

# COUNTY YOUTH COMPETITION RULES

## 1. NOMENCLATURE

The Bedfordshire Football Association's Youth County Competitions shall comprise of:

The Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Floodlit Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 18 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 16 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 15 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 14 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 13 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Under 12 Youth Challenge Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Senior Girls Development Cup  
The Bedfordshire FA Junior Girls Development Cup

The Association shall determine the dates on which County Cup matches shall be played and the lengths of its playing season within the limits laid down by the Football Association.

## 2. OWNERSHIP OF THE CUP

The Cup can never become the absolute property of any Club and, in the event of the dissolution of this Association, it shall again become the property of the donors.

The President and Chief Executive shall be for all intents and purposes the legal owners of the Cup, in trust for the donors.

## 3. MANAGEMENT

- (a) The County Competitions shall be under the entire control and management of the Bedfordshire F.A.
- (b) The Draws shall be made by those designated by the Bedfordshire F.A.
- (c) Failures by Clubs to comply with the Competitions Rules shall be referred to the Competitions Committee and problems concerning referees shall be referred to the Referees Committee.
- (d) If a match is declared void for any reason, the game shall be re-arranged as directed by the Association
- (e) The Association shall have power to alter, or add to, any of the County Competition Rules as they from time to time deem expedient.
- (f) All decisions made by the Competitions Committee shall be final and binding.

## 4. METHOD OF ENTRY AND REQUIREMENTS

- (a) All clubs affiliated to the Association are required, unless exempted, to take part in one of the County Competitions, provided one is suitable. Entries must reach the Association on or before the 30th June failure to comply will result in the club not being entered into any County Competition, unless exceptional circumstances prevail.
- (b) All Clubs entering the competition shall notify the Association of their distinguishing colours
- (c) Shirts bearing different numbers must be worn by players (including substitutes) of the competing teams in the County Competitions.

- (d) In the event of the colours of the two competing Clubs being similar in any tie, the home team must change, except in a final when the first named team shall change.
- (e) Entries to all County Competitions shall be classified by the Association. All Competitions, at the discretion of the Competitions' Committee, may have a qualifying competition and a competition proper.
- (f) Where a Club has more than one team at an age group it may be entitled to enter both or all teams, however no player may play for more than one team in any of the county competitions in any one season.
- (g) The County Competitions shall take precedence over all League and other competitions except the F.A. Youth Challenge Cup & the F.A. County Youth Challenge Cup
- (h) Clubs withdrawing or having been expelled mid season from their domestic competition shall not be eligible to compete in the County Cup Competition unless agreed by the Competitions' Committee.

## **5. DRAW AND NOTIFICATION**

- (a) The County Competitions shall be conducted and decided on a knock-out basis unless otherwise determined by the Competitions Committee.
- (b) Once the draw notification bulletins have been issued, no team will be accepted into a Competition as a late entrant unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Once the actual draw bulletin has been issued, no team under any circumstances will be added to a competition.
- (c) In each round of all county competitions the Association shall notify all clubs the name of their opponents. All ties must be played on the day, and at the time, ordered by the Association. In the U18 Floodlit Cup ties up to and including the Semi Finals shall be played by the date ordered by the Association and on a day nominated by the Home Club.
- (d) Any club wishing to play a game at a different time to that ordered by the Association must apply in writing to the Association giving at least 2 months notice. The Competitions Committee will then take each case on its merits and give the club their decision in writing within 4 days of their Committee Meeting that follows the clubs application.
- (e) The Home Club shall notify its opponents and match officials of usual match particulars at least 5 days prior to the match and when doing so shall give its Opponents, Match Officials and where appointed, Bedfordshire FA Council Representative details of the exact location of the ground on which the game is to be played and a route to be taken to reach it. Failure to do so shall result in the Club being fined as per the schedule of fines in the County Directory.

## 6. GROUNDS, FOOTBALLS

- (a) The dimensions of the field of play for matches in the Youth County Competitions shall be (excluding Finals):

**U12 Youth Cup** – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 7ft by 21ft*

Length – Maximum 82m (90yds) ; Minimum 68m (75yds)

Width – Maximum 51m (55yds) ; Minimum 42m (45yds)

**U13 & U14 Youth Cups** – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 7ft by 21ft*

Length – Maximum 91m (100yds) ; Minimum 73m (80yds)

Width – Maximum 56m (60yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

**U15 & U16 Youth Cups** – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 8ft by 24ft*

Length – Maximum 101m (110yds) ; Minimum 82m (90yds)

Width – Maximum 64m (70yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

**U18 Youth & U18 Floodlit Cup** – *Suggested Size of Goalposts – 8ft by 24ft*

Length – Maximum 120m (130yds) ; Minimum 90m (100yds)

Width – Maximum 90m (100yds) ; Minimum 45m (50yds)

All Grounds must be marked clearly and in accordance with the Laws of the Game, with corner flags and goal nets provided.

- (b) Clubs first drawn shall have the choice of ground, The final tie shall be played on such ground as the Association may determine.
- (c) In all County Youth Competitions changing facilities for players and officials must be provided, together with washing facilities ie Running Water. If a Home Team is unable to provide this, an alternative venue must be found, unless both teams agree prior to the date of the match to use the existing facilities.
- (d) All County Cup matches must be played on a natural grass pitch, no other surface will be allowed.
- (e) In all County Cup Finals the playing pitch must have a railed or roped-off area at least five feet from the goal and touch lines. Fluorescent tape is not considered a satisfactory replacement for rope. All posts or stakes used must be of material considered satisfactory for players' safety.
- (f) If the ground of the Club having the choice of ground is considered unsuitable for a Cup-tie, the opposing Club may appeal to the Association within three days of receipt of the intimation of the draw. The Association may order the match to be played on the ground of the appealing Club or on a neutral ground. The Association also has power to order a change of venue where the ground of the home team is temporarily unfit.
- (g) If the Home drawn team requests the match to be switched to their opponents grounds (or a ground on which they do not normally play) then they shall remain responsible for all Match Expenses including Hire of the Ground & Floodlighting (where applicable) and Match Officials Fees & Expenses.
- (h) The appointed referee shall decide as to the fitness of a ground for all County Competition matches except where the match is Played on a:
- (1) Ground rented from a Local Government Authority which, under the terms of letting, reserves to itself, or its delegated officials, the right to determine, whether or not the ground is fit for play.

- (2) Ground rented from a Club (not competing in the fixture), for the playing of the fixture, who shall have the right to determine and say that its ground is unfit for play.

Each Club must take every precaution to keep its ground in playing condition. If necessary, either Club must apply to the Association for an inspection to be made, and the Association shall require the referee or his nominated deputy to examine the ground and decide its fitness for play in sufficient time to save expenses of unnecessary journeys being incurred by the Clubs. The Club applying for the inspection shall pay the costs of such inspection.

- (i) All games must be played within the County boundary, except with the permission of the Association. No Club shall mutually agree to change the venue without the permission of the Association.
- (j) If the ground is of a standard where there are benches and technical areas, then the following will apply:
- (1) The maximum number of persons permitted on the bench will be eight.
  - (2) Only one person has the authority to convey technical instructions, and must return to their position immediately after giving these instructions.
  - (3) The manager, coach and other occupants of the bench must conduct themselves at all times, in a responsible manner.
  - (4) If more than eight persons, including substitutes are observed by a match official to be within the bench / technical area, the Referee shall have the power to stop the game and order the removal of all surplus persons.
- (k) **Footballs** - Size 5 balls will be used in the Under 18, Under 16 and Under 15 sections  
Size 4 in the Under 14, Under 13 and Under 12 sections

## 7. DURATION OF MATCHES

- (a) The duration of play in County Youth Competitions shall be as follows:

U18 section - 45 minutes each way plus 15 mins each way extra time if necessary

U16 & U15 section - 40 minutes each way plus 10 mins each way extra time if necessary

U14 & U13 section - 35 minutes each way plus 10 mins each way extra time if necessary

U12 section - 30 minutes each way plus 10 mins each way extra time if necessary

By arrangement between the Managers of the opposing Clubs. the duration of each match, except in the semi-final and final ties may be reduced by up to a period of 10 minutes each half, such arrangements must be notified to the Referee prior to the commencement of the match.

- (b) All matches must be completed at the first meeting, If at the end of Extra Time the scores are still equal, kicks from the penalty mark shall decide the result according to the procedure laid down in the Laws of Association Football. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the completion of Extra Time or kicks from the penalty mark, the game shall be re-played the following weekend at the ground of the Away Team, except in the U18 Floodlit Cup where games shall be rearranged as directed in the Draw Bulletin.

- (c) The half - time interval shall be of 10 minutes duration, or as mutually agreed by the two teams and match Referee.
- (d) The Kick Off time shall be determined by the Association and notified to all clubs on the Draw Bulletin, any Club failing to start at the appointed time shall be fined at the discretion of Association.
- (e) In cases when the start is delayed, no Club shall leave the ground until at least 30 minutes after the scheduled Kick Off time and after they have attempted to contact their opponents and the Association to try to ascertain the reasons for the late arrival.
- (f) In the event of a match being abandoned, the Association may order the match to be replayed or allow the result at the time of the abandonment to stand, as they consider appropriate and expedient.
- (g) In the event of a match being postponed it shall be re-arranged for the following Weekend unless clubs are otherwise informed by the Association. This re-arranged game then takes precedence over any fixture a club may have for the following week [other than those in competitions listed in rule 4(g)] and also any free weeks granted by leagues.

## 8. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS, SHORT TEAMS, TEAMSHEETS

- (a) The qualifying date for players in all competitions shall be 31<sup>st</sup> August. A player in the age ranges Under 12, Under 13 and Under 14 must not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match where any other player is older or younger by 2 years or more than that person.

The eligibility is summarised as follows: (For Boys & Girls Competitions)

<b>Under 18 Floodlit Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1991</u> and	<u>31st August 1994</u>
<b>Under 18 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1991</u> and	<u>31st August 1994</u>
<b>Under 16 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1993</u> and	<u>31st August 1995</u>
<b>Under 15 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1994</u> and	<u>31st August 1996</u>
<b>Under 14 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1995</u> and	<u>31st August 1997</u>
<b>Under 13 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1996</u> and	<u>31st August 1998</u>
<b>Under 12 Cup</b> - Players born between <u>1st September 1997</u> and	<u>31st August 1999</u>

**Senior Girls Cup & Junior Girls Cup** – Qualifying dates will be in line with those above and will be finalised when age groups are selected for each competition. Confirmation of the relevant qualifying date will be made on the Draw Bulletin.

- (b) Each player must be a registered member of their Club. A registered member is one who is registered with the league in which their Team competes, such registration having been made at least seven days previous to the date fixed for playing the match.

- (c) No player will be allowed to play in more than one team in any one season including other age groups for the same club except those competing in the U18 Floodlit Cup who may also play in a Sunday Competition for the same or a different club.
- (d) In the case of Postponed, Abandoned or Replayed matches, only those players who were eligible on the day fixed for the completion of the round in which the match was originally played shall be allowed to play, except that a player under suspension on the date of the original fixture shall be deemed eligible at the time of replayed or rearranged game, providing their period of suspension has expired before the date of the replayed or rearranged game.
- (e) In the Final tie players must have played at least four times in the current season for the team they wish to represent (League, League Cup, County Cup and FA Competition matches only apply). and have been registered as a member of the Club for at least twenty - eight days.
- (f) If the Association have any doubt as to qualification of any player taking part in this competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is qualified according to the rules and failing satisfactory proof the Association may disqualify such player and remove the Club from the competition and/or impose such other penalty as they think fit.

If a Club is found guilty of playing an ineligible player in a County Competition match, or causing the match to be abandoned, it shall be struck out of the Competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Association prevail, and suffer such other penalties as the Association deem appropriate. A Club found guilty of playing an ineligible player will be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines.

(g) **UNDER 18's**

A Club may, at its discretion, use THREE substitutes from FIVE named at any time in a cup-tie, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee after play has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. The Referee must be informed of the names of the substitutes before the start of the game.

**UNDER 12's to UNDER 16's INCLUSIVE**

A Club may, at its discretion, use FIVE substitutes from FIVE named at any time in a cup-tie, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee after play has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. The Referee must be informed of the names of the substitutes before the start of the game.

In accordance with the subsequent paragraph repeated substitutions are permissible up to and including the Under 16 age group as follows:

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 Association Football.

For all competitions a maximum of five substitutes may be nominated and must be included on the official team sheet (County Cup T1 form) handed to the referee before the match. Substitutes not so named shall not take part in the game. The eligibility of a substitute to play in any other County cup-tie shall not be impaired unless they have entered the field of play to participate in the match.

- (h) All Clubs must fully complete a County T1 (Youth) Team Sheet (save for the Referee Mark & Result) and hand copies of said Team Sheet to the Referee (Green) and Opponents (Yellow) at least 15 minutes before the appointed kick off time (45 minutes for all Cup Finals) listing full names of players taking part in the game (including the nominated substitutes) any player not so listed on the form shall not take part in the match. Any club failing to carry out this provision will be fined as per schedule of fines in the directory.

## 9. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

- (a) The Association shall appoint referees to all cup ties but competing Clubs shall appoint their own Club Assistant Referees, except when Assistant Referees are appointed by the Association (Semi Final & Final Ties). Such Referees shall be entitled to charge fees as follows:

<b>Competition</b>	<b>Referee</b>	<b>Assistant Referee</b>
Youth / Girls (U18,U16,U15)	£20.00	£14.00
Youth / Girls (U14,U13,U12)	£15.00	£10.00

Match officials shall be entitled to claim their fare if travelling by public transport, or 33 pence per mile if using own vehicle.

In all competitions the Home Club shall be liable for the Referees Fee and Expenses upto and including the Quarter Finals. In the Semi Finals (when Assistant Referees are appointed) the Fees and Expenses of all 3 Match Officials shall be shared equally between the competing clubs. In all cases upto and including the Semi Finals it shall be the responsibility of the Home Club to ensure that payment is made to the Match Officials.

- (b) A Club may apply in writing to the Association for the appointment of assistant referees in County Competition games, other than as set out in paragraph (b), and if such Assistant Referees are available, the Club making the application shall be responsible for the payment of their fees.
- (c) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee, the senior Assistant Referee shall referee the game. He shall receive the Referee's fee and the Clubs must agree to provide an Assistant Referee to take his place. In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee at a game, for which there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, the Clubs must agree upon a substitute to referee the game. Failure to do so may result in one or both clubs being eliminated from the Competition. In all cases where an officially appointed Referee or Assistant Referee fails to appear, or is late for the kick-off, the matter must be reported to the Association by the home club.

When Assistant Referees are not appointed, each Club must provide an Assistant Referee who shall report to the Referee five minutes before the appointed time of kick-off.

- (d) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control (ie the weather), the match officials, if present, shall be entitled to half fee plus travelling expenses; but where a match is not played owing to one club being in default, that Club, if present, shall pay the officials their full fees and travelling expenses within 15 minutes of the decision being made. When the defaulting team is

not present the Association shall pay the officials their full fees and expenses and recover the money from the defaulting team.

- (e) Match officials are required to report to the ground at least 45 minutes (1 Hour for Semi Finals & Finals) before the Kick Off time stated in the Draw Bulletin.
- (f) Referees will report late starts, no Club Assistant Referees, failure to exchange T1 forms or any other matter that they consider should be reported to the Association.
- (g) Officials appointed to the Final Tie shall receive a suitable memento in lieu of any fee but can claim travel expenses as detailed above.

#### **10. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

- (a) The Home Club (Up to and including the Semi Finals) must telephone the result to the Association, on the number provided on the Draw Bulletin, within one hour of the match ending. In the event that they have to leave a message on the answer phone the following information must be conveyed in a clear manner:
  - (1) Competition
  - (2) Match Details i.e. Match Number & Competing Teams
  - (3) Score (Whether Extra Time was played or not)
  - (4) Penalties Score (If Applicable)
- (b) In the event of the ground being declared unfit, the Home Club shall inform the Association immediately. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be fined as per schedule of fines in County Directory.
- (c) Both Clubs shall send notice of the result of each match on the County T1 (Youth) Team Sheet. Clubs must ensure that the players full names are listed and those substitutes that played are marked accordingly. The Result and Referees Name & Mark must also be completed before finally signing the form. The T1 forms should reach the Association within 3 days of the match (excluding Sundays). Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be subject to a fine as per schedule of fines in County Directory and in default of payment, shall be struck out of the competition.
- (d) Clubs in matches that started but were not completed for any reason must still send in the County T1 (Youth) Team Sheet as detailed in Rule 10(c). Clubs in matches that didn't take place for any reason do not need to send in a T1 Team Sheet.

#### **11. NON FULFILMENT OF CUP TIES**

- (a) Any Club not intending to fulfil a Cup Tie must give information of their intention to do so to the Secretary of the opposing Club and to the Association at the earliest opportunity, if this is within 7 days of the game the Association shall have the power to compel them to pay the expenses incurred by their opponents, or of taking such action as they may deem expedient. Clubs failing to fulfil a Cup Tie shall be fined as per schedule of fines.
- (b) Any Club failing to play on the date fixed for a tie (unless the Association has specifically agreed to a change of date) shall forfeit the match.
- (c) A Club withdrawing in a Semi Final or Final of a County Competition shall be deemed guilty of serious misconduct and dealt with in such a manner that the Association see fit.

#### **12. FINAL TIES, TROPHIES & MEMENTOES**

- (a) The proceeds of the Final Ties shall be taken by the Association who shall be responsible for rent of ground, Refreshments, printing costs, match officials expenses and any other expenditure. Any excess Income over Expenditure shall be divided as follows:

50% to each of the Finalists (When pre-match ticket sales are made available and taken up the clubs shares shall be divided pro-rata on the number of tickets sold i.e. clubs selling no tickets shall not receive a share of the gate)

Payments to Clubs will be made within 28 days of the last Final being completed.

- (b) At the conclusion of the Final Tie both clubs shall be presented with 16 mementoes and each Match Official shall be presented with a memento. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct the memento to which he may be entitled shall be withheld at the discretion of the Association.
- (c) After the Final the winners of the Trophy shall sign a receipt and give an undertaking to return the Trophy clean and polished, in equitable order and suitably engraved to the Association on or before the 1st February next. Winning Clubs who fold before or during the next season must immediately return the Cup to the Association. Clubs failing to return the Cup by the 1st February will be fined as per schedule of fines in Directory.

### **13. APPEALS AND PROTESTS**

- (a) All appeals and protests (including those relating to players) must be made to the Association within 7 days of the match taking place (Sundays not included), accompanied by a deposit as per schedule of payments, which shall be forfeited if the Association think the appeal or protest to be groundless. If the protest be sustained, the amount of the deposit shall be repaid by the offending Club, who may also be ordered to pay other expenses incurred in hearing or deciding the protest.
- (b) Protests against the appurtenances of the match such as markings, measurements, goalposts etc, will not be entertained unless a protest has been lodged with the Referee before the match.

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