



# **Managers' Handbook** (V1.0)

**FOR**

# **SEASON 2026/27**

# **FA STANDARD CODE OF RULES FOR YOUTH COMPETITIONS**

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The MYSL adopts the FA Statutory Code of Rules (FA SCOR (Y) ) for Youth Football for Season 2026/27. These rules will be approved and adopted at the AGM on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

## **MYSL BY LAWS**

For Season 2026/27 the following By Laws will be observed by all participating Member Clubs/Teams and will be split into the following headings:

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## **MYSL 2026-27 CALENDAR**

The league will start on the weekend of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2026 and the league fixtures will finish on the weekend of TBC – see website – [www.mysl.co.uk/new-season](http://www.mysl.co.uk/new-season)

### **26/27 Season**

#### Dates For Your Diary

MYSL CUP - 29th/30th August

First Week Of Season - 5th/6th September

Player Registration Deadline - 30th September

Cup Group Game Starts - 17th/18th October

Cup QF - 21st/22nd November

Cup SF - 28th/29th November

Cup Final - 5th/6th December

Christmas Tournament - 19th/20th December

Christmas Break - 26th/27th December

Christmas Break - 2nd/3rd January

Player Registration Deadline - 31st January

Cup Group Games Start - 6th/7th March

Easter Break - 27th/28th March

FINALS - 8th/9th May

FINALS - 15th/16th May

FINALS - 22nd/23rd May

FINALS 29th/30th May

# TRANSFER DEADLINE DAY

The league will operate two registration deadline days for the two cup competitions:

- Christmas Cup – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026
- Champions Cup – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2027

Teams MUST have a print out or PDF document on their mobile device of their squad and coaches for the opposition coach to review before a cup game kicks off. (Squad sheets are required for ALL u12 and above games for inspection, if asked)

New players can be registered to teams after Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026 if they are knocked out of the cup competitions.

No new players can be added to ANY team after 31<sup>st</sup> January 2027 unless in exceptional circumstances. This will be referred to the league committee to review.

## **CHRISTMAS CUP**



The Christmas cup starts on the weekend of Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

The finals will take place on the weekend of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2026.

## **CHAMPIONS CUP**



The Champions Cup starts on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2027

Start dates will be communicated to all coaches via the Whatsapp groups and social media.

The finals will take place in May 2027. More information on dates/venues to follow as and when known. Dates will be communicated a lot earlier than what we have done in previous years.

### **WhatsApp Groups**

Please join the admin WhatsApp group below (scan the code) for the day your team plays on. We will keep you updated on policies and other important information via this communication tool.

#### **Saturday**



#### **Sunday**



## **RULES OF PLAY (As per future fit)**

|       |           |                           |             |
|-------|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|
| U7's. | 3 a-side, | 10 minutes' x 3 quarters, | size 3 ball |
| U8's. | 5 a-side  | 17 minutes' x 3 thirds,   | size 3 ball |
| U9's. | 5 a-side, | 27 minutes' x 2 halves,   | size 3 ball |
| U10's | 7 a-side, | 27 minutes' x 2 halves,   | size 3 ball |
| U11's | 7 a-side, | 27 minutes each way,      | size 3 ball |
| U12's | 9 v 9     | 30 minutes each way,      | size 4 ball |
| U13's | 9 v 9     | 30 minutes each way,      | size 4 ball |
| U14's | 11 v 11   | 35 minutes each way,      | size 5 ball |

At all age groups substitutes will be roll on roll off at the referee's discretion, any player substituted then becomes a substitute themselves.

### **Under 7's, 8's, 9's, 10's & 11's)**

All matches shall start with a kick off on the half way line, the ball can be passed forward or backwards and there must be at least two touches of the ball from the team taking the kick off before a goal can be scored.

After a goal is scored the match is restarted as above. All free kicks are direct, (except that of a deliberate header or pass back) opposing players must retreat 6 yards at all set pieces. The goalkeeper cannot handle the ball from a back pass, if he does a free kick shall be awarded on the edge of the penalty area nearest to where the offence took place All goal kicks shall be taken with the ball on the ground. The goalkeeper cannot score a goal from within the goal area, if the goalkeeper shoots and the only other player to touch the ball is the opposing goalkeeper the goal shall not stand and a goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team The Retreat Line rule will be applied at the above age groups. All opposing players must retreat to the halfway line. The referee will police this, NOT the coaches.

### **Deliberate Heading restart (up to U11 in 2026/27)**

- Deliberately (as deemed by the referee) heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick
- The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except:
- Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.

### **Touchline Restart:**

- When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the touchline, on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw-in, a pass-in/dribble-in is awarded
- The kicker that takes the pass-in/dribble-in may touch the ball again before it is touched by another player

#### **Pass In**

- At the moment of delivering the ball:
- The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch
- All opponents must stand at least five yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or /dribble-in is to be taken from
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

#### **Dribble In**

- At the moment of delivering the ball:
- The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch
- All opponents must stand at least five yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or /dribble-in is to be taken from
- A goal can be scored directly from a dribble in by the player taking the dribble in
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- The ball must not go above **waist height** from the kick in. This is to encourage the players to keep the ball on the ground throughout the matches.

### **U12's, U13's**

As per 11 a-side rules including the off-side rule but with a size four ball and 16 x 7 goal posts.

### **U14's**

Full FA - 11 a side rules will apply.

**Trafford 5's** - See separate sheet on appendix B

## Player Eligibility

To be eligible to play in any sanctioned game a player must be registered to the team via Club Portal and must appear on an up to date squad sheet printed off or on a mobile device and must have been acquired not more than **7 days** prior to the match via Club Portal, either paper copies or mobile devices must be made available to both the opposition or Referee throughout the game. A player is ineligible if he does not appear on said squad sheet. If a team play an ineligible player in a league match (one where points are awarded) the points will be awarded to the opponents. In a cup match the tie will be awarded to the opponents with a 3-0 win.

See transfer deadline dates above.



In grassroots football, including leagues affiliated with the **Manchester FA** and governed by **The FA's Standard Code of Rules**, the recruitment of players is strictly regulated to ensure fair play and stability for youth clubs.

While specific wording regarding "poaching" may vary by league, all FA-sanctioned youth

leagues operate under established protocols regarding player movement.

### Understanding Player Approaches and "Poaching"

In the context of youth football, "poaching" is generally understood as an illegal approach made to a player who is already registered with another club. The Football Association has clear regulations regarding this:

- **Formal Notice Required:** If a club wishes to approach a player who is already registered with another club, they must provide **seven days' formal written notice** to the secretary of the current club.
- **Restricted Contact:** An approaching club may not approach the same player more than once in a season, and there are strict limitations on how many players can be approached from a single club within a specific timeframe.
- **Misconduct Charges:** A failure to follow these procedures constitutes a breach of FA rules. Clubs found guilty of such breaches can face charges of **misconduct**.
- **Consequences:** Penalties for failing to follow proper procedure can be severe. This may include:
  - The cancellation of the player's registration with the new club.
  - Fines levied against the club.
  - Disciplinary action, which, in extreme cases or instances of repeat offenses, could lead to the removal of the team from the league or further sanctions by the County FA.

### How to Handle Concerns

If you believe a team is "poaching" players in your league, it is important to handle the matter through the correct official channels rather than taking direct action against the other team:

1. **Review League Rules:** Consult the specific handbook or constitution of your league. All sanctioned leagues must adhere to the FA's standard rules, but they may have specific local processes for reporting grievances.
2. **Contact the League Secretary:** If you have evidence of an improper approach (e.g., direct contact with a player or parent without prior notice to your club secretary), report the incident to your league's governing committee. They are responsible for investigating these claims.
3. **Involve the County FA:** If you feel the league is not addressing the issue or if the conduct is particularly egregious, you can contact the **Manchester FA** directly to discuss the matter, as they oversee disciplinary procedures and ensure clubs are following the Rules of the Association.

**Academy Players** – (U9 – U11 only) MYSL allows category 3 players (maximum of 2 per squad) to play at their own age group. Category 1 & 2 players must play up an age group.

## **Game Cancellations (including cup matches)**

Fixture cancellations must be sent via email to [info@mysl.co.uk](mailto:info@mysl.co.uk) as soon as you know the fixture cannot go ahead. You must include the following information in the email:

Team name, age group, fixture date & time and opponents

If you're cancelling within 48 hours' notice of the fixture, you must notify the following:

Saturday – Ashley 07726 437 777

Sunday – Billy 07971 832 054

If Ashley/Billy do not answer, leave a voicemail and also send a SMS/WhatsApp message.

You **MUST** also inform your divisional WhatsApp group to inform the opposition coach.

Failure to notify within 48 hours' notice **WILL** result in a fine of the game fee. This fine will be transferred to your opposition team as compensation. E.g. U7 is £25, U8 £25, U9 is £28, U10/U11 is £30 and U12/U13 is £45.

**All ages** - To avoid forfeiting a cup game, you must give at least 14 days' notice to request a postponement. Teams are allowed one postponement, per cup competition, if within the 14 days' notice period as noted above.

## **Kick off time requests**

MYSL cannot guarantee any kick off times. If you have (for example) a team party on a certain day and at a certain time we can try and accommodate this. Please email [fixtures@mysl.co.uk](mailto:fixtures@mysl.co.uk) at least 6 weeks' in advance and we will try and accommodate your request.

## **Divisional Placements**

The MYSL prides itself on its 'Levels' format. We aim to move teams up and down to enhance maximum enjoyment for all participants. Any movement is carried out at the end of each month (this may be earlier depending on results). If you feel this is needed sooner, please email [info@mysl.co.uk](mailto:info@mysl.co.uk) or WhatsApp Ashley (Saturday) or Billy (Sunday) and we will look into your request. Please include your team name, age group, division and day that you play in the email.

## **Points Awarded**

In all competitive age groups (U12's to U14's) points will be awarded as follows: 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw.

## **Deciding a Championship**

Championships (u12 to u14) will be decided on points gained, if two or more teams finish on equal points, the league will be decided on goals difference. If two or more teams have the same goal difference, it will go down to goals scored. If two or more teams are still tied, head-to-head from the league games played will decide, if tied,

the championship will be decided by playing a play-off game. (Venue/kick off time to be decided by MYSL)

### **Coach / Assistant Registration**

All Coaches / Assistants must have in their possession a team sheet, via Club Portal, clearly showing photo id of who is permitted to be on the touchline. Failure to comply, for whatever reason, will result in the person being asked to leave the touchline. Only 2 Coaches / Assistants per team will be allowed on the touchline during matches. Coaches / Assistants should refrain from going onto the pitch unless invited to do so by the Referee. For 11 a-side matches, 3 Managers/Coaches will be allowed on the touchline during matches

The Manchester Youth Super League (MYSL) enforces strict standards to ensure a professional environment for all participants. Regarding your presence on the pitch-side, please note the following:

#### **Sideline Requirements**

- **Club Uniforms:** All coaches must be dressed in official club attire while on the sidelines.
- **Identification:** The league mandates this to ensure that only authorised officials are easily identifiable and distinguishable from spectators.

#### **Compliance and Reporting**

The MYSL maintains a rigorous approach to league standards to protect the integrity of the game.

- **Reporting Protocol:** Should the league observe individuals on the sidelines who are not registered officials, or who fail to comply with the dress code, they will formally report the matter to the Manchester FA.
- **Potential Sanctions:** Once an issue is referred to the Manchester FA, it will be subject to a formal review by their disciplinary department. Failure to adhere to these rules can lead to further action, including official warnings, fines, or potential suspensions for both the individuals involved and the club.

To ensure your team avoids any unnecessary disciplinary issues, it is advisable to ensure all coaching staff are correctly kitted in their club gear and that spectator boundaries are strictly observed.

### **Cup Competitions**

All knockout cup matches will be concluded on the day, if the scores are level in regulation time a penalty shoot-out will decide the tie. U7's, 8's, 9's, 10's, 11's, 12's and 13's will take **three** penalties if the scores are still level then a sudden death penalty shoot-out will decide, U14's will take **five** penalties before sudden death.

All games U7 – U10 will be 2 x 25 mins (no extra time)

U11, U12 and U13 will be 2 x 30 mins (no extra time)

U14 will be 2 x 35 mins (no extra time)

Any team/s trying to fix match results/cup draws will be withdrawn from the competition. This includes teams from the same club not wanting to play against each other. If you do not want to play against each other, please go to different leagues.

### **Referees**

We aim to have ALL games covered but in the event of an emergency. We would expect a coach/assistant to a referee half the match each. The match result should be emailed over to [info@mysl.co.uk](mailto:info@mysl.co.uk) or WhatsApp to Ashley (Saturday) or Billy (Sunday).

MYSL are fiercely protective of our referees and remind clubs that the majority of referees are children. However, feedback on referees objectively and fairly is welcome, as we are committed to supporting referees' development. We also note that while referees are young, they are in a paid role and therefore that carries a level of responsibility. We expect our referees to:

- A) attend in suitable refereeing kit, with relevant equipment
- B) referee with enthusiasm in each match
- C) communicate throughout the game
- D) display understanding of the laws of the game for the format they referee

What we do not expect is referees to be flawless in their decision making, there will be mistakes all the time - just like by you as coaches and the children playing.

Any issues on the day, please speak with the co-ordinator at the venue or email [welfare@mysl.co.uk](mailto:welfare@mysl.co.uk) with as much information as possible.

### **Venue Rules**

- All car parking regulations must be adhered to at all times
- Each venue may have its own rules and regulation (non-smoking etc including vapes)
- No dogs or pets allowed at any venue apart from assistance dogs (on car parks only, venue permitting)
- All central venues operate a no smoking policy, smoking and vaping is only allowed in designated areas, if there is no designated area smoking and vaping will only be allowed on venue car parks
- Teams should arrive 15 minutes prior to kick off times
- Pitch allocations are available to view on Tournify
- Players/coaches should not enter the playing area until the previous match has finished.

- Coaches should always have their player Squad Sheets available for inspection
- Central venues – Both coaches **MUST** bring a match ball that is suitable for playing with. I.e. pumped up and the correct size for the game being played.
- 11v11 – Balls must be provided by the **HOME** team.
- All players should wear the appropriate footwear (no metal studs on 3G surfaces) and shin pads **MUST** be worn.

### **Central Venue Codes of Conduct**

The FA Codes of Conduct for Players, Managers and Spectators must always be adhered to:

- Each match must be preceded by the Respect Handshake
- After the Respect Handshake the match will start immediately (no more team talks)
- No footballs, except the match ball, shall be used during periods of play
- All post-match debriefs must take place off the playing area
- All litter must be taken from the pitches and surrounding areas, particularly plastic bottles and bottle tops, no hot drinks or food to be taken onto pitches etc
- All parents and supporters to remain in the designated area's
- When teams have a colour clash - all teams must bring enough bibs for each outfield player in an alternate colour to the team shirts.

### **Zero Tolerance on behaviour**

The **Manchester Youth Super League (MYSL)**, like other FA-sanctioned leagues, operates under the *Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions*. This framework grants the League Management Committee the power to act when individuals or clubs repeatedly fail to uphold the required standards of behavior.

- **Zero Tolerance:** The MYSL explicitly states a zero-tolerance policy for abuse toward referees, spectators, or players.
- **Proportional Sanctions:** Consequences for bad behavior are intended to be proportionate to the incident. They range from individual bans (1 match to lifetime) to wider sanctions against the club.
- **Removal as a Last Resort:** While teams are rarely removed for a single, minor incident, "persistent" behaviour that disrupts the environment for children can lead to the Management Committee taking disciplinary action, including the suspension or expulsion of a team if they fail to comply with league instructions or safety standards.

### **How to Address Persistent Bad Behaviour**

If you are witnessing ongoing issues, it is important to follow the correct reporting hierarchy to ensure your concerns are handled effectively:

1. **Report Internally (First Step):** Raise your concerns with your own **Club**

**Secretary or Club Welfare Officer.** They are responsible for gathering evidence and, if necessary, escalating the matter to the league or the Manchester FA.

2. **Matchday Reporting:** If an incident occurs during a game, alert the match official (referee) at the first opportunity. They are required to document incidents in their match report, which is the most critical evidence used by the County FA to issue charges.
3. **Formal League Complaint:** If internal steps at the club level are insufficient, you can lodge a formal complaint with the **MYSL League Committee**.
4. **Involve Manchester FA:** For serious cases—especially those involving discrimination, violence, or safeguarding risks—you should contact the **Manchester FA** directly:
  - **Email:** Support@ManchesterFA.com or MYSL welfare@mysl.co.uk
  - **Phone:** 0161 225 1966

### **Key Evidence for Effective Action**

For any report to lead to formal disciplinary action, "he said/she said" accounts are often insufficient. To help the league or County FA build a case:

- **Keep a Log:** Document dates, times, specific individuals involved, and a description of the behaviour.
- **Gather Statements:** Ask other witnesses to provide written accounts of what they observed.
- **Identify Violations:** Reference specific breaches of the FA's [Respect Code of Conduct](#).

## **Safeguarding and Complaints**

Any complaints regarding the safeguarding or welfare of players, children or adults, please email the League Welfare Officer/s - welfare@mysl.co.uk

### **Complaints Procedure**

Please email welfare@mysl.co.uk with any complaints and remember to include as much information as possible including your contact details.

### **Personal Hearing**

In the event that a Club considers the complaint to be serious or not having been resolved by the MYSL, the Club can request a Personal Hearing. A sum of **£50.00** must be lodged with the League at which time a venue and time will be arranged for the hearing. A panel of three MYSL Committee Members will hear your complaint. The

Club will be allowed to bring three Senior Club/Team Officials. The complaint will be heard and the Club will be informed of the MYSL decision either on the night or within seven days.

### **Parent and Spectator Behaviour**

It is “The Clubs” responsibility to undertake Codes of Conduct for parents and spectators and to ensure these are adhered to, but where inappropriate behaviour is either reported to MYSL or witnessed by MYSL Coordinators, a zero tolerance approach to such behaviour will be enforced. Parents must remain in the designated areas and must never enter the field of play unless invited by the referee in the case of injury. Foul and abusive language aimed at either the referee or opposition will not be tolerated and may result in you being asked to leave a venue. Aggressive or violent conduct may result in a banning order being implemented or police involvement.

### **Finance Queries**

#### **League Financial Information Summary**

| Category            | Details                                                              |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact for Queries | Amanda at <a href="mailto:finance@mysl.co.uk">finance@mysl.co.uk</a> |
| Monthly Invoices    | Generated on the <b>1st</b> of each month (August through April)     |
| Payment Terms       | Due within <b>15 days</b> of the invoice date                        |
| Registration Fees   | <b>£50 per team</b> , requested in <b>July 2026</b>                  |

#### **Important Notes**

- **Securing Your Place:** The £50 registration fee is mandatory to secure your team’s spot in the league for the upcoming season.
- **Deadlines:** The league maintains strict payment timelines. Please note that failure to meet these deadlines—including the July registration fee—may result in your team being removed from the league. Any team missing two months’ of payments will be automatically suspended from playing games.

If you are managing the finances for your team, it is highly recommended to set a calendar reminder for the 1st of each month to ensure you do not miss the 15-day payment window.

## **APPENDIX A – TRAFFORD 5'S**

### **Rules for Trafford 5's Manchester – U8/U9**

- All games will be played at 5 v 5

#### **Calmer and Safer**

- Silent Sidelines Rule – Spectators are encouraged to applaud both teams (e.g. clap when a goal is scored) but must not shout or call out
- All goalkeepers must be identifiable (i.e) use a bib if you do not have a goalkeeper shirt

#### **More Skilful**

- Retreat Line Rule – Opposition players only retreat on **goal kicks**.
- Pass Back Rule – Because goalkeepers need to practice their footwork, they cannot pick up the ball from an intentional pass back.
- No deliberate heading of the ball upto U11 – see managers' handbook.

#### **Faster Development**

- Equal Playing Time Rule – All squad members must receive equal playing time with at least 50% per player per game

#### **More Competitive**

- Power Play Rule – If any team goes 5 goals ahead, the other team may field an extra player until the goal difference is reduced to 4 goals. If the team goes 8 goals ahead they can field an extra player until the goal difference is reduced to 7 goals.
- Equal Numbers Rule – If a team has too few players, the other team must help out by loaning subs or withdraw players to make numbers even (cup games are an exception and this is down to the individual coach/es to decide on the day)
- Keep it fair! Do not use higher ability players in lower ability teams if you cannot field a team. Make the other coach aware if you cannot field a team and you need to use a player from another team within your club
- Teams will forfeit points in cup games, if this happens. We want to keep games ON but keep it fair.

#### **Pitch side**

- All bags, drinks and coats must be placed on the netting behind the goal
- Corners/goals kicks will be awarded if the ball crosses the touchline. The referees do not have VAR to assist. The referee's decision is final.
- All coaches must be stood with subs against the boards at opposite ends of the pitch.
- Coaches must be stood at least **2 metres/grass carpet widths away from the goal**
- Maximum of two coaches per team allowed pitch side upto U13.
- Maximum of 4 sub players (wearing bibs) to be stood pitch side (additional players must be outside) No balls other than the match ball permitted at pitch side during play