ESFA

ESFA Under 11 7-a-side Schools' Cup | Season 2021-2022

Toolkit for Competition Organisers and Team Managers

What is the ESFA Under 11 7-a-side Schools' Cup?

The English Schools' Football Association, founded in 1904, is the governing body for schools' football in England. Our mission statement is to support young people, who are in education, to develop self-discipline, loyalty, resilience and respect for those around them. Our activities also provide children with the opportunity to develop positive decision making, adopt a healthy lifestyle and enhance their physical skills through enjoyment and achievement.

We offer this Under 11 7-a-side Schools' Cup competition for schools in affiliated membership via local District Associations, for school children in Years 5 and 6, in the following categories:

- U11 School Teams' Cup
- U11 Schools' Cup for Girls
- U11 Small Schools' Cup

The competition was established in 1979 and regularly attracts over 3,000 boys' teams and 2,000 girls' teams on an annual basis, making it one of the largest schools' football competitions in the world.

The tournament pathway is organised through, District, County and Regional rounds, which culminate in a national final, which will be hosted at a Premier League or Football League stadium in May 2022.

For more information about the English Schools' FA go to www.schoolsfootball.org

How does it work?

The local District Schools' FA (this can be the local District Schools' FA, School Games Organiser, School Sports Partnership, etc) will run a tournament for the primary/middle schools within its membership using any or all of the categories listed.

How you do this will be governed by how many teams you have taking part. If you have a small number of teams, then you may be able to achieve this as a one day tournament. If you are working with a larger number of teams, then you may decide to run this via several qualifying tournaments which lead to a District Finals day.

The winners of the District Final will be invited to participate at the County Finals where the winners of other Districts from within the County will also be invited to compete.

Categories:

The categories of competition that are offered are as follows:

- **U11 7-a-side School Teams' Cup**
  (for boys and girls)
- **U11 7-a-side Schools' Cup for Girls**
  (girls only competition)
- **U11 Small Schools' Soccer Sevens**
  (important rule change - schools must have fewer than 65 pupils in total in Years 5 and 6 according to the numbers on roll as confirmed by the preceding year's summer census. Schools that qualify for the Small Schools' Soccer Sevens may enter that competition OR the Schools' Cup for School Teams – not both)

Tournament Pathway and Date Structure

The tournament pathway of the ESFA Under 11 7-a-side Schools' Cup is as follows:

District Rounds

September - December: the local District Schools' FA will stage a competition for schools in its membership. The winning schools shall be invited to compete at the County Finals.

County Rounds

By 29th January 2022: the local County Schools' FA will stage a competition for the District winners within its County SFA affiliated membership. The county winners will be invited to compete at the Regional Finals.

Regional Finals

By 26th March 2022: the ESFA will organise regional finals for the county champion teams. The winners and runners-up of the Regional Finals will be invited to compete at the National Finals in May.

National Finals

The ESFA and Danone will use best endeavors to secure a Premier League or Football League stadium to host the National Finals in May. The last four seasons have seen the finals held at Leicester City, Stoke City, Ricoh Arena and Birmingham FC.

National Finalists 2021 - 2022

At the National Finals, in May, the 8 qualify teams in each category of competition, will be split into 2 groups of 4 teams and will play each once in the league phase. A win will earn 3 points, a draw will earn 1 point and a defeat will earn 0 points. The winners and runners-up of each group will qualify to participate in the national semi-final. The winners of Group A will play the runners-up in Group B and vice versa. The winners of the two semi-final fixtures will play in the national final to determine the champions of England. Extra time of 2 x 3 minute periods and penalty kicks will be used, if necessary, to determine winning teams in the knockout section of the competition. Participating teams will be required to submit a squad list with dates of birth, so the ESFA can check player eligibility. All appropriate documentation regarding the national finals will be sent to the national finalists before the school Easter holidays.

Rules

The ESFA recognises that some compromises regarding the rules may be required in order for local delivery to take place, but we encourage consistency where possible. The following are some important notes relating to the rules for you to adopt at your tournaments:

- The tournament is a 7-a-side competition
- Teams can select from a squad of 10 (three named substitutes are allowed for each match)
- Repeated substitutions are allowed in each match (so if a player comes off, then they become a sub)
- Players must be under 11 and over 9 years of age at midnight on 31 August/1 September in the playing season to be eligible to participate in this competition (school Years 5 and 6 only)
- A 60 x 40 yard pitch size is recommended (full sized pitches split into thirds or quarters is acceptable)
- 12ft x 6ft goalposts will be used (availability will dictate the size of your goal posts (7 ft high x 16 ft wide is acceptable and is age appropriate)
- Tournaments may be played on 3G or 4G pitches provided that the venue holds a valid test certificate and appears on The FA's register of artificial pitches - to view the register visit http://3g.thefa.me.uk/
- A size 4 ball shall be used
- Players' shirts shall be numbered where possible. It is acknowledged that some primary school football kits are not numbered
- In District and County Rounds, the host association will appoint the referees
- In the Regional and National Finals the ESFA will appoint the referees
- Matches will consist of two periods of seven minutes each (this will be dependent of venue availability and the number of participating teams)

- Teams should play in a league format followed by a knockout section (i.e. the winners and runners-up from each group will go forward to play in a semi-final, followed by a final)
- In the league phase, a win will earn three points, a draw one point and a defeat 0 points
- If teams finish level in the group phase, then the position shall be decided by goal difference
- If points and goal difference are level, then the position shall be decided by goals scored
- If teams are level on points, goal difference and goals scored, then the qualifying team shall be decided by a play-off (or a penalty shoot-out if time does not allow for a full play off)
- If scores are level at the end of a knockout fixture, extra time of three minutes each way shall be played. If scores remain level after extra time, the winners shall be determined by taking kicks from the penalty mark (FIFA rules)
- The rule relating to offside does not apply to this competition
- The 'retreat' rule relating to goal keeper kicks applies in this competition. This means that when a goalkeeper takes a goal kick off the ground, the opponents must retreat to their own half of the pitch unless the goalkeeper decides to take the kick early.

Social Media

To get involved on social media, make sure you interact with our channels! Share your pictures, comments, memories, questions... **we're looking forward to hearing from you**.

www.facebook.com/schoolsfootball

ESFA: @SchoolsFootball

@SchoolsFootball

www.youtube.com/esfatv

For more information, please visit
www.schoolsfootball.org

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