools' Football Association.
- (d) The trophy shall be presented to the captain of the winning team immediately after the final match.
- (e) The winning team shall be responsible for returning the trophy in the condition in which it was presented. Arrangements for display of the trophy must be agreed by the ESFA.
- (f) It shall be the responsibility of the winning team to ensure the return of the Trophy in time for presentation at the final during the following season.

2. CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES

ESFA will determine closing dates for National Competitions and indicate this on the competition entry forms.

3. MEMENTOES

Eighteen mementoes (16 players and 2 team officials) shall be awarded to each Association taking part in a final tie. Additional identical mementoes may be purchased by the finalists subject to the approval of the ESFA. Four mementoes shall be awarded to the match officials (referee, two assistant referees and reserve official), officiating at a final tie.

4. CONTROL

- (a) The entire control and management of the competitions shall be vested in Council, or such committees that shall be appointed by Council.
- (b) The rules of the game shall be those of the International Football Association Board, except as otherwise stated.
- (c) All Local and County representative teams must be under the ultimate control of either:
 - (i) A practicing teacher, recognised as such by the Department for Education, current employee of education service OR
 - (ii) A retired teacher, or past employee of the education service or an AOTT who has received direct approval in writing from the appropriate Local or County Schools' Football Association to undertake such responsibilities.
- (d) (i) Approval may be withdrawn, by the ESFA, the Local and/or County Schools' Football Association, at any time.
 - (ii) Any other person regularly assisting with or coaching a team must have an (FA DBS) Disclosure and Barring Service check and safeguarding training within the previous 3 years (either through an educational establishment or The FA) and operate in the presence of a person who is qualified under (i) or (ii) above. Any cost associated with this shall be the responsibility of the Local/County Schools' Football Association.
 - (iii) Associations must, at all times, comply with the FA's/ESFA's Safeguarding Criteria. Compliance must be in place at the time of affiliation.
- (e) An individual cannot be the named manager/coach for more than two teams within the same Association, although they can be named as assistant manager/assistant coach for more than two teams.
- (f) All District and County Associations who run representative teams must register all team personnel with the ESFA as a requirement of the affiliation. This information must be registered with the ESFA as part of the affiliation process, prior to affiliation being approved.
- (g) Any official or player representing a School or Association in membership with the Welsh Schools' FA participating in any of the ESFA national competitions who is

reported for misconduct, on or off the field of play, shall be referred to the Council of the Welsh Schools' FA for appropriate action.

5. THE FIELD OF PLAY

The FA recommend the following pitch and goal sizes for youth football:

Age group	Type	Length (yards)	Width (yards)	Goal Height (ft)	Goal Width (ft)
U11 / U12	9 v 9	80	50	7	16
U13 / U14	11 v 11	90	55	7	21*
U15 / U16	11 v 11	100	60	8	24
U17 / U18	11 v 11	110	70	8	24

* It is recommended that 7 x 21 ft sized goalposts are used for U13 / U14 matches. However, it is recognised that not all sites will be able to provide specifically for this age group, so 8 x 24 ft goals are acceptable.

Artificial Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in this competition provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed on The FA Artificial Turf Pitch Register and must be tested (by an accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The home team is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming the match arrangements.

6. PROTESTS

(a) Protests arising from competitions organised by the English Schools' Football Association shall be submitted to the ESFA in line with the ESFA policy for protests, stated below:

- (i) All protests regarding ESFA national competitions shall be in writing and shall be received at the ESFA headquarters within 48 hours of the match concerned.
 - (ii) No protest relative to the ground, goalposts, or other appurtenances of the game shall be considered unless a protest in writing was made to the referee before the start of the match. All decisions made by the referee are final and must be accepted without question.
 - (iii) The regulations of the competition are mandatory and cannot be appealed against.
 - (i) Any protest shall be signed by the Association Secretary as acknowledgment of their approval of its submission.
 - (iv) The ESFA National Competitions Department (NCD) will gather any evidence they wish to have before making their decision.
 - (v) A copy of this decision must be relayed to both teams in writing.
- (b) Should the complainant not be satisfied with the decision of the ESFA NCD, an appeal shall be submitted to the ESFA in line with the ESFA policy for appeals, as stated below:
- (i) Any appeal against the National Competitions Department (NCD) decision must be made within 48 hours of the receipt of the ruling that the NCD has made.
 - (ii) The appeal must arrive at the ESFA headquarters by letter, countersigned by the Association Secretary and accompanied by payment of £50. This will be returned if the appeal is upheld.
 - (iii) The appeal will be considered by members of a panel appointed by the ESFA Competitions' Committee Chairman. The Competitions Committee panel shall have the power of Council to make all decisions in relation to the organisation, control and management of any ESFA competition which shall be deemed to be the decision(s) of Council and shall be final and binding on all participants.

7. PLAYERS' ATTIRE

- (a) Where teams have similar colours, the home team shall be entitled to retain their colours and the visiting team shall change to colours that provide a satisfactory contrast.
- (b) Teams must not wear shirt advertising of a conflicting interest to that of the competition's sponsor.
- (c) Players' shirts shall be numbered.

- (d) Attire worn by players and staff must only reflect their Association and not make any reference to other football organisations

8. PLAYERS

- (a) If the ESFA has any doubt over the eligibility of any player taking part in a competition, it shall have the power to call upon the player's Association to which he or she belongs to prove that he or she is eligible according to the rules, and failing satisfactory proof, the offending Association may be disqualified from the competition and / or have points deducted. In such cases the ESFA may award the points to the opposing team.
- (b) All competing teams will be required to register all squad players via the ESFA's Player Passport portal in accordance with ESFA guidance. Thereafter, an online teamsheet must be completed prior to each game. Only players who are registered on Player Passport are eligible to play in the competition. Failure to comply may result in the offending Association being disqualified from the competition and / or having points deducted. In such cases the ESFA may award the points to the opposing team(s).
- (c) Mixed-gender matches shall be played in line with current FA regulations. In all ESFA competition matches in the U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 age groups, which may involve players of mixed gender, then only players from the same chronological academic year group shall take part. Please note, girls are permitted to play in mixed football matches up to an including the Under 18 age group in accord with FA rules. Boys are not eligible to participate in the Girls' Competitions as those competitions are specifically for the development of girls' football.
- (d) A pupil may play for more than one Association in the same competition during a season, with the permission of the ESFA.
- (e) Pupils under the statutory school leaving age who are not on the roll of a school may apply to the ESFA to participate in representative football for the Local or County Association in which they reside.
- (f) **Player eligibility criteria for Inter-District Competitions**
Only bona-fide scholars receiving full-time education, in accordance with the Education Acts, who are on the roll of a school or college, which holds a current and valid DFE Unique Reference Number (URN), in affiliated membership with the local District Schools' FA, shall be eligible to participate in this competition.
- I. **U12 Boys:** Students over the age of 11 years and under the age of 12 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 7 only).
 - II. **U13 Boys:** Students over the age of 12 years and under the age of 13 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 8 only).
 - III. **U14 Boys:** Students over the age of 13 years and under the age of 14 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 9 only).
 - IV. **U15 Boys:** Students over the age of 14 years and under the age of 15 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 10 only).
 - V. **U12 Girls:** Girls over the age of 11 years and under the age of 12 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition (Year 7 only).
 - VI. **U14 Girls:** Girls over the age of 11 years and under the age of 13 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition (Year 7 & 8 only).
- (g) **Player eligibility criteria for Inter-County Competitions**
Only bona-fide scholars receiving full-time education in accordance with the Education Acts, who are on the roll of a school or college, which holds a current and valid DFE Unique Reference Number (URN), in affiliated membership with the County Schools' FA, shall be eligible to participate in this competition.
- i. **U14 Boys:** Students over the age of 13 years and under the age of 14 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 9 only).

- ii. **U16 Boys:** Students over the age of 15 years and under the age of 16 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 11 only).
- iii. **U18 Boys:** Students over the age of 16 years and under the age of 18 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in the competition (Year 12 & 13 only).
- iv. **U14 Girls:** Girls over the age of 12 years and under the age of 14 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition (Year 8 and 9 only).
- v. **U16 Girls:** Girls over the age of 14 years and under the age of 16 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition (Year 10 and 11 only).

9. MATCH DATES AND ARRANGEMENTS

- (a) After the closing date for registering team entries for the subsequent season, the ESFA shall arrange for the draw of fixtures. The first Association drawn shall be regarded as the home team and will secure an appropriate venue to host the fixture in accord with ESFA regulations. Matches must take place on the published play-on date, unless a mutually convenient date is agreed by both teams for the match to take place before the play-on date and playing the fixture early does not disrupt any other local competition fixtures. In order for this to happen, permission must be obtained from ESFA before proceeding with any match arrangements.
- (b) The play-on dates must be strictly adhered to as failure to fulfil the fixture will result in the match being declared void or the offending team losing the points and / or being disqualified from the competition. No match shall be permitted to go beyond the play-on date, unless the fixture is postponed due to inclement weather (in accordance with ESFA policy for postponing fixtures). Inclement weather is the only acceptable reason for postponing a fixture. Postponed fixtures will be played as directed by the ESFA in accordance with the policy relating to the priority of schools' football fixtures.
- (c) In the event of an Association team withdrawing from the competition after the publication of fixtures on the 1st of September in the current season, the offending Association shall pay a administration fee of £100 and all results of that team shall be expunged from the competition.
- (d) Teams will play in a League format followed by a "knock-out" section to determine the national champion team. In the League Section, a win will gain 3 points, a draw will gain 1 point and a defeat will gain zero points. Should teams share a position in the league, the highest ranked team will be decided on goal difference. Should points and goal difference be equal the highest ranked team shall be decided by the team scoring the most goals. If this fails to determine the winning team, the position shall be decided by the head to head result during the league phase. If this fails to determine the highest placed team and qualification into the knockout phase is dependent on such a position, then the ESFA will decide the highest place will be decided by a play-off match which will adopt the rules of a knockout fixture. The ESFA will determine how many teams progress from each league into the knockout phase and communicate this process at the start of each playing season.
- (e) The home team is required to report all fixture dates, venues and kick-off times on the ESFA portal prior to the match taking place. Once the match has been completed, the competing teams must report the final score via the ESFA portal, promptly after each match.
- (f) The following applies regarding individual match arrangements:

Inter-District Competitions:

	BOYS				GIRLS	
	U12	U13	U14	U15	U12	U14
Age Eligibility	Year 7 only	Year 8 only	Year 9 only	Year 10 only	Year 7 only	Years 8 & 9 only
Format:	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11	9v9	11v11
Match Duration	2 x 30 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 30 mins	2 x 35 mins
Extra Time (Knockout phase only)	2 x 7 mins	2 x 7 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 7 mins	2x10 mins
Penalties (No replays in the knockout phase)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Size of Match Ball (Teams can mutually agree to use size 5)	4	4	4*	5	4	4*
Substitutes	'Repeated' substitutions are allowed in this competition. A player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time, subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game. Teams are permitted to use 5 substitutes from five named players.					

* Under 14 age group uses a size 4 football unless size 5 is mutually agreed

Inter-County Competitions:

	BOYS			GIRLS	
	U14	U16	U18	U14	U16
Age Eligibility	Year 9 only	Year 11 only	Years 12 & 13 only	Years 8 & 9 only	Years 10 & 11 only
Format:	11v11	11v11	11v11	11v11	11v11
Match Duration	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 45 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 mins
Extra Time (Knockout phase only)	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins
Penalties (No replays in the knockout phase)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Size of Match Ball (Teams can mutually agree to use size 5)	4	5	5	4	5
Substitutes	'Repeated' substitutions are allowed in this competition. A player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game. Teams are permitted to use 5 substitutes from five named players.				

- (g) Match duration will consist of two periods as detailed above, with teams changing round at half-time.
- (h) In the knockout phase of the competition, extra time as detailed above shall be played if the match ends in a draw. Should the scores remain equal after the conclusion of extra time, then the result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark (taken in accordance with the recommendations of FIFA and published in the Laws of the Game). There are no replays in this competition.
- (i) If, in the opinion of the referee, for circumstances beyond the control of the organisers, scheduled extra time in a match cannot be started or completed, a match shall be deemed to have been completed at the end of normal playing time. Penalties, if scheduled, shall then follow.
- (j) In the event of any match being abandoned for any reason stated under Law 5 of The Laws of the Game, the ESFA shall have the power to allow the score at the time of the abandonment to stand and the points of the fixture shall be awarded as deemed appropriate by ESFA and / or remove any team found guilty of causing such abandonment from the competition.
- (k) There shall be a half time interval of ten minutes in all matches which can only be altered with the consent of the referee.
- (l) All arrangements for Finals shall be decided by ESFA.

10. MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a) The Match Officials shall be appointed as ESFA directs in its communication at the start of the season. Their duties shall be accordance with the Laws of the Game as sanctioned and enforced by the International Football Association Board.

- (b) In the event of a referee failing to appear, the teams involved must agree in writing upon one at the ground so that the game shall be conducted in accordance with the rules. The official so acting shall have the powers of a duly appointed referee.

11. FINANCE

Financial assistance to the Competitions is at all times subject to confirmation by the Trustees in accordance with General Rule 10. Details of financial assistance will be circulated to the participating teams at the start of each season.