



ESFA 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, OR a recognised teacher who is retired
 - (ii) an AOTT who has received direct approval in writing from the appropriate Local or County Schools' Football Association to undertake such responsibilities.
- (d) Approval may be withdrawn, by the ESFA, the Local and/or County Schools' Football Association, at any time.
- (e) Everyone regularly assisting with or coaching a team must:
 - (i) Have an accepted FA Enhanced DBS check, issued within the previous 3 years
 - (ii) Complete the FA Safeguarding Children Course in line with FA policy and renew every 2 years, unless they are a practicing schoolteacher who receives annual safeguarding training through their employment in a recognised educational establishment.
- (f) Any cost associated with this shall be the responsibility of the Local/County Schools' Football Association.
- (g) Everyone regularly assisting with or coaching a representative team must be named and accepted on the ESFA affiliation portal by ESFA National Welfare Officers before they can be involved in any activity.
- (h) Practicing schoolteachers must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.
- (i) AOTT (Adults Other Than Teachers) must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.

- (j) Retired teachers must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.
- (k) Anybody who has an expired FA DBS and/or expired safeguarding training under (e) above must not be involved in any activity.
- (l) All coaches and helpers/assistants must operate in the presence of a person who is qualified under (c) above.
- (m) Associations must comply with The FA's/ESFA's Safeguarding Criteria. Compliance must be in place at the time of affiliation and throughout the season.
- (n) 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.
- (o) 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.
- (p) All ESFA affiliated Associations running representative football teams must have an FA qualified and ESFA approved Welfare Officer
- (q) Association Welfare Officers must comply with the current training requirements of The Football Association
- (r) 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.
- (s) Where the Association benefits from voluntary service by those who are employed as commercial coaches, commercial coaches shall not use their contact with school players to recruit to their commercial operation without the express consent of the County Committee, who will wish to ensure that parents are clear about the capacity in which any such approaches are made. Approval (or otherwise) is at the sole discretion of the County Committee.

5. THE FIELD OF PLAY

The following recommended pitch and goal sizes apply to 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11 youth football:

Age	Format	Minimum pitch Size (Yards)	Maximum pitch Size (Yards)	Recommended goal sizes in feet	Ball size
Year 5	7v7	50 x 30	60 x 40	12 x 6	3
Year 6	9v9	70 x 40	80 x 50	16 x 7	4
Year 7	9v9	70 x 40	80 x 50	16 x 7	4
Year 8	11v11	90 x 50	100 x 60	21 x 7	4
Year 9	11v11	90 x 50	100 x 60	21 x 7	4
Year 10	11v11	90 x 50	110 x 70	24 x 8	5
Year 11	11v11	90 x 50	110 x 70	24 x 8	5
Year 12	11v11	100 x 50	130 x 100	24 x 8	5
Year 13	11v11	100 x 50	130 x 100	24 x 8	5

If a pitch is provided for U13/U14 it is recommended that 7 x 21 goalposts are provided. However, it should be noted that 8 x 24 would also be acceptable as not all sites will be able to provide specifically for this age group.

Artificial Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the 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 opposition team(s), except the award of goals.
- (b) All competing teams will be required to register all squad players via the ESFA's Player Registration System in accordance with ESFA guidance. Thereafter, an online teamsheet must be completed for each game. Only players who are registered on the Player Registration System 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 win to the opposition team(s), except the award of goals.
- (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 and 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 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. **U13 Girls:** Girls 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 this competition (Year 8 only).
 - VII. **U14 Girls:** Girls 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 this competition (Year 9 only).
 - VIII. **U15 Girls:** Girls 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 this competition (Year 10 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) 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. In the event of an association failing to keep its fixture engagement, the Management Committee shall have the power to impose a fine, deduct points from the defaulting team, award the points from the competition match in question to the opponents, order the defaulting association to pay any reasonable expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals.
- (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 an 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 placed team 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:

	BOYS				GIRLS			
	U12	U13	U14	U15	U12	U13	U14	U15
Age Eligibility	Year 7 only	Year 8 only	Year 9 only	Year 10 only	Year 7 only	Year 8 only	Year 9 only	Year 10 only
Format	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11	9v9	11v11	11v11	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	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 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	2 x 7 mins	2x10 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	4	4*	5	4	4	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.							

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

- (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 completion 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 bye law 4. Details of financial assistance will be circulated to the participating teams at the start of each season.