

STANDARDISED RULES

These Rules have been compiled by the Sanction and Registrations Committee of The Football Association in conjunction with the Members of the Standardisation of League Rules Working Group for the mandatory use of all sanctioned Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 inclusive of the National League System.

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 In these Rules:

"Affiliated Association" means an Association accorded the status of an affiliated Association under the Rules of The FA

"Appointing Authority" means both The FA and the Competition

"Articles" means the Articles of Association of the Company and reference to a number of following the word "Article" is a reference to an Article so numbered in the "Articles"

"Board" means the Board of Directors of the Company appointed in accordance with the Articles or, in the case of a Competition which is an unincorporated association, the management committee elected to manage the running of the Competition

"Club" means a Club for the time being in membership of the Company (including a Club which has had a transfer of membership approved under Rule 2.7 below)

"Company" means The Western Football League Limited, company registration number 4228404 which administers the Competition and shall, where the Competition is an unincorporated entity, include that entity

"Company Secretary" means the person appointed by the Board and registered at Companies House as the Company Secretary of the Company

"Competition" means the Toolstation Western Football League

"Competition Match" means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Company

"Competition Secretary" means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition

"Criteria Document" means the document entitled "National Ground Grading Document" issued by The FA from time to time and shall, unless stated to the contrary, mean the latest edition of the document

"Fees Tariff" means a list of fees approved by the Company at a general meeting to be levied by the Company for any matters for which fees are payable under the Rules

"Fines Tariff" means a list of fines approved by the Company at a general meeting to be levied by the Company for any breach of the Rules

"Fit and Proper Declaration" means a declaration to The FA required from an Officer from time to time

"Football Creditor" means any one of the following:

- The Football Association Limited
- Any Club affiliated with an Affiliated Association
- Any League sanctioned by The Association or an Affiliated Association
- Any full time or part time employee of a Club, or former full time or part time employee of a Club, in respect of sums due to such person by way of arrears of remuneration or expenses. This excludes for these purposes all and any claims for redundancy, unfair or wrongful dismissal or other claims arising out of the termination of the contract or in respect of any period after the actual date of termination

- The Professional Footballers' Association Limited
- The Football Foundation
- Any Affiliated Association
- Any pension scheme or plan administered by or on behalf of the Competition

"Insolvency Event" means any one of the following:

- A manager, receiver, administrator, administrative receiver, liquidator, provisional liquidator or supervisor to a voluntary arrangement is appointed in respect of a Club or any part of its undertaking or assets;
- A Club applies for an Administration Order (as defined in Section 10 of Schedule B (i) of the Insolvency Act 1986) or an Administration Order is made in respect of it or it otherwise enters into Administration;
- A winding-up order is made in respect of a Club;
- A Club enters into any arrangement with its creditors or some part of them in respect of the payment of its debts or any of them as a Company Voluntary Arrangement (under the Insolvency Act 1986) or a Scheme of Arrangement (under the Companies Act 1985);
- A Club passes a resolution pursuant to Section 84 (i) (c) of the Insolvency Act 1986 to the effect that it cannot by reason of its liabilities continue its business and that it is advisable to wind up;
- A Club ceases or forms an intention to cease wholly or substantially to carry on its business save for the purpose or reconstruction or amalgamation or otherwise in accordance with the scheme of proposals that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Board;
- A Club convenes a meeting of its creditors pursuant to Section 95 or Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986

"Match Officials" means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Competition Match

"Officer" means an individual who is required to make a Fit and Proper Declaration by The FA

"Players' Agent" means a person who, for reward, represents, negotiates on behalf of, advises or otherwise acts for a Principal in the context of either the transfer of a player's registration, the terms of a contract between a player and a Club or the terms of a contract between a manager and a Club

"Playing Season" means the period between the date on which the first league fixture in the Competition is played each year until the date on which the last league fixture in the Competition is played. For Clubs participating in play off matches this does include the period when play off matches are played

"Play Off Position" means the position of a Club in the table at the end of each Playing Season which is provided for in Rule 13 as qualifying the Club to take part in a play off match to qualify for promotion to the next step of football for the next Playing Season

"Principal" means a Club, a manager, an official of a Club, or a player employing an Agent for one of the purposes set out in the definition of Agent above

"Rules" means these rules under which the Competition is administered

"SSAP" means a sporting sanctions appeal panel to be appointed to determine an appeal against a deduction of points under Rule 14

"The FA" means The Football Association Limited

"written" or "in writing" means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise

1.2 Words or expressions used in these Rules shall, if not inconsistent with the subject or context, bear the same meanings as in the Articles

1.3 All Clubs shall adhere to the Rules. Every Club shall be deemed, as a member of the Company to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Board in relation thereto, subject to the provisions of Rule 17

1.4 The Competition will be known as "Toolstation Western Football League" (or such other name as the Company may adopt). The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Company in accordance with the Articles. A Club which ceases to exist or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall thereupon automatically cease to be a member of the Company.

1.5 The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Company acting (save where otherwise specifically mentioned herein) through the Board in accordance with the Rules Regulations and Practices of The FA

1.6 The Company shall be part of the National League Structure established by The FA and shall sign such documents as are required from time to time to confirm such membership

2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

2.1 All Clubs shall have grounds or headquarters situated in England or Wales and the Competition Secretary shall send their names and particulars to The FA annually by the date appointed by, and in the format required by, The FA. English Clubs shall be duly affiliated at all times to a recognised County Football Association. Welsh Clubs shall be affiliated to The FA of Wales. Each Club shall notify the Competition Secretary of its affiliation number each year as soon as practicable after it has received same. Each Club shall return to the Competition Secretary a fully completed questionnaire relating to Form "D" required by The FA by the date given in the circular letter accompanying the questionnaire issued by the Competition Secretary.

A Club may share its ground (subject to the provisions of Rule 4.12) with another club (including a club engaged in another sport) providing, in the case of any football club, the club playing in the most senior competition has priority of fixtures and, in the case of any other club, providing the Club has priority of fixtures. Ground sharing is permitted but not in order to gain promotion or to avoid relegation. In the case of dispute the Company shall have the power to accept an alternative agreement on priority.

2.2 No club which is a "nursery" club or a reserve side of a football club shall be eligible for membership of the Company.

A club shall be deemed to be a "nursery" club if it is under obligation, written or otherwise, to a football club by reason of which it has not the sole and entire control of its own management, finance and players.

2.3 Clubs seeking membership or applying to retain membership of the Company must comply with the requirements provided for in the Criteria Document for the step at which the Club is playing. Only clubs which meet these criteria in full will be eligible for membership. All Clubs visited by representatives of the Competition in pursuance of the document will pay a non-returnable fee. In the absence of a procedure for application for membership being established by The FA, the Board shall establish such procedure.

2.4 The FA shall determine a time scale whereby all Clubs in membership must attain the grade provided for in the Criteria Document. The grade applicable for each Club for the commencement of a Playing Season shall be that existing at the previous 1st April, such grading to be ascertained by an inspection carried out on or before 1st April or as soon as practicable thereafter. Any Club not maintaining the grade set for the Competition shall be relegated at the end of the Playing Season to a step determined by The FA.

Any delay in inspection shall in no way release a Club from its obligation to have its ground ready for inspection. If for any reason a Club's existing ground, or any new ground in which it proposes to play its home matches in the season following inspection, is not available for grading by 1st April prior to commencement of the relevant season then the Club must, by the 1st April, submit to the Board in writing its proposals for a venue for its home matches in the following season ("alternative proposal"), such alternative proposal to be considered (and if appropriate) approved at the next Board Meeting after 1st April. The alternative proposal must, inter alia, contain documentary evidence in support of any ground sharing arrangements and evidence that the proposed ground is demonstrably suitable at a level which the relevant club will be competing. The alternative proposal may not be for a continuation of any ground share arrangement if the Club has had a ground sharing arrangement for the previous 2 seasons, or any part thereof, even if those arrangements have related to more than one ground.

Any approval of the alternative proposal will be subject to the issue of a grading certificate. The Board will use all reasonable endeavours to inspect the ground after receiving the alternative proposal and prior to the Board meeting, but if it is unable to do so then any approval of the alternative proposal will be subject to the issue of a satisfactory grading certificate. In the event of a Club not having received a grading certificate by 1st April and not having had its alternative proposal approved at the relevant Board Meeting, it shall be relegated forthwith at the end of the playing season to a level determined by The Football Association.

Clubs in membership of the Competition on 1st April in any season will have until 31st May in that season to meet in full the criteria of membership of the Competition.

2.5 Any Club wishing to incorporate shall notify The FA, its Affiliated Association and the Company Secretary before it makes any resolutions in this regard.

2.6 In the event that any Club which is an unincorporated association incorporates itself it shall notify the Company Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution to take this action and shall with such notice provide the Company Secretary with a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company. Any amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of a Club must be notified to the Competition Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution with a copy of the change(s).

2.7 In the event that any Club which is an unincorporated association resolves to transfer its membership of the Competition to a company or in the event that a Club which is a company resolves to transfer its membership to a different company the Board will use the following minimum criteria in deciding whether to approve that transfer:

2.7.1 The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity

2.7.2 All Football Creditors in the Club must be satisfied in full or transferred (with the creditors' consent) to the new entity, and evidenced as such.

2.7.3 All other creditors in the Club must be satisfied and evidenced as such.

2.7.4 The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts showing its ability to fund the Club for the next 12 months or to the end of the Playing Season following transfer (whichever is the longer) and that evidence of funding sources has been provided.

2.7.5 The FA has given approval for the transfer to take place.

2.8 The Competition shall allow for up to 44 member Clubs. There will be 2 divisions of 22 Clubs in each division where possible. The divisions will be called Premier and First. The Clubs competing in each division each season will be confirmed by the Annual General Meeting of the Company each year.

2.9 Any Club or Club representative found guilty of serious irregularities regarding players Contract payments under The FA Rules may be expelled from the Company in accordance with the Articles or these Rules and, in addition, may be fined such sum as the Board shall determine.

2.10 The Company will hold a register of the full name of the company/unincorporated entity constituting each Club. If the Club is an incorporated entity, it must provide the Company with its company registration number. If the Club is an unincorporated entity, it must provide the Company with the name of an individual in whose name the membership of the Company will be vested.

The Company will provide a copy of its membership register to The FA annually.

2.11 In the event that an Insolvency Event occurs in relation to any Club, that Club must inform and keep informed the Company Secretary and The FA immediately.

The Board shall have the power to suspend a Club on notification of it having entered an Insolvency Event.

At the discretion of the Board, a suspension may take effect from the giving of the notice or it may be postponed subject to any conditions as the Board may think fit to impose.

In the event that a Club is suspended or its suspension is postponed, the Board shall have power to make such payments as it may think fit to the Club's Football Creditors out of any monies due to that club from the Company.

2.12 An Officer must submit a Fit and Proper Declaration to The FA and the Competition within 14 days of becoming an Officer.

No individual will be permitted to act as an Officer if they fail to meet any of the requirements of the Fit and Proper Declaration, as set out in the Rules of The FA.

In the event that an individual/entity is found to have either:

- Completed false or misleading statements on their Fit and Proper Declaration;
- acted as an Officer when in breach of the requirements of the Fit and Proper Declaration;
- Acted as an Officer without having submitted a fully completed Fit and Proper Declaration;

then the individual/entity or Club shall be subject to such fine or other sanction as may be determined by The FA.

2.13 Any Club which is incorporated must be incorporated in England and Wales.

2.14 If during the course of a season the Board decide that the organisation and management or finances of a particular Club fall below the standards appropriate to membership of the Competition, the Competition Secretary shall be instructed to warn the Club at once that it may be excluded from membership of the Competition at the end of that playing season. Such a Club shall have the right to appeal to The FA within 14 days of the date of notification of the Board's decision.

2.15 The Competition, through the Board shall be empowered from time to time by subscription, levy or otherwise to require Clubs to contribute such sum or sums of money to the funds of the League as may be necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the League. Such contributions by Clubs may be collected by deduction from sums due to Clubs under any promotion agreement or from sponsorship money due or by whatever means the Board shall think fit. There shall be added to any sums to be contributed from Clubs, if applicable, Value Added Tax at the then prevailing rate.

2.16 Any Club failing to be represented at an Annual General Meeting or any other General Meeting called in accordance with the Articles without satisfactory reason being given shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

2.17 The Board shall establish a procedure for inspecting Clubs' grounds from time to time as well as a procedure for inspecting the grounds of clubs applying for membership of the Company.

3. MEMBERSHIP - ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

3.1 Any Club applying for membership of the Company shall submit to the Company a fully completed Membership application form and the application fee and non-refundable ground inspection fee set out in the Fees Tariff.

3.2 Clubs which have qualified for membership of the Company must confirm their acceptance of membership on the appropriate Competition form to be received by the Company at least 14 days prior to the next Annual General Meeting of the Company accompanied where appropriate by the membership fee set out in the Fees Tariff.

The annual subscription set out in the Fees Tariff shall be paid by each Club to the Company no later than 7 days after the date of the appropriate invoice.

4. POWER OF THE BOARD

4.1 The Board shall have power to deal with all matters of management of the Competition covered by the Rules. The Board shall conduct the business of the Competition and shall meet as often as is necessary for this purpose. The Board may appoint such committees as it deems appropriate which shall be fully empowered to act on the Board's behalf SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION BY THE BOARD.

4.2 Save where specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, the Board shall have power to apply, act upon and enforce these Rules and shall have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Company or the Competition including any not provided for in these Rules.

4.3 All decisions of the Board shall be binding, subject to a right of appeal to The FA pursuant to Rule 17. Decisions of the Board must be notified, in writing, to all concerned within fourteen days of the making of such decision.

4.4 Any Club or person committing a breach of any Rule shall be liable to the penalties set out in the Fines Tariff, or if not therein set out, such as the Board may decide.

4.5 All fines and charges imposed by the Board shall be received by the Company within twenty-eight days of the date of notification of imposition (unless otherwise ordered). Any Club or person breaking this Rule or defaulting in paying any Football Creditor shall be liable to such penalties as the Board may impose. The Board shall have the power to place an embargo on the registrations of transfers by any Club defaulting in the payment of a transfer or compensation fee to another Club.

4.6 If a Club fails to comply with an order or instruction of the Board within fourteen days of notification of such order or instruction, or within fourteen days of an operative date specified in that order or instruction, it shall not be allowed to play or take part in the business of the Company until the expiry of 7 days from the day the order or instruction is complied with.

4.7 Except where otherwise mentioned, all communications shall be addressed to the Competition Secretary, who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.

4.8 A Club must at all times attend satisfactorily to the business of the Competition and/or the correspondence of the Competition or Company.

4.9 If a Club is asked to submit a report in relation to any alleged violation of these Rules it may have a personal hearing, providing it notifies its intention of such within fourteen days of the date of notification from the Company, or the case will be dealt with in its absence.

4.10 The Board shall have the power to arrange representative matches at their discretion.

4.11 A match may be played each season between two clubs nominated by the Board, usually the Competition Champions and the Competition Cup Winners (or, if no Cup Competition is played for, or if the same Club wins both competitions, between the Competition Champions and a club nominated by the Board). The venue and the date for playing the match will be decided by the Board. The distribution of the proceeds of the match, after the match expenses have been deducted, will be decided by the Board.

4.12 No Club shall move to another ground or seek to share a ground, including its own, without first obtaining the consent, in writing, of the Board. Any ground sharing agreement for a period in excess of 13 weeks must be in writing and be approved by the Board before

being entered into and (except in an emergency) completed by 31st May in each year to be effective for the following Playing Season. A copy of the completed agreement must be sent to the Competition Secretary within 7 days of signing.

4.13 Within ten months of its accounting reference date, each Club shall submit to the Company a copy of its full financial statements as presented to its members/shareholders with confirmation that the accounts have been approved at a duly convened general meeting.

4.14 All Participants shall abide by The Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children as determined by The Association from time to time.

5. INTERESTS IN MORE THAN ONE CLUB

Except with the prior written consent of the Board no person, company or business institution (including insolvency practitioners) may at any time be interested in more than one Club or in a Club and any other club playing in a Competition sanctioned by The FA. The definition of "interested" shall be the same as provided for by the Rules of the FA Challenge Cup Competition in force from time to time.

6. PLAYERS

6.1 STATUS OF PLAYERS

The FA Rules will apply in respect of all matters concerning players.

Players will be contract, non-contract or scholars and their status must be clearly stated on all registration forms.

Contract Player means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

Non-Contract Player means a player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment with a Club.

All players must be registered on forms provided by the Competition. Each player must be registered as contract, non-contract or scholar and notice must be given to the Competition in the event of any change to the status registered during the currency of the registration of that player within 5 days of the change of registration being effected. To be eligible, a player of a Club must have obtained an International Transfer Certificate (if required), have signed a Competition registration form and have been registered and approved by the Company in accordance with a procedure set by the Board before playing in any Competition organised by the Company.

It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any player signing a registration form for that Club has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate.

All players' contracts shall be in the full name of the Club. If the club is a corporate body, the contract must state the full name of the company, and also include the company registration number.

The registration of a player shall be valid for one Playing Season only.

Players' Registration Forms will be made available to Clubs by the League and will be charged in accordance with the Fees Tariff.

The registration of scholars must be in accordance with The FA Rule C3(a).

The Board have the power to refuse or cancel the registration of any player found guilty of undesirable conduct and to disqualify the player in question from participating in any or all matches in the Competition for a breach of Rule.

Except when specific approval has been given by the Board a Club cannot sign or transfer more than one player, contract or non-contract, from another Club at any one time, unless a period of 14 days has elapsed between each signing.

The Board have the power to place an embargo on the registration, transfer or the loan transfer of players by any Club who are deemed to be in breach of these Rules.

6.2 REGISTRATIONS

6.2.1 In the event of a player signing registration forms for more than one Club, priority of registration shall decide for which Club he is entitled to play. The Club submitting the later form shall be notified of the prior registration of the player and the circumstances under which the registration forms were signed shall be investigated by the Board. Any player found to have signed registration forms for more than one Club or any Club found to have knowingly induced a registered player of another Club to sign a registration form, shall be dealt with by the Board in such a manner as it shall think fit.

6.2.2 At least 11 players must be registered 7 (seven) days prior TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF EACH PLAYING SEASON.

6.3 FACSIMILE REGISTRATION

Subject to the provisions of Rule 6.5, a player will only be eligible to play in a match organised by the Company under these Rules if the appropriate forms are received by the Company (including by facsimile) by four (4) hours preceding the scheduled kick off time of such match.

No player whose registration is received after four (4) hours preceding the scheduled kick off time of any match will be eligible to play in a match organised by the Company on that day.

If a registration form is sent to the Company by facsimile or by email, that form must be received by the Company within 5 days of the sending of the facsimile or email and in default the player shall not be eligible to play in the Competition unless and until a valid registration form is received. The form when received must be identical to that received by facsimile or email. Any Club deemed to have falsified any form will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.8.

The late registration of a player by facsimile or email is not automatically valid and it is the responsibility of the Club to ensure that the player is NOT registered with any other Club. When the player involved was previously registered with another Club, it is necessary for that Club to complete the transfer form prior to or at the same time as the registration or transfer to the new Club.

6.4 TRANSFERS

6.4.1 The transfer of the registration of a contract player from one Club to another must be in writing, on the Competition transfer form, duly signed by the contract player and the two Clubs and forwarded to the Company for approval and registration. Such contract player does not become a bona-fide player of the Club seeking his transfer until that Club has received from the Company a certificate of registration or the provisions of Rule 6.3 have been complied with. The registration of a contract player whose contract is cancelled by mutual consent shall be automatically cancelled upon receipt by the Company of a copy of the relevant FA form.

Where a Club cancels the registration of a player, contract or non-contract, for any reason whatsoever, the Club must notify the Competition Secretary immediately, in writing and such notification must be signed by an authorised signatory of that Club to be valid.

A non-contract player whose registration for a Club is cancelled or transferred for any reason whatsoever, cannot return to his original Club until a minimum of four weeks has elapsed from the date of the cancellation or transfer without the consent of the Board.

6.4.2 Should a Club wish to register a Non-Contract player who is registered by another Club, both Clubs if in agreement must sign the standard Competition transfer form applicable to Non-Contract players.

If a non-contract player also registers for a club not in membership of the Competition, his registration for the Competition may be retained by the Club.

6.4.3 A player may not register for a Club unless at least 14 days have expired from the date of registration with another Club. A Club may not register a transfer of a contract or non-contract player unless that player has been registered with the transferring Club for at least 14 days.

6.4.4 Short Term Loan Transfers – Loans of contract players shall be allowed to or from clubs in membership of:

- The FA Premier League Limited
- The Football League Limited
- The Football Conference Limited
- The Isthmian Football League Limited
- The Northern Premier Football League Limited
- The Southern Football League Limited
- Any other Leagues which have been authorised by The FA

on such terms and conditions as shall be mutually agreed by the two clubs and the player. For transfers between Clubs in the same Competition the transfer must be completed on the National League System Temporary Transfer Form and for transfers between Clubs in different Competitions the transfer must be completed on FA Form H3.

The Competition shall not approve more than TWO short term loan transfers to or from any one club including FA Premier League or Football League clubs at any one time.

A Club can have up to a MAXIMUM of 8 players on short term loan during the season. The minimum period of a short term loan transfer must be 28 days with a maximum of 93 days in any one season.

Short term loan transfers which become permanent before their expiry date shall not count against a Club's quota of days or players.

A player whose contract registration is cancelled by mutual consent and immediately re-registered by the same or a different Club on a non-contract basis shall not subsequently be registered as a contract player for the same Club within three months of the date of the cancellation except with the consent of the Board.

On completing the National League System Temporary Transfer Form or FA form H3, a Club must send the top copy to The FA, one copy to the Company and the third copy to the secretary of the league with which the player is registered.

To extend the period of any short term loan transfer a further National League System Temporary Transfer Form or FA form H3 must be completed, with copies sent as provided above.

The player being taken on short or long term loan must sign a Competition contract registration form, which will be valid for the full period of the loan, including any extension to the loan period. The standard Competition cancellation form must be used to prematurely end the temporary transfer period.

The short term transfer of a player to a Club must be completed and registered with the Company at least 4 (four) hours before the scheduled time of the kick-off of the first match in which the player is required to play.

If the short term loan transfer is extended, only the Club for whom the player was originally registered will be allowed to cancel the agreement at any time within the extension period. In the case of a goalkeeper, Clubs may mutually agree, if they so wish, to include a recall clause in the agreement to enable the Club for whom the player was originally registered to recall the player at any time during the loan period. Players, other than goalkeepers, may NOT be recalled within the first month (i.e. 28 days) of any loan period.

Any short term loan transfer which may terminate after the last day for registrations (Rule 6.5) may be extended for a further period.

The short term loan transfer of a player must be continuous. If the same player is taken on loan at a later date, this second loan period will count against the permitted number of short term loan transfers.

A player cannot play for a Club on a short term loan for more than 93 days in any one Season.

6.4.5 Long Term Loan Transfers shall be for a Playing Season or from the commencement of the Playing Season to 31st December or from 1st January (the January Transfer Window) to the end of the Playing Season. The Board may approve loans between Clubs in membership of the Leagues referred to in Rule 6.4.4 in respect of players aged 24 and under on or before 30th June prior to the commencement of the Playing Season and provided the loan is registered 4 hours before the Club's first fixture of the Competitions Playing Season for the Playing Season or from the commencement of the Playing Season to 31st December or on or before 31st January for the period from January to the end of the Playing Season and providing that such agreement is dated to expire at the end of the Playing Season relative to the Club taking him on loan.

A player on long term loan may not be recalled except for a goalkeeper or where the player is to be transferred permanently by the Club holding his registered contract. A player other than a goalkeeper so recalled cannot be permitted to play for the Club holding his registration after such recall until the end of the Season. Players so recalled can only be replaced by a further long term loan with permission from the Company. Long term loans transfers will not count against the number of short term loans in Rule 6.4.4.

6.4.6 The maximum number of Short Term Loans will be 8 per Season and Long Term Loans will be 2 per Season. Whilst a Club may register any number of Work Experience players only 2 may play in any one match in accordance with FA Rules. A Club may name up to a maximum of 5 players on a team sheet who are either Long Term Loans, Short Term Loans or Work Experience players with no more than 2 from any one Category.

6.4.7 The Company may, at its discretion, refuse any further registration of players to any Club which has not completed payment of a transfer arrangement made with another Club or arranged for the payment to be adequately secured. The Club concerned will continue to pay the player in accordance with his contract.

6.5 CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATIONS

After 5pm on 31st March each season, registrations and transfer of registrations will be declined or will be approved subject to such limitations and restrictions as the Board may determine and, if so determined, the player shall only be eligible to play in the matches for which permission is granted by the Board.

6.6 CLUB LIST OF PLAYERS AND TRANSFER LIST

Clubs shall furnish the Competition Secretary by 1st June with the following details:

6.6.1 a list of contract players whose agreements do not terminate at the end of the current season;

- 6.6.2 a list of contract players in respect of whom the Club has exercised its option in accordance with Football Association Rule C1, J;
- 6.6.3 a list of contract players in respect of whom the existing agreements do not include an option to renew but which the Club is desirous of offering further engagements, in accordance with Football Association Rule C1,J;
- 6.6.4 a list of contract players in respect of whom the Club has exercised its option in accordance with Football Association Rule C1, J but whose registration the Club is prepared to transfer;
- 6.6.5 a list of contract players the Club has released;
- 6.6.6 a list of all players whose registration the Club wishes to be cancelled;
- Clubs shall also complete the standard Competition forms and return these by this date.

6.7 SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

A Club at its discretion may use three substitute players at any time in a match. Substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. When a Club is making a substitution it shall use a Board to show the number of the player to be substituted and the number of the substitute player.

A maximum of three (3) SUBSTITUTES may be nominated and they must be included on the official team sheet handed to the Referee before the match in accordance with Rule 8.11.1. A substitute may not be used to replace a player who has been suspended from the match by the Match Officials.

If a player does not take part in the match for which he is a nominated substitute he shall be deemed as not having played for the Club in that match.

If a named substitute is not a registered player with the Club for the Competition and does NOT take part in the match, the offending Club may be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

6.8 PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER

Any Club found to have played an ineligible player in a match shall have any points gained from that match deducted from its record and have levied upon it a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. The Company may vary this decision in respect of the points gained only in circumstances where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or in the case of where a substitute player who is ineligible participates in a match or is listed on the official team sheet but does not participate in that match.

The Board may also order that such match be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Board which may also levy penalty points against the Club in default.

6.9 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

6.9.1 Subject to clauses 6.9.2 to 6.9.7, and to the Rules and Regulations of The FA, a Club may negotiate a financial arrangement with its players.

6.9.2 All players under a written contract must be registered with the Competition and The FA.

6.9.3 All payments and benefits due to the player must be shown in the contract.

6.9.4 All payments made to players must be made by the Club and fully recorded in the accounting records of the Club.

6.9.5 All salaried payments (whether to contract or non-contract players) must be subject to PAYE and National Insurance.

6.9.6 All salary payments due on written contracts must be stated gross, before PAYE and National Insurance deductions.

6.9.7 Any players paid expenses should be reimbursed via an expense claim form. The club should retain all expense records in a format acceptable to the Inland Revenue.

6.10 NON UNITED KINGDOM PLAYERS

In a Competition match a Club shall not, without the consent of the Board, play more than three players who are not citizens of the European Union or colonies of the United Kingdom unless such person has been resident in the United Kingdom for a continuous period of five years. Any Club in breach of this Rule will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.8.

7. CLUB COLOURS

7.1 On or before a date specified by the Company each year, every Club shall notify the Competition Secretary, in writing, of details of their first choice colours (shirts, shorts and socks) and such details shall be printed in the Handbook published by the Company for the ensuing Playing Season. The colours registered by each Club shall be worn during the following season when playing at home. Shirts must be numbered 1 - 14 (or, where 13 is excluded 1 - 15) such that the numbers can be clearly identified by officials and spectators. Striped, hooped or otherwise patterned shirts shall have numbers affixed to contrasting patches or numbers in a contrasting colour with bold outline. No changes to the first choice colours or combination of colours shall be permitted without the consent of the Board

7.2 When the registered colours of shirts shorts or socks of two competing Clubs are alike or similar the visiting Club shall change the relevant item to a colour which does not clash with the corresponding item of the home Club. Neck and cuff trim colours on shirts shall not be regarded as a basic colour for the purpose of this Rule.

Subject to the foregoing a Club may, if they wish, wear colours not registered with the Competition for away matches. It is the responsibility of the visiting Club, if they do not intend to play in their registered colours, to notify the home team and check that their colours will not clash.

7.3 The goalkeeper shall play in kit clearly distinguishable from the colours of the shirts worn by all other players in the match and the Match Officials.

The goalkeeper may not wear a black jersey or a predominantly black jersey in the Competition fixture.

7.4 No Club shall be permitted to register or play in shirts the colour of which is likely to cause confusion with the outfits worn by the Match Officials (i.e. black or dark blue).

7.5 The players' shirts must be clearly numbered in accordance with the list handed to the match referee before a match and there must be no change of numbers during the match except for a change of goalkeeper or if permitted by the match referee because of a blood injury.

7.6 The Captain shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status.

7.7 Both sleeves of the shirts of all players in matches played under the jurisdiction of the Company shall carry a Competition logo as supplied by the Competition on an annual basis if so decided by the Board. Shirt advertising must comply with FA Regulations.

8. PLAYING OF MATCHES.

8.1 The Board shall fix the date on which the Playing Season shall commence.

8.2 All matches shall be played under the Rules and Regulations of The FA and in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

8.3 All matches shall be of ninety minutes' duration. Any match not complying may be ordered to stand as a completed match or replayed for the full period of ninety minutes, or the match awarded to the Club not at fault, as the Board may decide, on such terms as the Board shall decide. The half-time interval in all matches shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Where a match is abandoned for reasons over which neither Club has control, the home Club shall retain the gate receipts of such uncompleted match and the Board shall decide the terms upon which any replayed match shall be played.

Where a match is abandoned before Half Time the Home Club will issue a voucher to spectators valid for free admission on the date of the rearranged match. Where a match is abandoned after Half Time for whatever reason(s) no refund voucher will be issued.

Where a match is abandoned because of the conduct of one team or its Club members the Board shall be empowered to award the match to the opponents and fine them in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Where an abandonment is caused by the conduct of both teams or their Club members the Board will take such action as they consider appropriate and both shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

All claims for compensation by either Club shall be received by the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the date of the match to which the claim relates.

8.4 In the event of the match being postponed, not completed or abandoned, the home Club must immediately telephone or facsimile the Competition results service, the Competition Secretary and, in the case of a match postponement, the Appointing Authority, the visiting Club and the Match Officials. When a postponement occurs in any FA or County Cup competition, the home Club if two Clubs are playing the tie, or the Club if the match involves a team outside of the Competition, must also follow this procedure.

8.5 Each Club must take every precaution to keep its ground in good playing condition and amenities (including floodlights) in good working order throughout the Playing Season.

8.6 Where a match has been postponed for any reason the Competition Secretary shall determine the new date.

Any Club without just cause failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Competition match on the appointed date shall for each offence be liable to expulsion from the Competition and/or such other disciplinary action the Board may determine, including the deduction of up to a maximum of three points from the offending Club's record, any expenses incurred by their opponents, and a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

In the event of a Club being in breach of the previous paragraph of this Rule then the Board may award points to the Club not at fault as if the match had been played and the League table shall reflect the position as if the match had been played with the result awarded by the Board.

8.7 The postponement of matches due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance with Rule 15.2.

8.8 All Clubs must have a facsimile machine, a mobile telephone and an email address, operational at all times. These will be listed in the Competition Handbook unless a Club requests otherwise.

8.9 Each Club shall be prepared to kick-off at the scheduled time unless a satisfactory explanation is offered. Any Club commencing a Competition match with less than 11 players may be subject to a fine in accordance with the fines tariff. Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing Club.

8.10 When a Club obtains the consent of the Board to postpone a fixture because of an epidemic, affecting the availability of their players, that Club shall be liable to pay any direct expenses incurred, if any, to the opposing Club. The amount of claim will be at the discretion of the Board. Requests for the postponement of a match for any reason will not be considered more than forty-eight hours before the scheduled time of kick-off.

Medical certificates for those players affected, signed by the players' own doctor, must be forwarded to the Competition Secretary within seven days of the postponement, along with a full list of contract and non-contract players currently registered by the Club at the date of the match which was postponed, giving full reasons against each name for the player's unavailability.

8.11.1 Each Club must hand copies of a list of name(s) of players taking part in a match (including the name(s) and number(s) of the nominated substitute(s) to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee at least forty five minutes before the scheduled time of kick-off. The players' numbers (in accordance with Rule 7) and the colours of the playing strip must be clearly stated. Any Clubs in breach may be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

8.11.2 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after team sheets have been exchanged may be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. A player who is named on the team sheet exchanged under Rule 8.11.1 may be replaced without fine if he is injured warming up after exchange of the team sheet. Any subsequent changes must be notified to the referee and to a representative of the opponents before the actual kick-off.

8.12.1 The home Club shall advise the visiting Club and the Match Officials of the date and time of kick-off of each match, to be received at least five days prior to the match and the visiting Club and the Match Officials must acknowledge receipt to be received at least three days before the match.

8.12.2 Where a match is re-arranged or cancelled after the officials have been appointed, it is the duty of the home Club to notify the officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately. Clubs in default of this Rule may be subject to any action decided by the Board.

8.13 Unless mutually agreed by the Clubs concerned, the time of kick-off shall be:

Saturday matches - 3.00 pm

Midweek matches - 7.45 pm unless a Club notifies the Competition Secretary in writing before the commencement of each Playing Season to state that it wishes all its home midweek matches to kick off at 7.30pm.

Where floodlights are not installed:

Saturday matches;

August, September, October, February, March, April & May - 3.00pm

November & January - 2.15pm

December 2.00pm

Midweek matches;

August, September, April & May - 6.30pm

The Competition Secretary reserves the right to amend scheduled fixtures and kick-off times to meet television requirements as necessary. Notification will be provided by the Competition Secretary in writing to both Clubs for fixtures so rescheduled.

8.14 All matches shall be played on the home and away principle and the Board shall determine how the fixtures shall be arranged. Such fixtures shall take precedence over all competitions in which a Club may engage, with the exception of:

- The FA Challenge Cup/Welsh Cup.
- The FA Challenge Trophy/Vase Competition.
- The Senior Cup Competition for which the Club is eligible, of the Affiliated Association to which it was first affiliated.

Clubs playing in the FA of Wales Challenge Cup, or an Affiliated Association Cup Competition which allows the option to play the tie mid-week, must arrange the match to avoid interference with Saturday fixtures, providing the opposing club drawn at home has suitable floodlighting. This applies to ALL Clubs who play in a League competition which forms any part of the National League System of Football outside the Football League.

Scheduled Saturday fixtures must not be re-arranged without permission of the Competition Secretary. This excludes FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase matches. Clubs may be ordered to re-arrange outstanding matches, at the discretion of the Board, and where necessary their prospective opponents instructed accordingly. Clubs with open dates on Saturdays may be instructed to play any outstanding Competition fixture on such date. A minimum of seven (7) days' notice will be given in respect of any such re-arrangement.

8.15 A Club may not enter its first team in any outside competition, other than those listed in Rule 8.14, without the prior permission of the Board. The Competition Secretary must be informed of all fixtures, postponements and results of all matches played in any other competition.

8.16 The Board shall determine the policy of the Competition for the issuing of match day passes.

8.17 The Board may change any Competition fixtures during the season to suit the overall interests of the Competition and shall have the power to decide whether a ground is suitable for Competition matches and to order a Club whose ground is deemed unsuitable to play its home matches at an alternative suitable ground.

8.18 Six weeks' notice is required from Clubs wishing to re-arrange a Saturday match to Friday evening or Sunday. A request made in less than this period of time will only be considered by the Board in exceptional circumstances and granted at their discretion.

8.19 All Competition matches shall be arranged as soon as practicable. The copyright in all lists of arrangements of such fixtures shall be vested in the Company.

8.20 The home Club shall be responsible for notifying the Competition immediately following the conclusion of each home Competition match the result of that match together with the attendance, the times of all goals scored in the match and the scorer of each goal. In any FA or AFFILIATED ASSOCIATION Competition the home Club if two Clubs are playing the tie, or the Club if the match involves a team outside of the Competition, must also follow this procedure.

8.21 The home Club is responsible for publishing a full match programme acceptable to the Board for each of its Competition matches. A team sheet will not be considered sufficient to comply with this Rule.

The visiting Club must send in writing to the home Club details of the proposed team they plan to field together with their Club history and up-to-date pen pictures of their current players registered with the Competition for the season at least five days before the scheduled date of the match between the two Clubs.

The home Club programme must include the details sent by the visiting Club in the match day programme.

Clubs will be responsible for all comments in their match day programme in respect of the Competition, the Company or other member Clubs, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary. No part of a Club's programme issued for a match in any competition shall, in the opinion of the Board, bring the Competition or the Company into disrepute.

All Clubs will be responsible for their official website or similar computer related information system, which is within the public domain. Nothing shall be included on the website which in the opinion of the Board brings the Competition or the Company into disrepute.

8.22.1 In all Competition Matches, the number of Clubs players and officials seated on the team benches, in the designated technical area, must not exceed 11 unless the team bench facility provides more than 11 individual seats.

8.22.2 Only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the players during the match. This person shall be the team manager or the team coach. He is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team but then must return to his position on the bench immediately after giving these instructions.

8.22.3 All team officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the official team sheet when it is submitted to the Match Officials. Only those persons listed on the official team sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.

8.22.4 The occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to The FA, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.

8.22.5 With the exception of the team manager, the team coach and any substitutes who are warming up or warming down, all other personnel are to remain seated on the trainers bench. The team manager or team coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team, but must then return to the trainer's bench.

9. PLAYERS' AGENTS

9.1 A Players' Agent cannot have an involvement in any Club in an official capacity (as defined by the Board) nor may he hold office with the Competition.

9.2 All Clubs must comply with The FA Regulations concerning Players' Agents.

10. FINANCIAL RECORDS

10.1 All Clubs shall keep their accounting records for recording the fact and nature of all receipts and payments so as to disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position including the assets and liabilities of the Club.

10.2 The home Club shall retain all gate receipts. Where a match is declared all ticket the Away Club shall be entitled to 10% of the total number of tickets available or a minimum of 600, whichever is the greater, subject to any stipulation by the relevant safety authority affecting these figures.

Clubs must ensure that all gate receipts are fully and properly recorded and accounted for in the accounting records of the club.

Clubs should have a system in operation for home games that enables them to accurately report on the following;

- A record of all tickets sold in advance
- A reconciliation of cash received by category of entrant through each turnstile
- The number of entrants through each turnstile
- A schedule of the numbers admitted to parts of the stadium that do not pass through a turnstile
- A list of complimentary tickets authorised

This documentation should be reconciled to the overall takings and declared attendance for each home game.

10.3 For Competition league matches only, the travelling expenses of match officials shall be pooled, each Club rendering on the match report details of all payments made. The Company shall, at the conclusion of the season, divide the total cost of officials in each division by the total number of Clubs in that division and where the total payment made by the Club is less than the equal share of the pool, the Club shall pay the difference within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification to the Club. Where the sum paid by the Club is more than the equal share of the pool, the Club will be reimbursed from the pool of monies received from all the other Clubs.

10.4 In the event of a transfer of a player where a consideration is agreed, the consideration can only be paid between the two clubs (the transferor and transferee clubs).

The full name of each contracting club should be stated in the transfer agreement. The full consideration involved must be recorded in the accounting records of both clubs.

10.5 Any Club temporarily transferring a player's registration to another club should invoice the receiving club in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement. The player concerned should remain on the payroll of the Club holding his permanent registration for the period of the loan.

10.6 All loans extended to a Club must be documented in full in the accounting records of the Club.

Documentation supporting each loan must be retained and should include the following information:

- The value of the loan
- The length of the loan
- The interest rate charged, and whether this is fixed or variable
- Repayment terms
- The full names of the individual or corporate body extending the loan
- The terms in the event of a default on the loan

The document should be signed by two directors, Officers or Executive Committee Members who are independent of the party extending the loan.

11. FOOTBALL CREDITORS

Where a Club defaults in making any payments to any Football Creditor, the Club shall be subject to such penalty as the Board of Directors may decide.

12. RESULT/REPORT FORMS

Each Club shall submit the fully completed copy of the appropriate match result forms by first class post (in an envelope showing a postmark within 3 days of the match), facsimile, or email to the Appointing Authority and the Competition. When a Club considers that the Referee has discharged his duties incompetently and awards a mark of 60 or less, a detailed report must be sent to the Appointing Authority within three days of the match by first class post. Clubs in default of any provision of the Rule will be subject to a fine for each offence in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

13. CHAMPION, RELEGATION

13.1 Three points will be awarded for a win at home or away and one point for a drawn match at home or away.

13.2 At the end of the Playing Season of each competition a table will be compiled showing the playing record of each Club in each division of the Competition.

The position of each Club in the table so compiled shall be determined in order with the Club being awarded the highest number of points being first and the Club being awarded the second highest number of points being placed second and so on. In the event of two or more clubs being awarded the same number of points the highest placed Club shall be decided as follows:

13.2.1 Goal difference - The goals scored against by each Club shall be deducted from the goals scored by that Club and the largest difference shall be placed the highest.

13.2.2 In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has scored the most goals;

13.2.3 In the event that two or more Clubs have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals then the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has won the most matches.

13.2.4 In the event of the two Clubs still being equal the Club which has the better playing record against the other Club in their head to head Competition matches during the Season will be the highest placed Club.

13.2.5 If the records of two or more Clubs are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the Clubs concerned shall play off a deciding match or matches on a neutral ground or grounds with the net gate money after deducting the usual matches expenses being divided equally between the two completing Clubs.

13.3 Promotion, relegation and lateral movement of Clubs shall be in accordance with the principles established by the Leagues Committee of The FA.

13.4 ----

13.5 If no Clubs are eligible or wish promotion, the number of Clubs to be relegated will be reduced.

13.6 In the event of a Club, not being placed in a relegation position at the end of the season, wishing to resign from the Competition at the end of the season, or having been removed from membership under the Articles the number of Clubs to be relegated shall be reduced accordingly.

13.7 In the event of a Club opting to be relegated or being removed from membership under the Articles such Club or Clubs will replace the Club or Clubs otherwise due for relegation.

13.8 If any Club ceases to operate between the annual general meeting of the Company and the commencement of the following Playing Season, no adjustments to the number of Clubs participating in the Competition will be made. The remaining Clubs will participate in the Competition for that season.

13.9 A Club which for any reason ceases to operate at any time during the Playing Season may have its playing record expunged, and any monies due to them from the Company shall be forfeited. From the date of the withdrawal no further payment shall become due to them. From the date of the withdrawal, that Club shall cease to be a member of the Company.

14. SPORTING SANCTIONS

14.1 If an Insolvency Event shall occur in relation to any Club that Club shall be deducted 10 points. The deduction shall be made forthwith on the happening of the first Insolvency Event.

Rule 14.2 Where a Club takes or suffers an Insolvency Event:-

- 14.2.1 during the Normal Playing Season but prior to 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March, the points deduction shall apply immediately;
- 14.2.2 during the Normal Playing Season but after 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March then Rule 14.3 shall apply; and outside the Normal Playing Season, the points deduction shall apply in respect of the following Season such that the Club starts that Season on minus 10 points (including a Club or Clubs Relegated from the Southern Football League, where such Club shall be subject to Rule 14 of the Southern Rules).
- 14.3 Where the circumstances set out in Rule 14.2.2 apply and at the end of that Season, having regard to the number of Competition points awarded (ignoring any potential deduction):-
- a) the Club would be relegated in accordance with The League Rules, the points deduction will apply in the next following Season; or
 - b) the Club would not be relegated as aforesaid, the points deduction will apply in that Season and League Rules will then apply (if appropriate) following the imposition of the points deduction.
- 14.4 For the purposes of this Rule 14
- a) where any Insolvency Event is taken or suffered other than on a Business Day (as defined by the Insolvency Rules 1986 as amended from time to time) then for the purposes of determining the timing of any points deduction only the action taken or suffered will be deemed to have been taken or suffered on the immediately preceding Business Day; and
 - b) if a Company Voluntary Arrangement is approved, then approval of that Company Voluntary Arrangement shall be deemed to have been given at the date of the first meeting of creditors called to consider that Company Voluntary Arrangement, and not the date of any adjourned meeting of the creditors or the meeting of shareholders
- 14.5 For the avoidance of doubt, where a Club is subject to more than one Insolvency Event (for example Administration followed by a Company Voluntary Arrangement), the Club shall only be deducted one set of 10 points, such deduction to apply with effect from the first Insolvency Event.
- 14.6 The Competition shall serve the Club with written notice of the points deduction (the 'Notice').
- 14.7 A Club may only appeal against an automatic deduction of points on the ground that the insolvency proceedings arose solely as a result of a Force Majeure event (the 'Appeal'). For the purposes of this Rule 14, a 'Force Majeure' event shall be an event that, having regard to all of the circumstances, is reasonably considered to have been unforeseeable and unavoidable.
- 14.8 Any Appeal must be in writing and be received by the Competition at its registered office no later than 7 days after the Competition serves the Notice. The Appeal must contain a statement setting out the grounds of appeal and provide copies of any documentation upon which the Club intends to rely in support of the Appeal.
- 14.9 The Club must also lodge with the Competition, at the same time as the Appeal, a deposit fee in respect of the costs of the Appeal.
- 14.10 Upon receipt of the Appeal the Competition Secretary shall refer the matter to an SSAP by delivering to the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (or such other body as the Board may from time to time determine) five copies of the appeal documents together with a request for the appointment of Arbitrators as set out in 14.9 hereof.
- 14.11 The SSAP shall consist of three Arbitrators, one of whom must be a barrister (or solicitor) of at least 5 years call who will act as Chairman of the SSAP, each to be appointed by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (or such other body as the Board may from time to time determine) as provided above.
- 14.12 The Competition shall, immediately upon receipt of the Appeal, instruct a firm of independent accountants to carry out a review of the Club's activities for the purposes of preparing an independent report into the circumstances surrounding and leading up to the entering into insolvency proceedings. The Club shall meet the costs of preparation of that report in any event. The report shall be provided to the Club, the SSAP and the Competition. The SSAP shall take into account the contents of that report when determining whether the insolvency proceedings arose solely as a result of a Force Majeure event.
- 14.13 Both the Club and the Competition shall be entitled to make representations to the SSAP. The SSAP shall use all reasonable endeavours to hear any appeal within 21 days of the lodgement of the Appeal.
- 14.14 The SSAP shall have the power to:-
- 14.14.1 Confirm the deduction of ten points; or
 - 14.14.2 Set aside the deduction of ten points and substitute a deduction of such lower number of points as it shall deem appropriate; or
 - 14.14.3 Order that there shall be no sanction at all.
- 14.15 The decision of the SSAP shall be final and binding. Any costs incurred by any party in appeal proceedings brought before the SSAP shall be met by the Club in any event and shall be considered as a sum due to the Company.
- 14.16 Any sanctions imposed pursuant to these provisions shall not be taken into account in respect of any other sanctions, penalties or fines that may be imposed by the Competition in respect of any breaches of its Rules, Regulations or Articles of Association by the Club.
- 15. MATCH OFFICIALS**
- 15.1 Match Officials for all Competition matches shall be appointed by the Appointing Authority.
- 15.2 No Club shall postpone a Competition match on account of the apparent state of the ground. In the event that such circumstances prevail, Clubs should comply with procedures provided for in the document published by The FA "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions". Should the ground be declared unfit it is the responsibility of the home Club to immediately advise the Competition, the Appointing Authority, the visiting Club and the Match Officials.
- 15.3 In the event of any of the Match Officials appointed for a match not being in attendance at the match or becoming unable to complete the match it shall be completed under the control of the remaining Match Officials unless the competing Clubs are able to agree upon a substitute who is acceptable to the Match Referee; should the appointed Match Referee fail to appear then the senior Assistant Referee must take charge. Any substitute agreed for a match shall be considered a Match Official for the purposes of that match.
- In the event that a Club causes a match to be abandoned in relation to the operation of this Rule then that Club shall be charged with failing to fulfil a fixture (Rule 8.6 refers).
- 15.4 Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least 90 minutes prior to the scheduled time of kick-off. The appointed Referee may be required to visit the ground earlier if requested to do so by the home Club.
- 15.5 In cases where it is found necessary to stop play owing to the weather or other cause, the Referee must wait a reasonable length of time before deciding on abandonment.
- 15.6 Referees must report on the relevant form all cases where teams commence a match late or without eleven players on the field of play. Referees must also report their own or any assistant referees' late arrival in any matches, and notify those concerned at the time

of their intention. Assistant referees must also send an explanation of their late arrival to the Appointing Authority in writing by first class post within 3 days of the match.

15.7 The home Club will be responsible for paying the Match Officials the fees and match expenses set by the Appointing Authority on the day of the match in their dressing room, within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the match (including matches abandoned for any reason). In the case of a postponed match, whether or not gate money is taken, any Match Official who has travelled to the match will be entitled to claim travelling expenses and half their match fee from the home Club. Where provided by the home Club, each Match Official must complete and submit a claim form for expenses.

15.8 The home Club shall be responsible for providing Match Officials with distinctive flags of a suitable size in an acceptable condition.

15.9 Three match balls proposed to be used in the match and, if applicable, supplied by the Company under a ball sponsorship agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Referee before the commencement of the match in his/her dressing room.

15.10 The home Club shall supply to the visiting Club a minimum of three practice balls for use prior to the start of the match. The balls provided must be in good condition and, if applicable, as supplied by the Competition under a ball sponsorship agreement.

15.11 Referees must report all breaches of Rule to the Competition Secretary in writing within three days of the match on the appropriate form by first class post.

16. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

A Club must notify the Company not later than 31st December each year of its intention to withdraw from the Competition at the end of that Playing Season. Failure to do so will make a Club liable to a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

This Rule shall not operate so as to preclude promotion, relegation or lateral movement of any Club to another competition in accordance with Rule 13.

17. PROTESTS, APPEALS

17.1 All protests, claims or complaints relating to these Rules and appeals arising from a player's contract shall be heard and determined by the Board, or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Board. The Clubs or players protesting, appealing, claiming or complaining must send two copies of such protest, appeal, claim or complaint and deposit a fee which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld, and the party not succeeding may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Board.

17.2 All such protests claims complaints and appeals must be received in writing by the Competition Secretary within fourteen days of the event or decision causing any of these to be submitted.

17.3 The Board shall also have power to compel any party to the protest to pay such expenses as the Board shall direct.

17.4 Any appeal against a decision of the Board must be lodged with The FA within fourteen days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Competition Secretary.

All appeals to The FA must be lodged in accordance with the appeals procedure detailed in the Appendix to these Rules or that in force at any one time.

17.5 A Club, on giving fourteen days' notice to a player to terminate his player's contract, must state in the notice his right of appeal to the Board and also the address of the Competition Secretary to whom he must appeal. The notice must advise the player of the necessity of forwarding two copies of his appeal with the deposit fee specified in the Fees Tariff, to the Competition Secretary within seven days of the receipt of the notice from the Club. A copy of such notice must be received by the Competition Secretary within seven days of the sending of the notice in order to be valid.

17.6 A player on giving fourteen days' notice to his Club to terminate his player's contract must also notify the Company and The FA of the reasons for the termination of the agreement. A copy of such notice must be received by the Competition Secretary within seven days of the sending of the notice in order to be valid.

17.7 If the recipient of a notice referred to in Rules 17.5 and 17.6 above wishes to do so, he may appeal against the relevant notice within seven days of the date of sending of the notice in writing in duplicate to the Competition Secretary with an appeal fee.

17.8 The Club or the player as the case may be shall have further right of appeal as set out in Rule 17.4 above.

17.9 An appeal by a contract player against a fine or suspension imposed by his Club under Football Association Rule C1m must be made within seven days to the Competition Secretary.

17.10 If so requested the Board may arbitrate on any disputes, protests, appeals, claims or complaints between two member Clubs in which event both Clubs shall send a non-returnable fee. Such arbitration shall be final and binding upon the parties to the arbitration.

18. MISCONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS

Any person charged and found guilty of bringing the Competition into disrepute and any Club, Officer or Member charged and found guilty of misconduct as defined by the Board or of inducing or attempting to induce a player of another Club to join his own Club shall be liable to such penalty as the Board shall deem appropriate.

19. TROPHY

The Company shall present to the Winners and Runners Up of all divisions in the Competition 18 souvenirs, Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Board, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.

In addition, a Competition championship trophy and runners-up trophy will be presented as and when the Board determine.

The Clubs concerned will also receive a permanent souvenir.

The trophies are the property of the Company and may never be won outright.

The recipient Club shall be responsible for engraving their details on the trophy before returning same.

The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the trophies:

"We, A.B. the ofFootball Club, C.D. and E.F members of and representing the said Club, having been declared winners of the [] Trophy and the same having been delivered to us by the said Competition, do hereby on behalf of the said Club, jointly and severally agree to return the same to the Competition Secretary, on or before 1st March next in good order and condition, suitably inscribed, in accordance with the Rules of the Competition and if the said Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care, we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair."

Any Club not returning the Competition trophy by the due date, returning them in poor condition or without being engraved will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

20. ALTERATIONS TO RULES

No alteration to the Rules shall be made until they have been approved by The FA. Alterations to Rules shall only be made by special resolution passed at a general meeting of the Company.

Proposals for alterations to Rules, together with the name of their proposers and seconders, shall be received by the Company Secretary not later than 31st March prior to the date fixed for the annual general meeting of the Company in each year or not later than eight weeks before the holding of an extraordinary general meeting called for the purpose of amending the Rules.

21. ADMISSION CHARGES

The minimum charge for admission to all matches shall be £ 4.00 including VAT. Clubs may, at their discretion, vary the operation of this rule in respect of the admission of juveniles and senior citizens or other concessions they deem appropriate.

Admission charges, excluding home Club concessions as appropriate, must be the same for home and visiting supporters at Competition matches.

22. LONG SERVICE

22.1 The Board shall be empowered to grant a long service award for 25 years' service with a member Club, providing such an award has not already been made by any other competition.

22.2 Clubs may enter into agreement with players after five years continuous service providing for a testimonial. Players shall be qualified for a second testimonial after a further five years continuous service. If a player is eligible for and entitled to a testimonial, his Club may grant him a monetary consideration, sanctioned by the Board of Directors, in lieu of such testimonial.

23. CENTENARY AWARDS

A Club celebrating its centenary whilst in membership of the Competition shall be presented with a commemorative award by the Board

24. PLAYING SURFACES

Competition matches shall NOT be played on any synthetic or artificial grass surfaces without the prior written approval of the Board.

Clubs must register their pitch dimensions with the Competition prior to the start of each season. It will be misconduct on the part of a Club to alter its pitch dimensions during a season unless with prior written consent of the Board. The Board may at any time require a Club, at its own cost, to submit a report from a qualified independent source certifying the pitch dimensions.

The Board may require a Club to take such steps as the Board shall specify if they are not satisfied that an adequate standard of pitch is being maintained, including but not limited to the Board commissioning an independent report on the state of the pitch. The cost of the independent report to be borne by the Club concerned.

25. INSURANCE

25.1 PLAYERS

All Clubs shall be members of a players' personal accident insurance scheme. Each Club shall submit to the Board a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt fourteen days prior to the start of the Playing Season. Each Club shall submit to the Board a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt fourteen days prior to the start of the Playing Season.

25.2 PUBLIC LIABILITY

All Clubs must have Public Liability cover of at least one million pounds (£1,000,000).

26. NOT APPLICABLE

27. NOT APPLICABLE

28. NOT APPLICABLE

30. NOT APPLICABLE

31. NOT APPLICABLE

32. NOT APPLICABLE

33. NOT APPLICABLE

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