

THE FOOTBALL CONFERENCE LIMITED KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

FA STANDARDISED MEMBERSHIP RULES 2023/24 SEASON

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.

“Agent” shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

“AGM” shall mean the annual general meeting held in accordance with the Articles of the Competition.

“Appointing Authority” means The FA or 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.

“Board Directive” means an order or instruction issued by the Board.

“Bond” means a sum of money deposited with the Competition as part of the requirements of membership 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 2.9 below).

“Commercial Agreements” means all or any Agreement or Agreements with any third party including but not limited to broadcasting, media, sponsorship, marketing, merchandising, licensing and advertising, for the general promotion of each or any of the Clubs in the Competition and the Company, and which have the object of promoting the welfare and general commercial interest and increasing the financial resources of each of the Clubs, the Company and the Competition.

“Company” means The Football Conference Limited, company registration number 3364308 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 means The National League, comprising of the National League, National League North and National League South.

“Competition Match” means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Company.

“Competition Office” means the registered Offices or addresses where League business is transacted.

“Competition Secretary” means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition.

“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.

“Contractual Disputes Tribunal” shall be as defined in Rules of The FA.

“Control” means the power of a natural person, legal entity or any other body to exercise, or to be able to exercise or acquire, direct or indirect control over the policies, affairs and/or management of a Club, whether that power is constituted by rights or contracts (either separately or in combination) and having regard to the considerations of fact or law involved, and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, Control shall be deemed to include:

- a) the power (whether directly or indirectly and by any means including without limitation by way of those that in the opinion of the Board are acting in concert) to appoint and/or remove all or such of the members of the board of directors of the Club as are able to cast a majority of the votes capable of being cast by the members of that board; and/or
 - b) the holding and/or possession of the beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, shares (or other equity securities) in the Club (whether directly, indirectly (by means of holding such interests in one or more other persons) or by contract including without limitation those that in the opinion of the Board are acting in concert) which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof 30 per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable at general meetings of the Club;
- For the purposes of the above, any rights or powers of a nominee or of an associate (as defined in the Rules of The FA Challenge Cup) of a person shall be attributed to that person.

“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.

“Creditor Compromise” shall mean an agreement reached by a Club under a Company Voluntary Arrangement (under the Insolvency Act 1986) or a Scheme of Arrangement (under the Companies Act 1985 or Companies Act 2006) or a restructuring plan (under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006).

“Day” means any day on which the Competition Office is open for normal business but excluding, unless the Board determines otherwise, a Saturday, a Sunday or a Bank or Public Holiday.

“Embargo” means a ban placed by the Board on a Club in respect of player registrations, as more fully defined in Appendix H.

“Embargoed Club” means any Club subject to an Embargo.

‘Event Doctor’ -means an individual qualified in accordance with the requirements set out in ‘Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds’ (known as the ‘Green Guide’), as in force from time to time (formerly known as a crowd doctor)

“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.

“FIFA Quality Concept” means the:

- (a) FIFA Quality Concept Handbook of Requirements for Football Turf Surfaces (January 2012 Edition); and
- (b) FIFA Quality Concept – Handbook of Test Methods for Football Turf (January 2012 Edition), and any amendment or modification thereof.

“FIFA Recommended One / IATS or Two Star Certificate” means the certificate of that name awarded by FIFA following compliance with the applicable requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept.

“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.

“First Aider” means a person who holds a valid ‘Emergency Medical First Aid in Football’ or ‘Emergency First Aid in Football’ accreditation (or such equivalent qualification deemed acceptable by The FA 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.

“Football Turf (3G) Pitch (FTP)” means a field of play (as that term is defined in the Laws of the Game) that has, following installation and prior to the commencement of

each subsequent Playing Season, been awarded the relevant FIFA Performance requirement (FIFA Two and One Star or Pro and Quality) and which otherwise conforms to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

“Grass Pitch” means a field of play (as that term is defined in the Laws of the Game) that is natural grass, predominantly natural grass or intended to be predominantly natural grass and which conforms to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

“Ground” means the ground on which the Club’s first team plays its Competition fixtures.

“Insolvency Event” means any one of the following:

- (a) entering 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 a restructuring plan under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006 or any compromise agreement with its creditors as a whole; or
- (b) lodging 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 in respect of it (“Administrator” and “Administration Order” having the meanings attributed to them respectively by paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act); or
- (c) 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 Board, are material to the Club’s ability to fulfil its obligations as a member of the League; or
- (d) the coming into force of a moratorium pursuant to Part A1 of the Insolvency Act 1986; or
- (e) shareholders passing a resolution pursuant to section 84(1) of the 1986 Act to voluntarily wind up; or
- (f) a meeting of creditors is convened pursuant to section 95 or section 98 of the 1986 Act; or
- (g) 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

- (h) ceasing or forming 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 Board; or
- (i) being subject to any insolvency regime in any jurisdiction outside England and Wales which is analogous with the insolvency regimes detailed in (a) to (h) above; and/or
- (j) have any proceeding or step taken or any court order in any jurisdiction made which has a substantially similar effect to any of the foregoing.

“Intermediary” means any natural or legal person who carries out or seeks to carry out Intermediary Activity and has registered with The Association in accordance with The FA Intermediaries Regulations.

“Intermediary/Agent Activity” means acting in any way and at any time, either directly or indirectly, for or on behalf of a Player or a Club in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction. This includes, but is not limited to, entering into a Representation Contract with a Player or a Club. For the avoidance of doubt, a Club Official is not acting as an Intermediary or Agent when they carry out any Intermediary/Agent Activity in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction for or on behalf of that Club. Similarly, a Lawyer is not acting as an Intermediary or Agent when they solely and exclusively undertake or provide Permitted Legal Advice in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction.

“Long Term Loan” means a loan transfer of a Player who is a qualifying Player within the terms of the Rules. from either (a) any date during the first Registration Period to any date during the second Registration Period, or (b) any date during the first or second Registration Period to the end of that Playing Season. For the purposes of this definition only, a “Registration Period” shall mean one of the periods determined by The FA during which players may be registered for a professional men’s club.

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

“Membership Year” means the period in each calendar year from the holding of one annual general meeting of the Company to the holding of the next annual general meeting.

“National League System” means the system of competitions controlled by the FA where promotion and relegation links exist between participating Leagues.

“Non Contract Player” means any 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.

“Officer” means an individual who is required to make an Owners’ and Directors’ Declaration by The FA.

“Online Player Registration System” means the relevant online player registration system as determined by The FA from time to time.

“Option” shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

“Owners’ and Directors’ Declaration” means a declaration to The FA required from an Officer from time to time.

“Paid in Full” shall mean when a Club has either:

- paid (in cleared funds) to the supervisor of its Creditor Compromise or its administrator, sufficient funds to pay all its creditors in full (100p in the £) and to cover the costs of the Creditor Compromise or the administration and confirmation of this fact has been received in writing from the supervisor/administrator; or
- paid (in cleared funds) sufficient to settle in full (100p in the £) any debts owed to creditors outside a Creditor Compromise.

“Participant” shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA

“Pitch” means a Grass Pitch or Football Turf Pitch.

“Pitch Test” means the test(s) conducted by a FIFA accredited field test institute or UKAS accredited test institute in accordance with the requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept or IATS.

“Player” means any Contract Player, Non Contract Player or other Player who plays or who is eligible to play for a Club or is subject to any suspension from playing.

“Player Status Rules” shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

“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 12 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.

“Qualified Medical Practitioner” means a graduate health care professional e.g., a doctor, physiotherapist, paramedic, nurse, sport therapist or sports rehabilitator, having the appropriate valid medical insurance, and being registered with a recognised professional body, (e.g., the General Medical Council, Health Care Professions Council, Royal College of Nursing, Society of Sports Therapists, Sports Therapy Association, Sports Therapy Organisation or Federation of Holistic Therapists Directory Service).

“Rules” means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

“Satisfied” shall mean that a creditor has consented, and provided evidence of such, to accept a sum in full and final settlement of its debt from a Club. For the avoidance of doubt, a vote to approve a Company Voluntary Arrangement (‘CVA’) by the creditors of a Club, held in accordance with Insolvency Law in operation from time to time, shall deem those debts admitted to the CVA as being Satisfied. The Board shall determine at its absolute discretion whether an amount is satisfied under the Rules.

“Scholar” means a player that has entered into a Scholarship Agreement.

“Scholarship Agreement” means an agreement entered into between a Club and a player pursuant to the Player Status Rules.

“Season” means the period from the Annual General Meeting of the Company until the next Annual General Meeting of the Company.

“Secured” shall mean that one of the following legally recognised undertakings has been provided for the payment of the specified sum in full by the AGM at the end of the Playing Season in which the transfer of membership takes place:

- (i) A solicitor’s undertaking for the full amount outstanding;
- (ii) A bank guarantee is held for the full amount outstanding;

In each case to be paid and satisfied in full by no later than the AGM at the end of the Playing Season in which the transfer took place.

The Board shall determine at its absolute discretion whether an amount is Secured or Satisfied under the Rules.

“Short Term Loan” means a loan transfer for a period of no fewer than 28 days in any one season.

“Significant Interest” means the holding and/or possession of the legal or beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, shares or other securities in the Club which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof ten (10) per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable in respect of the Shares of any class of Shares of the Club. All or part of any such interest may be held directly or indirectly or by contract including, but not limited to, by way of membership of any group that in the opinion of the Board are acting in concert, and any rights or powers held by an Associate (as defined in the Rules of The FA Challenge Cup) shall be included for the purposes of determining whether an interest or interests amounts to a “Significant Interest”.

“SSAP” means a sporting sanctions appeal panel to be appointed to determine an appeal against a deduction of points under Rule 13.

“Team Sheet” means a form provided by the Competition referred to in Rule 8.20.

“The FA” means The Football Association Limited.

“Transaction” means any negotiation or other related activity, including any communication relating or preparatory to the same, the intention or effect of which is to create, terminate or vary the terms of a player’s contract of employment with a Club, to facilitate or effect the registration of a player with a Club, or the transfer of the registration of a player from a club to a Club (whether on a temporary or permanent basis). A completed Transaction is one that has so achieved the creation, termination or variation of the terms of the player’s contract of employment with a Club, the registration of the player with a Club or the transfer of the registration from a club to a Club.

“Transmission-Free Period” means the period determined by The FA from time to time pursuant to Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes and the Regulations Governing the Implementation of Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes.

“WGS” means the Whole Game System and the procedures for the operation thereof as determined by The FA from time to time.

“Work Experience Player” means a Player whose registration is held by a competition other than the Competition and is registered under a Scholarship. The Club taking the Player on work experience will register the Player Non Contract with a league in which they take part to fulfil the football element of the Scholarship, not the educational part.

“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.

“Youth Loan” means a loan transfer for a period of no fewer than 28 days of a Player who is a qualifying Player within the terms of the Rules.

- 1.2 The Rules are taken from the Standardised Rules determined by The FA from time to time. In the event of any omissions from the Standardised Rules then the requirements of the Standardised Rules shall be deemed to apply to the Competition.
- 1.3 Words or expressions used in these Rules shall, if not inconsistent with the subject or context, bear the same meanings as in the Articles.
- 1.4 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 16.
- 1.5 The Competition will be known as The National League (or such other name as the Company may adopt) and the Divisions will be known as the National League, National League North and National League South. 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.

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 The Company shall be part of the National League System 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 Each Club shall register its Ground, and its pitch dimensions, with the Competition prior to the start of each Playing 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.

Dimensions of the field of play for all Competition matches shall be:-

Length - Maximum 120 yards (110 metres) – Minimum 110 yards (100 metres)

Width - Maximum 80 yards (75 metres) – Minimum 70 yards (64 metres)

No Club shall move to another Ground without first obtaining written consent of the Board; such consent not to be withheld unreasonably. In consideration whether to give such consent the Board shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and shall not grant consent unless it is reasonably satisfied that such consent:-

- would be consistent with the objectives of the Competition as set out in the Memorandum of Association;
- would be appropriate having in mind the relationship (if any) between the locality with which by its name or otherwise the applicant Club is traditionally associated and that in which such Club proposes to establish its Ground;
- would not adversely affect such Club's Officials, Players, supporters, shareholders, sponsors and others having an interest in its activities;
- would not have an adverse effect on visiting Clubs;
- would not adversely affect Clubs having their registered Grounds in the immediate vicinity of the proposed location, and
- would enhance the reputation of the Competition and promote the game of association football generally.

The Club must disclose, as soon as practicable, plans and details of any proposed move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board.

Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 4.12 a Club shall forthwith notify the Competition of any proposed change in its circumstances relating to the occupation of

its Ground. By way of example, and without limitation, a proposed change may include a sale of any freehold interest (with or without subsequent leaseback) or any surrender or variation or a lease or licence.

- 2.2 All Clubs shall have Grounds and headquarters situated in England, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man if applicable 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. Clubs playing in England 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.
- 2.3.1 A Club’s Ground may be shared with another Club or any other club (including a club engaged in another sport) providing, where sharing with a football club the Club or club playing in the most senior competition has priority of fixtures at all times and, where sharing with a club engaged in another sport, the Club has priority of fixtures. A Club will not be permitted to ground share to gain promotion or to avoid relegation. Ground sharing may not be permitted when one of the sharers retains the use of another ground unless that club can show by means of a refused planning permission or similar that it cannot meet the requirements of the Criteria Document at that ground. Any Club wishing to share a Ground or intending to move to a new Ground must obtain the written consent of the Board. Any Ground sharing for a period exceeding thirteen (13) weeks must be in writing and a written agreement must first be approved by the Board before being entered into and (except in an emergency) must be completed by 31 March in any year to be effective for the following Playing Season. A copy of the completed signed and dated agreement must be received by the Competition within fourteen days of the approval being sent to the Club.
- 2.3.2 The Club as at 31 March in any year shall either:
- (i) Own the freehold of the Ground, or
 - (ii) Have a lease for the Ground that extends uninterrupted for a minimum of the current and following Playing Season, or
 - (iii) Possess an agreement for the use of the Ground that is acceptable to The Football Association following consultation with the relevant Competition.

In each case the Club must provide to the Competition of which it is a member and to The Football Association:

If the Ground is freehold either currently dated Official Copies of the freehold title at the Land Registry in the name of the entity in membership of the Competition or, if

unregistered, a Certificate of Title from the Club's solicitor showing that the Ground is owned by the entity in membership of the Competition, or

If the Ground is held leasehold a copy of the signed and dated lease in the name of the entity in membership of the Competition; if the expiry date of the lease has already passed or is dated before the end of the next full Playing Season, a certificate from the Club's solicitor as to whether or not a notice has been given by the landlord to terminate the lease. In addition the Club must provide evidence of registration at the Land Registry, or explain why the Lease is not registered.

If the Ground is subject to an acceptable agreement a copy of the signed and dated agreement for the use of the Ground together with confirmation from The Football Association, following consultation with the relevant Competition, that the agreement is acceptable.

The Club must disclose whether the Club's occupation of the Ground is subject to any third party option, whether the ground is charged by way of security and whether or not any break clauses in the lease or agreement have been exercised either by the landlord or the tenant.

In all cases The Football Association and the Competition of which it is a member have the right to call for further information.

- 2.3.3 A Club's Ground must comply with the Criteria Document for the step in the National League System at which the Club is playing. Each Club that is required to hold a safety certificate issued in accordance with safety legislation must lodge a current copy with the Competition. If a Clubs' ground is subject to any reduction in capacity by a public authority it must immediately inform the Competition.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.

The Board shall establish a procedure for inspecting Clubs' grounds from time to time to ensure that the grade attained by that ground is maintained.

2.6 The Competition and 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 31st July (or by a later date which was agreed at the sole discretion of The FA's Alliance League Committee (Steps 1 to 4) or Leagues Committee (Steps 5 & 6) such grading to be ascertained by an inspection carried out on or before 31st March or as soon as practicable thereafter. Any Club not maintaining the grade set for the Competition may 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 31st March prior to commencement of the relevant season then the Club must, by the 31st March, 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 31st March. 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 31st March 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.

2.7 Any Club which is incorporated must be incorporated in England and Wales. Any Club wishing to incorporate shall notify The FA, its Affiliated Association and the Competition Secretary before it makes any resolutions in this regard. Any person wishing to be appointed as an Officer to a Club must comply with the requirements of The FA Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations and send to the Competition Secretary a copy of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration within 5 days of sending the same to The FA.

- 2.8 In the event that any Club which is an unincorporated association incorporates itself it shall notify the Competition Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution to take this action and shall with such notice provide the Competition 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).

Transfer of Membership

Transfer as a Going Concern

- 2.9.1 In the event that any Club which resolves to transfer its membership of the Competition from one legal entity to a different legal entity, other than in the circumstances shown at 2.9.2 below, the Board will use the following minimum criteria in deciding whether to approve that transfer:
- (a) The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree to the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity.
 - (b) All Football Creditors in the Club must be paid in full or transferred in full (with each creditor's consent) to the new entity, and evidenced as such.
 - (c) All other creditors in the Club must be paid in full or Secured or transferred in full (with each creditor's consent) to the new entity and evidenced as such.
 - (d) The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts to The FA and the Competition showing its ability to fund the Club for the next twelve (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.
 - (e) The FA must have given approval for the transfer to take place.

Transfer from Insolvency

- 2.9.2 In the event that any Club that is subject to an Insolvency Event resolves to transfer its membership of the Competition to a new entity, the Board will use the following minimum criteria in deciding whether or not to approve that transfer:
- (a) The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree to the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity and/or a licensed insolvency practitioner(s) appointed to the Club has agreed to sell or transfer some or all of the Club's assets to the new entity;
 - (b) All Football Creditors in the Club must be Paid in Full and evidenced as such;
 - (c) The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts to The FA and the Competition showing its ability to fund the Club for the next twelve (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;

- (d) The FA must have given approval for the transfer to take place; and
- (e) All other creditors in the Club must be satisfied and evidenced as such (This provision to be read in conjunction with 2.9.3 below.)

In the event that requirement (a) and/or (e) is not fully complied with, and only where the Board, at its absolute discretion, deems there to have been exceptional circumstances surrounding the application for the transfer, it may approve the transfer (subject to compliance with all other provisions above) and may apply such conditions as it deems appropriate including, without limitation, the deduction of points.

- 2.9.3 Nothing in Rule 2.9.2 above shall limit in any way the application of Rule 13B of these Rules.
- 2.10 The Competition shall allow for up to seventy-two (72) member Clubs. There will be three (3) divisions of twenty-four (24) Clubs in each division where possible. The divisions will be called the National League, the National League North and the National League South. The Clubs competing in each division each season will be confirmed by the Annual General Meeting of the Company each year. A Club entered into membership at the Annual General Meeting shall be subject to the application of the Rules until the date of the following Annual General Meeting. It shall be allowed for these numbers to be increased to accommodate any anomaly in the National League System.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The Company will hold a membership 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 name and 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. A Club must notify the Company of all proposed changes to the information held by the League in the membership register in respect of the Club including any proposed change of company name or the name of an individual in whose name the membership of the Company is vested. Clubs are required to submit a fully completed membership form prior to the Annual General Meeting each Season.

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

Ownership and Change of Control

- 2.13 Each Club shall publish its legal name, form (e.g. unincorporated association, company limited by shares or guarantee etc) and any identifier (e.g. company number). In

addition for those Clubs that are owned, then the Club shall also publish the identities of the ultimate owner (i.e. the name of an individual) of each Significant Interest in the Club. Such information shall as a minimum be published on the Club's official website on a page accessible directly from the home page of that official club website and within the Club's official matchday programme.

2.14 If any change of Control of a Club is proposed (whether by a natural person, legal entity or any other body) then:

(i) The Club shall submit to the Board up to date information including financial information (such as budgets) prepared to take into account the consequences of the change in Control on the Club's future financial position as soon as reasonably practicable prior to the change of Control, or if submission is not reasonably practical prior to the change of Control then no later than 10 working days thereafter;

(ii) The Board shall have the power to require those that are to acquire or have acquired control of the Club to appear before it and to provide evidence of the source and sufficiency of any funds which the purchaser proposes to invest in or otherwise make available to the Club; and

(iii) On considering all information available, including that provided under Rule 2.14(ii), then the Board at its absolute discretion shall apply any conditions in respect of the Club's ongoing membership of the Competition including the provision of any further information, adherence to a budget, the application of an Embargo, request for financial guarantees, and or payment of a Bond.

(iv) The Club shall submit a copy of any agreement concerning the completed sale of a controlling ownership interest to the Competition and The FA. If the Competition becomes aware that a change of Control has occurred at a Club in the Membership Year that has not been assessed in accordance with this Rule then, in addition to the powers set out in this Rule, the provisions, criteria and powers set out in 'Appendix Q; The Licensing System' shall apply.

This Rule shall not apply where Rule 2.9 applies.

2.15 In the event that an Insolvency Event occurs in relation to any Club, that Club must inform and keep informed the Competition 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.

- 2.16 An Officer must submit an Owners' and Directors' Declaration to The FA in accordance with the Reporting Requirements set out in The FA's Owners' and Directors' Regulations that apply from time to time. The Club must provide a copy of any such Owners' and Directors' Declaration to the Competition at the time it is submitted to The FA.

No individual will be permitted to act as an Officer if they fail to meet any of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' 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 Owners' and Directors' Declaration;
- acted as an Officer when in breach of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration;
- Acted as an Officer without The FA having given written confirmation to the Club in accordance with The FA's Owners' and Directors' Regulations that the individual may so act; then the individual/entity or Club shall be subject to such fine or other sanction as may be determined by The FA.

In the event that the Competition receive a Notice from The FA issued in accordance with The FA's Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations for the suspension of that Club's Competition membership, then that Club shall be suspended from the Competition with effect from 14 days from the date of the Notice. An appeal of the effect of the Notice is to The FA and can only be made by the affected Club and in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in the FA Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations. The effect of the Notice shall be suspended pending the outcome of an appeal.

The FA shall advise the Competition and the Club in writing where it becomes satisfied that a Disqualifying Condition as defined in the FA Owners' and Directors' Test no longer applies. Upon receipt of this written notification from The FA, the Competition may remove the suspension of the Club's Competition membership.

Where a Club is suspended and that causes a match in the Competition not to be played, the Board shall determine how the outcome of that match shall be treated.

- 2.17 Within fourteen days of a change in a Significant Interest at a Club or the appointment or removal of any director of a Club, written notice thereof, together with such details as are required to be filed with the Registrar of Companies, shall be deposited at the Competition Office.

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 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, commercial contract 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.
- 2.20 Any Club failing to be represented throughout an Annual General Meeting or any other General Meeting called in accordance with the Rules or Articles without satisfactory reason being given shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Whenever required to do so all Clubs shall ensure that their Manager, or an Assistant Manager, attend in person any Meeting of Clubs called by the Board. Failure to do so without just cause shall be a breach of these Rules and be dealt with in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
- 2.21 The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.
- 2.22 The Competition and each Club does not and must not by its rules or regulations or in any manner whatsoever unlawfully discriminate against any person within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination (whether by way of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise).
- 2.23 The Competition and each Club shall make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise.
- 2.24 Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning Association for investigation.

- 2.25 Each Club shall comply with the provisions of Appendix Q – the ‘Licencing System’, as approved by the FA Council from time to time.

3. MEMBERSHIP – ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

- 3.1 Any Club allocated 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.
- 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 fourteen (14) days prior to the next Annual General Meeting of the Company accompanied where appropriate by the membership fee.

The annual subscription shall be paid by each Club to the Company no later than seven (7) days before the Annual General Meeting of the Company in each year.

The Board may determine that such annual subscription fees are deducted from central payments during the applicable season.

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. The Board shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of the Football Association or affiliated Association.

- 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. The Board shall also have the power to issue an order or instruction, by way of a Board Directive, in the best interest of the Competition, on any matter not provided for in these Rules, with which Clubs must comply or be subject to sanction under Rule 4.6, save where any such Directive is inconsistent with a Rule or Regulation of The FA, in which event the Directive will not create a binding obligation on Clubs.
- 4.3 All decisions of the Board shall be binding, subject to a right of appeal to The FA pursuant to Rule 16. Decisions of the Board must be notified, in writing, to all concerned within fourteen days of the making of such decision.

Upon becoming aware of any breaches of these Rules the Board shall write to the entity suspected of a breach formally charging the party giving at least 7 days' notice of the time, date and venue of the meeting at which the charge shall be considered.

The party charged will respond in writing to the Board within 7 days stating whether or not the charge is admitted and in default the Competition will deal with the case on the evidence it has at the time. If the charge is disputed or if the party admitting the charge wishes to present a plea in mitigation, it shall have the right to a personal hearing. The party charged also has the right to waive the 7 day requirement and allow the charge to be considered in less than 7 days after the party has been charged.

If the party charged disputes the charge or wishes to have a personal hearing to present a plea in mitigation then it shall submit its case in writing to be received by the Competition Secretary at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting set to consider the charge and in default the Board will be at liberty to proceed to hear the charge without the benefit of written submissions from the party charged.

- 4.4 Where the Rules provide for the imposition of a financial penalty under the Fines Tariff then the Notice of Charge given by the Board under Rule 4.3 above shall refer to the penalty provided for in the Fines Tariff.

If the Rule provides that the penalty for such a breach is in the discretion of the Board then the notice shall also state as such. If the penalty set by Rules is not a financial penalty then such penalty must still be referred to in the Notice of Charge.

All breaches of the Laws of the Game Rules and Regulations of the Football Association shall be dealt with in accordance with FA Rules by the appropriate Association prior to any action by the Competition in accordance with FA Regulations.

- 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 shall be liable to such penalties as the Board may impose.

- 4.6 If a Club fails to comply with a Board Directive 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 (or matches) may be played each season between two Clubs nominated by the Board and it shall be a requirement for such match (or matches) to be played on the date(s) nominated by the Board. All matters concerning the match will be decided by the Board.
- 4.12 In the event of any issue concerning the membership of any Club with the Competition the Board may require a Bond to be paid by or on behalf of the Club on such terms and for such period as it may in its entire discretion think fit.
- 4.13 In the event of a Club being unsuccessful in any Appeal to The Football Association pursuant to clause 4.2 hereof and Appendix A hereto, then the Board may at its discretion order the unsuccessful applicant to indemnify the Company in relation to all costs (including but not limited to legal fees) incurred in relation to that Appeal.

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. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

6.1 A QUALIFYING PLAYER REGISTRATION

The FA’s rules will apply in respect of all matters concerning players.

- 6.1.1 A Player is one who has been registered via the relevant Online Player Registration System and such registration has been approved by the Competition.

- 6.1.2 At Steps 1 to 4, a Player’s registration with a Club as a Contract Player shall continue until the earlier of the date upon which: (a) the contract between the Contract Player and the Club expires, (b) the Contract Player’s registration is transferred to another club, or (c) the contract is cancelled in accordance with Rule 6.5.

A Player will only be eligible to play in a match organised by The National League if his registration form; transfer form, or loan transfer form, has been received by The National League via the Online Player Registration System, by 5pm on the last normal business Day before the day of the match when a match is played on a Saturday, Sunday or a Bank or Public Holiday or not less than four hours before the scheduled

kick-off of the match when a match is played on a midweek Day in which the player is required to play and found to be in order, and so registered. It is the responsibility of all Clubs to ensure any player signing a registration form has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate and in the case of Contract Players, including those on loan, must have approval from The Football Association. Clubs are also responsible for all players being correctly registered before fielding any player. Failure to do so constitutes misconduct and the Club will be charged with fielding an ineligible player.

The Registration of Players are subject to fees in accordance with the fees tariff.

The status of a player must be clearly stated on the registration information submitted. Hard copies of the registration form are not required to be submitted to the Competition. However, these must be completed, signed and retained by Clubs in case of dispute or in case requested by The FA and/or the Competition.

The registration of a Player will be valid from the date of registration to the end of that Playing Season only or, if in the case of a Contract or Loan Player whose contract or loan expires before the end of the Playing Season, for the term of the said contract or loan.

6.1.3 A Player may only play under his correct status. Any change of a Player's status during the currency of a registration must be notified to the Competition within five (5) days of the change of registration being affected.

In the event of a Player changing his status with the same Club either from Contract to Non- Contract or from Non-Contract to Contract then that Player must sign a new registration form (which is to be retained by the Club), complete a new registration process via the Online Player Registration System, and be re-registered. In default the Player re-registering will be ineligible to play in a match under the jurisdiction of the Competition and Rule 6.9 will be applied in such circumstances where a Club is found guilty of playing a Player who has changed status without re-registering.

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

6.1.4 The Board shall have the power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any Player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct subject to the right of Appeal to the FA or the relevant County Football Association. Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated conduct, which may deter a Participant from being involved in this Competition. Application should be made to the parent County of the Club the Player is registered with.

(Note:- action under this clause shall not be taken against a Player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Association, and then only in cases of the Player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any case be subject to an Appeal to the Football Association. For the purposes of this Rule, bringing the Competition into disrepute can only be considered where the Player has received in excess of 112 days suspension, or 10 matches in match based discipline, in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.)

- 6.1.5 The Board shall also have the power to place an Embargo on the registration, transfer or loan transfer of Players by any Club deemed to be in breach of these Rules. Where a Club has been subject to an Embargo that is ongoing (if applied by the Competition or another) then the Embargo shall continue to apply until the Club can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that the circumstances that resulted in the Embargo no longer apply.

6.2 REGISTRATION PERIOD

- 6.2.1 At Steps 1 to 4, the Registration Period shall be the period commencing at midnight on the last day of the immediately preceding Playing Season and ending at 5.00pm on the fourth Thursday in March.

After 5.00pm on the fourth Thursday in March new registrations, new loans, 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.

6.3 PLAYER STATUS

The status of a player may be: -

- Contract Player
- Non-Contract
- Work Experience
- Scholar
- Short Term Loan
- Long Term Loan
- Youth Loan

6.4 REGISTRATIONS AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- 6.4.1 A Player will only be eligible to play in a match organised by the Company under these Rules if the appropriate information is provided via the Online Player Registration System and received by the Company by 5pm on the last normal business Day before the day of the match when a match is played on a Saturday, Sunday or a Bank or Public Holiday or at least four (4) hours before the scheduled kick-off time when a match is played on a midweek Day ("The Registration Deadlines"). No Player whose

registration, including Loan registrations, is received after the Registration Deadlines will be eligible to play. Any loan registration must also be approved by the Football Association before that Player can be considered eligible to play.

The registration of a Player is not automatically valid and it is the responsibility of the Club to ensure 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 standard Competition transfer form or to have completed the standard Competition cancellation of registration form prior to or at the same as the registration to the new Club.

Any Club found to have been in breach of any part of Rule 6.4.1 will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.9.

- 6.4.2 Each Club must have at least sixteen (16) Players registered fourteen (14) days before the start of each Playing Season.
- 6.4.3 A registration form, when submitted to the Competition, must be accompanied by the financial details, i.e. the appropriate page of the contract for Players under written contract or the standard Competition form for Players not under written contract.
- 6.4.4 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 latter 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.
- 6.4.5 Except where mutually agreed between the Clubs in writing, and specific approval has been given by the Board a Club cannot register more than one Contract or Non-Contract Player registered to another Club or club at any one time unless a period of 28 days has elapsed between the first and the second notice of approach or acknowledgement.
- 6.4.6 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.

LOAN AND WORK EXPERIENCE THRESHOLDS

Number and Type of Registrations Permitted

- 6.4.7 Subject to Rule 6.4.8 the following numbers and types of registrations are permitted during a Playing Season:

TYPE OF REGISTRATION	WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?	LENGTH	RIGHT OF RECALL	NUMBER PERMITTED DURING PLAYING SEASON	NUMBER PERMITTED TO/FROM ONE CLUB
SHORT TERM LOAN (Also see Rule 6.6.2)	Any Contract Player	Minimum: 28 days. Maximum: Until end of Playing Season ^1	Cannot be recalled within first 28 days (except goalkeepers)	12	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time
LONG TERM LOAN (Also see Rule 6.6.3)	Any Contract Player	(a) Full Playing Season; or; (b) Any date during first professional game registration period to any date during second professional game registration period; or (c) Any date during second professional game registration period to the end of Playing Season	Within the first or second registration period during which players may be registered for a professional men's club (except where the Player is a goalkeeper or where the Player is being transferred permanently)	6	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time
YOUTH LOAN (Also see Rule 6.6.4)	(a) scholars in 2 nd or 3 rd year of a Scholarship at a Premier League or EFL club (b) Contract Players aged 20 or below on 1 July immediately preceding the Playing Season	Minimum: 28 days Permitted at any time of the Playing Season Cannot extend beyond the date immediately preceding the date of the Player's 21 st birthday or the date of the Player's contract with	Player may continue to train and play for their parent club (in non-first team matches)	Unlimited (to or from clubs at Steps 1-4)	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time

		their parent club expires			
WORK EXPERIENCE (Also see Rule 6.6.5)	Work Experience Player	No minimum or maximum limits	No specific restrictions on ability to recall player Player may continue to play for their parent club (in non-first team matches)	Unlimited	3 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time

^1 Note: there are additional Short Term Loan restrictions for players registering from EFL clubs. These can be found in the EFL's Regulations.

6.4.8 No more than a combination of four (4) Short Term, Long Term or Youth Loans from any one club during a single Playing Season are permitted. One additional Youth Loan may be added to this figure.

Team sheets

6.4.9 A Club may name up to a maximum of five (5) players on a Team Sheet who are registered as either a Short Term Loan, Long Term Loan, Youth Loan or Work Experience. A breach of this Rule by a Club which results in more than 5 of such players entering the field of play during the course of a Competition Match shall be treated as that Club having played an ineligible player(s) and will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.9.

6.4.10 The Company may, at its discretion, refuse any further registration of players, i.e. place under a registration embargo, any Club which has not completed payment of a transfer or loan arrangement made with another Club (or club) or arranged for the payment to be adequately secured. The Club (or club) which holds the Player's Contract will continue to pay the Player in accordance with his Contract.

6.4.11 The Company at its discretion may approve at any time the registration of an additional goalkeeper on a short-term basis if none of the Clubs' registered goalkeepers are available ahead of a Competition Match.

The Company at its sole discretion may approve the registration of a Player after the Registration Deadline for fixtures scheduled for a bank holiday or a public holiday.

6.5 TRANSFERS

6.5.1 The transfer of a Contract Player's registration from one Club to another must be in writing, on a completed transfer agreement that is signed by the Contract Player and the two Clubs, and accompanied by the Player's contract and registration form. The

forms must be submitted via the relevant Online Player Registration System. Such Contract Player does not become a registered Player of the Club seeking his transfer until the forms have been approved by The FA and the Competition(s).

CANCELLATIONS

Where a Club cancels the registration of a Contract Player, for any reason whatsoever, the Club must submit a notification via the relevant Online Player Registration System or on the relevant Competition /FA form and such cancellation must be approved by the relevant parties. To be valid, such notification must be signed by an authorised signatory of that Club and the Player. Where a Club cancels the registration of a Non-Contract Player for any reason whatsoever, the Club must submit via the relevant Online Player Registration System and/or the relevant Competition form. To be valid, such notification must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Club.

TERMINATIONS

Where the registration of a Contract Player has been terminated by either the Club or the Player, this must be in accordance with the provisions of the Player Status Rules.

- 6.5.2 The transfer of a Non-Contract Player's registration from one Club to another must be: (a) in writing, on the relevant Competition transfer form, signed by the Non-Contract Player and the two Clubs (as required by the Competition), and (b) submitted via the relevant Online Player Registration System for approval and registration. Such Non-Contract Player does not become a **registered** Player of the Club seeking his transfer until the transfer has been approved by the Competition. A Non-Contract Player whose registration for a Club is cancelled or transferred for any reason whatsoever cannot, without the consent of the Board, return to his original Club until a minimum of fourteen (14) days has elapsed from the date of the cancellation or transfer.
- 6.5.3 A Club cannot register the transfer of a Contract Player or Non-Contract Player unless that Player has been registered with the transferor Club for at least 14 days, unless that Player is a goalkeeper.
- 6.5.4 A Club shall submit to the Board any contract it proposes to enter into which gives the Club or any other party to the proposed contract any rights relating to the transfer of the registration of a Player at a date in the future from or to the Club or any rights relating to the employment for the Player by the Club.

Any such proposed contract shall be subject to the approval of the Board.

6.6 TEMPORARY TRANSFERS (LOANS)

- 6.6.1 Where the Rules of the relevant League permit, Short Term Loans, Youth Loans and Long Term Loans of Contract players shall be allowed to or from Clubs in membership of:-

- The Premier League

- The EFL
- Any League operating at Step 1 to 6 of the National League System

on such terms and conditions as shall be mutually agreed by the two clubs and the player. For Loan Transfers between Clubs in the same Competition the transfer must be completed via the Online Player Registration System, with a Competition Temporary Transfer Form completed and retained by the Club. For Loan Transfers between Clubs in different Competitions the transfer must be completed via the Online Player Registration System, to include any applicable loan form (as communicated by The FA from time to time).

The player being taken on loan, including Youth 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.

If the original Loan agreement contains a pre-agreed recall clause, a Player may be recalled by the loaning Club submitting written confirmation to the borrowing Club, the Competition and The FA. Where no pre-agreed recall clause exists, the cancellation must be agreed between the loaning Club, the borrowing Club and the Player. The loaning Club must submit written confirmation to the borrowing Club, the Competition and The FA. The Competition's standard cancellation form must be used to prematurely end the Temporary Transfer period. The temporary registration for the borrowing Club will automatically be deemed to be cancelled upon maturity of the temporary transfer period.

Where a Short Term Loan, or Youth Loan expires, and is not renewed simultaneously, any subsequent Short Term Loan, or Youth Loan of that Player to the same Club will be subject to a minimum duration of 28 days.

Where a Short Term Loan, Youth Loan or Long Term Loan (or period of Work Experience) expires on or after the last match of the season and the Club finishes in a Play-Off Position, and both Clubs agree, the Loans shall be extended to include the Club's remaining Play-Off Matches. Any such extension is not subject to any time limits that would otherwise apply, and must be agreed in writing by the player's parent Club and be registered with the Competition in accordance with these Rules and registered with The FA in accordance with the Player Status Rules.

- 6.6.2 Short Term Loan Transfers – A Club can have up to a maximum of twelve (12) Short Term Loans during a Playing Season. The minimum period of a Short Term Loan transfer must be twenty-eight (28) days with a maximum period to the end of the Playing Season. Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Short-Term Loan from clubs in the EFL.

The Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Short Term Loan transfers to or from any one club, including EFL Clubs, at any one time (subject to the overall limit of

four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).

On completing the Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary Transfers involving two competitions), a Club must retain copies in case of dispute or if called in case requested by the Competition or The FA. Clubs must also take the appropriate action on the Online Player Registration System.

To extend the period of any Short Term Loan transfer a further Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary Transfers involving two competitions) must be completed and copies retained as directed above. 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, i.e. after 28 days. 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 who 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.

Any Short Term Loan transfer which may terminate after the last day for registrations may be extended for a further period provided the loan period does not extend beyond the current Playing Season.

Short Terms Loan Transfers which become permanent before their expiry date shall not count against a Club's quota of days or Players.

6.6.3 Long Term Loan Transfers – Clubs may have up to a maximum of six (6) Long Term Loan Transfers of any age during a Playing Season.

Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System may register players on a Long-Term Loan from other clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

Only Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Long-Term Loan from clubs in the Premier League or EFL.

A Player on Long Term Loan may be recalled on any date from the beginning of the Loan until the agreed summer transfer window deadline, provided that the initial 28 days have elapsed, except in the case of a goalkeeper, and within the agreed winter transfer window,), except for a goalkeeper or where the Player is to be transferred permanently by the Club (or club) holding his registered contract in each case, subject to the agreement of the loaning Club, the borrowing Club and the Player, which may be pre-agreed in a recall clause in the original Loan agreement.

To extend the period of any long term loan transfer a further Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary

Transfers involving two competitions) must be completed and copies retained as directed above.

The Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Long Term Loan transfers to or from any one club, including Premier League and EFL clubs, at any one time (subject to the overall limit of four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).

6.6.4 Youth Loan Transfers

Youth Loan Transfers apply to:-

- Contract Players aged 20 or under on 1 July immediately preceding the Playing Season in question.

At Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System, Youth Loans are permitted at any time during the Registration Period, subject to the below provisions.

Unlimited Youth Loan Transfers shall be allowed to or from Clubs in membership of the Competitions at Steps 1-4 of the National League System, save that the Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Youth Loan transfers to or from anyone club at any one time (subject to the overall limit of four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).

Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System may register players on a Youth Loan from other clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

Only Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Youth Loan from clubs in the EFL.

It shall be a condition of any Youth Loan involving a Contract Player to whom EFL Rules apply that for the duration of the period of the Youth Loan the Player continues to fully comply with the programme of education in place for that Player.

A Player registered on a Youth Loan may, provided it is agreed between the two clubs and the Player, continue to train with and/or play for his loaning Club (or club) in any match other than matches played as part of the Premier League Competition, EFL Competition, EFL Cup, FA Cup or EFL Trophy (i.e. First Team matches.) Participation by the Player in First Team matches for the borrowing Club shall take precedence.

Any days on which the Player participates in a Reserve Team match and/or attends any training sessions for the loaning Club (or club) shall still count towards the period of the Youth Loan.

The minimum period of a Youth Loan shall be 28 days, thereafter a break clause may be included. Youth Loans cannot extend beyond the date immediately preceding the date of the Player's 21st birthday and/or the Player's contract period with their parent club.

6.6.5 WORK EXPERIENCE PLAYERS

A Scholar may register as a Work Experience Player with a club at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

Work Experience Players can be registered for any period of time, but can be recalled by their parent club at any time during that period.

A Work Experience Player may continue to train and play for either the parent club or the work experience club in any age-restricted or reserve team match or in any match in the football pyramid below the EFL, but not in any first team match played as part of the Premier League Competition, EFL Competitions, EFL Cup or EFL Trophy.

6.7

CLUB LIST OF PLAYERS AND TRANSFER LIST

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

6.7.1 a list of Contract Players whose agreements do not terminate at the end of the current season;

6.7.2 a list of contract Players in respect of whom the Club has exercised an Option in accordance with the Player Status Rules;

6.7.3 a list of Contract Players in respect of whom the existing agreements do not include an Option but which the Club is desirous of offering further engagements, in accordance the Player Status Rules;

6.7.4 a list of Contract Players in respect of whom the Club has exercised an Option in accordance with the Player Status Rules but whose registration the Club is prepared to transfer;

6.7.5 a list of Contract Players the Club has released;

6.7.6 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.

A Club relegated from the Football League Limited shall advise the Competition Secretary by 30th June the names of Players retained by that Club for the season, taking into consideration the contents of Football League Rule 53.

6.8 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. The substitution board used shall be branded as determined by the Competition.

A maximum of five 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 8.20. 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.

6.9 PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER

Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a match or matches shall have any points gained from that match or matches deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points, and have levied upon it a fine. The Board may also order that such match or matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Board which may also levy penalty points against the Club in default.

The Board may vary its decision in respect of the points gained in circumstances where;

- (a) the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or
- (b) where the ineligibility is related to a change in the Player's status with the Club for whom he is registered or
- (c) where the Board determined that exceptional circumstances exist

6.10 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.10.1 Subject to clauses 6.10.2 to 6.10.7 and to the Rules and Regulations of The FA, a Club may negotiate a financial arrangement with its Players.
- 6.10.2 All Players under a written contract must be registered with the Competition and The FA.
- 6.10.3 All payments and benefits due and/or made to the Player must be shown in the contract.
- 6.10.4 All payments made to Players must be made by the Club and fully recorded in the accounting records of the Club.
- 6.10.5 All salaried payments (whether to Contract or Non-Contract Players) must be subject to PAYE and National Insurance.
- 6.10.6 All salary payments due on written Contracts must be stated gross, before PAYE and National Insurance deductions.

6.10.7 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 HM Revenue and Customs.

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 for outfield players and their goalkeeper (shirts, shorts and socks) and such details shall be printed in the Handbook published by the Company for the ensuing Playing Season. Subject to the consent of the Board, each Club is authorised on one occasion per Playing Season to wear an alternative strip in a home match.

The colours registered by each Club shall be worn during the following season when playing at home. In the National League squad numbering and player's names must be used on all players' shirts. A player's squad number must be retained by the player throughout his tenure with the Club in any one season. In the National League North and National League South, Clubs may either operate as above or have shirts numbered 1 to 20 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. Subject to the consent of the Board, each Club is authorised on one occasion per Playing Season to wear an alternative strip in a home match.

7.2 When playing away from home, clubs must play in colours (shirts, shorts and socks) which are clearly distinguishable from those of their opponents and the Match Officials, in particular the goalkeeper must play in kit clearly distinguishable from the colours of the shirts worn by all other Players in the match and the Match Officials.

Neck and cuff rim colours on shirts are not regarded as basic colours for the purpose of this Rule. Subject to the foregoing a Club may, if it wishes, wear colours not registered with the Competition for away matches. It is the responsibility of the visiting Club to check that their colours will not clash.

The goalkeeper may wear tracksuit trousers acceptable to the Match Referee.

7.3 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.

7.4 The Players' shirts must be clearly numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet 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. The shirt numbers, and short numbers if worn, used

in all matches played under the jurisdiction of the Competition must be the official numbers as determined by the Competition.

- 7.5 The Captain shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status.
- 7.6 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. When playing in other competitions the shirts of all Players must include the Competition logo.
- 7.7 A Club may apply to the Board for permission to use either (a) a variation of the Competition logo referred to in Rule 7.6 (for example, a variation in size or colour) or (b) in relation to one sleeve of the shirt only, an alternative in place of the Competition logo referred to in Rule 7.6 (for example, advertising). The cost of producing any variation or alternative shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant Club.
- Advertising must comply with The FA's Kit and Advertising Regulations.
- 7.8 The colours of clothing worn by ballboys/girls must not clash with the colours of either competing Club and the Match Officials.

8. PLAYING OF MATCHES.

ARRANGEMENT OF FIXTURES

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 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.

8.4 All matches shall be played on the home and away principle and the Board shall determine how the fixtures shall be arranged.

Saturday (and in the case of Step 1, Saturday and midweek) fixtures in the Competition shall take precedence over all other competitions in which a Club may engage with the exception of:

- The FA Challenge Cup/Welsh Cup
- The FA Challenge Trophy Competition

Scheduled Saturday fixtures in the Competition must not be re-arranged without permission of the Competition Secretary. 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 6 days' notice will be given in respect of any such re-arrangement.

National League North and National League South Only

Fixtures in the Competition shall take precedence over fixtures in any cup competition of the Affiliated Association to which a club is affiliated, save that the fixtures in the Nominated Cup Competition of the Affiliated Association to which a Club is first affiliated shall take

precedence over midweek fixtures of that Club on one week in each month of the Playing Season as nominated by that Affiliated Association.

A re-arranged fixture in the Nominated Cup Competition of the Affiliated Association cannot take precedence over a fixture in the Competition that has already been scheduled.

8.5 In the event of any Club being required to play an FA Cup, FA Trophy or FA Vase match within 48 hours of a scheduled Competition fixture it shall have the right to apply in writing as soon as practically possible (but in any event no later than 48 hours after becoming aware of the relevant Cup fixture) to have its Competition fixture postponed with or without the consent of its opponent. At the same time as it makes the application a copy shall be sent to its opponent who shall raise any objection within a further 24 hours of notification. Thereafter the Competition shall decide in its absolute discretion as soon as reasonably possible as to whether or not the application is approved. The Competition may, in its absolute discretion, consider an application to postpone a Competition fixture made by an applicant Club more than 48 hours after it became aware of the relevant Cup fixture.

8.6 The standard kick-off times shall be as follows:

Saturday matches - 3.00 pm

Midweek matches - 7.45 pm

All agreed changes to time of kick-off to be notified to the Board immediately for confirmation.

Clubs with ground sharing agreements must arrange for home matches to be played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If a clash of fixtures occurs with the sharing Club and for any reason a match is unable to be played on a Saturday, the match must be played on either the day before ie on Friday, or the day after ie on Sunday. If Clubs are unable to agree on the date then it will be played on the Sunday unless the Board decides otherwise. The decision of the Board shall be final and binding.

Official bank holidays and Sundays - 3pm unless agreed otherwise by the two Clubs and the Board; application shall be made to the Competition Secretary by both Clubs at least 21 days before the relevant date.

All National League, National League North and National League South midweek fixtures will kick-off at 7.45pm.

To re-schedule a midweek fixture for an evening other than the Home Clubs normal midweek fixture day will require written agreement of both Clubs and the Competition Secretary.

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.

8.7 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.

8.8 Three (3) 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 sole discretion.

8.9 A Club may not enter its first team in any outside competition, other than those listed in Rule 8.4, without the prior permission of the Board. The Competition Secretary must be

informed in writing of all fixtures, postponements, abandonments and results of all matches played in any other competition.

8.10 When a Club obtains the consent of the Board to postpone a fixture due to the non-availability of its Players, that Club shall be liable to pay any expenses directly attributable to such postponement which have been incurred by the opposing Club. Any claim by the opposing Club must be submitted to the Competition Secretary within three working days of such postponement, with a copy to the Club that obtained the postponement. If the reason for the postponement is the illness of the Club's Players, medical certificates for those Players must be submitted to the Competition Secretary within three working days of such postponement together with a list of all Players registered by that Club with the Competition at the date of postponement with full details of each Player's inability to play entered against each name on the list. The amount of claim will be at the discretion of the Board.

PRE-MATCH ARRANGEMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

8.13 The home Club shall advise the visiting Club and the Match Officials of the date and time of kick-off of each match and the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing, 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.

Where the home Club has an Artificial Football Turf Pitch. It shall advise the visiting Club and Match Officials of any footwear requirements that apply at least five days prior to the match. The visiting Club must disseminate this information to its players and club officials.

The visiting Club must include in its acknowledgement the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing.

8.14 The home Club is responsible for publishing a full match programme acceptable to the Board for each of its Competition matches. A full match programme available electronically only shall be acceptable providing that each Club has approval from the Board before the commencement of the Playing Season and must be continuous for the whole of that Playing Season. 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 and the latest team photograph 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.

8.15 The postponement of matches due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance with Rule 14.2.

8.16 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.

8.17 The Board shall determine the policy of the Competition for the issuing of match day passes. A home Club cannot refuse the admission into the ground of an away Club Official, as defined in the Rules of the Association, save for that individual being subject to a suspension or banning order from the Association or Competition.

8.18 All Clubs at Steps 1 to 6 are required to have a working and serviced defibrillator available at all home matches.

MATCH MANAGEMENT

8.19 Clubs shall be permitted access to the field of play at least sixty (60) minutes prior to the scheduled kick off time, such access to include the use of fully working floodlights where necessary.

Players and Club officials accessing an Artificial Turf Pitch must adhere to any applicable footwear requirements.

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

8.21 The Captain of each Club, accompanied by the person in charge of his team on the day, i.e. the Manager must hand the Team Sheet containing 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 sixty 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.

8.22 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged may be fined. A Player who is named on the Team Sheet 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.

The name of the Doctor or Medical Practitioner in attendance (in accordance with Rule 25) must be entered on the Team Sheet in the appropriate space provided.

8.23 Clubs taking the field of play – For all matches under the jurisdiction of the Competition, Clubs shall be required to enter the field of play together, preceded by the Match Officials, not less than 5 (five) minutes before the advertised time of kick-off.

8.24 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. Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing Club.

8.25 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.

8.26 Only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the Players during the match from within the technical area.

8.27 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.

8.28 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. Any occupant dismissed from the technical area shall immediately go to a location within the ground from which they cannot view the remainder of the game.

8.29 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 trainer's bench. The team manager or team coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.

8.30 All occupants of the technical area must wear corporate bench kit as directed by the Competition. The only exception would be the Team manager who will be allowed to wear suits and overcoats not displaying any sponsorship logos. Corporate bench kit must also be worn by the players and staff in warm-ups and warm-downs, and where possible in media interviews on match days. Failure to wear the bench kit will result in a fine.

8.31 Match Videos.

The Home Club in all matches played under the jurisdiction of the Competition shall film the game in its entirety with an uninterrupted view and provide a full match video to a content management solution as specified by the Competition and in a timeframe as determined by the Competition. The Away Club may film the match if this is agreed by the Home Club, such agreement is not to be unreasonably withheld. Clubs are permitted to use or duplicate match footage with the permission of the Competition only. Filming shall be in a format as directed by the National League from time to time.

MATCH STREAMING BY A CLUB

8.32 Unless determined otherwise by The FA, a Club participating in a Competition Match may offer a live stream of that match online subject to compliance with the following conditions:

8.32.1 Consent of the Board to the live stream taking place must be obtained;

8.32.2 The two competing Clubs must consent to the live stream taking place and agree any associated live streaming arrangements (including the costs associated with those arrangements, if applicable);

8.32.3 Subject to Rule 8.32.4, the live stream cannot take place during the Transmission-Free Period;

8.32.4 Where the live stream is to take place during the Transmission-Free Period, it must be geo-blocked so that it is not accessible in the UK (or any Crown Dependency of the UK); and

8.32.5 A copy of the live stream footage must be provided to The FA, the Board or the opposing Club upon request following the Competition Match.

8.33 A Club must provide evidence of compliance with the conditions set out in Rule 8.32 upon request by The FA or the Board

8.34 The FA or the Board may take action against any Club for a failure to comply with any of the conditions set out in Rule 8.32 or any failure to comply with a request made pursuant to Rule 8.33.

POST MATCH MANAGEMENT

8.35 Each Club shall enter information from the match result form by the method instructed by the Competition and shall submit the fully completed copy of the appropriate match result forms by first class post or email or as otherwise instructed by the Competition to the Appointing Authority and the Competition immediately following completion of the match, or within 24 hours at the very latest. 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 the method instructed by the Appointing Authority. Clubs in default of any provision of the Rule will be subject to a fine for each offence.

8.36 In the event that a match is abandoned before half time the Club playing at home will issue a voucher to each spectator valid for free admission if the match is ordered to be replayed. In the event that the match is abandoned during or after the half time interval the Club playing at home is not obliged to issue such a voucher.

8.37 In the event that a match is abandoned for reasons over which neither Club has control the Club playing at home shall retain the gate receipts for such uncompleted match and the Board shall determine the terms upon which any replayed match shall be played.

8.38 In the event of a match being abandoned due to the conduct of one Club or its members or supporters the Board has the power to order that the match is not replayed and to award either one or three points to the Club not at fault. It cannot levy a financial penalty due to the conduct of a Club.

8.39 In the event of the match being abandoned due to the conduct of both Clubs or their members or supporters no financial penalty can be applied by the Board to either Club and the Board shall determine whether the original match stands as a completed match or is replayed and, if replayed, the terms upon which the match is to be replayed.

8.40 In the event of a match having to be postponed and one Club is found to be at fault then opponents for that match shall be compensated by the Club at fault. In the case of a visiting

Club where it has undertaken all or part of its journey then travelling expenses and meal allowances may be claimed based on the total mileage involved in the whole journey. In exceptional circumstances, expenses for overnight accommodation up to a maximum of 18 persons may be claimed. In some instances compensation may also be claimed when neither of the Clubs is at fault. The Board will determine the amount of compensation payments to be made, if any.

All claims for compensation by either Club in the case of either an abandoned match or a postponed match must be received by the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the date of the match to which the claim relates.

POST MATCH ADMINISTRATION

8.41 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.

8.42 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.

8.43 Where a match has been postponed for any reason, the two Clubs concerned must agree within seven (7) days of the postponement a new date (which shall, save in exceptional circumstances, be within 42 days of the original date) and in default the Board is empowered to order Clubs to play on a date it considers suitable. 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 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.

9. REGISTERED INTERMEDIARIES/ AGENTS

9.1 An Intermediary/ 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 Intermediaries/ 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 15% of the total number of tickets available (or a minimum of 600 at Step 3, whichever is the greater), subject to any stipulation by the relevant safety authority affecting these figures. A reasonable allocation of the total disabled spectator accommodation where appropriate shall be made available to disabled supporters of the Away Club.

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 Sale of tickets for away supporters - Clubs are required to sell tickets for their away matches if required to do so by the Home Club and Home Clubs are required to supply tickets for their home matches to the Away Club for sale by the Away Club to its supporters if so requested by the Away Club. These tickets are to be made available on a sale or return basis and must be ordered by the Away Club at least five weeks before the Competition match to which they relate. The Home Club must deliver those tickets to the Away Club at the latest four weeks before the Competition match to which they relate. Where any match is arranged at shorter notice the above steps shall be taken as soon as is reasonably practicable. Visiting supporters should also have the same opportunity to take advantage of pre-booking discounts that apply to home supporters.

For League matches only the Away Club shall be entitled to a commission representing five (5) per cent of the aggregate sales (exclusive of VAT) of tickets sold on behalf of the Home Club, unless otherwise agreed between the Clubs. The Away Club shall submit a VAT invoice, in respect of the commission due, to the Home Club within five working days of the match taking place.

The Away Club may charge a booking fee of transaction charge to the customer providing this is exactly the same in every respect as that which it charges for tickets to its own home matches.

Unless otherwise agreed between the Clubs unsold tickets must be returned, and received by the Home Club, no later than 48 hours prior to the date of the match. Payments for tickets sold by an Away Club must be made to the Home Club within five working days of the date of the match taking place. Any Club making late payment shall:-

- Pay interest to the Home Club at the rate of 5 (five) per cent per annum over Barclays Bank base rate in force from time to time calculated on a daily basis, on the outstanding sum from the due date to the actual date of payment to the Home Club, and
- Forfeit its entitlement to the 5 (five) per cent commission detailed above.

- 10.4 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.

- 10.5 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.

- 10.6 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.

- 10.7 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.

10.8 Within nine months of its accounting reference date, each Club shall submit to the Company a copy of its full annual financial statements as approved by the Club's board or committee and confirmation that the annual financial statements have been circulated to its members/shareholders.

10.9 All Clubs must comply with The FA's 'Third Party Interest in Players' Regulations.

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 may decide, including, but not limited to, an Embargo; a points deduction; a Bond; a suspension; or any combination thereof.

12. CHAMPION, RELEGATION

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

12.2 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 playing record of each Club must include any points deduction made by the Competition or by the FA and in any situation where points per game are calculated the calculation will be made after taking into account the deduction of any such points.

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:

12.2.1 Goal difference – If any two or more Clubs have scored the same number of points their position in the division shall be determined on goal difference, that is to say, the difference between the total number of goals scored by and against a Club in League Matches in that Season, and the higher or highest placed Club shall be the Club with the higher or highest goal difference.

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

12.2.3 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.

- 12.2.4 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.
- 12.2.5 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 competing Clubs.
- 12.3 Promotion, relegation and lateral movement of Clubs shall be in accordance with the principles established by the Leagues Committee of The FA.
- 12.4 If no Clubs are eligible or wish promotion, the number of Clubs to be relegated will be reduced.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 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 in accordance with Regulation 5.4 in the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System.
- 12.7 The Board may nominate Clubs to participate in sanctioned international competitions. The Board shall nominate the highest placed Club(s) from the previous season or apply any other reasonable method in its absolute discretion. Subject to FA approval, such nominated Clubs shall be obliged to participate and may apply to the Board to request necessary fixture alterations to enable its participation and may apply to the Board for a contribution to any reasonable travel costs sustained directly related to its participation that are not adequately covered by income from the sanctioned competition organiser or from shares of net gate receipts.

13. INSOLVENCY PROVISIONS

13.A. SPORTING SANCTIONS

- 13.A.1 If an Insolvency Event shall occur in relation to any Club that Club shall be deducted 10 (ten) points.

13.A.2 Where a Club takes or suffers an Insolvency Event:-

13.A.2.1 during the Playing Season but prior to 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March, the points deduction shall apply immediately;

13.A.2.2 during the Playing Season but after 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March then Rule 13.A.3 shall apply; and

13.A.2.3 outside the Playing Season, the points deduction shall apply in respect of the following Playing Season such that the Club starts that Playing Season on minus 10 points (including a Club or Clubs Relegated from The English Football League (EFL), where such Club shall be subject to Rule 12.3 of The English Football League (EFL) Rules or where it has been necessary under the National League System Regulations for a Club or Clubs to be moved from one league to another and such Club would have been subject to Rule 13).

13.A.3 Where the circumstances set out in Rule 13.A.2.2 apply and at the end of that Playing Season, having regard to the number of Competition points awarded (ignoring any potential deduction):

- a) the Club would be relegated in accordance with The National League Rules & Regulations, 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 Playing Season and The National League Rules & Regulations will then apply (if appropriate) following the imposition of the points deduction.
- c) If any club relegated to the Competition from The Football League (in accordance with the regulations of The Football League) whilst it was a member of The Football League, took or suffered any such action as set out in Regulation 12.4 of the Regulations of The Football League whilst it was a member of The League and the circumstances set out in Regulations 12.4.2 or 12.4.3 apply, then that club, upon being accepted as a member of the Competition shall suffer a deduction of 10 points, such points deduction to apply in respect of the following Playing Season such that the Club starts that Season in the Competition on minus 10 points.

13.A.4 For the purposes of this Rule 13

- 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.

- 13.A.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.
- 13.A.6 The Competition shall serve the Club with written notice of the points deduction (the 'Notice').
- 13.A.7 A Club may appeal against such a points deduction. Any such appeal will be conducted in accordance with Part C: Appeals: Non-Fast Track of the Disciplinary Regulations, , save that the following paragraphs of those Regulations will not apply – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 21, 23 and 24. In place of those Regulations, the following Rules 13.A.8 to 13.A.12 will apply.
- 13.A.8 The Notice of Appeal shall be lodged with the FA within 7 days of the date of the Notice.
- 13.A.9 A Club may appeal against an automatic deduction of points solely 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 13, 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.
- 13.A.10 The Appeal Board shall have the power to:-
- 13.A.10.1 Confirm the deduction of ten points; or
 - 13.A.10.2 Set aside the deduction of ten points and substitute a deduction of such lower number of points as it shall deem appropriate; or
 - 13.A.10.3 Order that there shall be no sanction at all.
- 13.A.11 The decision of the Appeal Board shall be final and binding. Any costs incurred by any party in appeal proceedings brought before the Appeal Board shall be met by the Club in any event and shall be considered as a sum due to the Company.
- 13.A.12 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.
- 13.B. GENERAL INSOLVENCY
- 13.B.1 In the event of a Club entering an Insolvency Event between the end of the AGM and start of the AGM immediately following thereafter ('the next AGM') then it shall automatically be relegated by one Step at the next AGM, unless one of the following requirements has been met, namely:
- (i) Prior to the next AGM it has Paid in Full all its creditors (including but not limited to Football Creditors); or

- (ii) Prior to the next AGM it has Paid in Full its Football Creditors and entered a compliant Creditor Compromise.

For the purposes of this Rule, a Creditor Compromise shall be considered compliant if it provides for the following:

- That all Creditors will be paid in Full;
- The first payment under the terms of the Creditor Compromise shall be made within 28 days of the approval of the Creditor Compromise and shall constitute a minimum of 10% of the total sum payable;
- The balance shall be paid in equal amounts over the remaining period of the Creditor Compromise;
- The period of the Creditor Compromise shall not extend beyond three years from the date of approval.

Notwithstanding the above, in the event of a Club being subject to an Insolvency Event at the date of the AGM, then the Club may be subject to such sanction as the Board may determine, (including expulsion from membership of the Competition) unless the Board is satisfied that by no later than 5pm on 31 July (or, if the 31 July falls on a weekend, 5pm on the immediately preceding Business Day) that the Club (or any new entity to which its membership is subsequently transferred under 2.9.2 above) is in a financial position to complete all of its fixtures for the immediate following Playing Season.

This sanction shall apply in addition to any Club being relegated pursuant to its playing record in the same period namely that in the event of the Club having already been relegated by one Step it shall be relegated two Steps.

This provision is subject to Rule 2.9.1 in respect of Clubs which have transferred their membership pursuant to an Insolvency Event and in that case where there is any conflict between any provision of Clause 14 and Rule 2.9.1 then this Clause 14 shall prevail.

13.B.2 A Club shall not be eligible for promotion or to compete in the Play Offs at the end of a Playing Season if at 5pm on the date on which the last scheduled League fixture is due to be played that Club:

- (i) has entered an Insolvency Event between the date of the AGM and 5pm on the date on which the last scheduled League fixture is played and has not Paid in Full all its creditors to which the Insolvency Event applies (including but not limited to Football Creditors) or Paid in Full all its Football Creditors and entered a Creditor Compromise to have Paid in Full all other creditors over an agreed period not extending more than three years following the date of approval of the Creditor Compromise: or

- (ii) has not complied with the terms of a Creditor Compromise by which it is bound or is to seek to extend the period of the Creditor Compromise.

13.B.3 The sanctions contained herein shall be in addition to and not in substitution for any other sanctions contained within the Rules and, in particular, the sanctions set out in rule 13.A. For the avoidance of doubt, where a Club is subject to more than one connected Insolvency Event, for example Administration followed by a Company Voluntary Arrangement, any sanction applied to it in accordance with Rule 13.B.1 shall be applied in one Playing Season only except as provided for in Rule 13.B.1

COMPLIANCE WITH/EXTENSION OF CREDITOR COMPROMISE'S

13.B.4 Any Club must inform the Competition in writing (and provide supporting evidence) within seven (7) days of the Club:

- (i) making a payment under the terms of a Creditor Compromise and provide evidence of that payment;
- (ii) becoming aware of any failure to comply with the terms of any Creditor Compromise entered into by it (including the failure to make a payment by the due date);
- (iii) making an application to extend or vary the terms of the Creditor Compromise entered into by it and provide a copy of the application,
- (iv) completing all its obligations under an Insolvency Event and receiving confirmation of such from the relevant Insolvency Practitioner, or
- (v) becoming aware of any consent by creditors to compromise the whole or part of the debt admitted into the Creditor Compromise.

13.B.5

Following the approval of a Creditor Compromise, if creditors subsequently consent to compromise the whole or part of the debt admitted to the Creditor Compromise or if any Club makes a successful application to vary the terms of its Creditor Compromise so that the Creditor Compromise is not compliant as provided for in Rule 13.B.1 then that Club shall be automatically relegated by one Step at the end of the Playing Season in which the event takes place. If the Club has already been relegated due to its position in the final table of the Division in which it is competing then it shall be relegated two Steps.

13.B.6 In the event of any Club

- (i) Failing to comply with the terms of any Creditor Compromise entered into by it (whether securing Payment in Full of all of its creditors or not) including the failure to make a payment by the due date; and/or
- (ii) Breaching any of the provisions of Rule 13.B.4 or failing to notify the Competition of any consent by creditors to compromise the whole or part of

the debt admitted thereby rendering the Creditor Compromise as non-compliant as required in Rule 13.B.1.

Then the Board shall have the power to impose such sanction as it deems appropriate, including, but without limitation to expulsion of that Club, the relegation of that Club, the deduction of points and an Embargo.

- 13.B.7 Where a Club has transferred its membership under Rule 2.9.2 the provisions of Rule 13.B in relation to a Creditor Compromise shall be applied to the former entity that was subject to the Insolvency Event and/or the new entity

Clubs Relegated from the EFL

- 13.B.8 In the event of any Club entering the Competition from the EFL whilst subject to any Insolvency Event, then that Club shall be eligible for membership of the Competition and the provisions of Clause 13.B.1 will not apply to it at the AGM at which it is first elected into membership but will apply in all seasons after its first season of membership of the Competition.
- 13.B.9 In the case of a Club or Clubs relegated from a league in the National League System or subject to lateral movement under the National League System Regulations, Rule 13.B.1 shall apply from the date of the AGM of the League of which the Club or Clubs were a member in the immediately preceding Playing Season where the AGM of the Company is later.
14. MATCH OFFICIALS
- 14.1 Match Officials for all Competition matches shall be appointed by the Appointing Authority.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 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 8.39 refers).

- 14.4 Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least ninety (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.
- 14.5 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.
- 14.6 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 the method instructed by the Appointing Authority within 3 days of the match.
- 14.7 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), or by BACS/ Bank Transfer within 48 hours (excluding Bank Holidays) after the conclusion of the match. 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.
- 14.8 The home Club shall be responsible for providing Assistant Referees with distinctive flags of a suitable size in an acceptable condition.
- 14.9 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.

It is the responsibility of the Club playing at home in each match played under the jurisdiction of the Competition to provide match balls in accordance with any match ball agreement signed by the Company. The official Competition match ball must be used in all Competition matches and pre-match warm-ups.
- 14.10 The away Club is responsible for the provision of its own practice balls for use prior to the start of each match, as supplied by the Competition under a ball sponsorship agreement.
- 14.11 Match Officials officiating in Competitions using the reporting functionality in The FA's Match Official Administration System (MOAS) must report all breaches of Rule via MOAS within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match.

Match Officials officiating in Competitions not using the reporting functionality in MOAS 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 or electronically.

15. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

15.1 A Club must notify the Company not later than 31st March 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.

This Rule shall not operate so as to preclude promotion, relegation or lateral movement of any Club to another competition in accordance with Rule 12.

15.2 If, between the holding of the Company annual general meeting and the commencement of the next Playing Season, any Club, either:

- (i) ceases to operate for any reason; or
- (ii) gives notice to the Company that it does not intend to compete in the Competition during the next Playing Season:

then no adjustment shall be made to the number of Clubs participating in the Competition for that Playing Season and the remaining Clubs will form the Competition for that Playing Season.

15.3 If, after the commencement of a Playing Season, any Club either:

- (i) ceases to operate for any reason; or
- (ii) gives notice to the Company that it does not intend to continue competing in the Competition for any reason:

then the Company may extinguish the playing record of that Club and any monies due to that Club from the Company shall be forfeited. The Company shall have the discretion to issue charges against that Club and to issue fines against that Club in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

15.4 From the operative date in Rule 15.2 or 15.3, the Club concerned shall no longer be a member of the Company and shall not be entitled to any further payment from the Company but may be required to make payment to the Company.

16. PROTESTS, APPEALS, DISPUTES ARISING FROM PLAYER CONTRACTS

Protests, claims or complaints relating to Rules

16.1 Subject to Rules 16.5 and 16.10 below, all protests, claims or complaints relating to these Rules shall be heard and determined by the Board (or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Board), which shall have the power to regulate its own procedure. The Clubs or Players protesting, claiming or complaining must email such protest, claim or complaint to the

Competition Secretary and deposit a fee which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, claim or complaint not being upheld, and the unsuccessful party (or parties) may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Board.

16.2 All such protests, claims and complaints must be received in writing by the Competition Secretary within fourteen days of the event or decision to which the protest, claim or complaint relates.

16.3 The Board may compel any party to the protest, claim or complaint to pay such expenses as the Board shall direct.

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

16.4 An intention to appeal against a decision of the Board must be lodged with The FA within seven days of the Board providing written notification of its decision.

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

All appeals to The FA must be lodged in accordance with Part C: Appeals Non-Fast Track of The FA's Disciplinary Regulations.

Disputes arising from a Player's Contract

Disciplinary Matters

16.5 Within seven days of receipt of any notice of a fine or suspension imposed by a Club under the Player's contract, the Player may appeal that decision to the Board by giving notice of appeal to the Club and the Board. The Board shall have the power to regulate its own procedure and shall hear the appeal within fourteen days of receipt of the notice of appeal. The grounds of appeal available to the Player shall not be limited and the Board shall have full power to review the facts and any evidence (including hearing from any relevant witnesses).

16.6 Within seven days of receipt of the Board's decision, either the Club or the Player may appeal against the decision of the Board to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal in accordance with the Player Status Rules. An appeal to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal shall be heard within 14 days of receipt of the notice of further appeal or, if exceptional circumstances exist which means that the appeal cannot be heard in that time frame, it shall be heard as soon as practicable. Any reference to the 'League Appeals Committee' in the Player's contract shall be deemed as a reference to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal.

TERMINATION

16.7 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.

16.8 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.

16.9 If the recipient of a notice referred to in Rules 16.7 and 16.8 above wishes to do so, they may appeal against the relevant notice to the Board within seven days of the date of receipt of the notice in writing by email to the Competition Secretary with the relevant appeal fee as set out in Schedule A to these Rules. The Board shall have the power to regulate its own procedure. The grounds of appeal available to the appellant shall not be limited and the Board shall have full power to review the facts and any evidence (including hearing from any relevant witnesses).

16.10 Within seven days of receipt of the Board's decision, either the Club or the Player may appeal against the decision of the Board to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal in accordance with the Player Status Rules. An appeal to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal shall be heard within 14 days of receipt of the notice of further appeal or, if exceptional circumstances exist which means that the appeal cannot be heard in that timeframe, it shall be heard as soon as practicable. Any reference to the 'League Appeals Committee' in the Player's contract shall be deemed as a reference to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal.

17. MISCONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS

(a) Undertakings to be given by Club Employees

All Clubs must incorporate in any contracts of employment with their employees, including Player, an undertaking on the part of the employee not to bring The Competition or any Club into disrepute and an undertaking on the part of the employee not knowingly to do anything or omit to do anything which will cause the Club to be in breach of the Laws of the Game, the Rules of The Football Association or the Rules of the Competition.

Without prejudice to the generality of this rule, all Clubs must ensure they, and where appropriate any Officers of the Club, comply with the obligations of The Football Association's Owners' and Directors' Test.

(b) Misconduct in pre-arranging the result of matches.

Any Club, Official or Player offering or receiving a payment or any form of inducement to or from any Club or the Official or Player of any Club; or any Club, Official or Player receiving or seeking to receive any payment or other form of inducement from any other person or organisation to win, lose, or draw a Match under the jurisdiction of the Competition or in which the Club participates by reason of membership of the Competition shall be deemed guilty of misconduct.

- (c) 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.

18. TROPHY

The Company shall present to the Winners of all divisions in the Competition twenty-five (25) souvenirs, i.e twenty (20) for the Players, one (1) for the secretary, team manager and three (3) for assistant and coaching staff. 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 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. A runners' up trophy and medals may also be awarded at the discretion of the Company. 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 of Football 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

19. ALTERATIONS TO RULES

No alteration to the Rules shall be made until they have been approved by The FA. Alterations to Rules shall be approved at a general meeting of the Company in accordance with article 25 of the Articles of Association of the Company.

Proposals for alterations to Rules, together with the name of their proposers and seconders, shall be received by the Competition Secretary not later than 31st October 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.

20. ADMISSION CHARGES

The minimum charge for admission to all matches shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

Admission charges must be the same for home and visiting supporters at Competition matches for equivalent accommodation. If there is no equivalent accommodation, the Board may in its absolute discretion consider the charges set by the home Club and determine a reasonable equivalent admission charges for visiting supporters, which shall be implemented by the home Club until the end of the current Playing Season.

Clubs may, with the written permission of the Board, have a maximum of three Competition Match days each Playing Season during which they can vary general admission charges for adults including allowing free admission.

Concessionary admission charges or pricing policies for disabled people and their carers/helpers, senior citizens, students, children, unemployed, armed forces etc, if available for home supporters, must be offered on a similar basis to visiting supporters.

21. LONG SERVICE

21.1 The Board shall be empowered to grant a long service award for 21 years' service with a member Club, providing such an award has not already been made by any other competition.

21.2 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.

22. CENTENARY AWARDS

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

23. PLAYING SURFACES

23.1 The Pitch

With effect from the commencement of Season 2016/17 Competition Matches may be played on:

- (a) Grass Pitch; or
- (b) Football Turf Pitch in Steps 1 to 6

23.2 Ground Maintenance

The Club is to be responsible for the maintenance of the Pitch and for the general maintenance of the ground. The Club must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to maintain its Pitch in good order, as required under these Rules.

23.3 Pitch Standards

All Pitches must be flat and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations. The maximum slopes allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1:41 in any direction.

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

23.4 Where a Club proposes to install a Football Turf Pitch (or replace an existing Football Turf Pitch) the following shall apply:

For matches played under the auspices of The National League at Step 1& 2 of the National League System:-

- (a) the Club shall disclose to the Competition, as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event not later than 7 days following the Club's final match of the Playing Season preceding the scheduled commencement of installation, full details of the proposed contractor installing the Football Turf Pitch and the timescales for installation. The proposed Football Turf Pitch must have a design and specification that is capable of attaining the FIFA Recommended Two Star Certificate following installation;
- (b) no installation works shall commence until such time as the Competition has approved the proposed installation and the timetable thereof. Installation may only take place outside the Playing Season;
- (c) installation must be scheduled to be completed in sufficient time to enable the completion of a Pitch Test and for confirmation of the results thereof to be supplied to

the Competition no later than 14 days prior to the commencement of the following Playing Season;

(d) the Club shall procure that:

(i) a Pitch Test is carried out on the newly installed Football Turf Pitch; and

(ii) the FIFA accredited field test institute provides the Competition with a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and

(e) the Club shall provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate within 7 days of receipt to the Competition.

For matches played at Step 3 and below of the National League System:-

(f) the Club shall disclose to the Competition, as soon as reasonably practicable full details of the proposed contractor installing the Football Turf Pitch and the timescales for installation. The proposed Football Turf Pitch must have a design and specification that is capable of attaining the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate following installation. Clubs must be awarded the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate by 31 May in the season before promotion to Step 2, save for those pitches installed on or prior to 31 July 2016 as set out in Rule 23.5 below;

(g) no installation works shall commence until such time as the Competition has approved the proposed installation and the timetable thereof;

(h) the Club shall procure that:

(i) a Pitch Test is carried out on the newly installed Football Turf Pitch; and

(ii) the FIFA accredited field test institute provides the Competition with a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and

(i) the Club shall provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate within 7 days of receipt to the Competition in which it is in membership.

23.5 Only Clubs with FIFA Quality Pro certified Football Turf Pitches will be eligible to take part in matches under the auspices of The National League at Step 1 & 2 of the National League System SAVE THAT a Club which has a ground with the recommended FIFA Quality Certificate installed by 31 July 2016 can be promoted to Step Two of the National league System providing that it undertakes that upon renewal of the Pitch the Club will install a Pitch that is awarded a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate or be relegated to the appropriate Step.

23.6 Without prejudice to the obligations set out in Paragraph 23.3 above, Clubs that have a Football Turf Pitch shall:-

(a) take such steps and/or refrain from such actions as are necessary to ensure that the Football Turf Pitch continues to meet the requirements for a FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable) at all times during each Playing Season including, without limitation, complying with all requirements of the FIFA Quality Standard;

(b) where required to undertake Pitch Tests:

(i) procure that the FIFA accredited field test institute undertaking any Pitch Test provides to The Competition a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test;

(ii) provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate by 31st May prior to the commencement of each Playing Season (as applicable); and

(c) co-operate with all reasonable requests made by the Competition, the Association or FIFA for the performance of the Football Turf Pitch to be measured.

23.7 Where the Board is aware, by whatever reason, a Football Turf Pitch fails to meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable), including following any Pitch Test, the Club shall forthwith, at its cost, take such steps as the Board shall specify to ensure the Football Turf Pitch is restored to the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable).

23.8 The Competition shall have the right to order the postponement of a match where the Football Turf Pitch fails to meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable).

23.9 Where a Club has a Football Turf Pitch, any visiting Club is allowed to train, at no cost to that Club, on the Football Turf Pitch on the day before the relevant match or at a mutually agreed time. The length of this training session may not exceed one hour, unless agreed otherwise with the home Club. The visiting Club must notify the home Club of its intention to exercise this right no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled match (or within 48 hours of the arrangement of the fixture, if later).

23.10 A breach of any of the requirements of Rule 23 which results in the postponement or abandonment of a match shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule 8.39.

23.11 Pitch Protection

In order to protect any Pitch, unless otherwise mutually agreed between both participating Clubs, the following procedures shall be adopted by Players and Officials in the periods immediately before and after a Match and at half time:

(a) the Pitch shall only be used for warming up or warming down by Players named on the Team Sheet;

(b) pre-match warming up by either team shall not commence until 45 minutes before the kick-off time at the earliest, shall not last for more than 30 minutes, and shall end no later than 10 minutes before the kick-off time;

(c) if portable goals are provided they shall be used for all goalkeeping drills other than crossing practice;

(d) the goalmouth area shall be used by goalkeepers only if portable goals are not provided or for crossing practice and then only for not more than 20 minutes;

(e) for the purposes of warming up and warming down each team shall use only part of the Pitch between the edge of a penalty area and the half way line or as otherwise directed by the groundsman;

(f) all speed and stamina work shall be undertaken off the Pitch parallel to the touchline opposite the side to be patrolled by the assistant referee or, in the absence of sufficient space, in that part of the Pitch described in paragraph (e) above or as otherwise directed by the groundsman;

(g) Players using the Pitch at half time as aforesaid shall give due consideration to any other activity or entertainment taking place on the Pitch at the same time;

(h) the Home Club may water the Pitch at half time provided it gives reasonable notice to the referee and the other Club that it intends to do so and that any such watering is carried out evenly over the entire length and width of the Pitch; and

(i) any warming down after the conclusion of the Match shall last for no longer than 15 minutes and for that purpose neither penalty area shall be used.

23.12 Promotion and Relegation to and from The National League

As a pre-condition of entry into The National League (Step 1) any Club proposing to enter with a Football Turf Pitch must by no later than 31st May in its proposed year of entry provide the Competition with an irrevocable undertaking that in the event of it gaining promotion to The Football League at any time that it will comply in full with the applicable criteria, policies and regulations of The Football League in relation to the playing surface and together with such undertaking will provide credible and acceptable evidence as to how it would do so. In the event of the undertaking being breached at the relevant time and as a result the Club not being eligible to be admitted as a member of The Football League then the Club shall not retain its place in The National League and instead shall automatically be relegated to National League North or South and may have levied upon it a fine as determined by the Board in its

sole discretion. Such Club shall not be accepted into membership of The National League (Step 1) until such time as it installs a Grass Pitch so that it complies in full with the playing surface regulation of The Football League. This provision shall cease to apply in the event of The Football League accepting clubs with a Football Turf Pitch.

24. INSURANCE

24.1 PLAYERS

All Clubs shall be members of the players' insurance scheme. It will be mandatory for all Clubs, 14 days prior to the start of the Playing Season, to be members of "The National League Personal Accident Insurance Scheme for all registered Players'.

24.2 PUBLIC LIABILITY

All Clubs shall be required to be members of "The National League Group Employers and Public Liability Scheme" with cover of at least £10,000,000.00. Any Club failing to pay its premium on the due date, shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Any unpaid premium contribution may be deducted from sums due to the relevant Club. All Member Clubs, irrevocably waive any claim they have against the Competition in the event that the cover under The National League Group Personal Accident Scheme for players and the Group Employers and Public Liability Scheme differs from any existing cover available to a Member club under any prior insurance scheme affected by them pursuant to the Rules of the Competition in previous seasons. Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be fined in Accordance with the Fines Tariff.

25. QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

The safety of Players (and, where applicable, others) is of paramount importance. These Rules set out the medical requirements for Clubs participating within the National League System. Nothing in these Rules:

- prevents any Club from arranging medical provisions that exceed any minimum medical requirements prescribed by these Rules; or
- replaces, reduces, or affects in any way the obligations imposed on Clubs or any other persons by statute or common law in the fields of medicine, occupational health and/or health and safety (or any other area).

While not forming part of these Rules, from time to time The FA issues guidance in respect of medical matters, which is published on The FA's website and distributed to Participants as appropriate.

25.1 Subject to Rule 25.2, the following table sets out the designated Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider which each home Club, operating at its respective Step of

the National League System, shall have in attendance throughout all Competition Matches:-

Step 1 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner having a valid Advance Trauma Medical Management in Football (ATMMiF) qualification.
Step 2 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner, having a valid Intermediate Trauma Medical Management in Football (ITMMiF) qualification.
Step 3 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner, having a valid Emergency Medical First Aid in Football (EMFAiF) qualification.
Step 4 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider, or Qualified Medical Practitioner having a valid Emergency Medical First Aid in Football (EMFAiF) qualification.
Step 5 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider having a valid Emergency First Aid in Football (EFAiF) qualification.
Step 6 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider who has a valid Emergency First Aid in Football (EFAiF) qualification.

- 25.1.1 The Qualified Medical Practitioner shall visit both the home and away teams' dressing rooms before leaving the ground. The name of the practitioner present at the Competition Match must be entered on the team sheet.
- 25.2 In exceptional circumstances, where the home Club is unable to ensure that Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider shall be present at a Competition Match, the home Club shall;
- 25.2.1 Make alternative arrangements appropriate for the level of Competition Match.
- 25.2.2 Liaise with the away Club in advance of the Competition Match to ensure that each Club is aware of the medical provision that will be available at the Competition Match.
- 25.2.3 Fully document any alternative arrangements within the home Club's Emergency Medical Emergency Action Plan and share the updated plan with the away Club, prior to the Competition Match taking place.
- 25.3 Clubs shall ensure their Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider keeps detailed up-to-date medical records for all Players in the form and in accordance with the requirements and guidelines published by The FA from time to time.
- 25.4 When a Player's registration is about to be transferred, the Club that Player is registered to must make such records as referred to in Rule 25.3 available to the Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider of the Club that the Player is being transferred to. This procedure shall also apply to all Players whose registrations are temporarily transferred under the provisions for Long, Short and Youth Loans.

- 25.5 All Clubs are required to have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) in place. A copy of which must be submitted to the Competition on the standard form provided by no later than 1st August in each year and placed clearly in the home, away and match officials dressing rooms.

Event Doctors

- 25.6 Any persons employed as an Event Doctor shall comply with any relevant health and safety legislation.

26. PLAYER TRANSFERS BETWEEN CLUBS

When Players are transferred (Contract, Non-Contract, Scholars or loan on temporary transfer) between member Clubs (or between member Clubs and clubs) it is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that the Competition receives copies of all relevant documents pertaining to the transfer including full details of any payment schedules agreed in writing or otherwise between the two Clubs. Should a Club fail to meet the payment schedules lodged with the Competition on receipt of notification an embargo on further Players registrations will be placed upon the defaulting Club together with a 1% levy per day on the outstanding payments as detailed in the transfer agreement.

27. PROVISION FOR MEMBERSHIP FORM TO BE SIGNED BY EACH CLUB EACH PLAYING SEASON

28. PROVISION FOR FULL & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

29. PROMOTION AGREEMENTS

30. GENERAL MEETINGS

31. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

32. COMPETITION OFFICERS

33. Each Club shall at all times comply with all reasonable requests by the Competition to ensure due compliance by the Competition with its commercial agreements and shall not enter into any new agreements with any direct competitor to the Competition's title sponsor or any third party with whom the Competition has entered into a commercial agreement.

34. Each Club must utilise any match boards provided by the Competition's sponsor and must procure that any corporate bench kit shall be worn during competitive and first team matches, as directed by the Competition. In the event that a Competition does not have a bench kit sponsor, a Club may enter into its own bench kit sponsor

agreement providing any such agreement is in writing and the Club obtains the consent of the Competition in writing before entering into such agreement which must include a break clause which facilitates ending the agreement if the Club is promoted, relegated or laterally moved to another competition, or the Competition negotiates a new agreement in the future. A full copy of such agreement must be provided to the Competition Secretary within five (5) days of the sending of such request by the Competition.

In the event of any Club having an existing agreement with a competitor to any of the to the Competition's sponsors in respect of match boards and/or other commercial or advertising obligations, the Club is permitted to honour that agreement on an on-going basis, with the consent of the Competition provided the Club's agreement was signed before that of the Competition and a full copy of any such agreement must be provided to the Competition Secretary within five (5) days of the sending of such request by the Competition. For the avoidance of doubt, the Club would not be permitted to extend said agreement beyond the existing term.

35. Each Club shall permit photography, filming and audio and web broadcasting at their home ground to enable the Competition to comply with the terms of any Commercial Contract (as defined in the Articles), which may be entered into by the Company and will provide all necessary facilities as may reasonably be requested by the Competition or any broadcaster as may be nominated by the Competition.

36. Any distribution of any income received by the Company from any source whatsoever shall be entirely at the discretion of the Board.

The amount of central funding available for distribution will be agreed by the Board from time to time and will be distributed to Clubs, subject to the Board's discretionary rights above, in the ratio of 70% of the total agreed fund to Clubs in the National Division and 30% to Clubs in the North and South Divisions. The Board's discretion not to distribute central funding to a Club or Clubs will extend to, but may not be limited to, Clubs subject to a winding-up petition and/or an Insolvency Event. Payment of central funding withheld under this rule will not be distributed retrospectively.

37. The Company shall be entitled either directly or through its duly appointed agents to inspect the books, accounts and financial records of any Club and that Club shall make available to the Company all information as may be required from time to time in that respect.

38. CLUB FINANCE RECORDS

- (a) The Company shall be entitled either directly or through its duly appointed agents to inspect any Member Club books, accounts and financial records and

the Club shall make available to the Company all information as may be required from time to time in that respect.

(b) Current HMRC debt.

With effect from 1 July 2011 any Club which has not, within twenty-eight (28) days of the relevant due date, paid to HMRC the amounts due to be paid to HMRC to discharge:-

- the Club's full liability for VAT, and PAYE & NIC due in respect of any and all employees or former employees of the Club for the immediately preceding payment period;
- the Club's full liability for VAT, PAYE & NIC which becomes due as a result of an assessment issued by HMRC, with the exception of amounts formally disputed until such time determination is made on HMRC's claim, and/or
- defaults on the terms of any 'time to pay' agreement,

shall report the default event to the Competition prior to the month end following the month in which the debt falls due.

39. CENTRAL FUNDING

39.1 The Competition has the right not to make any Payments from central funding to Clubs who are subject to an Insolvency Event.

39.2 Clubs shall irrevocably waive their right to receive monies and also waive their right to receive such monies when at any time funds are due from them to Football Creditors within or without The Competition and further irrevocably authorise and appoint the Competition as their attorney to pay any monies which would otherwise be due to their Football Creditors to such Football Creditors on their behalf if deemed appropriate by the Board.

Any Club responsible for such payment arising shall pay a fee in accordance with the Standard Fees Tariff.

39.3 Members of the Competition hereby irrevocably authorise the Board that in the event of each or any of them taking steps which would comprise an Insolvency Event to withhold any payment that might otherwise be due and permanently waive their right to receive the same subject only to the Board's discretionary right to pay such monies to their Football Creditors as referred to in 39.2 above or 39.4 below.

39.4 Whether there is any withholding pursuant to Rule 39.1 or not the member further irrevocably appoints the Company as its attorney to pay and discharge out of any monies that would otherwise be due to it pursuant to its membership of the Company and/or the Competition any sums that may be due to other members of the Company or any other Football Creditor as defined within the Rules of the Competition.

39.5 In the event of any such payments being made as set out in Rule 39.2 and 39.4 the Board shall be obliged to advise the relevant members in writing of the payments it has made on its behalf within 28 days of such payments.

40. FINANCIAL REPORTING INITIATIVE

A club shall comply with the provisions of Appendix D 'Financial Reporting Initiative' as shall be enforced from time to time as determined by the Board and approved by the Football Association.

41. BUDGET MONITORING SCHEME & PERMITTED LOANS

A Club shall comply with the provisions of Appendix E, 'Budget Monitoring Scheme & Permitted Loans' as shall be enforced from time to time as determined by the Board.

42. EMBARGO

An Embargo may be imposed pursuant to any of the relevant preceding or subsequent Rules and Regulations or Appendices but in any event shall be imposed:-

- (a) where a Club has undergone an Insolvency Event
- (b) where a Club has been served with a winding-up petition which has not been satisfied in full or to the satisfaction of the petitioning creditors as evidenced by written agreement or
- (c) where a Club has either defaulted on such an agreement or has omitted or incorrectly reported its failure to adhere to the terms of any agreement.

Any Embargo is without prejudice to any other penalties that the Competition may wish or be entitled to impose pursuant to any other Rule or Regulation or Appendix in relation to any matter giving rise to the right to impose an Embargo including but not limited to any default, or any agreement reached with creditors or failure to report the default or incorrectly reporting the Club's adherence to any agreement with creditors.

The following appendices are incorporated within the membership rules and should be read in conjunction with the aforementioned rules. The rules and appendices were approved and passed by the clubs at the Annual General Meeting(10 June 2023)

APPENDIX A

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES - APPEALS 2023/24

APPEAL REGULATIONS

These Regulations set out the provisions relating to appeals conducted in accordance with the Rules, save for appeals arising from matters proceeding under Part E: Fast Track Regulations (which shall be conducted in accordance with Part E: Fast Track 7: Appeals – Fast Track therein).

GROUND OFS OF APPEAL

1 The grounds of appeal available to The Association shall be that the body whose decision is appealed against:

1.1 misinterpreted or failed to comply with the Rules and/or regulations of The Association relevant to its decision; and/or

1.2 came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come; and/or

1.3 imposed a penalty, award, order or sanction that was so unduly lenient as to be unreasonable.

2 The grounds of appeal available to Participants shall be that the body whose decision is appealed against:

2.1 failed to give that Participant a fair hearing; and/or

2.2 misinterpreted or failed to comply with the Rules and/or regulations of The Association relevant to its decision; and/or

2.3 came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come; and/or

2.4 imposed a penalty, award, order or sanction that was excessive.

3 Where an appeal is brought by FIFA, UKAD or WADA against a decision of a Regulatory Commission pursuant to the Association's Anti-Doping Regulations, any of the grounds set out at paragraphs 1 and 2 above may be relied upon.

APPEAL PROCESS

Commencement of Appeal and Response

4 Appeal timings shall run from the date of notification of the decision being appealed against ("Notification Date"). The Notification Date shall be:

4.1 the date of provision of the written decision; or

4.2 where the relevant rules or regulations provide that written reasons may be produced or requested, the date of provision of the written reasons.

5 In the case of an appeal from a decision of a Regulatory Commission or Disciplinary Commission;

5.1 notification of the intention to appeal shall be made in writing to The Association (or to the relevant Participant, where The Association is the appellant) within seven days of the Notification Date.

5.2 a notice of appeal (the "Notice of Appeal") with The Association by email to Disciplinary@TheFA.com (or, where The Association is the appellant, with the relevant Participant) within 14 days of the Notification Date.

6 In case of all other appeals, the timings set out in paragraph 5 above shall apply, unless the relevant rules provide otherwise.

7 The Notice of Appeal must:

7.1 identify the specific decision(s) being appealed;

7.2 set out the ground(s) of appeal and the reasons why it would be substantially unfair not to alter the original decision;

7.3 set out a statement of the facts upon which the appeal is based;

7.4 save for where the appellant is The Association, in which case no appeal fee will be payable, be accompanied by the relevant appeal fee asset out in paragraph 21 of Part A: General Provisions. Where an appeal dislodged electronically, the appeal fee must be received not later than the third day following the day of despatch of the electronic notification (including both the day of despatch and receipt);

7.5 where appropriate, apply for leave to present new evidence under paragraph 10 below.

8 The respondent shall serve a written reply to the Notice of Appeal (the "Response") on an appellant and the Appeal Board within 21 days of the lodging of the Notice of Appeal. Where appropriate, the Response must include an application for leave to present new evidence under paragraph 10 below.

9 Where the Regulatory Commission or other body appealed against has not stated the reasons for its decision, either:

9.1 the appellant shall request written reasons from that body which shall be provided to the Appeal Board; or

9.2 the Appeal Board shall require that a member of that body attends the appeal hearing. In which case:(i) questions may be put by the Appeal Board at a hearing to satisfy itself as to the reasons for the decision) ;(ii) cross-examination by the appellant or respondent shall not be permitted;(iii) representations may be made by the parties to the Appeal Board who may then put questions to the member of the body that made the decision.

New Evidence

10 The Appeal Board shall hear new evidence only where it has given leave that it may be presented. An application for leave to present new evidence must be made in the Notice of Appeal or the Response. Such application must set out the nature and the 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 at the original hearing and that such evidence is relevant. The Appeal Board's decision shall be final. Where leave to present new evidence has been granted, in all cases the other party will be given an opportunity to respond.

Appeal Board Proceedings

11 The appellant shall prepare a set of documents which shall be provided to the Appeal Board and respondent at least seven days before the hearing and which shall comprise the following (or their equivalent):

11.1 the Charge;

11.2 the Reply;

11.3 any documents or other evidence referred to at the original hearing relevant to the appeal;

11.4 any transcript of the original hearing;

11.5 the notification of decision appealed against and, where they have been given, the reasons for the decision;

11.6 any new evidence;

11.7 the Notice of Appeal;

11.8 the Response.

12 An appeal shall be by way of a review on documents only. The parties shall however be entitled to make oral submissions to the Appeal Board. Oral evidence will not be permitted, except where the Appeal Board gives leave to present new evidence under paragraph 10 above.

13 Once an appeal has been commenced, it shall not be withdrawn except by leave of the Appeal Board. Where an appeal is so withdrawn, the Appeal Board may make such order for costs, or such order in respect of any bond lodged pursuant to paragraphs 27 to 37 below, as it considers appropriate.

14 The chairman of an Appeal Board may upon the application of a party or otherwise, give any instructions considered necessary for the proper conduct of the proceedings, including but not limited to:

14.1 extending or reducing any time limit;

14.2 amending or dispensing with any procedural steps set out in these Regulations;

14.3 instructing that a transcript be made of the proceedings;

14.4 ordering parties to attend a preliminary hearing;

14.5 ordering a party to provide written submissions.

The decision of the chairman of the Appeal Board shall be final.

15 The Appeal Board may adjourn a hearing for such period and upon such terms (including an order as to costs) as it considers appropriate.

16 The Appeal Board shall proceed in the absence of any party, unless it is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the failure of the party to attend, and shall do so in such manner as it considers appropriate.

17 The following procedures shall be followed at an appeal hearing unless the Appeal Board thinks it appropriate to amend them:

17.1 the appellant to address the appeal board, summarising its case;

17.2 any new evidence to be presented by the appellant;

17.3 the respondent to address the appeal board, summarising its case;

17.4 any new evidence to be presented by the respondent;

17.5 each party to be able to put questions to any witness giving new evidence;

17.6 the Appeal Board may put questions to the parties and any witness giving new evidence at any stage;

17.7 the respondent to make closing submissions;

17.8 the appellant to make closing submissions.

18 The Appeal Board may, in the event of a party failing to comply with an order, requirement or instruction of the Appeal Board, take any action it considers appropriate, including an award of costs against the offending party.

APPEAL BOARD DECISIONS

General

19 A decision, order, requirement or instruction of the Appeal Board shall (save where to be made under the Rules by the Chairman of the Appeal Board alone) be determined by a majority. Each member of the Appeal Board shall have one vote, save that the Chairman shall have a second and casting vote in the event of deadlock.

20 The Appeal Board shall notify the parties of its decision to the parties as soon as practicable in such a manner as it considers appropriate; and unless it directs otherwise, its

decision shall come into effect immediately.

21 The Appeal Board shall have power to:

21.1 allow or dismiss the appeal;

21.2 exercise any power which the body against whose decision the appeal was made could have exercised, whether the effect is to increase or decrease any penalty, award, order or sanction originally imposed;

21.3 remit the matter for re-hearing;

21.4 order that any appeal fee be forfeited or returned as it considers appropriate;

21.5 make such further or other order as it considers appropriate, generally or for the purpose of giving effect to its decision.

21.6 order that any costs, or part thereof, incurred by the Appeal Board be paid by either party or be shared by both parties in a manner determined by the Appeal Board.

22 Decisions of the Appeal Board shall be final and binding and there shall be no right of further challenge, except in relation to appeals:

22.1 to CAS brought by FIFA or WADA pursuant to the Anti-Doping Regulations; or

22.2 concerning the amount of costs any party is ordered to pay by the Appeal Board (which is considered in paragraph 24 below).

Other Costs

23 Any costs incurred in bringing, or responding to, an appeal shall normally be borne by the party incurring the costs. In exceptional circumstances the Appeal Board may order one party to pay some or all of the other party's costs. Such costs will not include any legal costs. Any applications for such costs must be made at the Appeal Board and must include details of the exceptional circumstances.

24 An appeal against only the quantum of costs ordered to be paid shall be heard and determined by a single person appointed by Sport Resolutions (UK) (or a similar independent body as determined by The Association from time to time). That person shall decide all matters of procedure for how such an appeal will be conducted.

Written Decision and Written Reasons

25 As soon as practicable after the hearing, the Appeal Board shall publish a written statement of its decision, which shall state:

25.1 the names of the parties, the decision(s) appealed against and the grounds of appeal;

25.2 whether or not the appeal is allowed; and

25.3 the order(s) of the Appeal Board.

26 The Appeal Board shall, upon the request of the appellant or the respondent (such request to be received at The Association within three days of the date of the notification of the decision), give written reasons for the decision.

APPENDIX B

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS SEASON 2023/24

COMPETITION RULES

1. At the end of the season, the Clubs who finish in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th & 7th at the end of the Playing Season in accordance with Membership Rule 12 and meet the Qualification Criteria for The Football League as at 1st March and meet the Criteria for Admission to Full Membership of the Football Conference Limited shall be eligible to enter the end of season National League Play-Offs Competition "Competition".

If a Club is not eligible to enter the Competition then it shall not take part in any play-off matches. In that event such Club shall not be replaced and the Competition structure and draw shall be adjusted as necessary by the Board on the basis of the remaining Clubs' final league positions.

2. There shall be a Qualifying Round, Semi-Finals and a Promotion Final. All ties shall be played over a single leg. The Promotion Final shall be staged at a neutral ground selected by The National League Board of Directors.

3. In the Qualifying Round, the two Clubs who finish 4th and 5th respectively will play at home against the Clubs finishing 7th and 6th respectively. In the Semi-Finals, the two Clubs who finish 2nd and 3rd respectively will play at home. The Club finishing 2nd will play against the winner of the tie between the Clubs finishing 5th and 6th and the Club finishing 3rd will play against the winner of the tie between the Clubs finishing 4th and 7th. Any club not able to fulfil a fixture on the scheduled date may be subject to exclusion from the Play-Offs.

4. In the Qualifying Round, Semi-Finals and Promotion Final, in the event of the scores being level at the end of 90 minutes play, extra time will be played in two equal periods of 15 minutes. The team which has scored the most goals will be declared the winner at the end of the two periods of extra time. If the tie is still undecided after extra time the winners will be determined by the taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark in accordance with the International Board Decision in the Laws of the Game (i.e. 5 kicks per team taken alternatively followed by sudden death). In the event that extra time is played in any match, a Club may at its discretion use one additional substitute player (a fourth in total) from the nominated five substitutes permitted in accordance with Membership Rule 6.8 during such period of extra time.

FINANCIAL RULES

5. In the Qualifying Round and Semi-Final Ties the net gate receipts of each match shall be divided equally between the competing Clubs. The net gate receipts due from a match shall be the total ticket sales for the match less VAT, the travelling and any

pre-approved accommodation expenses of the visiting Club, the fees and expenses of the Match Officials, and other match expenses allowed in accordance with FA Trophy rules (which include costs relating to gate attendants, turnstile operators, stewards, police charges, floodlighting, first aid helpers and any costs relating to clearing the ground of snow and water provided the visiting Club is consulted beforehand on the approximate costs). Where the visiting Club considers it necessary or desirable to claim accommodation expenses, written application must be made to the League within 24 hours of the fixture being announced. The League shall determine such application at its sole discretion.

6. Income from television broadcasting or any corporate Commercial Agreements made on behalf of the Company for a match shall not form part of the proceeds of any Qualifying Round, Semi-Final or Promotion Final ties. The Board of Directors shall determine facility fees payable to clubs, if applicable and the allocation of all income from all commercial activities.

7. Financial Rules relating to Qualifying Round and Semi-Final matches:

7.1 Clubs may not reduce their normal National League Admission charges in any Play-Off matches.

7.2 The HOME CLUB shall provide within 14 days of each tie a detailed account of all income and expenditure for its home match on the appropriate form provided by The National League.

7.3 A maximum of 50 complimentary tickets may be issued. Any tickets in excess of this number may be charged for at the appropriate rate.

7.4 The Visiting Club shall have the right to claim 15% or a minimum of 600 tickets for the match depending upon which is the greater.

a) Unless otherwise mutually agreed in writing, all tickets shall be on a sale or return basis.

b) A Visiting Club shall be entitled to its full allocation of 24 seats in the Directors Box in Play-Off Semi-Final Ties.

c) A reasonable allocation of the total disabled spectator accommodation shall be made available to disabled supporters of the Away Club.

7.5 Payments for tickets sold by a Visiting Club together with details of tickets sold and the return of unsold tickets must be made to the Home Club two days prior to the date of the match.

7.6 Each Club will be required to make available the contracted services and facilities at its Home ground as specified in The National League's Corporate and Commercial

partners and contracts. The Competition Office will in respect of full commercial and marketing arrangements for Play-Offs provide details to each home and visiting club.

8. Financial Rules relating to the Promotion Final Tie:

8.1 In the Promotion Final Tie where clubs sell match tickets on behalf of National League the proceeds of ticket sales shall be paid to The National League on a daily basis directly in to the Football Conference Limited designated Bank Account.

8.2 The proceeds of the matches after paying there out the travelling and/or hotel expenses of the competing clubs, the ground and other expenses of the match including Value Added Tax, hire of stadium, advertising, printing, postage, police charges, turnstile operators, stewards, contribution to first aid helpers, catering , match entertainment, travelling and/or hotel expenses of The National League Boards of Directors and Officers, Match Officials, Ball Boys shall hereafter be referred to as “The Net Gate Receipts before Levy”. The Board of Directors shall set a Levy prior to the commencement of the season. The agreed levy shall form part of the Net Gate Receipts before the Levy shall be payable in accordance with Appendix “B” in The National League handbook. The balance of the net proceeds after deductions shall be divided between the two clubs in the Promotion Final Tie at a rate set by the Board of Directors prior to the commencement of the season.

8.3 Income derived from programme sales and perimeter advertising after paying thereout all attributable costs shall be included in the Net Gate Receipts before the Levy unless these items are corporately sold by The National League in which case the income will be allocated by the Board of Directors.

8.4 The allocation of central income will be distributed to Full Member Clubs at the earliest opportunity following full receipt and audit of all income related to the Promotion Final.

APPENDIX C

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE NORTH & SOUTH PLAY-OFFS 2023/24

COMPETITION RULES

1. At the end of the season, the clubs who finish in 2nd 3rd 4th 5th, 6th & 7th at the end of the Playing Season in accordance with Membership Rule 12 and whose registered home ground has been inspected on or before 1 April in the season and meets the Grading requirements in force that season and the Entry Criteria for Admission to Full Membership of the Football Conference Limited shall be eligible to enter the end of season National League North & South Play-Offs competitions respectively. If a Club is not eligible to enter the Competition then it shall not take part in any play-off matches. In that event such Club shall not be replaced and the Competition structure and draw shall be adjusted as necessary by the Board on the basis of the remaining Clubs' final league positions.

2. There shall be a Qualifying Round, Semi-Finals and a Promotion Final. All ties shall be played over a single leg. The Promotion Final shall be staged at a neutral ground selected by The National League Board of Directors. If a neutral ground is not selected the Promotion Final shall be staged at the ground of the Club in the tie finishing highest at the end of the Playing Season in accordance with National League Rule 12.

3. In the Qualifying Round, the two Clubs who finish 4th and 5th respectively will play at home against the Clubs finishing 7th and 6th respectively. In the Semi-Finals, the two Clubs who finish 2nd and 3rd respectively will play at home. The Club finishing 2nd will play against the winner of the tie between the Clubs finishing 5th and 6th and the Club finishing 3rd will play against the winner of the tie between the Clubs finishing 4th and 7th. Any club not able to fulfil a fixture on the scheduled date may be subject to exclusion from the Play-Offs.

4. In the Qualifying Round, Semi-Finals and Promotion Final, in the event of the scores being level at the end of 90 minutes play, extra time will be played in two equal periods of 15 minutes. The team which has scored the most goals will be declared the winner at the end of the two periods of extra time. If the tie is still undecided after extra time the winners will be determined by the taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark in accordance with the International Board Decision in the Laws of the Game (i.e. 5 kicks per team taken alternatively followed by sudden death). If a Promotion Final is played at a venue with more than one match staged on the same day, the Board may vary this rule by omitting extra-time and in the event of the scores being level at the end of 90 minutes play the winners will be determined by the taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark. In the event that extra time is played in any match, a Club may at its discretion use one additional substitute player (a fourth in total) from the nominated five

substitutes permitted in accordance with Membership Rule 6.8 during such period of extra time.

FINANCIAL RULES

5. In the Qualifying Round and Semi-Final Ties the net gate receipts of each match shall be divided equally between the competing Clubs. The net gate receipts due from a match shall be the total ticket sales for the match less VAT, the travelling and any pre-approved accommodation expenses of the visiting Club, the fees and expenses of the Match Officials, and other match expenses allowed in accordance with FA Trophy rules (which include costs relating to gate attendants, turnstile operators, stewards, police charges, floodlighting, first aid helpers and any costs relating to clearing the ground of snow and water provided the visiting Club is consulted beforehand on the approximate costs). Where the visiting Club considers it necessary or desirable to claim accommodation expenses, written application must be made to the League within 24 hours of the fixture being announced. The League shall determine such application at its sole discretion.

6. Income from television broadcasting or any corporate Commercial Agreements made on behalf of the Company for a match shall not form part of the proceeds of any Qualifying Round, Semi-Final or Promotion Final ties. The Board of Directors shall determine facility fees payable to clubs, if applicable and the allocation of all income from all corporate activities.

7. Financial Rules relating to Qualifying Round and Semi-Final matches:

7.1 Clubs may not reduce their normal National League Admission charges in any Semi-Final Play-Off matches.

7.2 The HOME CLUB shall provide within 14 days of each tie a detailed account of all income and expenditure for its home match on the appropriate form provided by The National League.

7.3 A maximum of 30 complimentary tickets may be issued. Any tickets in excess of this number may be charged for at the appropriate rate.

7.4 The Visiting Club shall have the right to claim 15% of the ground capacity or a minimum of 400 tickets for the match depending upon which is the greater.

a) Unless otherwise mutually agreed in writing, all tickets shall be on a sale or return basis.

b) A Visiting Club shall be entitled to its full allocation of 24 seats in the Directors Box in Play-Off Semi-Final Ties.

c) A reasonable allocation of the total disabled spectator accommodation shall be made available to disabled supporters of the Away Club.

7.5 Payments for tickets sold by a Visiting Club together with details of tickets sold and the return of unsold tickets must be made to the Home Club one day prior to the date of the match.

7.6 Each Club will be required to make available the contracted services and facilities at its Home ground as specified in The National League's Corporate and Commercial partners and contracts. The Competition Office will in respect of full commercial and marketing arrangements for Play-Offs provide details to each home and visiting club.

8. Financial Rules Relating to the Promotion Final Tie:

8.1 In the Promotion Final Tie where clubs sell match tickets on behalf of The National League the proceeds of ticket sales shall be paid to The National League on a daily basis directly in to the Football Conference Limited designated Bank Account.

8.2 The proceeds of the matches after paying there out the travelling and/or hotel expenses of the competing clubs, the ground and other expenses of the match including Value Added Tax, hire of stadium, advertising, printing, postage, police charges, turnstile operators, stewards, contribution to first aid helpers, catering match entertainment, travelling and/or hotel expenses of The National League Boards of Directors and Officers, Match Officials, Ball Boys shall hereafter be referred to as "The Net Gate Receipts before Levy". The Board of Directors shall set a Levy prior to the commencement of the season. The agreed levy shall form part of the Net Gate Receipts before the Levy shall be payable in accordance with Appendix "C" in The National League handbook. The balance of the net proceeds after deductions shall be divided between the two clubs in the Promotion Final Tie at a rate set by the Board of Directors prior to the commencement of the season.

8.3 Income derived from programme sales and perimeter advertising after paying there out all attributable costs shall be included in the Net Gate Receipts before the Levy unless these items are corporately sold by The National League in which case the income will be allocated by the Board of Directors.

8.4 The allocation of central income will be distributed to Full Member Clubs at the earliest opportunity following full receipt and audit of all income related to the Promotion Final.

APPENDIX D

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE FINANCIAL REPORTING INITIATIVE

1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the basis of the Financial Reporting Initiative ('the Initiative') as enabled by Rule 40 of the Football Conference Limited ('The National League' or 'the Competition') Rules ('the Rules').

1.2 Each Club that is a member of The National League shall be subject to the requirements of the Initiative, as set out in this document.

1.3 Any breach of the terms of the Initiative shall be dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Initiative and the Rules

1.4 The Initiative came into effect on 1 July 2009.

2 Procedure

FQR Documentation

2.1 On or before each Quarterly Reporting Date (see 2.3 below), every Club will be required to submit a completed 'FQR' form to The National League, in such form as shall be determined by The National League from time to time.

2.2 All 'Financial Reporting Initiative monitoring data' must also be completed on each FQR form.

2.3 Each Club shall be required to comply annually with each of the following Quarterly Reporting Dates:

- FQR1 – 30 September ('First Quarterly Reporting Date')
- FQR2 – 31 December ('Second Quarterly Reporting Date')
- FQR 3 – 31 March ('Third Quarterly Reporting Date')
- FQR 4 – 30 June ('Fourth Quarterly Reporting Date')

Payment Confirmation

2.4 Each Club is required to confirm Payment in Full of all amounts disclosed in respect of PAYE/Ni/VAT on any FQR form. The Competition reserves the right to request evidence of payment for any amount disclosed as having been Paid in Full on any FQR form.

2.5 Where a Club is required by the Competition to provide evidence of payment under the Initiative, such evidence should be in the form of a copy of a cheque, bank statement, BACS transmission report or other similar documentation that the Competition may deem to be necessary.

Other Documentation

2.6 On or before the First Quarterly Reporting date in each year, each Club is also required to submit the following information to the Competition:

- Details of their PAYE/VAT registration numbers;
- A copy of the P35 from the previous tax year;
- A statement of the Club's total liabilities as at 30 June.

General

2.7 Forms must be submitted in either hard copy or by email to the Competition Office by 5 pm on the relevant due date. All documentation must be signed by the Chairman of the Club and one other Director (or Committee member if the Club is not incorporated). Clubs must retain a copy of all documentation submitted to the Competition. Where documentation is submitted by email a printed signature is acceptable.

2.8 The Competition reserves the right to verify the accuracy of any of the information contained in any of the documentation submitted by a Club under the Initiative, in accordance with Rule 38 of the Competition.

2.9 Clubs' attention is drawn to the sanctions in place should the complete required documentation not be submitted in accordance with the relevant due date (see Section 3 below).

Clubs joining The National League

2.10 Clubs joining the Competition, whether by promotion, relegation or any other means, are required to complete a Financial Reporting Initiative opening statement in such form as prescribed by the Competition from time to time. Where any arrears to HMRC are declared on this statement the Club will have one calendar month from the date it was admitted to membership of the Competition to confirm Payment in Full and/or evidence a time to pay agreement with HMRC in respect of all arrears declared.

2.11 Where a Club joins the Competition, whether by promotion, relegation or any other means, and has an existing time to pay agreement at the date it is admitted into membership of the Competition for payment of arrears with HMRC then this will be treated, for this clause only, as though the arrears have been Paid in Full. Any such Club is required to report any failure to comply with the terms of an existing time to pay

agreement to the Competition within seven working days, whereupon the Club shall be subject to an immediate Embargo.

3 Sanctions

Non or Late Submission of Documentation

3.1 Any Club that fails to submit any of the documentation required under the Initiative by the relevant Quarterly Reporting Date will be subject to an immediate Embargo as defined in Appendix H of The National League Rules and furthermore any such failure may be considered as misconduct under Rule 18 of the Rules where a sanction may include, but may not be limited to, a points deduction and such sanction may be escalated for second or subject offences.

3.2 The Embargo will remain in place until such time as The National League is satisfied that the relevant documentation has been duly submitted in full.

Submission of False or Misleading Information

3.3 The submission of any documentation to The National League in accordance with the Initiative that is subsequently found to have been false, misleading or with omissions may be considered as misconduct under Rule 17 of the Rules.

FQR Submission Sanctions

3.4 Any Club that, on or before each Quarterly Sanction Date, has failed to have Paid in Full all amounts disclosed in respect of PAYE/NIC (and provide evidence of such payments to the Competition when so requested) on the FQR form due at that date shall be subject to an Embargo until such time the said amounts have been Paid in Full.

3.5 Any Club that, on or before each Quarterly Sanction Date, has failed to have Paid in Full all amounts disclosed in respect of VAT (and provide evidence of such payments to the Competition when so requested) on the FQR form due at that date shall be subject to an Embargo until such time the said amounts have been Paid in Full.

3.6 Any Club that

- Enters into a time to pay agreement with HMRC after (9 June 2012) for the repayments of any amounts due in respect of a PAYE/NIC and or VAT liability; and/or
- Has been served with a winding-up petition which has not been Paid in Full or to the satisfaction of the petitioning creditors, as evidenced by written agreement; and/or
- Has joined the Competition, whether by promotion, relegation or other means, and has failed to Pay in Full and/or evidence a time to pay arrangement in

respect of any arrears to HMRC declared on its Financial Reporting Initiative Opening Statement in accordance with 2.10; and/or

- Is found to have not reported a failure to comply with the terms of any time to pay agreement with HMRC entered into prior to 9 June 2012 within seven working days (whether as a member of the Competition or not) and/or
- Has failed to comply with the terms of any time to pay arrangement with HMRC it has entered into prior to 9 June 2012 (whether as a member of The National League or not);

Will be subject to an immediate Embargo as defined in Appendix H of the Competition Rules.

3.7 In the event that a Club is subject to an Embargo under the provisions of paragraphs 3.4, **3.5** and/or 3.6 above, the Club will be required to appear before a sub-committee duly appointed and authorised by the Board of to consider such matters ('the Sub-Committee').

3.8 The Sub-Committee will meet with the Club not more than 21 days after the date of Embargo at a time, date and venue of the Sub-Committee's choosing.

3.9 The Sub-Committee shall have the power to recommend to the Board that they suspend any Embargo imposed under paragraphs 3.4 and/or 3.5 and/or 3.6 or make modifications or apply any conditions thereto such as they deem to be appropriate.

3.10 Any failure by a Club to comply with any instructions made under paragraphs 3.4-3.9 may be considered as misconduct under Rule 17 of the Rules.

Powers of the Board

3.11 In the event of a Club breaching any of the requirements of paragraphs 3.1-3.9 above and being found guilty of misconduct, The Board reserves the right to impose any penalty it deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, the withholding of central funding to any Club.

4 Other Matters

4.1 In considering the application of the Initiative, the Board shall adopt such procedures and take such action for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference as it considers appropriate.

4.2 In the event that a Club believes that it is subject to specific circumstances that are not reflected in the Initiative, they must report these circumstances immediately to The National League. Such circumstances may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a Club not being registered for either PAYE or VAT
- a Club having an arrangement in place with HMRC to make PAYE/NI and/or VAT payments on a basis other than the standard terms (i.e. a basis other than PAYE/NI monthly and VAT quarterly)
- a Club being subject to an HMRC assessment in the course of any season
- a Club having an amount under dispute with HMRC

In such circumstances, the Board of The National League reserves the right to request any supporting documentation and to impose any additional or varied reporting requirements on such Clubs as it deems appropriate.

4.3 If requested by the Competition a Club must demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the Board that it has sufficient funds to meet its financial obligations for the Season or any outstanding part thereof. In the event of a Club failing to provide such information to the reasonable satisfaction of the Board then the Board may request a personal interview with the Club with a view to seeking further information and details and in the event of a Club still failing to satisfy the Board then the Board may impose such penalty as it may reasonably decide including but not limited to the imposition of an embargo or the suspension of a Club from the Competition.

4.4 Clubs will have the right to appeal any decision by the Board of The National League pertaining to the application of the Initiative. Such an appeal will be subject to the conditions laid down in Rule 16 of The National League.

4.5 For the avoidance of doubt, any Club that has become a member of The National League through promotion, relegation or by any other means is required to comply with the Initiative.

APPENDIX E

BUDGET MONITORING SCHEME & PERMITTED LOANS

BUDGET MONITORING SCHEME

The Budget Monitoring Scheme applies to all Clubs in membership of the National League, National League North and National League South.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Appendix:

“Approved Mid-Season Budget” means a Mid-Season Budget that has been approved pursuant to this Appendix

“Approved Pre-Season Budget” means a Pre-Season Budget that has been approved pursuant to this Appendix

"Associated Companies" means an Associated Company within the definition of The Companies Acts as may be in force from time to time

“Bond” shall have the same meaning as defined within the Rules of the Competition

“Club” shall mean any club in membership of The National League from time to time

“Competition” shall have the same meaning as defined within the Rules of the Competition

“Embargo” shall have the same meaning as defined within the Rules of the Competition

“Emergency Loan” means a Loan that is permitted by the Competition on the terms as set out below

"Existing Loan(s)" means a Loan or Loans owed by a Club to third parties and/or Associated Companies (excluding normal trade creditors and accruals) as at 7th June 2013

Independent Financial Review Panel (“IFRP”) means the panel appointed by the Board of the Competition and delegated such powers by The Board as may be required to supervise, administrate and adjudicate upon all matters in relation to the Budget Monitoring Scheme and all ancillary matters.

"Loan" means the provision of funds to a Club other than by way of a permanent unconditional gift or in exchange for shares (other than loan shares).

Mid-Season Budget ("MSB") shall mean a budget to be produced as a prerequisite of a Permitted Loan or additional equity or donations to be introduced after the commencement of the PSB Period.

"Mid-Season Permitted Loan" means a Permitted Loan, full details of which have been set out in an Mid-Season Budget and which is payable upon completion or periodically over the balance of the Season and which shall be demonstrably sustainable pursuant to the Mid-Season Budget.

"Permitted Loan(s)" means any Loan or Loans entered into after 7 June 2013 and which is/are:

(a) a Loan or Loans pursuant to a written agreement, a copy of which has been provided to the Competition,

within 7 days of its completion;

(b) for Permitted Loans entered into after 10 June 2017, has conditions in the loan agreement whereby the loan is unsecured and is subordinated to all other creditors in the event of a Club suffering an Insolvency Event and also subordinated to the costs of any such Insolvency Event.

(c) is set out in the Pre-Season Budget or Mid-Season Budget.

"Playing Season" shall have the same meaning as defined in the Rules of the Competition.

"Pre-Season Budget" ("PSB") shall mean a budget for the following 12 months ("the PSB Period"), such period not to end prior to the end of the Playing Season following the date of its submission (such budget to cover inter alia playing, managerial, commercial and administrative costs).

"Pre-Season Budget Period" means a period of 12 months not to end prior to the end of the Playing season following the date of its submission

"Pre-Season Permitted Loan" means a Permitted Loan, full details of which have been set out in an Approved PSB and which is payable to the Club in cleared funds either at the start of the Season or periodically over the Season and which shall be demonstrably sustainable pursuant to the Pre-Season Budget.

Pre-Season Budget ('PSB')

Each Club must submit a PSB to the Competition by no later than the 14th day of June, in such format as determined by the Competition from time to time. This shall

include the budgeted revenue and expenditure for the Club for the forthcoming season and a balance sheet including sufficient details to enable the Competition to identify net current liabilities falling due for repayment.

The PSB shall contain details of any Existing Loans and the cost of servicing the same, or a provision for repayment if an Existing Loan is repayable before the end of the PSB Period.

The PSB shall also contain details of any actual or proposed Permitted Loans and the cost of servicing the same and any provision for repayment should the Permitted Loan be repayable before the end of the PSB Period

In order to be eligible to participate in the Competition for the Playing Season included within the PSB Period for which it has been prepared, the IFRP must give a Club's PSB either:

- a) Unqualified Approval; or
- b) Qualified Approval.

Unqualified Approval shall be given by the IFRP when, in its sole opinion, the PSB is considered to be reasonably financially viable.

Where a Club has been unable to obtain Unqualified Approval for its PSB, it may be given Qualified Approval. Qualified Approval may be given by the IFRP when, in its sole opinion, it assesses that the Club's ability to meet all costs in its PSB, including opening liabilities falling due for repayment, is in doubt.

Where a Club's PSB is given 'Qualified Approval' the IFRP may permit the Club to start the Playing Season on such terms as it may deem appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- The attendance of the Club for interview with the IFRP;
- the provision of monitoring information and/or explanations as it deems necessary;
- the imposition of an Embargo;
- the imposition of a Bond.

A Club shall be obliged to notify the Competition within five working days of becoming aware of any material variation to the figures included in an Approved PSB (whether Unqualified or Qualified). For the purposes of this provision, a material variation shall be any actual or projected decrease in overall income or increase in overall costs of more than 15% .

Where a Club notifies the Competition of a material variation to an Approved PSB in accordance with the paragraph above, then the IFRP may apply such conditions to that Club as it may deem appropriate, including, but not limited to, those detailed in the paragraph above.

Permitted Loans

From 6th June 2013, Clubs shall only be able to enter into and receive Permitted Loans upon the terms of this Appendix.

Any proposed Permitted Loans shall be set out within the PSB or MSB as appropriate.

A Club must confirm to the Competition (in such format as determined by the Competition from time to time) within five working days of receipt that the Permitted Loan has been received by it.

In the event of any Permitted Loan(s) not being paid to the Club in cleared funds within five working days of the prescribed date or dates contained in the PSB or MSB, then the Club shall be subject to such sanctions as the Board deems fit including but not limited to an Embargo. This provision shall not apply if the Club has provided a revised budget to the Competition demonstrating that there is no longer any requirement for the Permitted Loan(s).

It shall be the obligation of the Club to advise the Competition in writing should any payment of a Permitted Loan not be made as aforesaid.

Mid-Season Budget ('MSB')

Should a Club wish to introduce a Permitted Loan after the Approval (whether Qualified or Unqualified) of the PSB, they are required to submit a MSB to cover the period from the receipt of the Permitted Loan until not earlier than the end of the PSB Period. A MSB shall also be required should a Club seek to introduce any significant additional equity or donations (i.e. more than £5k in value) after the commencement of the PSB Period and the Club also seeks to incur significant additional expenditure on players.

The IFRP must give any MSB either:

- a) Unqualified Approval; or
- b) Qualified Approval

before a Club may introduce a Permitted Loan or any significant additional equity or donations.

In deciding whether to grant approval (whether Qualified or Unqualified) to the MSB, the IFRP shall apply the same criteria as those detailed for the PSB above.

A Club introducing a Permitted Loan or significant additional equity or donations without having the IFRP having given its MSB approval (whether Qualified or Unqualified) shall be subject to such sanction as the Board may determine.

Repayment of Permitted Loans

A Club shall be obliged to submit an application for repayment of any Permitted Loan to the Competition which shall (acting in conjunction with the independent Financial Review Panel ("IFRP")) issue its decision as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event no later than 14 days from submission of the request.

In considering such an application the IFRP will require the Club to demonstrate to its complete satisfaction that the repayment of the Permitted Loan will not in any way prevent it from fulfilling its financial obligations for the remainder of the PSB Period.

No application will be considered if there are arrears of any other Club debts or if the Club cannot demonstrate that any other Existing or Permitted Loan which would fall due for repayment before the end of the PSB Period cannot be satisfied, nor will any application be considered unless all other Club debts that have fallen due for payment by the date of repayment have been paid or satisfied in full.

A Club shall be obliged to advise the Competition in writing within five working days of repayment of any Permitted Loan.

Emergency Loans

At any point after the approval (whether Qualified or Unqualified) of a PSB or MSB, Clubs are permitted to introduce certain loans ('Emergency Loans') without submitting an MSB to the Competition. Subject to the exception of point below, a Club will only be permitted to receive an Emergency Loan when each and all of the following criteria are met:

That the Club notifies the Competition by email of its intention to receive an Emergency Loan, such notification to include all of the following information as a minimum:

- Confirmation that there has been no projected change to the Club's overall profit or loss as set out in the PSB or MSB as appropriate;
- The amount of the Emergency Loan and proposed date of introduction;
- The full details of the individual/entity introducing the Emergency Loan;

- The specific circumstances which have led to the need for the Emergency Loan arising ;
- An approximate date for repayment of the Emergency Loan, which must be no later than the last day of the PSB Period; and
- The forecast circumstances which the club expects will happen to allow repayment of the loan.

Upon receipt of notification from the Club, at least two members of the IFRP must approve the Emergency Loan. The Club shall not be permitted to introduce the Emergency Loan until such approval is notified to it.

A Club is permitted to introduce an Emergency Loan without complying with the criteria set out above providing that such a Loan is:

- Not more than £5k in value; and
- Is repaid in full by the Club within twenty-one days of receipt.

General

Apart from Permitted Loans or Emergency Loans, no Club shall have the right to enter into further Loan arrangements.

A Club may enter into further Loan arrangements at any time provided that these are for the exclusive purposes of capital improvement or for the necessary acquisition of property. Clubs must provide a copy of a proposed written agreement for such Loans to the competition prior to entering into the same, and the proposed costs and repayments of such loans must be set out in the PSB or MSB (or an amended PSB or MSB if the loan is to be taken after submission and approval of the same). For the avoidance of doubt such Loans shall not be classed as Permitted Loans or Emergency Loans.

Nothing contained herein shall in any way affect a Club's obligation to comply with Rule 10.7 both in respect of pre-existing Loans, Permitted Loans or Emergency Loans.

All Clubs shall be required to cooperate fully with the IFRP in respect of the powers delegated to it by the Board.

Where a Club breaches any of the above regulations in relation to Permitted Loans, Emergency Loans and other ancillary matters, it is under an ongoing obligation to advise the Competition of the fact and circumstances of the breach(es) immediately.

Any Club found to be in breach of the above regulations shall be subject to such sanction as the Board may decide.

Clubs will have the right to appeal any decision by the IFRP pertaining to the application of the scheme. Such an appeal will be subject to the conditions laid down in Rule 16 of the Competition.

APPENDIX F

TELEVISIONING OF MATCHES

1. No matches in any Competition Conducted by The National League shall be televised or recorded or transmitted by satellite, cable, internet, or any similar method except with the written consent of the Executive of The National League nor shall any Club take part in any match (except matches in the Football Association Challenge Cup, Trophy competitions) which is to be televised or recorded or transmitted by satellite or cable or any similar method without first obtaining the written consent of The Executive of The National League.

2. National League or any subsidiary or associated company of The National League or duly authorised agent or broadcaster (and its respective employees and agents) shall be allowed access to the grounds of clubs (and to the television gantries, camera positions, and facilities) for the purpose of recording or broadcasting matches under the jurisdiction of The National League.

APPENDIX G

REGULATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM

DEFINITIONS

In the interpretation of these Regulations: any words and expressions, unless otherwise defined herein, shall be words and expressions as defined as follows:-

“The Association” means The Football Association Limited.

“Club” means a football club for the time being in a League in membership of the NLS or Feeder Leagues (as applicable)

“Committee” in these Regulations means the relevant Committee appointed by the Association.

“Competition” in these Regulations means a League in the NLS.

“Conditional Licence” means a Licence with conditions attached to be met by a Club within a period determined by the Competition in which the Club holding the Licence is allocated by the Committee. Such period is not to exceed 1 March in the Membership Year to which the Licence relates. Save in exceptional circumstances a Conditional Licence cannot be granted to a Club for successive Membership Years in respect of the same Criterion.

“Criteria” means the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches and Inter-Step Play Off Matches as set out in regulation 9 of these Regulations.

“Feeder Leagues” means Regional NLS Feeder Leagues from where a Club can enter the NLS.

“League” means any competition sanctioned by The Association and/or an Affiliated Association in membership of the NLS or Feeder Leagues (as applicable).

“Licence” means an annual licence required to be held by a Club to be a member of a Competition that may be either an Unconditional Licence or Conditional Licence.

“NLS” means the National League System of competitions controlled by The Association where promotion and relegation links exist between participating Leagues.

“Playing Season” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the League is played each year until the date on which the last competitive fixture in the League is played. For Clubs participating in Play Off Matches this does include the period when Play Off Matches are played.

“Play Off Match(es)” means matches played between Clubs in a Play Off Position on a format to be determined by each League provided that the format is the same across each Step.

“Play Off Position” means the position of a Club at the end of each Playing Season which is provided for in Standardised Rule 12 as qualifying the Club to take part in a Play Off Match to qualify for promotion to the next Step for the next Playing Season.

“Regular Season” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the League is played each year and the date on which the last competitive fixture in the League is played, excluding Play Off Matches.

“Regulations” means these regulations.

“Rules” means The Association’s Standardised Rules or The Association’s Standard Code of Rules under which a League is administered.

“Step” means the level at which a Club participates in the NLS or Feeder League (as applicable).

“Unconditional Licence” means a Licence without any conditions attached.

- 1.1 Due to the impact of COVID-19, a number of regulations were temporarily amended or disapplied for the 2020/2021 season. It is intended that any temporarily amended or disapplied regulations will be reinstated for the commencement of the 2021/2022 season, save where any further amendments have been approved by FA Council. A number of existing regulations have also been amended.

2. THE NLS SHALL BE OPERATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS.

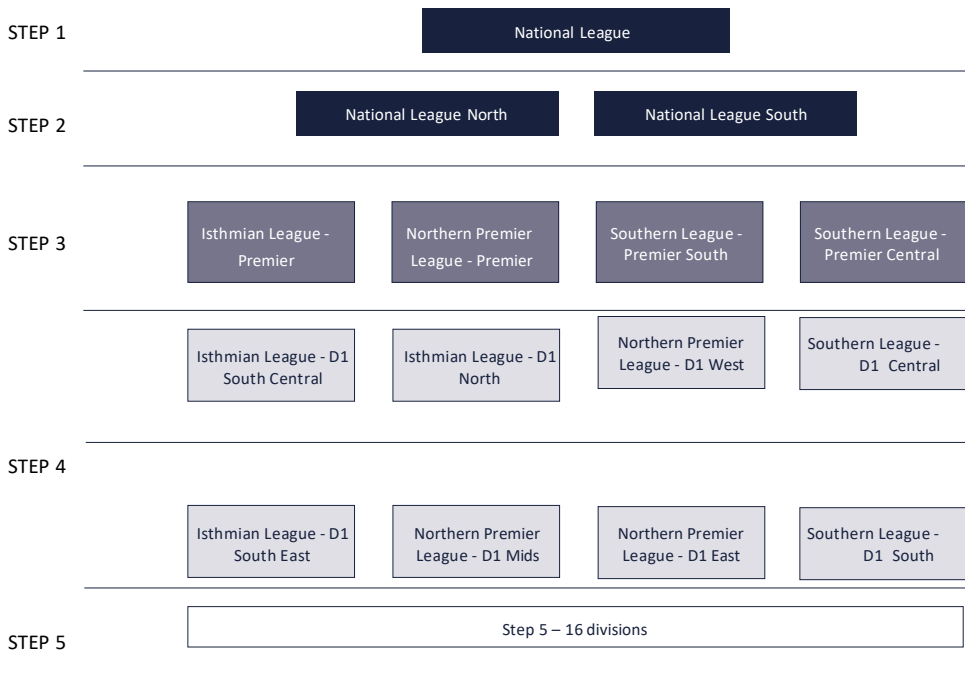
The aims and objectives of the NLS are to provide:

- 2.1 Clubs with a level of competitive football appropriate to their playing ability, stadium/ ground facilities and geographical location.
- 2.2 A framework for discussion on matters of policy and common interest to Leagues and Clubs.
- 2.3 The seasonal movement of Clubs.
- 2.4 A co-ordinated approach between Leagues regarding the final date of the Playing Season.

All Leagues are bound by the Regulations. A Club is bound by the Regulations from the date it has qualified for placement into the NLS until such time as it leaves the NLS for whatever reason.

3. NLS LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The current structure of the NLS is set out below:



The Leagues currently at Steps 5 and 6 are set out at the end of the Regulations.

Each Step shall have the following maximum number of Clubs: Step 1-24, Step 2-48, Step 3-88, Step 4-160, Step 5 - 320, Step 6- 340. Clubs will be placed in the most geographically appropriate division.

- 3.2 Any league wishing to become part of the NLS must apply to the Committee by 31st December in the relevant year in such form and/or providing such information as shall be required by the Committee from time to time. The decision as to whether or not a league should be admitted to the NLS shall be made by the Committee which will then decide on the Step at which the League will compete.
- 3.3 Any League wishing to propose an adjustment to its position within the NLS must apply in writing to the Committee by 31st December in any year for such proposal to be determined by the Committee in order, if approved, to have effect in the following Playing Season.

4. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

The Committee shall provide for the seasonal promotion, relegation or the movement of Clubs.

5 DETAILED PROMOTION AND RELEGATION ISSUES

- 5.1 The criteria for entry to the NLS and the criteria for ground/stadium facilities and the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches shall be determined by the Committee. All criteria so determined shall be published by The Association from time to time.
- 5.2 Subject to 5.5, at the conclusion of each Playing Season, the following procedures will apply to promotion / relegation subject to the application of the Rules:

Step 1 and Step 2

These regulations do not deal with promotion from Step 1

The Clubs finishing in the bottom four places at Step 1 at the end of the Playing Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 2 for the following Playing Season.

They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the divisions at Step 2 together with a further two Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted. The Clubs finishing in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th positions shall be eligible to take part in the Play Off Matches. The Play Off Matches shall be played so that in each Step 2 division there is a qualifying round, semi-finals and a promotion final with all ties being played over a single leg at the ground of the higher placed Club. The winner of the promotion final in each Step 2 division will be promoted. If a Club is not eligible to enter Step 1 then it shall not take part in any Play Off Matches. In that event, such Club shall not be replaced and the Play Off Matches structure and draw shall be adjusted as necessary by the Competition on the basis of the remaining Clubs' final league positions.

Step 2 and Step 3

The Clubs in the bottom four places in each of the two divisions at Step 2 at the end of the Regular

Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 3 for the following Playing Season.

They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the four divisions at Step 3 together with a further four Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 3, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to a second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off Match and the winner of that match will play in the further Play Off Match described above. Clubs finishing below position 7 will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 2 for the following Playing Season.

Step 3 and Step 4

The Clubs finishing in the bottom four places in each of the four divisions at Step 3 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 4 for the following Playing Season.

They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the eight divisions at Step 4 together with a further eight Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 4 the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per game ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to the second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off Match and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 3 for the following Playing Season.

Step 4 and Step 5

2023/24 Season

The Clubs finishing in the bottom two places in each of the eight divisions at Step 4 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 5 for the following Playing Season.

Clubs relegated for finishing in the bottom two places in each of the eight divisions at Step 4 will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5 together with a further 16 Clubs (one Club from each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5) determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the minimum criteria for promotion to the next Step (which shall include being awarded a Grade 5 following an independent ground grading inspection), the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 5, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed of the eligible Clubs and the other two eligible Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs, then the highest placed eligible Club shall receive a bye and play the winner of the other Play Off Match, and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 4 for the following Playing Season. In addition, a Club promoted to Step 4 shall comply with the Licencing System provision as set out in Appendix 1 to the Standardised Rules.

2024/25 Season onwards

The Clubs finishing in the bottom four places in each of the eight divisions at Step 4 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 5 for the following Playing Season.

Clubs relegated for finishing in the bottom four places in each of the eight divisions at Step 4 will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5 together with a further 16 Clubs (one Club from each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5) determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the minimum criteria for promotion to the next Step (which shall include being awarded a Grade 5 following an independent ground grading inspection), the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 5, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed of the eligible Clubs and the other two eligible Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs, then the highest placed eligible Club shall receive a bye and play the winner of the other Play Off Match, and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

Step 5 and Step 6

2023/24 Season

The Clubs in bottom place in each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 6 for the following Playing Season.

These Clubs will be replaced by (i) the Clubs finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season in each of the two divisions operated by the South West Peninsula League; (ii) the Clubs finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season in each of the remaining fifteen divisions at Step 6; and (iii) a further fifteen Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches within those

remaining fifteen divisions (i.e. not including the two divisions operated by the South West Peninsula League). Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 6, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per game ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to the second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off Match and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 5 for the following Playing Season.

2024/25 Season onwards

The Clubs in the bottom two places in each of the sixteen divisions at Step 5 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 6 for the following Playing Season.

These Clubs will be replaced by (i) the Clubs finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season in each of the two divisions operated by the South West Peninsula League; (ii) the Clubs finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season in each of the remaining fifteen divisions at Step 6; and (iii) a further fifteen Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches within those remaining fifteen divisions (i.e. not including the two divisions operated by the South West Peninsula League). Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 6, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per game ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to the second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off Match and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division

Step 6 and relegation

At the end of the Regular Season the Clubs in the bottom three positions of each of the seventeen Step 6 divisions will be liable to relegation. The final number of Clubs to be relegated will be confirmed once promotion candidates from Feeder Leagues and any vacancies are known. If reprieves are required the Clubs third from bottom will be ranked on a points per match basis (then goal difference, then goals scored if required) - the Club(s) with the best points per match will be reprieved. If all third from bottom Clubs are reprieved, and a further reprieve(s) is required,

the same process will apply for Clubs in second from bottom (and so on).

- 5.3 At Steps 2-5 the Club finishing in last place in the table at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and not reprieved.
- 5.4 At Steps 1 to 6, if a Club becomes eligible to take part in a Play Off Match and refuses to take part in that match or if a Club qualifies for promotion and refuses to be promoted then that Club shall be relegated from the division it last played in and shall play the following Playing Season in the division at the next Step level below. If the refusal/ineligibility applies to a Club currently operating at Step 6, the Club will be removed from the NLS and placed in the appropriate Regional NLS Feeder League, provided there is an eligible Club at Feeder League level to replace them.
- 5.5 Where a vacancy occurs within the NLS the following procedures will apply:

End of the Playing Season

- 5.5.1 (a) Where a Club notifies its decision to resign from its League at the end of the Playing Season, then a vacancy is created on the date the notification of that decision is formally recorded by that League. Such resignation can only be withdrawn by the end of that Playing Season with the consent of the Board of that League.
- (b) In all cases, that Club is treated as a relegated Club. The final table of that division is not affected.
- (c) In cases where the vacancy is created after the end of the Playing Season but before the League's AGM, the vacancy will be filled in accordance with Regulation 5.5.2 below.
- 5.5.2 (a) Where a vacancy occurs at Step 1 and Step 2 following the completion of a Playing Season the best ranked Club in a relegation position is reprieved.
- (b) Where a vacancy arises at Step 3 to 6 following the completion of a Playing Season it shall be dealt with at the sole discretion of the Committee.
- (c) Where a vacancy occurs at Step 3 and 4 after the allocations for the following season have been published and prior to the holding of the League's AGM. The vacancy created shall be dealt with at the sole discretion of the Committee in order to minimise disruption.
- (d) Where a vacancy occurs after the date of a League AGM then a League is not able to replace the Club(s) concerned for the following Playing Season.

Prior to the end of a Playing Season

- 5.5.3 (a) In cases where the vacancy is created prior to the end of the Playing Season, at Steps 1 and 2 the vacancy will be filled by the best ranked Club in a relegation position at the end of the Regular Season, eligible of being reprieved in that same division. In the event of there being more vacancies than Clubs eligible to be reprieved, such vacancy or vacancies will be filled by Clubs eligible to be reprieved in the Competition's other division(s) on a points per match ratio. At Steps 3 to 6, the vacancies shall be filled at the sole discretion of the Committee.
- (b) Where, prior to the end of the Playing Season, a Club notifies its decision to resign from its League with immediate effect or where a Club is removed from the League for any reason, then the playing record of that Club will be expunged and a vacancy is created on the date the resignation or removal is formally recorded by that League.
- (c) In all such cases that Club is treated as a relegated Club and the vacancy will be filled in accordance with 5.5.3(a) above.
- 5.6 Only internal changes to the constitution of a League are allowed following the holding of a League's Annual General Meeting.
- 5.7 Clubs are not allowed to enter into a ground share agreement in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step where the Club has failed to attain or maintain the relevant Grade.
- 5.8 Ground grading requirements will be in accordance with the Rules.

Each Playing Season, a Club participating at Step 1 to Step 6 must attain the following ground grading by 31 March:

STEP	GRADE
Step 1	Grade 1
Step 2	Grade 2
Step 3	Grade 3

Step 4	Grade 4
Step 5	Grade 5
Step 6	Grade 6

Where a Club fails to attain the relevant grade by 31 March in a Playing Season, it will not be eligible for promotion or to participate in any Play Off Match in that Playing Season and will be relegated to the Step immediately below at the end of the Playing Season (save for where that Club also fails to meet the ground grading criteria applicable for the Step immediately below, in which case the Committee shall decide (at its sole discretion) where to place the Club for the following Playing Season).

Clubs promoted from Feeder Leagues must install floodlights in working order by 30th September following promotion. Failure to do this will result in a sanction being imposed at the discretion of the League of which the Club is a member. If by 31st March in the year following promotion the floodlights are still not installed then the Club will be a relegated Club and be dealt with accordingly.

5.9 If a Club is relegated for not achieving the required Grade for the Step at which it is playing (regardless of whether the Club finishes in a relegation position or not), it will not be eligible for promotion again until it has attained the required Grade for the Step to which it wishes to be promoted. The Club must have that Grade at 31st March in the year in which it seeks promotion.

5.10 Where a Club resigns from a League that Club will not be eligible for promotion for at least one Playing Season following the Season in which it resigned. Regulation 5.9 shall also apply if, in the Playing Season during which the Club resigns, that Club failed to attain the required Grade for the Step at which it was playing.

5.11 In the event of any question arising regarding the interpretation of these Regulations it will be decided by The Association in its sole discretion.

6. THE MOVEMENT OF CLUBS WITHIN THE NLS OTHER THAN BY PROMOTION OR RELEGATION

6.1 Movement of a Club from participation in one League to another is not permitted other than by promotion and relegation or otherwise as set out in these Regulations or League Rules save with the approval of the Committee.

It may be necessary from time to time to move Clubs laterally at the same Step. Each year the Committee (or sub-committee thereof) will consider whether any lateral movements may be necessary at each Step and the final decision shall rest with the Committee / sub-committee. Only a Club subject to lateral movement from one League to another may appeal that decision pursuant to Regulation 8.2(b).

6.2 Any Club wishing to move from one League to another must make an application in writing to the Committee on or before 31st March in each year to be effective for the following Playing Season. In the event of such application being successful the League from which the Club is moving shall not levy a financial penalty on that Club.

6.3 (i) If a Club (whether a Members' Club or a Company) is wound up, liquidated, or is removed from its League or withdraws from football competition ('the Former Club'), and a new Club ('the New Club') is established which wishes to be placed within the NLS, it will be allowed to make an application only to join a League/ division at Step 5 of the NLS unless the Former Club was in either Step 4 or Step 5 when the event which caused it to cease its membership occurred in which case it must re-join the NLS at a minimum of two Steps below the level at which it was at the time the event occurred, or withdrew from football competition, whichever is lower. Where the Former Club was a member of Premier League or EFL then the Committee shall at its absolute discretion determine in which League the New Club shall be placed for the

following Playing Season and will set out at its complete discretion the requirements to be met by the New Club.

In order for consideration to be given to the placement in the NLS of the New Club in the following Playing Season, an initial application must be received by the Committee by 1st March or within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, if such date is later than 1st March.

The full application accompanied by all necessary documents including evidence of security of tenure having been granted to the New Club and affiliation to a County Football Association must be received by 31st March or within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, if such date is later than 1st March. The application shall be copied to the League of which membership is being requested. The application will be determined by the Committee.

In considering any application, the Committee will set out at its sole discretion the requirements to be met by the New Club.

In the event of more than one application being received within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, the Committee will consider at its discretion which application will be considered in accordance with this Regulation.

- (ii) If a Club is removed from its League and wishes to remain in the NLS it shall apply to the Committee within five working days of it receiving written notification of its removal from its League. The Committee will consider such application and will place the Club in what it considers at its sole discretion to be the most appropriate League/division for the following Playing Season.

- 6.4 If a Club (whether a Members' Club or a Company) ceases to be a member of its league and that Club (that is not a New Club as defined at 6.3 above) wishes to be placed within the NLS for the immediately following Playing Season, then unless otherwise determined by the Committee, it may be allowed to make an application to join a League/division below the most recent League/division of which the Club was a member.

In order for consideration to be given to the placement in the NLS by the Club in the immediately following Playing Season, an initial application must be received by the Committee in accordance with the procedures set out at 6.3 above. The application shall be copied to the League of which membership is being requested. The application will be determined by the Committee at its absolute discretion.

In considering any application, the Committee will set out at its sole discretion the requirements to be met by the Club in determining whether to approve the application.

- 6.5 If two or more Clubs ("the Merging Clubs") are proposing a transaction or series of transactions that result in the merging or consolidation ("the Proposed Merger") of those Clubs into one Club ("the Merged Club") then a formal application to do so must be received by the Committee and the league(s) of which the Merging Clubs are members by 31st December to be valid for the following Playing Season.

A Deed of Agreement, which shall be legally binding on all parties must be submitted to The Association by 31st March in the year immediately following receipt of the application. The Committee shall determine at its absolute discretion where the Merged Club is

to be included in the NLS for the following Playing Season subject to the provisions of item 6.5.5 below.

A Deed of Agreement, which shall be legally binding on all parties must be submitted to The Association by 31st March in the year immediately following receipt of the application. The Committee shall determine at its absolute discretion where the Merged Club is to be included in the NLS for the following Playing Season subject to the provisions of item 6.5.5 below.

In arriving at its decision the Committee may apply the following minimum criteria:

- 6.5.1 The requirements of Standardised Rule 2.9 for the current Playing Season must be met by each of the Merging Clubs. If one or more of the Merging Clubs is subject to an insolvency event then Standardised Rule 2.9.2 shall be applied to such club(s), otherwise Standardised Rule 2.9.1 shall be applied;
- 6.5.2 The proposed playing name of the Merged Club must be acceptable to the Committee; and
- 6.5.3 The Merged Club must have security of tenure to a ground that meets the relevant ground grading requirements;
- 6.5.4 Any other criteria that the Committee may from time to time deem to be appropriate;
- 6.5.5 The Merged Club will ordinarily be placed at the lower of the Steps at which the Merging Clubs ended the Playing Season in which the application is made. For the purposes of this Regulation, if one of the Merging Clubs has finished that Playing Season in a relegation place, then they will be deemed to have ended the Playing Season at the Step to which they would have been relegated without the Proposed Merger proceeding.

Any decision regarding whether a proposed transaction or series of transactions falls to be considered under this Regulation shall be determined by the Committee at its absolute discretion.

7. PLACEMENT OF A CLUB INTO A LEAGUE

- 7.1 Usually a club can only enter the NLS at Step 6 via a Feeder League. However a League may seek approval from the Committee to receive a club or team not currently in membership of a League within the NLS provided that there is: (a) exceptional circumstances, (b) a vacancy within its constitution, (c) the club meets the entry criteria and (d) promotion and relegation issues have been satisfied. Such request must be received from the league by no later than 1st February. Any decision shall only be capable of Appeal to The Association by the affected League.
- 7.2 Reserve teams, including a team from a club or Club which is not considered by the Committee to be sufficiently separate from another club or Club, will not be permitted to compete above Step 6 in the NLS. There must be a minimum of two Steps between a first and reserve team. This does not apply at Steps 6 and Feeder League level. No two teams from the same Club can play at the same Step.
- 7.3 Teams from Higher Education or Further Education establishments are not permitted to compete above Step 5. This does not prevent any such establishment forming a Club which complies with all entry criteria and which is separate from the establishment itself.
- 7.4 Where a Club moves from one League to another, for whatever reason, the League from which it is being moved must provide the League to which the Club is being moved with a certificate confirming that the Club being moved does not owe any money or other property of any nature to the League from which it is being moved. The Club being moved cannot compete in its new League until such certification has been provided and the onus will be on the Club being moved to ensure that it has cleared all indebtedness to its previous League.

8. PROCEDURES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF ANY MATTER, DISPUTE OR DIFFERENCE BY THE COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Committee may adopt such procedures for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference

as it considers appropriate and expedient, having regard to the aims and objectives set out at Regulation 2. The Committee may require the attendance at a meeting or the written observations of any League or Club, as it considers appropriate to assist its determination.

- 8.2 (a) Any dispute or difference between a League and a Club relating to promotion and relegation issues, lateral movement and/or other eligibility criteria must be referred for determination to the Committee; such determination shall be final and binding subject only to Arbitration in accordance with Rule K.
- (b) Subject to Regulation 6.1 above, any decision of the Committee shall be subject to a right of appeal to an Appeal Board. The decision of that Appeal Board shall be final and binding on all parties.

All referrals of appeals shall be conducted in accordance with the Appeal Regulations save for (i) appeals in relation to Ground Grading decisions where the procedures are outlined in Regulation 8.2(c) below and (ii) appeals in relation to decisions made pursuant to Regulations

6.1 and 6.2 above where the procedures are outlined in Regulation 8.2(d) below.

- (c) Procedures for Ground Grading Appeals
- (i) The ratification of the Ground Grading decision must be sent in writing within 14 days of the final decision date, currently 31st March.
 - (ii) Appeals in relation to Ground Grading Appeals must be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days from the date of the written decision outlining the Grounds of Appeal, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
 - (iii) Unless both parties agree that a hearing should be conducted on the papers, the Committee will appear before an Appeal Board with the Appellant to respond to the application and there is no requirement to make a formal response in writing.
 - (iv) In all cases the Committee will submit any documentation including the Ground Grading report that was considered by the Committee in relation to the Ground Grading decision, (which the appellant would already have received).
 - (v) Dates would be set annually in advance by the Judicial Services Department for the hearing of Ground Grading appeals and details of the dates would be notified to all Clubs in the correspondence from the Committee notifying the decision of the Ground Grading assessment.
- (d) Procedures for appeals against decisions made pursuant to Regulation 6.1 and 6.2.
- (i) Such appeals must be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days from the date of the written decision outlining the Grounds of Appeal, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
 - (ii) The Committee's response to the appeal shall be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days of the date the Club's appeal was submitted, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
 - (iii) In all cases the Committee will submit any documentation considered by the Committee in relation to the relevant decision (which the appellant would already have received) with its response.
 - (iv) The Committee will appear before an Appeal Board with the Appellant for determination of the appeal.
 - (v) Dates would be set annually in advance by the Judicial Services Department for the hearing of such appeals and details of the dates would be notified to the Club in the correspondence from the Committee notifying them of the relevant decision.

- 8.3 The Committee may, at its discretion, delegate the resolution of any matter, dispute or difference arising under these Regulations to anybody it considers to be appropriate (including a sub-committee or commission which may include members of council not on the Committee or a body constituted by a County Football Association).

9. CRITERIA FOR THE PARTICIPATION IN PLAY-OFF MATCHES

In order to qualify for Play Off Matches, a Club must comply with:

- Security of Tenure – see Standardised Rule 2.3.2
- Solvency – see Standardised Rule 13.B.2
- Ground Share requirements, i.e. not ground share in order to gain promotion – see 5.7 of these Regulations
- Ground Grading – see 5.8 of these regulations and the relevant criteria document

10. ARBITRATION

The fact of participation in the NLS and signifying agreement to be bound by the Regulations shall constitute an agreement between each League and Club to refer to Arbitration any challenge in law arising out of, or in relation to, the Regulations in accordance with the provisions of FA Rule K.

11. LICENSING SYSTEM

A Club shall be required to hold a Licence to be a member of a Competition at Steps 1 to 4 of the NLS.

- (a) The Association shall through the appropriate Committee operate a Licensing System to apply to all Clubs competing at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System (“NLS”). A Club is required to hold a Licence to be a member of a Competition at Steps 1 to 4 of the NLS. The Licensing System to be applied is as shown at an Appendix to the Standardised Rules.
- (b) Each Competition at Steps 1 to 4 of the NLS shall be responsible for the operation, assessment and granting of the Licence in respect of its Clubs through the Standardised Rules as approved by a Committee of The Association. A Competition at Steps 1 to 4 shall take all reasonable and practical steps to co-operate with The Association in the application of the Licence.
- (c) In the event that a Competition fails to apply the Licensing System set out in the Standardised Rules to the satisfaction of The Association, then The Association shall have the powers of the Board of that Competition as set out in the Standardised Rules to apply such Licensing System. In addition, The Association may, if necessary, bring an action against the Competition for Misconduct under the Rules of The Association.

12. PRECEDENCE

In the case of conflict between the Regulations for the Operation of the NLS and the Rules, the Regulations take precedence:

LEAGUES/DIVISIONS AT STEPS 5 AND 6 OF THE NLS (SEASON 2023-24)

STEP 5	STEP 6
Combined Counties League Premier Div North Combined Counties League Premier Div South Eastern Counties League Premier Div	Combined Counties League Div 1 Eastern Counties League Div 1 North Eastern Counties League Div 1 South Hellenic League Div 1
Essex Senior League	Midland League Div 1
Hellenic League Premier	Northern Counties East Div
Div Midland League Premier Div	1
North West Counties League Premier Div Northern League Div 1	North West Counties League Div 1 North North West Counties League Div 1 South Northern League Div 2
Northern Counties East League Premier Div Southern Counties East League Premier Div Spartan South Midlands League Premier Div Southern Combination Football League Premier Div United Counties League Premier Div North	South West Peninsula League Premier Div East South West Peninsula League Premier Div West Spartan South Midlands League Div 1
United Counties League Premier Div South Wessex League Premier Div	Southern Combination Football League Div 1 Southern Counties East League Div 1
Western League Premier Div	United Counties League Div 1 Wessex League Div 1
	Western League Div 1

Regional NLS Feeder League Regulations

1. League Structure

- 1.1 The Leagues currently operating as Feeder Leagues are set out at the end of the Appendix.
- 1.2 At Feeder League level the maximum number of Clubs in each division shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority taking into account all relevant factors. In any case, this shall not be more than 18 Clubs. The minimum amount of Clubs should be 14.
- 1.3 Any league wishing to become a Feeder League must apply to the FA Leagues Committee by 31st December in the relevant year in such form and /or providing such information as shall be required by the Committee from time to time. The decision as to whether or not a league should be admitted as a Feeder League shall be made by the Committee.

2. Rules and Regulations for Promotion and Relegation

- 2.1 All Feeder League Clubs seeking promotion to Step 6 must make an application using the prescribed form direct to The Association, copied to their existing League, by 31st December in the relevant year. In order to be considered for promotion Clubs must finish in 1st position in their Feeder League. If the Club finishing in 1st position does not wish to be promoted or fails to meet the entry criteria then the Club finishing in 2nd position will be eligible for promotion. If the Club in 2nd position does not seek promotion or fails to meet the entry criteria then Clubs down to 5th position may be considered for promotion provided that they meet the appropriate entry criteria. Clubs finishing below 5th position may not be considered for promotion and only one Club may be considered for promotion from each League. Each application must be accompanied by the agreed application fee, as determined by the Committee, which is non-refundable.
- 2.2 Clubs competing in a Feeder League must comply fully with the minimum requirements of Grade 8. To be considered for promotion to Step 6, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade 7 and attain Grade 6 by 31st March in the year following promotion. Clubs can be promoted from Feeder Leagues to Step 6 without floodlights, provided that that all other requirements of Grade 7 are met by 31st March in the Playing Season in which the Club wishes to gain promotion and that the Club has the following in place:-
 - Planning permission granted for floodlights.
 - That by 30th September following promotion that floodlights are installed and in working order.
 - A development / business plan
 - Quotations / estimates for the work to be carried out.
 - Funding applications submitted, if required.

Failure to install floodlights in working order by 30th September following promotion will result in a sanction being imposed at the discretion of the League of which the Club is a member. If by 31st March in the year following promotion the floodlights are still not installed then the Club will be a relegated Club and be dealt with accordingly.

3. Placement of a Club in a League

- 3.1 The matter of draft placements for Clubs in Feeder Leagues is for the League in conjunction with its Sanctioning Authority. Once drafted, proposed placements are to be submitted to the Committee for ratification by an appropriate date as prescribed by the Committee from time to time. This is save for Clubs being allocated to Feeder Leagues having been relegated from Step 6, which is a matter for the Committee.
- 3.2 Reserve and 'A' teams may participate in Feeder Leagues. Clubs should note the provision concerning Reserve teams at Step 6 under Regulation 7.2 in the 'National League System Regulations'.

4. Movement of a Club between Leagues

- 4.1 Movement of a Club from participation in one League to another is not permitted other than by promotion and relegation or otherwise as set out in League Rules save with the approval of the Committee.

It may be necessary from time to time to move Clubs laterally at the same Step. Each year the Committee (or sub-committee thereof) will consider whether any lateral movements may be necessary at each Step and the final decision shall rest with the Committee/sub-committee. Only a Club subject to lateral movement from one League to another may appeal that decision pursuant to Regulation 5.2(b).

- 4.2 Any Club wishing to move from one League to another must make an application in writing to the Committee on or before 31st March in each year to be effective for the following Playing Season. In the event of such application being successful, the League from which the Club is moving shall not levy a financial penalty on that Club.

5. Procedures for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference by the Committee

- 5.1 The Committee may adopt such procedures for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference as it considers appropriate and expedient, having regard to the aims and objectives set out in Regulation 2. The Committee may require the attendance at a meeting or the written observations of any League or Club, as it considers appropriate to assist its determination.

- 5.2 (a) Any dispute or difference between a League and a Club relating to promotion and relegation issues, lateral movement and/or other eligibility criteria must be referred for determination to the Committee; such determination shall be final and binding subject only to Arbitration in accordance with Rule K.
- (b) Subject to Regulation 4.1 above, any decision of the Committee shall be subject to a right of appeal to an Appeal Board. The decision of that Appeal Board shall be final and binding on all parties.

All referrals of appeals shall be conducted in accordance with the Appeal Regulations save for

- (i) appeals in relation to Ground Grading decisions where the procedures are outlined in Regulation 5.2(c) below and (ii) appeals in relation to decisions made pursuant to Regulations

4.1 and 4.2 above where the procedures are outlined in Regulation 5.2(d) below.

(c) Procedures for Ground Grading Appeals

- (i) The ratification of the Ground Grading decision must be sent in writing within 14 days of the final decision date, currently 31st March.
- (ii) Appeals in relation to Ground Grading Appeals must be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days from the date of the written decision outlining the Grounds of Appeal, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
- (iii) The Committee will appear before an Appeal Board with the Appellant to respond to the application and there is no requirement to make a formal response in writing.
- (iv) In all cases the Committee will submit any documentation including the Ground Grading report that was considered by the Committee in relation to the Ground Grading decision, (which the appellant would already have received).
- (v) Dates would be set annually in advance by the Judicial Services Department for the hearing of Ground Grading appeals and details of the dates would be notified to all Clubs in the correspondence from the Committee notifying the decision of the Ground Grading assessment.

(d) Procedures for appeals against decisions made pursuant to Regulation 4.1 and 4.2

- (i) Such appeals must be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days from the date of the written decision outlining the Grounds of Appeal, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
- (ii) The Committee's response to the appeal shall be submitted to The Association's Judicial Services Department within seven days of the date the Club's appeal was submitted, with a copy to The Association's National League System Department.
- (iii) In all cases the Committee will submit any documentation considered by the Committee in relation to the relevant decision (which the appellant would already have received) with its response.
- (iv) The Committee will appear before an Appeal Board with the Appellant for determination of the appeal.
- (v) Dates would be set annually in advance by the Judicial Services Department for the hearing of such appeals and details of the dates would be notified to the Club in the correspondence from the Committee notifying them of the relevant decision.

5.3 The Committee may, at its discretion, delegate the resolution of any matter, dispute or difference arising under these Regulations to anybody it considers to be appropriate (including a sub-committee or commission which may include members of council not on the Committee or a body constituted by a County Football Association).

Leagues with Regional NLS Feeder League status - 2023-24 season:

Anglian Combination Premier Div	Nottinghamshire Senior League Senior Div
Bedfordshire County League Premier Div	Oxfordshire Senior League Premier Div
Cambridgeshire County League premier Div	Peterborough & District League Premier Div
Central Midlands League Div North	Salop Leisure Football League Premier Div
Central Midlands League Div South	Sheffield & Hallamshire County Senior League Premier Div
Cheshire League Premier Div	Somerset County League Premier Div
Devon League Premier Div East	Southern Combination Div Two
Devon League Premier Div West	Spartan South Midlands League Div 2
Dorset Premier League	St Piran Football League Premier East
Essex & Suffolk Border League Premier Div	St Piran Football League Premier West
Essex Olympian League Premier Div	Staffordshire County Senior League Premier Div
Gloucestershire County League Premier Div	Suffolk & Ipswich League Senior Div
Hampshire Premier League Senior Div	Surrey Elite Intermediate League Intermediate Div
Herts Senior County League Premier Div	Thames Valley Premier League Premier Div
Humber Premier League Premier Div	Wearside League
Kent County League Premier Div	West Cheshire League Div 1
Leicestershire Senior League Premier Div	West Lancashire League Premier Div West Midlands
Lincolnshire Football League Premier Div	(Regional) League Div 1
Liverpool County Premier League Premier Div	West Yorkshire League Premier Div
Manchester Football League Premier Div	Wiltshire Football League Premier Div
Mid Sussex Football League Premier Div	York Football League Premier Div Yorkshire Football
Middlesex County League Premier Div	

Midland League Div 2	League
Northamptonshire Combination Premier Div	
Northern Football Alliance Premier Div	
North Riding Football League Premier Div	

APPENDIX H

EMBARGO

Embargo means a ban on a Club signing, re-signing, exercising an option to sign, extending a contract, converting a loan into a permanent transfer, converting a short term loan into a long term loan, loaning or seeking in any way to register a player whether on a contractual or non-contractual basis or as an amateur, trainee, academy, work experience or schoolboy associate other than within any of the Embargo Terms and Exemptions hereinafter contained.

Embargoed Club means any Club subject to an Embargo

An embargo may be imposed pursuant to any of the relevant preceding or subsequent Rules and Regulations or Appendices but in any event shall be imposed:-

(a) where a Club has undergone an Insolvency Event

(b) where a Club has been served with a winding-up petition which has not been satisfied in full or to the satisfaction of the petitioning creditors as evidenced by written agreement or

(c) where a Club has either defaulted on such an agreement or has omitted or incorrectly reported its failure to adhere to the terms of any agreement.

Any embargo is without prejudice to any other penalties that the Competition may wish or be entitled to impose pursuant to any other Rule or Regulation or Appendix in relation to any matter giving rise to the right to impose an embargo including but not limited to any default, or any agreement reached with creditors or failure to report the default or incorrectly reporting the Club's adherence to any agreement with creditors.

Embargo Terms and Exemptions

1. Prior to the start of the season an Embargoed Club will be permitted to sign up to 16 players. The complement of registrations must comprise entirely non-contract players save that it may include players under existing written contract, or players listed on the retained list at the end of the previous season where an option has been exercised prior to the implementation of the embargo.
2. In the event of the playing squad of any Embargoed Club falling below 16 registered players of whatever status then any of its then existing registered players who is the subject of a short term loan agreement may have that agreement renewed/extended.
3. In the event of any Embargoed Club having more than 16 registered players then subject to the exceptions hereinafter contained no short term loans may be renewed or extended.
4. In the event of any Embargoed Club having its playing squad fall below 16 registered players and where none of the registered players are on short term loans then the Embargoed Club shall be entitled to sign and register a sufficient number of non-contract players to bring the total of its squad up to 16.
5. An Embargoed Club shall in any event not be entitled to change the status of any of its registered players without the prior permission of the Board nor shall it be entitled to engage any new player under the permitted exemptions, on terms better than those of any player whose departure gave rise to the right to sign any other player.
6. An Embargoed Club shall not be permitted to improve the existing terms of any its registered players.
7. In the event of an Embargoed Club having a squad of 16 or less players, of whatever status, satisfying the Competition that any of those players have a long term injury (for this purpose a long term injury shall mean an injury supported by satisfactory medical evidence which may either be a medical certificate from the player's own Doctor or a letter signed by either a State Registered Physiotherapist or a Member of the Chartered Institute of Physiotherapists stating that the player or players will be unavailable for selection for a period of not less than 14 days) then it shall be entitled to sign a replacement player or players as the case may be on a non contract basis but subject to the provisions of Clause 5 hereof and for a period not to exceed the certification of the long term injury or injuries. A new player registered under this clause must not be nominated on the Team Sheet for any match at the same time as the player he has been signed to replace, and must not be engaged on more favourable terms than the player he has been signed to replace.

8. Where the number of eligible players falls below 11, or 11 excluding a goalkeeper, due to suspensions, a Club may make application to the Board to sign non-contract player(s) to ensure a team of 11, including a goalkeeper, can be fielded.
9. In the event of an Embargoed Club having no fit goalkeeper (again as evidenced by medical certificates) then it shall be entitled to register a goalkeeper for an initial maximum period of 28 days. A goalkeeper registered under this clause must not be nominated on the Team Sheet for any match at the same time as the goalkeeper he has been signed to replace, and must not be engaged on more favourable terms than the goalkeeper he has been signed to replace.
10. In any event if an Embargoed Club's squad falls below 16 because of exceptional circumstances then it shall have the right to make a written application to the Board of the Competition for its consent to sign sufficient players to bring the number of its squad up to 16 and the Board acting in the interest of the integrity of the Competition shall have the right at its absolute discretion to permit the Embargoed Club to sign sufficient players on non-contract or short term loans to bring the number of its playing squad up to 16 fit players applying the criteria set out in the Exemptions above.
11. Any event being a breach of any Competition Rule (including but not limited to the late delivery of a FRI form) which may give rise to the imposition of an Embargo, shall give the Board the right to impose that Embargo with immediate effect. The Board will in any event procure that a written request for a personal hearing in respect of such a decision will be heard within 7 days of receipt of the request from the Club, notwithstanding the Club's immediate right of Appeal in accordance with Rule 16.4. Pending any such request for a personal hearing, or any subsequent appeal to The Football Association, the Embargo will remain in place.
12. In the event of an Embargo being imposed pursuant to any breaches of the FRI regulations then the Embargo will not be lifted until 7 days after full compliance by the Embargoed Club with the FRI regulations in force from time to time
13. In the event of any Club failing to comply fully with any agreement with HMRC, whether formal or informal, or the terms of any Creditor Compromise then apart from any other obligations and penalties within these Rules and Regulations it shall be obliged to inform the Competition forthwith of such failure or contravention and the defaulting Club shall be placed under an immediate embargo. If the Club fails to advise the Competition upon becoming aware of such an event then it shall be subject to such penalty as the Board may impose in its entire discretion including but not limited to deduction of points, fines, suspension and expulsion.

APPENDIX I

MATCH DELEGATE

The administrative procedure will be as follows: The Football League will appoint a Match Delegate to all matches. Some days before the match, the Match Delegate should contact you by letter advising you of his appointment and requesting the appropriate tickets, e.g. car park, admittance, etc (for your guidance, the Football League for their games suggest a maximum of TWO complimentary tickets per Match Delegate). The Club Secretary should then either send the tickets by return post, or place them at the gate on match day as mutually agreed. If Match Delegate does NOT follow the above procedure please inform the Secretary. Please allocate at the ground seating ticket(s) within or adjacent to the Directors' Box which provide an uninterrupted view of the playing area. On his arrival at the ground the Match Delegate will call at your office to collect a match programme and confirm with you that the referee is as printed in the programme. There will be pre-match contact between referee and Match Delegate and at the conclusion of the game on both occasions in the match official's dressing room.

1 HOSPITALITY - The National League requests that the club hospitality be afforded to the Match Delegate but not necessarily in the boardroom. Boardroom hospitality shall be at the sole discretion of the club chairman.

2 Would you please stress to your club directors and club officials that it is totally inappropriate to engage the Match Delegate in conversation appertaining to the match.

3 If your game is postponed for any reason please be CERTAIN to "stand down" the Match Delegate, if known, as well as the three match officials.

4 Please ensure that your Programme Editor when compiling the programme identifies each assistant referee by one of the flag colours. The identification should read "yellow trim" or "red trim".

5 Should you encounter any difficulties with the Match Delegate's scheme, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary.

STANDING ORDERS - RULES OF DEBATE

- 1 Each member on speaking shall rise and address the chairman and his speech must be relevant to the issue. The question of relevance shall be decided by the chairman. If two or more members shall rise to speak at the same time, the chairman shall decide who has the priority to speak.
- 2 When the chairman arises to speak no one shall continue standing or speaking until the chair has been resumed.
- 3 A member shall not speak more than once on any motion amendment or point of order except by permission of the Chairman or by leave of the meeting, subject to the right of reply to the mover of the original motion.
- 4 The mover of every original resolution or motion shall have the right to reply to objections or queries raised against the resolution or motion.
- 5 Any motion or amendment once made and seconded shall not be altered or withdrawn without the consent of the chairman or meeting, without discussion.
- 6 When an amendment is moved on a proposition, no further amendment shall be moved until the first is disposed of, but any number of amendments may be brought forward in succession. If an amendment is affirmed it shall form the proposition under consideration, whereupon further amendments can be moved. The mover of the amendment which is affirmed shall be entitled to speak in reply in the event of further amendments being proposed.
- 7 An amendment shall be either: (a) to leave out words; (b) to insert words; or (c) to omit words in order to insert others.
- 8 No member shall be permitted to move or second more than two amendments on any motion.
- 9 Members will be allowed up to a maximum time of five minutes to speak on any motions or amendments or points of order, except with the permission of the chairman.
- 10 The decision of the chairman upon any point of order shall be final.

APPENDIX K

KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

Kicks from the penalty mark are taken after the match has ended and unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game apply.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK START

- Unless there are other considerations (e.g. ground conditions, safety etc.), the referee tosses a coin to decide the goal at which the kicks will be taken which may only be changed for safety reasons or if the goal or playing surface becomes unusable.
- The referee tosses a coin again and the team that wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick.
- With the exception of a substitute for a goalkeeper who is unable to continue, only players who are on the field of play or are temporarily off the field of play (injury, adjusting equipment etc.) at the end of the match are eligible to take kicks.
- Each team is responsible for selecting from the eligible players the order in which they will take the kicks. The referee is not informed of the order.
- If at the end of the match and before or during the kicks one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to the same number as its opponents and the referee must be informed of the name and number of each player excluded. Any excluded player is not eligible to take part in the kicks (except as outlined below).
- A goalkeeper who is unable to continue before or during the kicks may be replaced by a player excluded to equalise the number of players or, if their team has not used its maximum permitted number of substitutes, a named substitute, but the replaced goalkeeper takes no further part and may not take a kick.
- If the goalkeeper has already taken a kick, the replacement may not take a kick until the next round of kicks.

DURING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

- Only eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play.
- All eligible players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle.
- The goalkeeper of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.
- An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper.
- The kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play or the referee stops play for any offence; the kicker may not play the ball a second time.
- The referee keeps a record of the kicks.
- If the goalkeeper commits an offence and, as a result, the kick is retaken, the goalkeeper must be cautioned.
- If the kicker is penalised for an offence committed after the referee has signalled for the kick to be taken, that kick is recorded as missed and the kicker is cautioned.
- If both the goalkeeper and kicker commit an offence at the same time:
 - a. if the kick is missed or saved, the kick is retaken and both players cautioned
 - b. if the kick is scored, the goal is disallowed, the kick is recorded as missed and the kicker cautioned

SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS EXPLAINED BELOW, BOTH TEAMS TAKE FIVE KICKS

- The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
- If, after both teams have taken five kicks, the scores are level kicks continue until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- The above principle continues for any subsequent sequence of kicks but a team may change the order of kickers.
- Kicks from the penalty mark must not be delayed for a player who leaves the field of play. The player's kick will be forfeited (not scored) if the player does not return in time to take a kick.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND SEND OFFS DURING KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK

- A player, substitute or substituted player may be cautioned or sent off.
- A goalkeeper who is sent off must be replaced by an eligible player.
- A player other than the goalkeeper who is unable to continue may not be replaced.
- The referee must not abandon the match if a team is reduced to fewer than seven players.

APPENDIX M**THE NATIONAL LEAGUE****STANDARD FEES TARIFF SEASON 2023/24**

Rule	Subject Matter	Amount (£)
2.5	Ground Grading Fees:- National League National League North & South	£750 £500
3.1	Application for Membership for new member clubs	£500
3.2	Annual Subscriptions:- National League National League North & South	£2,000 £1,000
4.3	Fee for Personal Hearing	£150
6.1.1	Registration Forms	£ zero
13.A7	Sporting Sanctions Appeal	£5,000
14.7	Match Officials Fees:- National League Referee National League Assistant Referee National League Fourth Official National League travel expenses by car National League Hotel expenses National League North & South Referee National League North & South Assistant Referee National League North & South travel expenses by car	£180 £90 £60 or £80 if televised 40p per mile maximum Covered by the FA £110 £70 40p per mile
16.1	Protest, claim, complaint or Appeal to Board	£275
16.4	Appeal to The Football Association	£275
16.5	Appeal by Player	£175
16.6	Appeal by Club	£175
16.10	Arbitration	£500 per club
39.2	Football Creditor payment fee	£200 per payment
Board Directive	Football Academy Licence Fee	£1,000

APPENDIX N

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

STANDARD FINES TARIFF SEASON 2023/24

Rule	Subject Matter	Amount (£)
2.8	Failure to provide required notifications to the Competition within 14 days.	£400 National £200 North/South
2.15	Failure to inform the Competition of an Insolvency Event ²¹	£1,000 National £500 North/South
2.17	Failure to provide required submission to the Competition within 14 days	£200 National £100 North/South
2.20	Failure to attend any General or Special Meeting	£500 - £2,000
3.2	Failure to pay Annual Subscription 7 days before AGM	£400 National £200 North/South
6.4.2	Failure to register 16 players 14 days prior to start of season.	£200 National £100 North/South
6.7	Failure to return Retained List by due date	£200 National £100 North/South
6.8	Failure to use a branded substitution board	£500 Live TV match £200 National £100 North/South
6.9	Playing ineligible player in a match	£500 - £2,000 if a fine is levied as part or all of sanction
7.1	Playing in unregistered colours without first obtaining permission	£400 National £200 North/South
7.1	Failure to have all shirts correctly numbered	£100 National, North/South
7.2	Playing in colours that cause a clash, including the goalkeeper	£400 National £200 North/South
7.4	Failure of player to wear number in accordance with team sheet	£100 National, North/South
7.4	Failure to wear official shirt numbers in a match	£100 National, North/South
7.5	Captain not wearing armband	£100 National, North/South
7.6	Failure to wear official sleeve badges in a match	£500 Live TV match £200 National £100 North/South
8.21	Late presentation of Team Sheet to Match referee	£100 National, North/South
8.21	Presentation of Team Sheet to Referee & opponents by person(s) other than those required by Rule	£100 National, North/South
8.25-8.29	Breach of Technical Area regulations	£100 National, North/South which will be doubled for each subsequent offence
8.31	Failure of all occupants of the technical area to wear corporate bench kit	£1,000 Live TV match £400 National £200 North/South which will be doubled for each subsequent offence
8.32	Failure by a Home Club to provide a full match video	£400 National £200 North/South which will be doubled for each subsequent offence
8.35	Late or incomplete submission of match result form	£100 National, North/South

8.35	Failure to provide a report if the Match Referee has been awarded a mark of less than 60	£100 National, North/South
8.42	Failure to notify all concerned of postponement or abandonment	£400 National £200 North/South
8.43	Failure to fulfil a fixture in The National League	£2,500 - £10,000 if a fine is levied as part or all of sanction
10.8	Failure to supply full financial statements and annual accounts	£1,000 National £500 North/South
14.2	Postponement of a match without following the procedure published by the FA	£400 National £200 North/South
14.6	Responsible for late kick-off by either club	£75 plus £2 per minute for each minute late.
14.7	Failure to pay Match Officials on day of match in dressing room	£100 National, North/South
14.9	Failure to use official match balls in a match	£1,000 Live TV match £400 National £200 North/South
15	Late resignation from The National League (by 31 March)	£5,000 - £20,000
18	Failure to return Competition trophies by due date	£100 National, North/South
18	Failure to return trophies in good condition	£100 National, North/South plus costs of repairs
24	Failure to comply with Competition insurance requirements	£500 - £2,000
25	Failure to comply with Competition medical personnel requirements	£250 - £1,000
34	Failure to utilise match boards provided by the Competition's sponsor in a match	£1,000 Live TV match £400 National £200 North/South which will be doubled for each subsequent offence
APPENDIX D, E	Financial Reporting Initiative, Budget Monitoring Scheme & Permitted Loans	Failure to provide any quarterly report will result in an immediate embargo and a £250 fine for a first offence. Such failure or a second offence may be considered as misconduct and dealt with in accordance with Rule 3.1.

These fines are for guidance purposes.

APPENDIX P

LEAGUE CUP - COMPETITION RULES

1. The Competition shall be called the "League Cup". All Clubs competing in The National League shall play in the League Cup Competition.
2. The Competition shall observe the Rules, Regulations and Bye-laws of the Football Association, and all matches shall be played according to the Laws of the Game as settled by the International Football Association Board.
3. The Competition shall be played on a knock out basis. All rounds to be played on a single-leg basis. In rounds played on a single-leg basis, if the scores are level at the end of 90 minutes, the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board. All rounds up to and including the semi final will be drawn on a geographical basis with the date for each round and the Final Ties being decided by the Board of Directors.
4. The entire management and control of the Competition shall be vested in The National League who shall have power to deal with any matter for which no specific provision is made.
5. No Club shall withdraw from this competition.
6. The matches shall be played on such dates as The National League may decide, unless rearrangement is mutually agreed upon between the clubs affected. Dates of such rearranged matches must be communicated to the General Manager of The National League by both Clubs within two days of such rearrangement.
7. The minimum charge for admission to matches in this Competition shall be £7.00 (Spectators aged 16 and under and Senior Citizens excepted). All spectators will pay the Club's advertised admission charges. In all matches up to but not including the Semi Final, the net gate receipts shall be shared by the competing clubs in accordance with FA Challenge Cup Rules, after allowable deductions for Match Officials' fees and expenses, a maximum of £100 if played under floodlights, advertising and printing (not including match day programmes), obligatory safety attendants and/or Police, obligatory medical attendants (not team-related), and the visiting team's travelling expenses of 16 standard class railway fares or the actual expense incurred, whichever is the lower. When travelling by coach or car the visiting team's travelling expenses shall be reimbursed at the actual costs incurred. In all rounds, the Balance Sheet for the Match along with payment to the visiting Club, if appropriate, must be made within fourteen days of the match.
8. In all matches any player who has been duly registered with The National League shall be eligible. No Player can play for a second or subsequent club in the Competition in any one season. Players must be Registered in accordance with National League Rule 6, Players, and 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, and 6.8. For all League Cup matches no less than 10 of the 16 players named on the Team Sheet must have taken part in at least one of the Clubs two previous First Team fixtures. Any Club failing to comply with this requirement may forfeit all League Cup and Television Fees for the match in which the Club has breached this rule together with any other penalty the Board may decide.
9. Rules 8 and 12 of The National League shall be applicable in all rounds of this Competition.
10. All protests shall be lodged in triplicate within three days of the date when the match was played, accompanied by a fee of £200.00, which may be returned at the discretion of the Directors if the appeal is sustained.
11. Where a match has been postponed or abandoned through causes over which neither Club has any control, the expenses shall be paid out of the receipts of the second match.
12. The winning Club shall, on complying with the conditions of Rule 18 of The National League, hold the trophy for the year and be responsible for the engraving of the trophy before its return. Both the winning Club and the runners up shall be presented with 25 commemorative tokens.
13. Match Officials will be appointed by the Appointing Authority and all the conditions of The National League Rule 14 will apply. In the Final Ties tokens will be awarded to the Referee(s) and Assistant Referees.
14. The Rules of the Football Association Challenge Cup and The National League shall apply to this competition as far as they are applicable to the League Cup, except as specially provided for in the foregoing Rules.
15. The Final Ties shall be played at the direction of the Board of Directors and shall take precedence over any other fixture except the F.A. Cup, F.A. Challenge Trophy, Welsh Cup or the Senior Cup Competition for which the Club is eligible of the County

Association to which it was first affiliated, after consultation with the Clubs concerned.

16. No alteration or addition to existing Rules shall be made, except at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting convened on a requisition signed by not less than two-thirds of the Clubs comprising The National League, and then only upon such resolution being carried by two-thirds majority of the members present and voting thereon. Notice of alteration or addition must be sent to the General Manager not less than eight weeks before the date of such meetings, the same to be printed and circulated to Clubs for the purpose of amendments within the following 10 days and any proposed amendments to be notified to the General Manager not later than a further 10 days. All proposed alterations and amendments to be forwarded to Clubs at least twenty-one days before the meeting.

APPENDIX Q – THE LICENSING SYSTEM

This Licensing System has been compiled by the National League System Policy Body and approved by The FA Council for the mandatory use of all Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 (inclusive) of the National League System and should be read in conjunction with the Standardised Rules (“the Rules”) and The FA’s Sanction and Control of Competitions Regulations.

DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise stated, definitions are as stated in the Rules.

“The FA” or “The Association” means The Football Association Limited

“Competition” – means a league at Steps 1-4 of the National League System

“Licence” means the annual licence required to be held by a Club who wishes to be a member of a Competition, which may be either an Unconditional Licence or a Conditional Licence .

“Licence Criteria” – as stated in Annex 1, each of which is a Criterion

“Conditional Licence” – a Licence with conditions attached to be met by a Club within a period determined by the Competition in which the Club holding the Licence is allocated by the Leagues Committee. Such period is not to exceed 1 March in the Membership Year to which the Licence relates. Save in exceptional circumstances, a Conditional Licence cannot be granted to a Club for successive Membership Years in respect of the same Criterion.

“Unconditional Licence” – a Licence without any conditions attached

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND APPLICATION OF THE LICENCE

- 1.1 The Association operates a Licensing System for Clubs at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System. The Association has delegated to each Competition the operation, determination and monitoring of the Licence as set out in this Licensing System (“the delegated powers”). The Association retains a right to apply the operation, determination and monitoring of the Licence as set out in Section 2 below. The Competition may in accordance with the Rules delegate its responsibilities under this Licensing System to a Sub Committee or similar body.
- 1.2 A Club must hold a Licence to be a member of a Competition.
- 1.3 A Licence is granted for a Membership Year. In each Membership Year the Competition must monitor the compliance of each Club in relation to the Licence Criteria unless the Licence has been withdrawn by the Competition or has been or is to be surrendered by a Club.
- 1.4 If at any time during a Membership Year the Competition becomes aware that a Club no longer fulfils any of the Licensing Criteria then the Competition shall review that Club’s Licence in relation to the non-fulfilment such that a Licence may be withdrawn, suspended or have conditions imposed or varied or have financial penalties imposed upon it.
- 1.5 A Club must give written notification to the Competition of which it is a member of any breach of any Licence Criterion within 5 working days of the breach occurring.
- 1.6 If a Club’s Licence is suspended then that Club cannot participate in the Competition from that date until the expiry of seven days from the day the default is remedied, unless otherwise agreed by the Competition. If the Competition refuse or withdraw a Licence then that Club cannot participate in the Competition.
- 1.7 A Club that does not hold a Licence to be a member of a Competition may apply to The Association to be placed elsewhere within the National League System in accordance with National League System Regulations but shall not be automatically entitled to such a place.

2. ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 2.1 At any time The Association can make representations in writing to the Competition with regard to the Licence of a Club and the Competition shall respond in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the representation.

- 2.2 The Association has the right to apply at any time the delegated powers where in the reasonable opinion of The Association the Competition has failed to do so or has failed to do so adequately and the procedure set out in paragraph 2.3 has been followed. This right includes determining any sanctions for non-compliance by a Club with the Licence Criteria. In the event that The Association exercises the delegated powers then they shall be applied by The Association's Chief Regulatory Officer or any officer acting on a delegated authority.
- 2.3 The procedure to be adopted in the event that The Association wish to apply delegated powers as provided for in paragraph 2.2 is that The Association's Chief Regulatory Officer or any officer acting on a delegated authority shall give written notice to the Competition setting out the matter in respect of which it wishes to apply delegated powers, the decision it wishes to apply and the full reasons for this. The Competition shall reply in writing within five working days of receipt of The Association's written notice, or 3 May following the submission of the application if earlier, setting out its responses to the proposal including the Competition's agreement or otherwise to The Association's notice. If agreed then the decision required by The Association shall be applied by the Competition and shall be treated as a decision of the Competition. If not agreed then The Association may, after considering the responses of the Competition, confirm its decision to exercise delegated powers to the Club and the Competition in writing. In the event that The Association has applied the delegated powers then the decision of the Competition shall be set aside and the decision of The Association shall apply subject to an appeal by the Club and or the Competition as set out in Section 7.

3. LICENSING PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

- 3.1 Each Club is required to apply for a Licence using the application form. The application form is to be received by the Competition by 14 March in respect of the Membership Year immediately following. A Club shall be assessed by the Competition in accordance with the Licensing Criteria in order to be granted a Licence.
- 3.2 The Competition will conclude the assessment process by 21 April of the Membership Year and notify The Association in writing of its licensing decisions by that date in a form reasonably determined by The Association.
- 3.3 The Competition must advise each of its member Clubs of its licensing decision in writing on or before the 5 May following the submission of an application, other than for a Club to which The Association has exercised the delegated powers in accordance with paragraph 2.3.
- 3.4 The Competition shall advise The Association in writing of any subsequent decision in relation to any Licence during a Membership Year. Such notification to be transmitted to The Association within five working days of the date of the decision of the Competition.
- 3.5 The Competition may request the attendance of a Club at a meeting to consider the assessment of that Club in relation to the Licence or request any further information it deems appropriate. Such attendance, once requested, shall be mandatory and shall be made by an Officer of the relevant Club.

4. LICENCE CRITERIA

- 4.1 The Licence Criteria are as set out in Annex 1. Each Licence Criterion is to be met for a Club to be granted an Unconditional Licence. A Conditional Licence may be issued as stated in the Licence Criteria.

5. TRANSFER OF A LICENCE

- 5.1 If a Club wishes to transfer its Licence from one entity to another then it may only do so with the written consent of the Competition and The Association. The requirements to be met for the transfer of a Licence are set out in Rule 2.9.

6. MOVEMENT OF CLUBS

- 6.1 In the event that a Club moves from one Competition to another then the Licence will be retained by the Club and must be applied by the Competition of which that Club becomes a member. The Competition which receives a Club by such transfer may review that Club's Licence at any time and take such action as may have been available on the original application.

6.2 (Step 1 only) A Club relegated from the English Football League shall be subject to assessment for a Licence by the Competition on becoming a member of the National League in a timescale determined by the Competition and such relegated Club shall fully co-operate with such assessment in a timely manner. Such a Club must not be refused a Licence in its first Membership Year although any conditions for the grant of the Licence must be satisfied by no later than 1 March following the application.

6.3 (Step 4 only) A Club promoted to the Competition from Step 5 of the National League System shall be subject to assessment for the Licence by the Competition on becoming a member of the Competition. The timescale for assessment against the Licence Criteria shall be determined by the Competition and such a Club shall fully co-operate with the assessment in a timely manner. Such a Club must not be refused a Licence in its first Membership Year although any conditions for the grant of the Licence must be satisfied by no later than 31 March in that Membership Year. The Competition shall notify a Club of the decision in relation to a Licence in writing and notify The Association at the same time.

7. APPEALS

7.1 All decisions of the Competition in relation to a Licence shall be subject to appeal only by the Club which submitted an application form for that Licence. The appeal shall be determined in accordance with The FA's Appeal Regulations save that any such appeal must be lodged in writing within 5 working days of the date of notification of the decision to be appealed against and any appeal hearing must be held within 14 days of the appeal being lodged with The Association.

7.2 All decisions of The Association where it applies the delegated powers in accordance with Section 2 shall be subject to appeal only by the Competition and the Club which submitted an application form for a Licence. The appeal shall be determined in accordance with The FA's Appeal Regulations save that it must be lodged in writing within 5 working days of the date of notification of the final decision of The Association to apply delegated powers and any appeal hearing must be held within 14 days of the appeal being lodged with The Association.

8. RULES AND FA RULES

8.1 The application of the Licence Criteria and processes shall not restrict the application of the Rules and FA Rules in any way. Any information provided under the licensing processes may be used by the Competition and or The Association in the application of the Rules and FA Rules respectively.

9. MISCONDUCT

9.1 Any Club and or Club Official that knowingly provides information to the Competition in relation to the Club's Licence that is found to be false in any particular then that Club and or Club Official may be charged with Misconduct under the Rules or FA Rules.

LICENCE CRITERIA

ANNEX 1

1. LEGAL

1.1 Confirmation of the legal entity that is the Club

1.1.1. By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must confirm to the Competition its company name and number (if incorporated) and a list of all individuals with a Significant Interest in the Club or the name of the nominee in whose name the membership of the Company is vested (if an unincorporated association) as at the 1 March immediately preceding.

1.1.2. The Criteria will be met where the details provided by a Club complies and accords with information already provided to the Competition.

1.1.3. If a Club fails to provide the information or if the information provided does not comply and accord to that held by the Competition then the Club must explain any differences within a timescale set by the

Competition. If the explanation provided by the Club does not satisfy the Competition then the Competition may refuse the Licence, issue a Conditional Licence and or penalise the Club at its discretion.

1.2 The Rules or Articles of Association of a Club are required to meet the provisions of Rules 12.1 to 12.4 of The Association.

1.2.1 The criteria shall be met where the Club's articles or Rules meet the requirements of FA Rules 12.1 to 12.4. The Association shall by 14 March in a Membership Year provide the Competition with a written confirmation as to any Club of which it is aware whose articles or Rules do not satisfy the requirements of Rule 12.1 to 12.4 of The Association.

1.2.2 In cases where non-compliance is identified then a Conditional Licence may be granted such that the Club must amend its articles or Rules within 60 days of being instructed to do so by the Competition. The Club must provide evidence of the changes to the Competition and to The Association for consideration. If the changes are not made and evidenced to the satisfaction of The Association within the 60 day period then the Club's Licence may be suspended by the Competition with immediate effect until such time as the provisions of FA Rule 12.1 to 12.4 have been met.

2. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

2.1 Confirmation of ownership and control

2.1.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must provide written confirmation of its ownership and control as at the 1 March immediately preceding together with supporting documentation to evidence the same.

2.1.2 If a Club fails to provide the confirmation by the due date then the Licence may be refused or issued subject to conditions.

2.2 Publication of ownership

2.2.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must provide the Competition with evidence of compliance with Rule 2.13 at the 1 March immediately preceding. Evidence may include copies of pages from the Club's website and copies of the Club's matchday programme.

2.2.2 If a Club fails to provide the confirmation and or the evidence required or has not met the requirements of Rule 2.13 at 1 March immediately preceding then the Club may be issued with a Conditional Licence such that it is directed by the Competition to satisfy Rule 2.13 within 30 days. The failure to comply with this direction so may result in a penalty that may include the suspension of the Licence.

2.3 Change of control – National League only

2.3.1 Where a change of control of a Club has occurred in a Membership Year then it must have been assessed by the Competition in accordance with Rule 2.14. Compliance with Rule 2.14 shall be deemed to meet the criteria.

2.3.2 If through any means the Competition becomes aware that a change of control has occurred at a Club in the Membership Year that it has not assessed in accordance with Rule 2.14 then in addition to the powers of the Competition set out at Rule 2.14 the Competition may refuse a Licence, attach conditions to a Licence and / or apply a penalty at the discretion of the Competition.

3 INTEGRITY

3.1 Owners' and Directors' Test

3.1.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must confirm to the Competition that the Club has met the reporting requirements of The Association's Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations as at 1 March immediately preceding in a Membership Year.

3.1.2 If at 1 March the Competition has received a Notice issued by The Association in accordance with the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations and the Club's membership of the Competition has been suspended at that date then the Licence may be refused.

3.2 Interests in more than one Club

- 3.2.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must provide a written confirmation in a form determined by the Competition that it satisfies the requirements of Rule 5 as at the 1 March immediately preceding.
- 3.2.2 In the event that the written confirmation is not provided by the due date then the Club must be subject to a penalty determined by the Competition that may include a fine, Embargo, suspension, refusal of the Licence or the granting of a Conditional Licence.
- 3.2.3 If at any time during a Membership Year the Competition become aware of a matter to be considered under Rule 5 via the written confirmation provided by the Club or by any other means such that in the opinion of the Competition the breach brings or is likely to bring into question the integrity of the Competition then that Club's Licence may be refused, suspended, withdrawn or a Conditional Licence may be issued.

3.3 Management of a Club

- 3.3.1 If the Competition has determined that as at 1 March in a Membership Year a Club is in breach of Rule 2.11 and or 2.18 such that the Club is to be expelled or excluded from the Competition in accordance with the Rules then the Licence may be refused or a Conditional Licence may be issued.

4 FINANCE

4.1 Annual financial statements

- 4.1.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must provide to the Competition a copy of its full annual financial statements for the period of its most recent complete financial year.
- 4.1.2 The annual financial statements are to be prepared in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, the rules of the Club, Rules I1.3 or I1.4 of The Association as appropriate and are to be evidenced as having been approved on behalf of the Club by its Board of Directors or Committee and circulated to its members/shareholders.
- 4.1.3 The Association shall by 14 March in a Membership Year provide the Competition with a written confirmation as to any Club of which it is aware whose annual financial statements for the period of its most recent complete financial year do not satisfy the requirements of Rule I1.3 or I1.4 of The Association.
- 4.1.4 Where the annual financial statements are not provided to the Competition by the due date or do not satisfy the requirements at paragraph 4.1.2 above then the Licence may be refused or a Conditional Licence issued. The Club may also be subject to a penalty determined by the Competition.

4.2 Filing of annual financial statements – Club companies only

- 4.2.1 In the case of a Club that is a corporate body (or similar), then that Club must by 14 March in a Membership Year confirm to the Competition that the annual accounts for its latest complete financial year are not overdue for filing at 1 March immediately preceding with regulatory bodies such as the Registrar of Companies at Companies House (or similar).
- 4.2.2 Where the Competition becomes aware by any means that the annual accounts were overdue for filing at 1 March then the Club must be subject to a penalty determined by the Competition that may include licence refusal or the issuing of a Conditional Licence.

4.3 Football Creditors

- 4.3.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must provide a written confirmation in a form requested by the Competition that it is not in default of amounts owed by the Club at the 1 March immediately preceding in respect of Football Creditors. The confirmation must also include any on-going proceedings against the Club in relation to Football Creditors. The Club must provide details of any such proceedings whether through football procedures recognised by the Competition or legal procedures, such as a winding up petition.

4.3.2 This Criterion shall be met where the Competition has assessed a Club and found it to comply with the provisions of Rule 11. The date of assessment shall be 1 March in a Membership Year. Where a Club has reported or the Competition has become aware by any means that a Club has defaulted on payments to Football Creditors then in addition to the powers set out at Rule 11 then the Competition may refuse the Licence, issue a Conditional Licence or suspend the Licence pending the supply of any further information requested by the Competition and for a period as the Competition shall determine.

4.4 PAYE and VAT

4.4.1 A Club must be assessed under the Financial Reporting Initiative in respect of PAYE and VAT. The assessment of a Club and the application of the requirements of the Financial Reporting Initiative to a Club shall be deemed to be compliance with the criteria.

4.5 Evidence of Funding – Step 1 and 2 only

A Club must be compliant with the requirements of Appendix E Budget Monitoring Scheme and Permitted Loans in relation to the Membership Year.

4.6 Insolvency Event

4.6.1 By 14 March in a Membership Year a Club must confirm to the Competition in writing whether or not it is subject to an Insolvency Event as at the 1 March immediately preceding. If a Club is so subject to an Insolvency Event then the Club may be subject to assessment by the Competition in accordance with the requirements of Rule 13.B. In addition to the requirements at Rule 13.B the Competition may refuse the licence, withdraw a Licence or issue a Conditional Licence.

4.6.2 Irrespective of the content of paragraph 4.6.1, a Club subject to Insolvency Events (e), (f), (g) or (h) as defined in the Rules is not entitled to hold a Licence and must not be permitted to participate in the Competition from the date of the Insolvency Event. A Licence shall automatically lapse should a Club become subject to Insolvency Events (e), (f), (g) or (h) as defined in the Rules.

5 GROUNDS AND SECURITY OF TENURE

5.1 At 31 March in a Membership Year a Club must have satisfied the provisions of Rules 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6.

5.2 Compliance with Rules 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6 shall be deemed to meet the Criteria.

5.3 A Club that fails to meet the requirements of Rules 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6 at 31 March may be refused a Licence.

6 REPORTING OF CHANGES

6.1 A Club is required to advise the Competition in writing of any changes to the application of any of the Licence Criteria to its Licence at any time which might directly or indirectly affect the application of the Licence Criteria. The written notification is to be received by the Competition within three working days of the change occurring.

6.2 If the Competition becomes aware of a change at a Club by any means then the Competition must consider any such change in relation to the application of the Licence Criteria to the Club.

6.3 If a Club fails to advise the Competition of such a change then it may be subject to a penalty determined by the Competition, including and not limited to suspension or withdrawal of the Club's Licence, Embargo or financial penalty or a points deduction.

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE BOARD DIRECTIVES 2023/24

1. In accordance with Football Association Kit and Advertising Regulations, the National League Board ("the Board ") directs its member clubs as follows:

- a) The officially designated logo of the Vanarama National League shall appear on the player's right shirt sleeve.
 - b) Clubs are permitted to place advertising of a sponsor on the player's left shirt sleeve. Such mark must appear between the shoulder seam and the elbow and must not exceed 100 square centimetres. Such sponsor shall not be a direct competitor of the National League's title sponsor or broadcast partner or any future betting partner. To that end Clubs shall be obliged to provide details of all sponsors prior to the start of the Season to the Board together with details of any additional sponsors acquired during the season within 7 days of such acquisition.
 - c) If a Club does not place advertising of a sponsor on the player's left shirt sleeve, this shirt sleeve shall not be left blank. In this case the officially designated logo of the Vanarama National League shall appear on both the player's right and left shirt sleeves.
 - d) The officially designated logo of the National League shall appear once only on each of the players' shirt numbers.
 - e) Further to Rule 7.6, when playing in other competitions the shirts of all Players must include the official designated logo of the Vanarama National League, therefore if the FA Competition logo is worn on the right sleeve as directed in FA Competitions, the Vanarama National League logo must be worn on the left sleeve.
2. Further to Rule 8.31, Clubs are to film and complete the upload of a full length match video to a hosting solution within 12 hours of a League match finishing.
3. Clubs are not permitted to show National League match footage on their own website, mobile or social media until a time determined by the Competition, in conjunction with BT Sport, as communicated with Clubs as appropriate.
4. All Clubs are required to attend the Annual Gala Dinner and the minimum allocation for each Club is 6 tickets (National Division) and 4 tickets (North/South Divisions). Each Club shall ensure attendance of representatives at the event at least in accordance with the above minimum allocation. Failure to do so shall be reported to the Board and may result in a reduction in central funding of up to £2,000 for the National Division Clubs and up to £1,000 for Clubs in North and South Divisions.
5. As stated in the National League Code of Conduct for Managers and Chairmen, non-playing staff may enter the field of play at half time or full time but they must not engage in any threatening or abusive behaviour with the match officials whether verbal or non-verbal.
6. Clubs are not permitted to place commercial advertising on or near to the goal-line or touch-line during a Competition Match save by way of normal perimeter board advertising and any other advertising approved in writing by the National League in advance.
7. Clubs showing permitted National League match footage on their own website, mobile or social media are to place a National League ident (as issues by the National League) for a minimum of 2 seconds immediately prior to the commencement of the match footage.
8. National Division Clubs are required to submit a membership application to the EFL by midnight of 30 November and comply with requests made by the EFL to lodge documentation and other evidence as may be required to satisfy its regulations.
9. Clubs with a Football Turf Pitch are not permitted to lay permanent markings on such pitches except those markings used for football matches sanctioned by The Football Association.

Failure by Clubs to adhere to these directives without just cause shall prima facie be a breach of Membership Rule 4 and dealt with either in accordance with the fines tariff (if applicable) and/or in such a manner as the Board thinks reasonably appropriate.

HOME-GROWN PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The National League shall enable its Clubs to engage in home-grown player development through the implementation of a home-grown development plan. The organisation and rules of home-grown player development are set out in this Board directive.

Home-Grown Players

The National League has established a plan for its Clubs to develop more and better home-grown players. Throughout the plan the quality of the development experience for the young player is of the highest importance. The objective is to prepare a young player for a possible future career as a professional or semi-professional football player in the National League, the professional game or elsewhere in the National League System. It is also to ensure a player continues to receive education, which will enhance their career, education and/or training prospects either to coincide with employment as a football player or as a pathway to alternative employment.

A “Student” is a player who may remain in full-time education, an apprentice or someone doing a traineeship (or be employed on a written contract by the club as defined below) and is in an age group between the ages of Under 17 to Under 19, such age groups to be determined by a player’s age on 31 August in the year in question.

National League Football Academy Licence

A National League Club that registers Student players must obtain an annual licence to engage in home-grown player development from the National League Board (“Licensed Club”). Licensed Clubs will be granted the designation “National League Football Academy” and must pay an annual license fee in accordance with the Standard Fees Tariff.

Each Licensed Club may recruit Student players. Such players may have been previously engaged in the elite player performance plan in the professional game or be locally-trained players. Each Licensed Club is authorised to register a maximum of 45 players at any one time between the ages of Under 17 to Under 19, such age groups to be determined by a player’s age on 31 August in the year in question.

Student registrations shall be approved and registered by the National League U19 Alliance on behalf of the National League in accordance with these rules and Licensed Clubs shall submit the required forms within 5 days of signature. Student registrations shall be for 1 or 2 seasons and may be extended by a further season at a time. Student registrations may be extended at any time. A Student whose registration expires at the end of a current season must be informed in writing by a Licensed Club on or before 31 March whether they are to be offered an extended registration or released when their current registration expires.

The earliest a Licensed Club may offer a Student registration to a player whose registration it doesn’t currently hold is 1 January of a player’s Under 16 year, and to commence on or after the last academic year in which the player reaches the age of 16.

Students may also be registered as a Contract Player or Non-Contract Player in order to play in Competition Matches. Any Student that signs as a Contract Player part way through an education course must continue and complete their Education Programme.

Player Development

All registered Students are required to undertake a football development programme as described below (“Football Development Programme”) and an Education Programme appropriate to their age and ability and in accordance with the laws of England and Wales (“Education Programme”).

Each Licensed Club shall have a formal agreement with a learning provider(s) responsible for the delivery of each Student’s Education Programme. Learning provider(s) shall be not responsible for the delivery of a Student’s Football Development Programme.

Each Licensed Club shall be responsible for a player’s Football Development Programme and employ a minimum of two full-time coaches and a therapist who shall be qualified as per the standard set in National League Rules for Step 1. Coaches used to deliver the Football Development Programme must have a minimum of a UEFA ‘B’ coaching qualification or hold the FA Youth Award. Such coaches must keep their qualification up to date with continuous professional development. One such coach should be working towards a UEFA ‘A’ coaching qualification.

Each Licensed Club shall have a designated goalkeeping coach.

Each Licensed Club must have a designated safeguarding officer trained to Football Association standards and nominate a secretary to administer their home-grown player development activities.

All full and part-time staff shall have a written contract of employment to include the coaching contact time and be given a written job description and an annual appraisal. They must also be a member of the FA Coaches Club, hold a current FA first-aid qualification and hold a current DBS clearance as determined by the Football Administration.

Each Licensed Club shall produce a player development plan which shall set out the vision, goals, strategy and measurable short-term and long-term performance targets for all aspects of the work of the Club’s home-grown player development, and how the Club will deliver a coaching curriculum and integrate its coaching, education, games programme, sports science and medical provision (“Player Development Plan”). The Player Development Plan shall include a financial budget for the season and be approved by the Club’s Board. A summary of the Player Development Plan shall be made available to staff, players and parents.

Each Licensed Club shall be subject to a licence assessment, on-going monitoring and an annual evaluation by the National League.

Each Licensed Club shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that it protects the welfare of each of its players in the age groups up to and including Under 19 by offering support for the wellbeing and pastoral care of Students. Each Licensed Club shall publish a safeguarding policy, a health and safety policy, and codes of conduct for players, parents and staff.

Subject to a player’s fitness, each Student shall receive a minimum of 12 hours football coaching per week throughout the season, which shall be spread over 40 weeks of the year.

Each Licensed Club shall conduct a multi-disciplinary review and meet each of its Students every 12 weeks and also meet with the Parent of a Student under the age of 18 at least twice a year. At the end of each season each Student shall receive an annual written report on all aspects of their performance and development over the preceding season.

Each Licensed Club shall offer its Students a games programme consisting of authorised games in the National League Under 19s Alliance supplemented by football matches in other FA sanctioned competitions and friendly matches arranged with Clubs in the professional game and the National League (“Authorised Games”).

Facilities

Each Licensed Club shall have available to it a full-size football pitch to enable the Club to stage its Authorised Games and fulfil its coaching commitments. Each Licensed Club shall access to a full-size 3G artificial pitch for playing and/or coaching activities.

Each Licensed Club shall have available to it suitably-sized changing rooms and a sufficient number of washing, showering and toilet facilities to provide for the home team, the visiting team and match officials when staging Authorised Games.

Each Licensed Club shall have available to it suitably-sized meeting rooms for the use of players and parents.

Each Licensed Club shall have available to it suitably equipped first-aid and therapist facilities.

Each Licensed Club shall ensure that it has in place a Medical Emergency Action Plan in accordance with National League Rules.

Training Compensation

The registration of a Student at a Licensed Club shall impose an obligation on any National League Club next registering the same player to pay training compensation for the training and development of that Student to the Licensed Club which previously held his registration provided the Licensed Club offered to enter into a further period of registration as a Student or a Contract Player.

Until the Student registration or any renewal of has terminated a Student may not enter into any agreement with any other National League Club, and the Student may not be approached by any other National League Club, directly or indirectly, with a view to inducing the Student to leave the Licensed Club for which the Student is registered, except with written permission of the Licensed Club.

In the event of a Student registered with a Licensed Club having not accepted a further period of registration as a Student or a Contract Player with that Licensed Club, and having negotiated a Student registration and/or terms as a Contract Player or Non- Contract Player with another National League Club, and the Clubs not being able to reach agreement on the payment of a compensation fee, then provided the Licensed Club holding the Student's registration has complied with the rules, such compensation shall be determined by the National League Board. The National League shall follow the principles and procedures of The Football Association League Appeals Committee in determining any compensation fee.

In the event of a Student registered with a Licensed Club having negotiated a Student registration and/or terms as a Contract Player or Non-Contract Player with another club that is not a member of the National League, the Licensed Club shall submit a formal request in writing to the club concerned to request payment of a compensation fee. If the Licensed Club and the club are not able to reach agreement on the payment of a compensation fee, the Licensed Club shall notify the National League in writing and the National League shall request an adequate compensation fee to be paid by the club via the club's senior league. If an adequate compensation fee is not agreed and paid the player concerned shall not be approved and registered by the Competition either as a Student or a Player in the National League for a period of at least 2 years, subject to any dispensation granted by the National League Board.

The National League Board shall have power at any time to cancel the registration of a Student upon the written application of either the Student, or if the player is a minor, his parent or guardian on his behalf or the Licensed Club holding his registration. The National League Board may apply any reasonable conditions that it sees fit if and when any Student registration is cancelled. All decisions made in relation to the Home-Grown Player Development Board Directive shall be dealt with the National League Board, subject a right of appeal to an independent panel of National League Officers.

Should a Club have a team playing in the National League Football Academy North or South Divisions, and in Divisions A-I then they will be allowed to transfer players, subject to compliance with FA Rule C2(a). Players will only be allowed to move once in any 28 day period.

All decisions made in relation to the Home-Grown Player Development Board Directive shall be dealt with the National League Board, subject a right of appeal to an independent panel of National League Officers.