

RULES OF THE FA CHALLENGE VASE COMPETITION (“the Competition”)

In the event of a nationwide epidemic or global pandemic occurring such that specific Rules need to be introduced to address any potential or actual impact on the Competition, then The Association will act to make any changes to the Rules it deems necessary. Where any Rule changes are required, they will be communicated to the Clubs participating in the Competition as soon as reasonably possible. This or a similar approach may be adopted by The Association in response to any event or series of events it deems are affecting, or could affect, the Competition during the **2026-27** season.

1. CONTROL OF COMPETITION - RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competition and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in The Association.
- (b) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to make, delete and amend regulations for the organisation, control and management of the Competition as it, from time to time, deems expedient (the “Competition Rules”) (to include, for the avoidance of doubt, where the Competition has commenced in the relevant season)_subject only to the authority of The Association Board where such matters relate to financial or commercial matters. Unless explicitly provided for within the Competition Rules definitions of terms used within the Competition Rules are those included within the Rules of The Association for the relevant season.
- (c) All Clubs and players participating in any way in the Competition shall be bound by and comply with the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules).
- (d) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to make decisions on all matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to eligibility and qualification) which shall be final and binding on all participants in the Competition. In relation to these and any other matters relating to the Competition but not specifically mentioned in the Competition Rules, The National Leagues Pyramid Board, shall have the power to take such action and make such decisions, orders, rulings and impose such penalties as it deems necessary and following such procedures as it considers appropriate and such shall, subject to Rule 31, be final and binding on all Participants. In considering such matters, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding before a Court of Law.
- (e) The National Leagues Pyramid Board may, at its sole discretion, appoint from time to time a Committee (Step 5-6 Operating Committee) to take such action and make such decisions, orders, rulings and impose penalties on its behalf which shall be deemed decisions of The National Leagues Pyramid Board.
- (f) A Club participating in the Competition shall have only such rights in relation to the Competition (and any match in the Competition) as are expressly granted to the Club under the Competition Rules or by The Association in writing.
- (g) In addition to any other action or penalty, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to disqualify any competing Club, or Player for any competing Club(s), which it determines to have breached the Rules of The Association or the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules), and the decision of The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall, subject to Rule 31, be final and binding.

2. CONTROL OF COMPETITION - COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS

- (a) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled to, or otherwise to authorise or grant to others, rights of access to and attendance at the ground of the Home Club (“Access Rights”) for the purposes of transmitting or filming or otherwise recording on or by any media, any audio and/or visual materials depicting or describing all or any part or parts of a match (the “Copyright Materials”).
- (b) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall itself be exclusively entitled throughout the world, or to grant to or otherwise authorise others:

- (i) on a live, delayed, recorded or highlighted basis to broadcast or otherwise transmit by any method whatsoever (now known or hereinafter devised) the Copyright Materials by way of any and all forms of television or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) including, without limitation, free to air television, pay television, pay per view, "not-video-on-demand" internet or other on-line media and "video-on-demand" (the "Television Rights").
 - (ii) on a live or delayed basis to broadcast or to otherwise transmit the Copyright Materials (or audio) by way of radio broadcast or internet, or other on-line media or similar technology (now known or hereinafter devised) (the "Radio Rights").
 - (iii) to use, sell, publish, distribute and otherwise exploit the Copyright Materials in any manner whatsoever including, without limitation, clip licensing, videos, videograms, CD Rom, CDI, internet or other on-line media (the "Footage Rights").
- (c) In relation to each match in the Competition, The Association shall be exclusively entitled, either by itself or to authorise others, to use sell or otherwise exploit all commercial and other marketing rights associated with the Competition including, without limitation, fixture list copyright, sponsorship, supplier rights, licences or other commercial arrangements (the "Marketing Rights").
 - (d) Clubs shall comply with the terms of all contracts entered into by The Association from time to time in relation to Access Rights, the Television Rights, the Radio Rights, the Footage Rights and the Marketing Rights (collectively the "Commercial Contracts") in relation to the Competition.
 - (e) Clubs shall provide access to grounds and provide all other rights, facilities and services as may be necessary to enable The Association to fulfil the Commercial Contracts.
 - (f) The Clubs acknowledge that The Association may issue more detailed rules and regulations regarding the provisions of the Commercial Contracts (including, but not limited to in relation to, broadcasting, perimeter board advertising, interview backdrops, centre circle banners, side of goal mats, substitute/added time boards, tickets and match programmes) and the Clubs agree that they shall be bound by such rules and regulations as amended from time to time by The Association.
 - (g) Each Club undertakes to indemnify and keep indemnified The Association and its officers, directors, employees and authorised representatives from and against any claims for direct or consequential loss or damage by any party to a Commercial Contract caused or otherwise attributable to any failure or any breach by the Club fully to perform or observe its obligations and responsibilities under these provisions.
 - (h) Nothing in the above shall be construed or interpreted so as to prevent or restrict Clubs, subject to applicable FIFA, UEFA or other rules or regulations or decisions of The Association, from entering into commercial arrangements in relation to matches in the Competition which do not in any way conflict with the Commercial Contracts and duties of Clubs as set out herein (and in any other rules or regulations issued by The Association in accordance with this paragraph).
 - (i) In relation to the Commercial Contracts, The Association shall make provision for payments to Clubs as it shall from time to time consider appropriate.

3. NAME / LOGO AND IMAGES OF THE COMPETITION AND IMAGES OF THE VASE

- (a) The Competition shall be called 'The Football Association Challenge Vase' and should be marketed under the title 'The FA Vase' (the "official title") unless determined otherwise by The National Leagues Pyramid Board from time to time.
- (b) Each Club shall include the Official Title at least once on all (if any) materials produced by or on behalf of it which relate to the Competition (including, but not limited to, tickets, programmes, press releases and (where possible) scoreboard displays) and (where possible) shall refer to the Official Title at least once over (any) public address system operating on the day of each FA Vase match.
- (c) The Association shall from time to time issue a FA Vase Logo. The FA Vase Logo may incorporate branding for the lead FA Vase sponsor.
- (d) In the Competition Proper, each participating Club shall include The FA Vase Logo on all FA Vase communication materials produced by or on behalf of it (including, but not limited

to, the front page of each FA Vase match programme, match tickets (if it is not possible to include The FA Vase Logo on tickets the Club shall include a reference to the Official Title), fixture posters, stadium giant screens (if any) and Club websites).

- (e) The Association may from time to time issue images of The FA Vase to Clubs.
- (f) If a Club which wishes to use an image of The FA Vase shall use the image issued by The Association and will follow any directions issued by The Association in relation to the use of such image.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE COMPETITION

- (a) There shall be a Qualifying Competition and a Competition Proper.
- (b) The Competition Proper shall consist of the winners of the Qualifying Competition and such other Clubs as may be exempted by The National Leagues Pyramid Board.
- (c) The Qualifying Competition shall consist of all other Clubs entered in accordance with Competition Rule 5.
- (d) The Qualifying Competition and the First, Second, Third and Fourth Rounds Proper shall be played on a geographical basis.
- (e) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

5. ELIGIBLE CLUBS

- (a) Participation in the Competition shall be open to the first team only from Clubs competing in Steps 5 & 6 of The FA National League System subject to the ground conforming to the requirements of Competition Rule 13.
- (b) Entries from Clubs affiliated to off-shore Associations in Steps 5 & 6 of The FA National League System will be considered on an annual basis and if accepted, special provisions may apply to such Clubs as set out in Appendix 2.
- (c) The National Leagues Pyramid Board may reject the application of any Club to participate in the Competition at its entire discretion.
- (d) A Club which has been allowed to participate in the Competition may not assign or otherwise transfer the ability/right to participate without the prior written approval of The National Leagues Pyramid Board. A request for transfer must be in writing, setting out the details of the intended transferee and the reason for the transfer. The decision whether or not to approve a transfer shall be made by The National Leagues Pyramid Board in its absolute discretion. In considering a request for transfer The National Leagues Pyramid Board may assess the request from any Club allowed to participate in the Competition in relation to the minimum requirements set out at Rule A 3 (g) of The Association for that season. The National Leagues Pyramid Board may use the requirements of Rule A 3 (g) and any other conditions in its absolute discretion in deciding whether to approve the request. A transfer shall be granted only on the condition that the transferee shall be treated for the purposes of these Competition Rules and the Rules of The Association as being the same entity as the transferor.
- (e) If a Club is removed from the League in which it is playing or its League fixtures are suspended, once it has been accepted into the Competition, The National Leagues Pyramid Board has the power to remove the Club from the Competition.
- (f) If any Club or Parent Undertaking (as defined at Section 1162 Companies Act 2006) of that Club when applying to enter the Competition, or at any time during the course of the Competition becomes subject to any of the following insolvency events:
 - (i) enters into a Company Voluntary Arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986 ("the 1986 Act") or a compromise or arrangement with its creditors under Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 or any compromise agreement with its creditors as a whole; or
 - (ii) lodges a Notice of Intention to Appoint an Administrator or Notice of Appointment of an Administrator at the Court in accordance with paragraph 26 or paragraph 29 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act, an application to the Court for an Administration Order

under paragraph 12 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act (other than paragraph 12(1)(c)) or where an Administrator is appointed or an Administration Order is made ("Administrator" and "Administration Order" having the meanings attributed to them respectively by paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act); or

- (iii) an Administrative Receiver (as defined by section 251 of the 1986 Act), a Law of Property Act Receiver (appointed under section 109 of the Law of Property Act 1925) or any Receiver appointed by the Court under the Supreme Court Act 1981 or any other Receiver is appointed over any assets which, in the opinion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board, are material to the Club's ability to fulfil its obligations under the rules of the Competition; or
- (iv) shareholders pass a resolution pursuant to section 84(1) of the 1986 Act to voluntarily wind up; or
- (v) a meeting of creditors is convened pursuant to section 95 or section 98 of the 1986 Act; or
- (vi) a winding up order is made by the Court under section 122 of the 1986 Act or a provisional liquidator is appointed under section 135 of the 1986 Act; or
- (vii) Ceases or forms an intention to cease wholly or substantially to carry on business save for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation or otherwise in accordance with a scheme of proposals which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by The National Leagues Pyramid Board; or
- (viii) Being subject to any insolvency regime in any jurisdiction outside England and Wales which is analogous with the insolvency regimes detailed in (i) to (vii) above;

that Club must notify The National Leagues Pyramid Board immediately in writing. The National Leagues Pyramid Board will (at its absolute discretion) then decide whether to accept the application and/or allow that Club to continue to compete in the Competition and may set any terms and conditions in relation to that Club's ongoing participation in the Competition.

6. ENTRY DATE

- (a) A Club wishing to participate in the Competition must complete the application and payment process on or before 1 April in the season previous to the season in which such Club proposes to compete in the Competition. A Club that is either a Full or Associate Member of The Association who fail to pay The Association's Membership subscriptions by 1 August may be subject to removal from the Competition.
- (b) Clubs entering the Competition will be required, on the closing date for entries to have the following documentation available:
 - Annual accounts prepared in accordance with the Rules of The Association as are in force from time to time.
 - An up to date set of Memorandum and Articles/Club Rules.
 - A bank account in the name of the legal entity of the Club entered into the Competition.

Clubs may be required to provide evidence of the above to The Association at any stage. Clubs found to have failed to adhere to these Regulations may be subject to sanction by The Association.

7. PROVISIONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE COMPETITION

- (a) Any Club intending to withdraw from the Competition must notify its intention to do so to The Association and the opposing Club, not less than 8 days before the date fixed for playing the match in any other circumstances.
- (b) A Club failing to comply with this shall be reported to The National Leagues Pyramid Board, who shall have power to compel such offending Club to pay the expenses incurred and to take such other action as The National Leagues Pyramid Board considers appropriate.
- (c) If a Club decides to withdraw from the Competition after a postponed or abandoned match, notice must be given to The Association and its opponent at the end of the match or as soon as possible after the match has been postponed.

- (d) A Club failing to give satisfactory reason for withdrawing from the Competition shall in addition to any other action considered appropriate not be allowed to enter the Competition in the following season and shall be liable to such fine as The National Leagues Pyramid Board considers appropriate.
- (e) Where a Club fails to fulfil any fixture The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate.

8. **DRAWS FOR ROUNDS AND KICK OFF TIMES**

- (a) The Clubs competing in each Round of the Competition shall be drawn in couples. The couples shall play a match subject to the Laws of the Game. The winners will compete in the next Round, the ties of which will be drawn in the same manner. This shall be continued until the Final of the Competition.

Guidance

The Association shall conduct and manage each draw as it deems appropriate from time to time (which may include conducting draws for more than one round of the Competition at the same time). The Association may decide to conduct a draw again if it is deemed necessary (for example if an error occurs in the draw process).

- (b) After the draw for each Round is made, notice shall be given to each Club of the name of its opponent Club, and the date and time when the match shall be played. All matches in each Round shall be played on such date as The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall determine.
- (c) The time of kick-off shall be 3.00pm for matches on a Saturday or Sunday and 7.45pm for weekday matches unless mutually agreed otherwise, subject to the approval of The National Leagues Pyramid Board. In any event, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to order that a kick-off time is changed, as it deems appropriate. Any late kick-off shall be reported by the Referee to The Association and The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have power to impose a fine.
- (d) If, at the request of the Police and/or local enforcement authority, a match cannot be played on the Saturday date fixed for the playing of the Round, then that match will be automatically rescheduled to 3.00pm on the following day (Sunday) unless directed otherwise by The Association.
- (e) Immediately following publication by The Association of the draw for each Round (or the date at which the Home Club's participation in the relevant fixture is confirmed, whichever is later) the Club first drawn must communicate with the opposing Club to agree all necessary details regarding the match by completing the Match Arrangement Form which must be received by The Association and away Club within five days of the date of the Draw (or the date at which the Home Club's participation in the relevant fixture is confirmed, whichever is later). The Match Arrangement Form is to be signed by a Director or Secretary of the relevant Clubs.

9. **VENUE FOR MATCHES**

- (a) *Venue*
 - (i) The venue of each match (save for the Final which will be played at a venue selected by National League System Board) will be that of the first named Club unless the consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board has been obtained to any change of venue or The National Leagues Pyramid Board has directed that there should be a change of venue.
 - (ii) No monetary or other consideration shall be asked for, offered or paid in connection with negotiations for a change of venue.
 - (iii) A match shall not be played on a neutral ground without the consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board.
 - (iv) In any event, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to order that any match be played on an alternative ground or date, including a Sunday, if it is considered appropriate and necessary. For ties switched from the ground of the Club

first drawn, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall determine the financial conditions in which the tie shall be played.

(b) *Ground Sharing*

Clubs with ground sharing agreements must arrange for ties to be played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday if a clash of fixtures occurs with the sharing Club or other Sport. If for any reason a tie is unable to be played on the ground of the first drawn Club on a Saturday, the tie must be played on either the day before, i.e. on Friday, or the day after, i.e. on Sunday on the ground of the first drawn Club. If Clubs are unable to agree on the date, then it will be played on the Sunday, unless The National Leagues Pyramid Board decides otherwise. The decision of The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall be final and binding.

Guidance

If two Clubs party to the same ground sharing agreement are scheduled to play a competition match at home on the same date, the Club playing at the higher level of the National League System will be deemed to have priority of fixture, unless the ground share agreement states otherwise or The Association directs otherwise.

10. DURATION OF MATCHES

- (a) The Duration of each match shall be 90 minutes, except in special cases, provided for in these Competition Rules, where an extra 30 minutes shall be played. The Referee shall allow for time wasted or lost through accident or other cause. The Referee is the sole judge of allowance of time whether lost through accident or other cause and his decision on this matter is not subject to appeal.
- (b) The half-time interval shall be 15 minutes for all ties in the Competition.
- (c) Both teams shall enter the field of play together five minutes prior to the kick-off time, along with the Match Officials.
- (d) In all rounds of the Competition, when a match is drawn at full time, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.
- (e) In the Final:
 - (i) when a match is drawn at full time, an extra 30 minutes may be played (of two equal halves of 15 minutes), providing both Clubs are in agreement. Any such agreement between the Clubs must be (1) communicated to The Association no later than 48 hours after both Semi Finals have been completed and (2) approved by The Association.
 - (ii) when a match is drawn after extra time, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.

11. RESCHEDULED, POSTPONED AND ABANDONED MATCHES (MATCHES PLAYED PRIOR TO THE SEMI FINAL)

(a) *Postponed and rescheduled matches*

- (i) Subject to Rule 9(c), the default date for playing a Round is a Saturday.
- (ii) If the competing Clubs are not able to play the match at the ground of the Home Club on the scheduled or agreed date, the Clubs can agree to:
 - a. play the match at the ground of the Visiting Club or an alternative ground on the original date; or
 - b. postpone or reschedule the match (to be played at the ground of either the Home Club, the Visiting Club or an alternative ground) to another date within eight days of the date fixed for playing the round (the "Postponement Window"),

provided that in each case the consent of The Association has been obtained.

(iii) Clubs should seek to agree arrangements and alternative options such as back-up date and having an artificial football turf pitch on stand-by to ensure the match can be played within the Postponement Window.

(iv) If the Clubs cannot agree on a date for the postponed or rescheduled match within the Postponement Window, the default date is the Tuesday immediately following the date fixed for playing the round in the Qualifying Competition, First and Second Rounds Proper. In the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Rounds Proper the default date for a postponed or rescheduled match shall be the Saturday immediately following the date fixed for playing the round. If a match cannot be played on either a Tuesday or Saturday due to a ground sharing agreement, the default date is the Wednesday or Sunday (as appropriate).

(v) If a postponed or rescheduled match is further postponed, or if one or both Clubs are not able or willing to compete in a match within the Postponement Window, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall take such action as it deems appropriate (in its absolute discretion).

(b) *Abandoned Matches*

When any match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.

- (c) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

12. REPORTING RESULTS

- (a) Each Club shall confirm the result of the match, with the names of their players competing and goal scorers, together with the marking of the Referee's performance to be received at The Association within two days of the match, Sundays not included.
- (b) Each Club shall communicate the result and other details as required to The Association and designated press agencies immediately after the end of the match, according to the instructions issued prior to the match.

13. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

(a) *Artificial Football Turf Pitch*

Artificial football turf pitches may be used in the Competition provided conditions (i) to (iii) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

- (i) The pitch must be surfaced with artificial football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – to a minimum of FIFA Quality Standard and must have satisfied the performance and construction requirements at the time of its most recent annual assessment.
- (ii) The artificial football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of artificial football turf pitches by no later than 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition.
- (iii) Where an artificial football turf pitch is not listed on The Association's register by 31 July prior to the commencement of the Competition (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), in order to be able to use the pitch for a match in the Competition a club must obtain a Performance Test Certificate and submit it to The Association by no later than seven days prior to the default date of the round in which that match is scheduled to take place.
- (iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Clubs expense.
- (v) The Association may order a tie to be played at an alternative venue where it is not satisfied the pitch meets the Performance Standard.

- (vi) The artificial football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goalline. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.
- (vii) The home Club shall allow their opposition the opportunity to use the pitch and train on the surface **at least 60 minutes** prior to the kick-off and there must not be another game or event on the pitch following the training period. If it is intended to water the pitch before the match, the pitch shall be watered prior to the training period.
- (viii) The Club using the artificial football turf shall advise their opposition **at least 5 days** before the match of limitations or recommendations on the types of boot or stud that may be used on the surface.
- (ix) The Club shall provide all necessary assistance and data relating to player assessments, injury records, maintenance etc as requested by The Association, FIFA or UEFA.

(b) *Ground Facilities*

- (i) Clubs must have a ground where all home First Team League matches are played which fully conforms to a Grade 6 of The FA National Ground Grading (appropriate to entry to Step 6 of The FA National League System) or higher save where (i) National League System Regulations permit a Club at Step 6 of The FA National League System to play its home matches at a ground which does not fully conform to Grade 6 and (ii) where Clubs are in their first season after promotion from Regional National League System Feeder League level, provided their ground fully conforms to a Grade 7.
- (ii) The consumption of alcohol in the ground or premises during the period of a match shall be subject to the terms of the Club licence agreement and the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) Act 1985 and/or any successor legislation. Glasses, Glass bottles or cans containing alcohol are not permitted outside of the Clubhouse and must not be brought into grounds.
- (iii) Goal Line Technology shall be available, where directed by The Association, to assist the Match Official where a tie is played at a ground where Goal Line Technology is installed and the Match Official(s) have been trained in its use. Clubs shall comply with any protocol for use of Goal Line Technology issued by The Association from time to time, and for the avoidance of doubt neither The Association nor any Club or operator of a ground shall be liable for failure of Goal Line Technology where the relevant Goal Line Technology system otherwise complies with all applicable technical, maintenance and licensing requirements.

(c) *Playing Condition of the Ground*

- (i) Each Club must take every precaution to ensure that its ground is in a fit playing condition. In the event of doubt regarding the condition of the pitch, the Home Club shall immediately notify The Association to enable a Match Official to conduct a pitch inspection.
- (ii) A Referee shall whenever possible examine the ground and decide as to its fitness for play in sufficient time to save the expense of unnecessary journeys being incurred by Clubs. The pitch inspection must be made by the Match Referee or a Referee appointed by The Association who must immediately contact The Association with details of an inspection (and the Match Referee if relevant).
- (iii) Subject to this Rule, the Referee shall have the power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches.
- (iv) The Referee must report to the ground 90 minutes before the time of kick-off. If necessary, the Home Club or The Association may, by notice, require the Referee to visit the ground more than 90 minutes before the time of kick-off any time during the season.

- (v) No other activity is permitted to be played on the pitch, on the day of the match, prior to an FA Vase tie in all rounds up to and including the Semi Final without prior written consent of The Association.

(d) *Floodlighting*

- (j) All matches shall be played on grounds enabling matches to be played either partly or wholly under floodlight conditions, provided that the **ground fully conforms to the requirement set out in 13(b)(i)**.
- (ii) The Referee will decide at what point in the game the floodlights shall be switched on. This will necessitate a discussion with responsible Officials of the competing Clubs before the game, when a signal must be agreed.
- (iii) The cost for floodlighting must not exceed £100.00, and this cost may be charged as match expenses, if incurred.

(e) *Matchballs*

The Multiple Ball System (where more than one ball may be used in a match) will not operate in ties up to and including the Semi-Final. The Association shall determine whether the Multiple Ball System will operate in the Final of the Competition.

(f) *Substitute Boards*

Electronic substitute boards should be provided by Home Clubs for the fourth official, where FA appointed to operate to display the minimum additional time allowed at the end of each half. If electronic boards are not available, the normal hand held substitute boards should be used.

(g) *First Aiders, Medical Emergency Action Plans and First Aid / Emergency Medical Facilities and Equipment*

Nothing in these Rules replaces, reduces or affects the obligations imposed on Clubs by statute and/or common law in the fields of medicine, occupational health and/or health and safety.

(i) *First Aiders*

It is the responsibility of the Home or Host Club to ensure that Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider (as applicable) is in attendance throughout the Competition Match. The Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider should, as a minimum, meet the standard of first aid provision required by the League in which the Home Club's first team participates.

(ii) *Medical Emergency Action Plans*

The Home or Host Club must ensure that an up-to-date Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) is in place (or such other medical plan as may be required by the League in which the Club's first team participates). The MEAP should include information regarding: the deployment of medical personnel and resources, communication systems (including any unified command-control process which integrates the provision of emergency medical care and first aid into match-day safety systems) and emergency protocols for time critical emergencies.

The Home or Host Club must ensure that all personnel responsible for emergency medical care and first aid at the relevant match in the Competition (including those of the Visiting Club) are briefed on the contents of the MEAP prior to kick-off. The MEAP should be provided in writing within each dressing room and summarised in a medical briefing to all personnel responsible for emergency medical care and first aid prior to kick-off.

(iii) *First Aid / Emergency Medical Personnel, Facilities and Equipment*

The Home or Host Club must ensure that all personnel primarily responsible for emergency medical care and first aid are provided pitch-side seating with easy access to, and an unobstructed view of, the pitch. Where required by the League in which the Home or Host Club participates, and otherwise where possible, the medical staff of each Club shall be seated on the Trainer's bench.

The Home or Host Club is responsible for the provision of first aid/emergency medical personnel, facilities and equipment (to include extrication/ stretcher equipment) for the provision of medical care to players, match officials and spectators.

The provision of first aid/ emergency medical personnel, facilities and equipment for each match in the Competition should include a calculation of the appropriate number of personnel required and, where applicable, meet the minimum medical requirements as required by the League in which the Club's first team participates.

The Home or Host Club must ensure that: (i) all medical resources and/or equipment are easily accessible from the pitch and technical area, (ii) the location of those medical resources and/or equipment is appropriately signposted within the ground (including in the dressing rooms of each Club and match officials), and (iii) appropriately qualified and competent personnel are available to utilise those resources and/or equipment to deliver first aid or emergency medical care.

14. CLUB COLOURS

- (a) The two competing clubs must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and also the Match Officials. Where there is a clash (as determined by The Association) in a match other than the Final Tie, the Away Club must change.

In the Final Tie, each competing Club must wear its home kit (as registered with the League in which the Club's first team participates) provided there is no clash. If a clash occurs, a toss of a coin shall determine which Club shall wear its home kit. The toss of coin shall be made by a representative of The Association and shall be witnessed by the representatives of the Finalists with the toss taking place at The Associations' offices or another suitable location as soon as possible after the Semi Final.

- (b) In the event of the Clubs not agreeing upon the colours to be worn, The Association shall decide. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from the other players, and the Match Officials.
- (c) Clubs' colours must not clash with the black and white outfit worn by the Match Officials.
- (d) Players' shirts shall be clearly numbered on the back in accordance with the Official Team Sheet. No change of numbers during the match shall be allowed except on a change of Goalkeeper or where a player has been required by the Referee to change his shirt because of a blood injury. The Captain of each team shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status.
- (e) Advertising may be worn on players' clothing in accordance with the Rules of The Association and the Laws of the Game. When participating in a match no Player shall reveal undergarments that show political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images or advertising other than a manufacturer's logo.
- (f) In the Final the participating Clubs shall be required to wear sleeve badges branded with The FA Vase Logo.

15. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PLAYERS

- (a) Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing Club.
- (b) (i) Each Club must **submit** a list of names of players taking part in the match (including the names of the substitutes) (on the "Official Team Sheet") to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee:
- 75 minutes before kick-off for the Semi Final and Final.
 - **60** minutes before kick-off for all other matches.

Any Club failing to do so will be liable to be fined by The National Leagues Pyramid Board a sum not exceeding £100.00.

- (ii) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the "Official Team Sheet" to the Referee before kick-off, he may be replaced without fine if he is injured warming up after the exchange of the Official Team Sheet, provided the Referee and opponents are informed before the commencement of the match. In such circumstances the Official Team Sheet must be updated by the relevant Club to include the replacement player and exclude the injured player prior to the commencement of the match.

- (iii) A player may be deemed ineligible to take part in a match unless their name appears on the Official Team Sheet.
- (c)
 - (i) A maximum of five substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a Club may at its discretion use all five of those substitute players nominated at any time in a match.
 - (ii) In the Final, a maximum of seven substitutes may be nominated. Subject to the below a Club may at its discretion use five of those seven substitute players nominated at any time in a match. Where extra time is played in the Final in accordance with Rule 10(e), a Club may use one additional substitute in that period of extra time (i.e. a sixth in total).
 - (iii) A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Prior to the substitution being made the Club must identify to the Match Officials the number of the player out and the player in, in accordance with the Official Team Sheet.
- (d) All players **must be eligible to play in any given Competition Match according to The Association's Rules and Regulations.**
- (e) A player shall not play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season.
- (f) All players must have been eligible to play in the original tie in order to play in a match which is postponed or ordered to be replayed; however a player who has been suspended according to the disciplinary procedures under the Rules of The Association may play in a match which is postponed or ordered to be replayed after the term of his suspension has expired. In the event of an order to replay, a postponement or an abandonment of a match, a Club may request dispensation from The National Leagues Pyramid Board to select a replacement goalkeeper who is a registered player, but was not a registered player prior to the "Registration Deadline" (as defined below). Any such request must be made to The Association in writing (together with evidence substantiating the reasons for the request), and received no later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the relevant match. Dispensation will be at the complete discretion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board.
- (g) A Player who is named by a Club as a substitute for a match but does not take part in the match shall be deemed to have not played in the Competition for the purposes of Rule 15(e).
- (h) In all Rounds of the Competition a player shall be a "registered player" of his Club under the Rules of the Competition.
 - (i) A "registered player" is one who is either, in the case of a player under written contract, registered with The Association or, in the case of a player without a written contract, registered with a League in which his Club competes in the current season. Any such registration must have been received (with all relevant documents completed) by The Association or League by 12 noon on the Friday immediately prior to the date fixed for playing the Round, (the "Registration Deadline"). The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) must also have confirmed in writing to the Club submitting the application to register the player that the registration has been accepted in order for the player to be eligible to play in the match. The player must also still be registered with the Club which submitted the application as at the date of the match. The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) may confirm its acceptance of a registration after the Registration Deadline provided that such registration was received, along with all relevant documents, by the Registration Deadline. However, if The Association (for players under written contract) or League (for players without a written contract) has not confirmed in writing its acceptance of a registration 75 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the match, the player shall not be eligible to play in the match.
 - (ii) In order to be eligible to play in The Final, the players must have been correctly registered and eligible for the Semi Final.
 - (iii) Where a Player's registration with a Club requires an International Transfer Certificate ("ITC"), such Club must obtain confirmation from The Association that the ITC has been received (and any such confirmation must be received at least 75 minutes

before the scheduled commencement of the match) in order for the registration to be valid.

(i) *Domestic Loan Players and Scholars*

- (i) Subject to Rules 15(e), 15(j) to (k), a Player that has been domestically temporarily transferred to another Club (including to or from a Welsh Club that competes in the Competition) or a Scholar on work experience at a Club in accordance with Rule C of The Association's Rules shall be eligible to participate in any Competition Match for that Club, except a Competition Match against the Player's Parent Club.
- (ii) For all rounds other than the Final, a player recalled to his original Club from temporary (loan) transfer, in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement, may only represent his original Club if any such recall has been received and accepted by The Association by the Registration Deadline for that round.
- (iv) A player on temporary (loan) transfer is eligible to play in a match ordered to be replayed, or a match rescheduled as a result of a postponement or abandonment, if transferred permanently by the lending Club to the loaning Club after the Registration Deadline for that round, provided that the player was eligible to play for the loaning Club in the original match and the player's registration with the loaning Club is continuous from the Registration Deadline for that round through to the date of the replay or rescheduled match.

(j) *Written Prohibition*

- (i) The Player's Parent Club may issue a written prohibition to the Club prohibiting the Player from participating in the Competition, but only if that Player has not already participated in a Competition Match for that Club in the current Season.
- (ii) In order for any written prohibition referred to in Rule 15(j)(i) to be effective, a copy of the written prohibition must **be sent by the Player's Parent Club to the Club and** be received by The Association no later than **the applicable Registration Deadline for** the Club's next Competition Match.
- (iii) A Parent Club may withdraw a written prohibition referred to in Rule 15(j)(i).
- (iv) In order for any withdrawal referred to in Rule 15(j)(iii) to be effective, confirmation of the withdrawal must be received by The Association no later than 75 minutes before the Club's next Competition Match.
- (v) A written prohibition that has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 15(j)(iii) may be reinstated by the Parent Club, but only if the Player has not participated in a Competition Match for the Club in the current Season.
- (vi) In order for any reinstatement referred to in Rule 15(j)(v) to be effective, a copy of the reinstated written prohibition must **be sent by the Player's Parent Club to the Club and** be received by The Association no later than **the applicable Registration Deadline for** the Club's next Competition Match.

(k) *Written Permission to play against Parent Club*

- (i) A Parent Club may issue written permission for the Player to participate in a Competition Match against the Parent Club.
- (ii) In order for any written permission referred to in Rule 15(k)(i) to be effective, a copy of the written permission must be received by The Association no later than 75 minutes before the relevant Competition Match

Guidance:

- A written prohibition or written permission may be set out in the relevant loan agreement, or separately.
- Where the type or duration of a Player's registration with a Club changes after the relevant Registration Deadline, the Player's registration with that Club will be considered continuous provided that:
 - the change takes effect no later than the day immediately following the expiry or cancellation of the initial registration;
 - the relevant registration paperwork is submitted to The Association and/or the league in which the Club participates within 5 days of signature or prior to the Club's next fixture (in any Competition) taking place (whichever is earlier).
- A Player will be permitted to play in The FA Trophy and The FA Vase Competitions in the same season.

16. VALIDITY OF PLAYERS' QUALIFICATIONS

- (a) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have power to call upon a Player, and/or the Club to which he is registered, or for which he played, to prove that the Player is qualified according to the Competition Rules.
- (b) Subject to (c) below, where a player that is or is found to be ineligible under either the Rules of the Competition and/or the Rules of the Association plays for a Club in a Competition match, the National Game Board may remove the Club from the Competition, and may impose further penalties against the Club.
- (c) However, where the Club satisfies The National Leagues Pyramid Board that the Club (or any of its officers) did not know and could not reasonably have known, even had it made every reasonable enquiry (with the exercise of the utmost caution), that the player was ineligible, the Club shall not be removed from the Competition but may still be subject to any other penalty. (e.g. fine, ordered to replay the match).
- (d) In the event The Association is instructed to sanction a Player and/or Club in such circumstances by FIFA, The Association will follow such instructions unless there are exceptional circumstances which would, in The National Leagues Pyramid Board's absolute discretion, lead to The Association challenging such instruction.

17. PROGRAMME

A printed or digital version of a Programme or Team Sheet must be produced by the Home Club and made available for spectators on the day of a match.

18. TEAM BENCHES

- (a) In all Rounds of the Competition, 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.
- (b) Only one person has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the players during the match. He is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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 Association, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.
- (e) 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 team bench. The Team Manager or Team Coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.
- (f) In the Final, Clubs will be advised by The Association of the number of technical staff and substitutes who may occupy the team benches and a list of the permitted number of

authorised personnel must be provided by each Club to the Referee at least one hour before kick-off.

19. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a)
 - (i) Match Officials shall be appointed by The Association in accordance with its appointing procedures.
 - (ii) The Association reserves the right to appoint a Reserve Official to officiate in the event of an appointed Match Official failing to arrive or being incapacitated.
 - (iii) In the event of any of the Match Officials failing to arrive or being incapacitated, the match 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 most senior Assistant Referee must take charge. Any substitute agreed for a match shall be considered a Match Official for the purposes of that match.
- (b) The fees and expenses of all Match Officials appointed by The Association to officiate in any match prior to the Final shall be paid by the Club upon whose ground the match takes place unless otherwise instructed by The National Leagues Pyramid Board. For cash payments, these should be made on the day of the match. For electronic bank transfers, these should be made within 48 hours following the conclusion of the match.
- (c) *Scale of Expenses to be Paid to Match Officials*
 - (i) In all rounds of the Competition, standard class railway fares at the cheapest available rate operating on the day of the match may be allowed.
 - (ii) An allowance of £0.40 per mile will be allowed to all Match Officials who travel by private car.
 - (iii) In the event of a Match Official being unable to reach their destination, going to or returning from a match, without staying at a hotel, they shall be entitled to charge up to £60.00 for each night to cover their hotel expenses provided that where a concessionary hotel rate is negotiated the Match Official will, if it is not inconvenient, take advantage of such a rate. A receipted hotel account must be provided for the Home Club.
 - (iv) In the Semi-Final and Final, Match Officials shall be entitled to claim meal allowances as under:
 - Where the travelling time exceeds 8 hours: £10.00
 - Where the travelling time exceeds 6 hours: £8.00
 - Where the travelling time exceeds 4 hours: £6.00Travelling time is the period from the time the Match Official leaves home until the time he returns home, less the duration of the match. When an overnight stay is necessary, meal allowances are calculated from the time the Match Official leaves home to the arrival at the ground/hotel. The second day's calculations are from ground/hotel to home (less the duration of the match).
- (d) *Scale of Fees to be Paid to Match Officials*

The scale of fees to be paid to Match Officials will be specified by The Association and communicated to Clubs from time to time.
- (e) In the event of The Association giving permission for a pitch inspection prior to a match, by an Official other than the Match Referee, such Official shall be entitled to expenses only (to include loss of earnings where applicable) for Local Clubs, but expenses plus half the match fee if not local. The Home Club will pay any expenses.
- (f) Match Officials are entitled to their travelling expenses if incurred and half their fees if the match to which they were appointed is not played.
- (g) The Home Club must notify the Match Officials of the precise details of the match, this is to include a map with the location of the ground indicated, kick-off time, whether extra time is to be played, if necessary, colours of both teams and other necessary details. Such

information must be sent to be received by the Match Officials not later than five days prior to the match who must acknowledge receipt.

- (h) Match Officials shall acknowledge acceptance of appointments for all matches in the Competition to The Association.
- (i) The duties of the Match Officials shall be as defined in the Laws of the Game.

20. ADMISSION TO MATCHES - SALE OF TICKETS

- (a) All persons including Season Ticket Holders must be charged admission to the ground, enclosure and stands in all matches subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) Clubs shall agree the number of complimentary tickets that can be issued to each Club. If the Clubs are not able to agree on the number, no complimentary tickets will be issued.
 - (ii) In addition to the allowance of complimentary tickets set out at Competition Rule 20(b)(i) complimentary tickets may be issued for the sole use of the following:
 - Directors of the participating clubs. An allowance should be agreed between the participating clubs for the use of the Directors of each club up to the maximum available to the Visiting Club per Competition Rule 21(a)(vii);
 - Press/Media;
 - Scouts and official representatives from non-participating clubs;
 - Official representatives of the governing and legislative bodies of football;
 - Disabled and helpers (except where the home club's policy is to charge);
- (b) Immediately after the draw is known, the **home Club shall determine the prices of admission** subject to the following conditions
 - (i) Except where mutually agreed otherwise the minimum admission (except to children and senior citizens) to matches shall be:

In the First Round Qualifying to Third Round Proper:	£4.00
In the Fourth Round Proper to Semi-Finals:	£6.00
 - (ii) A higher admission charge may be mutually agreed between the Clubs concerned. The away Clubs supporters can only be charged more than the home Clubs supporters if agreed by both Clubs.
 - (iii) The price of admission for children and senior citizens **shall be determined by the home Club, unless mutually agreed otherwise**
 - (iv) *Executive packages, hospitality, sponsorship or advertising agreements*

Where the Home Club issues tickets as part of an executive package (eg executive box or lounge), hospitality, sponsorship or advertising agreement then the highest price payable for the appropriate category of spectator (eg adult, concession) for an admission only ticket for the relevant area of the ground should be included in the gate receipts for a match.
 - (vi) The admission prices are to be confirmed in writing to The Association and the visiting club as part of the Match Arrangement Form.
 - (vii) All questions in dispute must be immediately referred to The Association for settlement.
- (c) Immediately after half time but before the conclusion of the match, the Home Club must declare and provide in writing to the Visiting Club a statement of the total admission and gross gate receipts.
- (d) The visiting Club shall have the right to check the sale of tickets.
- (e) The visiting Club is entitled to have access to and copies of all documentation (see Competition Rule 26) maintained by the Home Club for the reconciliation of the match receipts. A request to be made by the Visiting Club in writing and copied to The Association. The documentation is to be provided within fourteen days of the date of the request.

- (f) The Association is entitled to have access to and copies of all documentation (see Competition Rule 26) maintained by the Home Club for the reconciliation of match receipts and expenses.

21. DISTRIBUTION OF TICKETS

- (a) In all matches except the Final, the Visiting Club shall have the right to claim up to 15% of all accommodation for which tickets are issued providing these tickets are in a fully segregated area, and subject to the following regulations:
 - (i) The request for tickets shall be made within two days of the Draw.
 - (ii) The tickets allotted to the Visiting Club, if numbered and reserved, must be of equal value to those retained by the Home Club
 - (iii) The Visiting Club shall be responsible for the payment of all tickets asked for and allotted, unless otherwise agreed between the Clubs in writing with a copy sent to The Association. All questions in dispute shall immediately be referred to The Association for settlement.
 - (iv) The Visiting Club should settle with the home Club for sales of tickets on or before the day of the match.
 - (v) Any tickets not sold by the Visiting Club should be returned to the home Club with their statement of ticket sales.
 - (vi) A Visiting Club shall be entitled to one third of the seats usually reserved and known as "Home and Visiting Directors' Seats" up to a maximum of 24.
 - (vii) Where disabled facilities are provided, a Visiting Club shall have the right to claim up to 15% of this accommodation.
 - (viii) Ticket sales shall only be permitted in accordance with the guidance issued by The Association or the league the Home Club participates in (as amended and in force from time to time) regarding the permitted number of spectators, or percentage of ground capacity, for any match to be played by the Home Club. The Home Club shall not be permitted to sell more tickets for a match in the Competition than it would be permitted to sell for a league match at the relevant point in time.
- (b) Where it is deemed desirable, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the right to vary the allocation of tickets to the Visiting Club, or require a match to be made all ticket.

22. PROCEEDS OF MATCHES

- (a) The net gate receipts due from a match (except replayed matches in consequence of a breach of the Rules) shall be the total ticket sales for the match less VAT, the travelling (and possibly accommodation) expenses of the Visiting Club, the fees and expenses of the Match Officials, and other match expenses allowed under the Rules (which includes costs relating to gate attendants, turnstile operators, stewards, police charges, floodlighting in accordance with the Rules, contributions to costs of First Aid Helpers, and any costs relating to the clearing the ground of snow and water provided the Visiting Club is consulted beforehand on the approximate costs). The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power from time to time to issue instructions as to what shall and shall not be allowed as a match expense.
- (b) Net gate receipts shall be divided as follows:
 - (i) In all matches prior to the Final, the net proceeds of each match shall be divided equally between the competing Clubs.
 - (ii) In the Final, the net proceeds shall be divided as follows:
 - 90% to The Association
 - 10% to the Pool
 - (iii) The Pool in (ii) shall be distributed at the discretion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board.

- (c) The net gate receipts shall be approximately divided immediately after the match. A full statement of account for the match shall be prepared by the Club playing at its home ground, on the prescribed Statement of Receipts and Payments Form, and payment shall be made in full to the Visiting Club and The Association within 14 days of the match. The Statement of Receipts and Payments Form must be signed by a Director or Football Secretary of the Home Club. A Club failing to comply with this clause may be ordered to pay a fine and any other punishment, including non-admission in the future to the Competition, may be imposed as determined by The National Leagues Pyramid Board.
- (d) No competing Club shall make any Agreement with any other competing Club by which their obligations under the Rules regarding the sharing of net gate receipts may be varied or amended in any way. "Agreement" for the purpose of the Rules of the Competition means any agreement, arrangement, obligation, undertaking or understanding whether oral or written, formal or informal, contractual or otherwise, binding in law or otherwise, and of any nature whatsoever and which includes for these purposes any attempt to enter into any such Agreement.
- (e) Any Club failing to comply with these provisions may at the discretion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board:
 - (i) be ordered to pay daily interest on the money due calculated at 5% per annum over Barclays Bank Base Rate in force for the time being from the due date to the actual date of payment, and/or;
 - (ii) be removed from the Competition for the current and/or future seasons and any other order as is deemed appropriate until such time as the money has been paid.
- (f) A Club that alleges that it has been financially disadvantaged by another Club failing to meet its financial obligations under the Competition Rules must bring the circumstances to the attention of The National Leagues Pyramid Board in writing. The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall consider the circumstances and take any action that it considers appropriate under the Competition Rules.
- (g) When a match is postponed through causes over which neither Club has any control, the expenses shall be paid out of the receipts of the match, when played.
- (h) In any match ordered to be replayed in consequence of a breach of Competition Rule, the Club in default shall not receive any share of the proceeds of such replayed match (except the approved travelling costs in accordance with Competition Rule 23) without the consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board, and such consent shall only be given under special circumstances. If consent is not given, any such share shall be remitted to The Association.
- (i) A Club may at its own expense erect temporary stands and take the proceeds only in cases where the remaining areas of the ground are otherwise sold out and the opposing Club declines to join in the expense of the erection. A temporary stand becomes a permanent one if used after the match for which it was erected.
- (j) In cases where the gate receipts are not sufficient to cover the entire expenses of the match, the deficit shall be shared by the two competing Clubs.
- (k) The Home Club must maintain proper accounting systems and documentation (see Competition Rule 26) for the control and recording of match receipts. A clear audit trail must be available from the documentation to the entries recorded on the Statement of Receipts and Payments Form.

23. MATCH EXPENSES

- (a) *Travelling Expenses*
 - (i) In all Rounds, match expenses shall include travelling expenses, actually incurred, which must not exceed £3.60 per coach mile. If private cars or minibus are used, then the expenses which can be claimed will be for a maximum of five cars at £0.48 per mile. For ties involving travel to/from the Isle of Wight, boat fares at the cheapest rate are allowed to be claimed.

- (ii) The travelling expenses for the Visiting Club are to be calculated on a direct route from the Club's Headquarters, the total mileage must be agreed between both Clubs prior to the first match and confirmed on the Match Arrangement Form.
- (iii) When travelling by rail, the cost of 25 standard class fares at the cheapest available rate may be claimed.

(b) *Hotel Expenses*

- (i) Where agreement concerning hotel accommodation has been reached, Clubs must confirm the agreement in writing and confirmed on the Match Arrangement Form.
- (ii) Where mutual agreement concerning hotel accommodation cannot be reached, and the Visiting Club considers it necessary or desirable to claim hotel expenses, written application must be made to The Association with a copy to the Home Club at least seven days in advance of the first match. The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power at its absolute discretion whether or not to grant permission.
- (iii) The grounds for making such an application are that it would be necessary for the Visiting Club to leave its Headquarters before 8.00am on the day of the match in order to arrive at the venue for the match no less than 90 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off, based on reasonable travel time only (determined by reference to the AA Route Planner service) and including a stop of not more than 45 minutes. Expenses, which may be claimed, if actually incurred, shall not exceed £60.00 per person for 25 persons. In the Final, expenses which may be claimed, if actually incurred, shall not exceed £120.00 per person for 25 persons.
- (iv) A Club that has been granted hotel expenses by The Association must stay within a 30 mile radius of the ground where the match will be played.

(c) *Gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators*

The gross cost plus employers national insurance in employing gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators for the match may be deducted from match receipts. Where the actual gross and employers national insurance is not known at the date by which the Statement of Receipts and Payments Form must be submitted then a reasonable estimate should be included as a deduction.

Where a Club contracts gatemen, stewards and turnstile operators the charge to the club (net of VAT) is to be deducted.

(d) *Police charges*

The cost (net of VAT) of policing the match may be deducted. Where the actual cost of policing is not known at the date by which the Statement of Receipts and Payments Form must be submitted then a reasonable estimate should be included as a deduction.

(e) *Medical*

The cost of first aid helpers and emergency medical personnel may be deducted as a match expense.

First Aid Helpers

The contributions for first aid helpers for all ties are as follows:

- (i) Clubs outside London to pay £20.00 per first aider, with a minimum payment of £60.00 per match.
- (ii) Clubs in London to pay £22.00 per first aider, with a minimum payment of £66.00 per match.
- (iii) London Clubs are defined as those within the Metropolitan Police boundary.

Payments relating to local first aid provision should be made direct to the local St John's Ambulance Brigade or Red Cross based upon the number of helpers agreed, regardless of the actual attendance. If they provide their own ambulance, then an additional payment must be mutually agreed between the Clubs for inclusion as a match expense.

(f) *Water and snow clearing*

Any additional cost incurred by a Club in attempting to clear snow or water from the pitch and stadium so that a match may proceed may be deducted as a match expense. Additional costs

are those incurred directly as a consequence of adverse weather conditions. Additional costs include the operating costs (excluding depreciation and repair costs) of under pitch heating (to a maximum of £200.00), hire of equipment (eg hot air blowers, pitch covers) and the cost of additional ground staff (gross and employers national insurance). Where actual costs are not known at the date of completion of the Statement of Receipts and Payments Form must be submitted then a reasonable estimate should be included as a deduction. All estimates should be supported by independent verification. The visiting club must be notified and agree to the approximate cost before being incurred. All disputes to be decided by The National Leagues Pyramid Board.

Where the additional costs have been incurred and the match is postponed because of adverse weather, the additional costs incurred may be deducted from the receipts of the rearranged fixture with the prior agreement of the Visiting Club. All disputes to be determined by The National Leagues Pyramid Board.

(g) *Floodlighting*

The cost for floodlighting must not exceed £100.00, and this cost may be charged as match expenses, if incurred.

24. DUAL INTERESTS AND ASSOCIATION

For the purposes of this Rule 24, the following capitalised terms shall have the meaning given to them in Rules of The Association: Associate, Associated Undertaking, Concert Party, Control, Financial Institution, Group Undertaking, Parent Undertaking, Person, Shares, and Subsidiary Undertaking.

- (a) Save with the prior written consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board, no Club may participate in the Competition at any stage where that Club is interested in another Club which is participating in the Competition or wishing to participate in the Competition (the "Second Club"). The Second Club shall similarly not be permitted to participate in the Competition at any stage.
- (b) Save with the prior written consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board, no Club may participate in the Competition at any time where a Person, or any Associated Party of that Person, is interested in such Club and a Second Club participating or wishing to participate in the Competition. The Second Club shall similarly not be permitted to participate in the Competition at any stage.
- (c) For the purposes of this Rule 24, a Club, Person, or Associated Party of that Person, shall be deemed to be interested in a Club if that Club, Person or Associated Party of that Person:
 - (i) holds or deals in (or has made any application to hold or deal in or underwrite any issue of) the securities or Shares of that Club; or
 - (ii) is a member of that Club; or
 - (iii) is involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management or administration of that Club; or
 - (iv) has any power whatsoever to influence the financial, commercial or business affairs or the management or administration of that Club; or
 - (v) has lent money to, gifted money to, purchased future receivables from (or any arrangement of substantially similar effect) or guaranteed the debts or obligations of that Club, otherwise than in the ordinary course of banking at arm's length.
- (d) The holding or acquisition by any Person (but not a Club) of not more than 10% Shares of any Club may be disregarded for the purposes of this Rule 24 provided that those Shares are, in the opinion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board, held purely for investment purposes only.
- (e) For the purposes of this Rule 24, an Associated Party of a Person shall be deemed to be:
 - (i) a Person who has Control of the Club or would be deemed to be interested in the Club in accordance with Rule 24(c);
 - (ii) any Associate of any Person(s) who has Control of the Club or would be deemed to be interested in the Club in accordance with Rule 24(c);
 - (iii) any Person of which any Person(s) who has Control of the Club or would be deemed to be interested in the Club in accordance Rule 24(c);

- is a director;
- either directly or indirectly holds Shares; or
- is able to influence the financial, commercial or business affairs or management or administration of that company;

(iv) any Person of which any Associate of any Person(s) who has Control of the Club or would be deemed to be interested in the Club in accordance with Rule 24(c):

- is a director;
- either directly or indirectly holds Shares; or
- is able to exercise any influence or control;

(v) any Person which is a Group Undertaking, Parent Undertaking, Subsidiary Undertaking or Associated Undertaking of any Person referred to in (iii) and (iv) above;

(vi) any Person who is an Associate, shareholder, director, employee or is able to influence the financial, commercial or business affairs or the management or administration of any Person referred to in (iii), (iv) and (v) above and any Associate of any such shareholder, director or employee;

(vii) any Person who is an employee or partner or Associate of any Person referred to in (vi) above;

(viii) any Person who has an agreement with any Person referred to in (i)-(vii) above in relation to the exercise of their voting power in the Club or the holding or disposal of their interests in the Club;

(ix) a Person who holds and/or has possession of the beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, Shares or other securities in the Club (whether directly, indirectly, by means of holding such interests in one or more other Person) or by contract or otherwise including without limitation by way of any Concert Party) which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof 5 per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable at general meetings of the Club;

(x) any Person who holds a loan interest or other debt or security interest of any kind in the Club or an entity in the same group of companies as the Club, with the exception of any such interest held:

- as part of regulated banking services provided by a Financial Institution;
- in the form of bonds, notes or other securities held by professional investors; or
- pursuant to a debenture providing the holder with access to tickets to events at the Club's stadium;

(xi) where a government, public or state funded body has Control of a Club, any Person who that government, public or state funded body also has Control of.

When considering where a Person is an Associated Party, The National Leagues Pyramid Board will direct its attention to the substance of the relationship and not merely the legal form.

- (f) Any act or thing prohibited in the above sections of this Rule 24 in relation to a Club, Person or Associated Party if done by such Club, Person or Associated Party itself is likewise prohibited through agents, trusts, trustees, nominees, or other third parties.

25. PAYMENT TO CLUBS

- (a) Prize Fund payments as determined by The National Leagues Pyramid Board from time to time shall be made by bank transfer direct into a bank account in the name of the legal entity of the Club that is entered into the Competition

- (b) A payment shall be made to the Winner and Runner-Up in the Final tie of the Competition of a sum determined by The National Leagues Pyramid Board from time to time.
- (c) A Club shall not be entitled to any payment from The Association if:
 - (i) that Club has not met all of its financial obligations to an opposing Club in accordance with these Rules;
 - (ii) that Club or its Parent Undertaking is subject to an Insolvency Event, as defined in Rule 5(f) on the due date of payment.

The National Leagues Pyramid Board may at its discretion make a payment on account to such a Club on receipt of a written request from a Club.

- (d) No competing Club shall make any Agreement (as defined under these Competition Rules), whether direct or indirect, with any competing Club regarding the sharing of any payment to which they are entitled under the Competition Rules.
- (e) Where a Club defaults in making a payment to an opposing Club as required under these Rules then The National Leagues Pyramid Board may deduct or withhold any such amount from payments (be they prize money, broadcasting fees or pool payments) due to the defaulting Club.
- (f) In the event that a club is found to have breached the Competition Rules The National Leagues Pyramid Board may, in accordance with Rule 1(d), order the repayment of any monies gained by such Club for Rounds of the Competition in relation to which it is determined that the Club was in breach and The National Leagues Pyramid Board may (in its absolute discretion) award the recovered monies to the Club(s) that were defeated in such earlier Rounds.
- (g) Where a club (the defaulting club) defaults in making any payment due to The Association and any holding company of The Association and any subsidiary company of that holding company, then The Association shall be empowered to deduct the amount of any such payment from any distribution from payment due to the defaulting club.

26. DOCUMENTATION

- (a) For each match hosted in the competition it is the responsibility of the Football Secretary of the Home Club to retain the following documentation ("the documentation") (as applicable):
 - (i) a copy of the signed Statement of Receipts and Payments Form.
 - (ii) a printout of the sales of advanced tickets from a computerised ticketing system (if operated).
 - (iii) a reconciliation of receipts for each cash turnstile (ie number admitted at the appropriate price = actual receipts). The reconciliation to be prepared by the turnstile operator and verified by a senior steward/officer of the Club.
 - (iv) a copy of the reconciliation of tickets sold by the Visiting Club.
 - (v) a schedule of amounts banked for the match in respect of ticket sales and cash admissions.
 - (vi) a comparison of the numbers entering the ground via cash or ticket turnstiles to the numbers admitted according to the computerised safety records (if installed).
 - (vii) a copy of the computerised safety records at the end of the game showing the numbers admitted by each turnstile (if installed).
 - (viii) a schedule of the numbers admitted to parts of the stadium that do not pass through a turnstile (eg lounges and executive boxes).
 - (ix) a list of complimentary tickets issued.

- (x) Copies of supporting documentation (eg invoices, wage payments to gatemen etc) for payments recorded as a deduction on the Statement of Receipts and Payment Form.
- (b) Clubs that operate an electronic access system (eg swipe cards) or a pass system to gain access to the ground rather than a ticketing system, must retain records that confirm the number of people that gained access at each entry point to the stadium.
- (c) The Football Club secretary is responsible for maintaining a file of the documentation for each season. The documentation for each match should be available for The Association and Visiting Club to review on request as set out at Competition Rules 20 (d) and 20 (e). The documentation should be retained for the period required by statute and H M Revenue and Customs.

27. PROVISIONS FOR THE SEMI FINAL

- (a) The National Leagues Pyramid Board may impose any arrangements where it is deemed appropriate.
- (b) The Semi Final shall be played on a "Home and Home" basis. The Club first drawn shall play the first match at home. The Club second drawn shall play the second match at home.
- (c) Both matches shall be of 90 minutes duration.
- (d) If the aggregate score is level at the end of the second match, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.
- (e) *Postponed Matches*
When a Semi-Final match has been postponed, it shall be played as directed by The Association.
- (f) *Abandoned Matches*
When a Semi-Final match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.
- (g) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

28. PROVISIONS FOR THE FINAL

- (a) The Association shall determine the ground for the Final and shall have direct control of the arrangements.
- (b) *Postponed Match*
When a Final match has been postponed, it shall be played as directed by The Association.
- (c) *Abandoned Match*
When a Final match has been abandoned after it has commenced but before it has been completed, The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall deal with the matter as it sees fit in its absolute discretion.
- (d) All tickets for the Final will be sold by The Association via its internal sales channels. On qualification to the Final, each Finalist will receive an allocation of tickets, as determined by The Association, at full price for internal Club sales. Any further tickets requested will need to be purchased via The Association's sales channels. Where a Club sells tickets for the Final it does so on behalf of The Association, in accordance with any instructions issued by The Association, and must settle all ticket accounts with The Association within seven working days of the match.
- (e) The venue staging a Final shall be entitled to a payment agreed by The Association.
- (f) Save for (a), (d) and (e) The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

29. THE FA VASE / FINALIST MEDALS

- (a) The Vase is the property of The Association. When the winning Club has been ascertained, The Association shall loan the Vase to such Club, which shall be responsible for its return to

The Association on or before the first day in March in the ensuing year in good order and condition. The Association reserves the right to request the return of the Vase at any time by giving seven days notice. Should the Vase be lost, destroyed or damaged by fire or any other cause whilst under the care or custody of the Club the latter shall refund to The Association the amount of its current insured value or the cost of thorough repair in addition to any other penalty which The National Leagues Pyramid Board may impose.

- (b) In addition to the Vase, The Association shall present 25 medals to playing staff and officials of both Clubs in the Final. When a player taking part is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct, the medal to which he may be entitled may be withheld at the discretion of The National Leagues Pyramid Board.

30. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PROTESTS

- (a) All issues relating to the interpretation of the Competition Rules, shall be referred to The National Leagues Pyramid Board, whose decision shall, subject to Rule 31, be final and binding. The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate. The National Leagues Pyramid Board shall not be bound by any enactment or Rule of Law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceeding before a Court of Law.
- (b) Where a Club wishes to protest that there has been a breach of the Competition Rules, such protest must be made in writing and must contain the particulars of the grounds upon which it is made. The protest must be received by The Association, accompanied by a fee of £100.00, within twenty-four hours of the match to which it relates. The fee may be forfeited to The Association in the event of the protest not being sustained.
- (c) The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee) may make such orders as it considers appropriate in relation to any issue or protest referred to it. The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee) may make such orders as it considers appropriate as to the costs incurred by the parties or The Association.
- (d) Any protest relating to the ground, goal posts, or bars, or other appurtenances of the game shall not be considered by The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee) unless an objection has been lodged by a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Visiting Club with a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Home Club in the presence of the Referee at least one hour before the official time of the kick-off. The Referee shall require the Home Club to correct the cause of the objection, if this is possible without unduly delaying the progress of the match. The Referee shall record the lodging of any protest made under this Rule in his match report.
- (e) Where an objection has been lodged with the Referee and Home Club as above, a protest must be made to The Association and neither objection nor protest may be withdrawn, except by leave of The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee).
- (f) The Association shall send a copy of any protest to the Club protested against, which shall lodge a defence to the protest with particulars of the defence within twenty-four hours of receipt of the protest.
- (g) Members of The National Leagues Pyramid Board directly connected with a Club concerned in a protest shall not have any involvement in the consideration of the matter.
- (h) A Club, or player or any person connected with the management of the Club may be summoned to attend at a hearing of a protest. A Club may be represented by one or more persons. A Barrister or Solicitor may represent a Club only with the prior written consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee). Any person summoned to attend a hearing of a protest must attend personally and shall not be legally represented except with the prior written consent of The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee).

31. PROVISIONS CONCERNING APPEALS

- (a) A Club that is expelled from the Competition may appeal against that decision to an appeal board in accordance with the procedures for Competition appeals set out in Appendix 1.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

32. NOTICES

All notices required to be given to The Association by any of these Competition Rules shall be addressed to the Competitions Manager, at the offices of The Association.

33. MATCH STREAMING

- (a) Unless determined otherwise by The Association, a Club participating in a match in any Round of the Competition up to and including the Quarter Final may offer a live stream of that match online subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) the two competing Clubs must consent to the live stream being made available and agree any associated live streaming arrangements (including the costs associated with those arrangements);
 - (ii) the live stream cannot take place in the transmission-free period determined by The Association pursuant to Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes and the Regulations Governing the Implementation of Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes (i.e. Saturday between 14:45 and 17:15);
 - (iii) the live stream must be geo-blocked so that it is only accessible in the UK;
 - (iv) a copy of the live stream footage must be provided to The Association, broadcast partners and the opposing Club upon request; and
 - (v) if any fee is charged to access the live stream, any income made must be declared on the Statement of Receipts & Payments Form and shared equally between the competing Clubs.

APPENDIX 1

- (a) Where a Club intends to lodge an appeal against a decision of The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or a subcommittee) to remove the Club from the Competition under Rule 31(a), it must:
 - (i) notify The Association by email (to Competitions@TheFA.com and JudicialServices@TheFA.com) by 12 noon on the first business day following receipt of the decision; and
 - (ii) provide The Association by email (to Competitions@TheFA.com and JudicialServices@TheFA.com) with an appeal fee of £100 and copies of all submissions, evidence and any other relevant material upon which they intend to rely by 6pm on the first business day following receipt of the decision.
- (b) The grounds of appeal available to the Club shall be that The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or subcommittee):
 - (i) failed to give the Club a fair hearing; and/or
 - (ii) misinterpreted or failed to comply with the rules of the Competition relevant to its decision; and/or
 - (iii) came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come; and/or
 - (iv) the removal of the Club from the Competition was excessive.
- (c) An appeal board of three people will be appointed to determine the appeal. The members will be appointed by The Association's Judicial Panel Chair (or their nominee) and shall be comprised of members of The Association's Judicial Panel.
- (d) An appeal shall be by way of a review of documents and oral submissions only and shall not involve a rehearing of the evidence considered by The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or subcommittee). The Association will ensure that all documents relating to the original decision are provided to the appeal board. If the Club does not wish to be present or represented in person, the appeal board may conduct the hearing on the basis of a review of the documents only.
- (e) The Association must, by 6pm on the first business day following receipt of the appellant's submissions, evidence and material, provide its responses to the appellant and the appeal board.

- (f) New evidence may only be permitted with the permission of the Chair of the appeal board. An application for leave to present new evidence must be made when providing submissions. Such application must set out the nature of relevance of the new evidence and why it was not presented at the original hearing. Save in exceptional circumstances, the appeal board shall not grant leave to present new evidence unless satisfied with the reason given as to why it was not, or could not have been, presented to The National Leagues Pyramid Board (or subcommittee) and that such evidence is relevant. Where leave to present new evidence has been granted, in all cases the other party will be given an opportunity to respond. The decision of the Chair of the appeal board shall be final.
- (g) The appeal board will hear the appeal at the earliest available opportunity and, in any event, before the next round of the Competition. The appeal board shall determine the procedures to be followed at any personal hearing.
- (h) A decision of the appeal board shall be final and binding and there shall be no right of further challenge.
- (i) The appeal board shall have the power to allow or dismiss the appeal and to make such further or other order as it considers appropriate.
- (j) The costs of bringing an appeal will be borne by the Club.