



20. PLAYING SEASON: CONDITIONS OF PLAY, TIMES OF KICK-OFF, POSTPONEMENTS & SUBSTITUTES

20A

All Competition Matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their Grounds in a playable condition. All Competition Matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the Management Committee. If through any fault of the home Team a match has to be replayed, the Management Committee shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

The Management Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for Competition Matches and to order the Club concerned to play its Competition Match(es) on another ground.

Artificial Football Turf Pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition provided they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's Register of Football Turf Pitches - <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>. All Football Turf Pitches used must be tested (by a FIFA accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The FA will give a decision on the suitability for use and add the pitch to the Register.

The home Club is also responsible for advising Participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 20.C.

Within Regional NLS Feeder Leagues, all Competition Matches shall have a duration of 90 minutes. All **other** Competition Matches shall have duration of 90 minutes unless a shorter time (not less than sixty (60) minutes) is mutually arranged by the two Clubs in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves. Two matches involving the same two Teams can be played on the same day providing the total playing time is not more than 120 minutes.

The times of kick-off shall be agreed at the AGM and can only be altered by the mutual consent of the two competing Clubs and the Competition. Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

The home Team must provide goal nets, corner flags and at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition If not provided. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

No overhead netting is allowed for 9v9 and 11v11 affiliated matches

Regional NLS Feeder Leagues: Overhead wires used to support pitch divider netting are removed for all affiliated matches at Regional NLS Feeder League level

For those leagues which are not Regional NLS Feeder Leagues: Overhead wires used to support pitch divider netting are ideally removed for affiliated matches but if they cannot be removed then discretion is given to the match official to restart the match in accordance of the laws



	of the game.
20B	<p>Except by permission of the Management Committee all Competition Matches must be played on the dates originally agreed but priority shall be given to The FA and parent County Association Cup Competitions. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a Competition match with the consent of the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.</p> <p>In the case of a revised fixture date, the Clubs must be given by the Competition 5 clear days' notice of the match (unless otherwise mutually agreed).</p>
20C	<p>An Officer of the home Club must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the Ground, time of kick-off and kit colours (including goalkeeper) to the Match Officials and an Officer of the opposing Club at least 5 clear days prior to the playing of the Competition Match. The opposing Club must confirm receipt and give notice of its kit colours (including goalkeeper) at least 4 days prior to the playing of the Competition Match. If either is not provided, the relevant Club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.</p>
20D	<p>In accordance with the Laws of the Game, the minimum number of Players which will constitute a Team for a Competition Match is 7. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.</p>
20E	<p>1. Home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall decide whether it should either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. award the points from the Competition Match in question to the Club's opponent (without the awarding of goals) <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. order the Competition Match to be rescheduled. The Management Committee shall also have the power to order the rescheduled Competition Match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent Club's Ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances. <p>In addition, the Management Committee may at its discretion order one or more of the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. impose a fine (in accordance with the Fines Tariff), b. deduct points from the defaulting Club, c. order the defaulting Club to pay any reasonable expenses incurred by the opponents. <p>2. Any Club with more than one Team in the Competition shall always fulfil its fixture, within the Competition, in the following order of precedence:- First Team, Reserve Team, A Team.</p> <p>3. Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a Competition Match has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the Competition Fixtures Secretary, the secretary of the opposing Club and the Match Officials. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.</p> <p>4. In the event of a Competition Match not being played or being abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it should be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Competition. Failing such agreement and notification to the Competition within 28 days the Competition shall have the power to order the Match to be played on or before a given date. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition- The Management Committee shall also be empowered to order the score at the time of an abandonment to stand. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.</p> <p>5. The Management Committee shall review all Competition Matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a Match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one Team or its Club member(s) they shall award the points for the Match to the opponent. In cases where a Match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both Teams or their Club member(s), the Management Committee shall rule that neither Team will be awarded any points for that Match and it shall not be replayed. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Match.</p> <p>The Management Committee shall review any Match that has taken place where either or both Teams were under a suspension imposed upon them by The FA or Affiliated Association. In each case the Team that was under suspension would be dealt with in the same manner as if they had participated with ineligible players in accordance with Rule 18.M above. Where both Teams were under suspension the game</p>



	must be declared null and void and shall not be replayed.
20F	<p>A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use substitute Players in any Competition Match. A Club may name up to 5 substitute Players of whom not more than 5 may be used.</p> <p><i>A Player who has been substituted becomes a substitute and may replace a Player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.</i></p> <p><i>Where a Competition does allow return substitutes, a Team may use up to 5 from 5 substitute Players in a Competition Match.</i></p> <p>The referee [and a representative of the opposing Club] shall be informed of the names of the Players taking part in the Match (including the substitutes) not later than 15 minutes before the start of the Competition Match and a Player not so named may not take part in that Competition Match.</p> <p>A Player who has been named as a substitute before the start of the Competition Match but does not actually play in that game shall not be considered to have been a Player in that Competition Match within the meaning of Rule 18 of this Competition.</p>
20G	The half time interval shall be of 5 minutes' duration, but it shall not exceed 15 minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.
20H	The Teams taking part in a Competition Match shall identify a Team captain who <i>shall wear</i> an armband and shall have a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of their teammates. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.
20I	Where a suspension imposed in relation to a Football Debt (as defined under the Football Debt Recovery Regulations) upon a Club by The FA or Affiliated Association is not lifted, and/or the Club does not provide confirmation from The FA or Affiliated Association that such suspension is lifted to the Competition Secretary by 9pm 2 days before a fixture, that fixture will be treated as an unfulfilled fixture and dealt with in accordance with Rule 20 P(c)(d).
20J	All home ground dates should be forwarded to the fixtures Secretary by the date notified on the permit & pitch availability form, no later than 15 th August. Failure to do so will result in a fine in accordance with the fines tariff.
20K	The times of kick-off shall be fixed at the AGM and can only be altered by the mutual consent of the two competing clubs prior to the scheduled date of the competition match with written notification given to the competition at least 7 days prior.
20L	<p>Each team shall complete a Competition match sheet on the day, ideally 25 minutes prior to kick off. This would allow enough time to carry out the administrative tasks so as not to delay the start of the match. There are three (3) sheets pertaining to one (1) fixture. The top sheet is white and is handed to the match referee after the player registration check has been completed and both teams have counter-signed their opponent's sheet. The 2nd sheet is yellow and is a duplicate of the top sheet. This sheet is swapped between both teams so that each team has a copy of their opponent's signed team sheet that has been handed to the match official on the day. This sheet is for the team to keep safe, and produce should there be any appeal/protest of unregistered/ineligible players in that fixture. If you do not keep that team sheet, then you waive your right to appeal/protest. The 3rd and final sheet is to be completed by your club post-match. This would include all the stats from the match that's required by the competition. Your Full Time team sheet should replicate this sheet (other than emergency signings on the day).</p> <p>The Referee shall make their way to the field of play 15 minutes before the scheduled kick off time and is then given the team sheets from both teams, the two match balls fit for play and offered their fee. The Referee must receive copy of the team sheet from both teams at least 15 minutes prior to kick-off (for Cup Finals this must be 30 minutes prior to kick-off time), with named substitutes clearly marked and ensuring all written shirt numbers correspond with those worn by the player. Teams delaying the start of the match by not having their team sheet ready for the referee will be fined for causing a late kick-off in accordance with the fines tariff.</p> <p>Any team failing to commence at the appointed time shall be fined a sum in accordance with the fines tariff (1-15 minutes) or (16-30</p>



	minutes), 30 minutes late is the cut off time for a scheduled kick-off, teams later than 30 minutes will not be permitted to record this fixture as a competitive match and the result will be decided by the Management Committee. The result will be covered by Rule 20 P. Member clubs causing continual late kick-offs will be dealt with in line with Rule 6I.
20M	Fixtures, having been issued shall be deemed to have been accepted unless objections are received by the Fixtures Secretary in writing, within seven days of their issue. All matches must be played on stated/published dates, or as directed by the Fixtures Secretary or the Management Committee.
20N	For midweek matches, notice must be given by 9pm Sunday prior to playing the match. Any team which does not notify their opponents and/or match official(s) by midday on the preceding Thursday may lose the right to play the match and be liable for the full cost of the match official(s). The points or the tie may be awarded to the opposition, with a scoreline of 0-0 being recorded. In all cases, email communication (where possible) will be deemed acceptable. When sending details to your opposition you must include your kit colours (including goalkeepers) and a PDF of your squad list downloadable from Whole Game/Football For All, the away team must send their PDF squad list to their opposition when confirming details.
20O	If a team fields only 6 players, a match cannot start. Similarly, if during a match, a team is reduced to 6 players either by injury, disciplinary action, (excluding temporary dismissals) or other circumstances, the match should not continue and should be abandoned immediately. The circumstances should be reported by both teams and the referee, where appointed by the league, to the league secretary and Fixtures Secretary within two days of the match. In certain circumstances the Referee must also report the abandonment to the County FA. Every team shall play its best available qualified team or teams in all matches in the competition. (Note: The intention of this Rule is not to interfere with normal team selection by teams, but to prevent them deliberately fielding a weakened team in order to unreasonably preserve players for another game or boast the strength of another lower team. If, in the opinion of the Management Committee, the substance or the spirit of the Rule is obviously being disregarded, the team or teams concerned may be called to account for its/their actions and shall be subject to such decisions as the Management Committee may determine, despite the fact that Rule 18 has not been infringed).
20P	<p>The decision-making process into non-played fixtures is as follows:</p> <p>a) If you are the HOME TEAM and withdraw before noon on the Thursday prior to the match (or Sunday 9pm for a midweek fixture) = the away team is awarded the match, 0-0 scoreline (walkover in a cup tie), HOME team is charged £10 for non-fulfillment of fixture and an additional charge of £50 for loss of revenue by the away team.</p> <p>b) If you are the HOME TEAM and withdraw after noon on the Thursday prior to the match (or Sunday 9pm for a midweek fixture) = the away team is awarded the match, 0-0 scoreline (walkover in a cup tie), HOME team is charged £10 for non-fulfillment of fixture, an additional charge of £50 for loss of revenue by the away team. If a club fails to notify the Fixtures Secretary before midday on the Saturday prior to the match, this will result in the full referee costs being levied against the defaulting team, unless the Referee can be reallocated an alternative fixture on the same date by the Referee's Secretary. (See Rule 23)).</p> <p>c) If you are the AWAY TEAM and withdraw before noon on the Thursday prior to the match (or Sunday 9pm for a midweek fixture) = the home team is awarded the match, 0-0 scoreline (walkover in a cup tie), the AWAY team charged £10 for non-fulfillment of fixture and an additional charge of £50 for loss of revenue by the home team. Note: Cancellation of the permit is the sole responsibility of the home team as no permit costs will be awarded in this scenario.</p> <p>d) If you are the AWAY TEAM and withdraw after noon on the Thursday prior to the match (or Sunday 9pm for a midweek fixture) = the home team is awarded the match, 0-0 scoreline (walkover in a cup tie), the AWAY team charged £10 for non-fulfillment of fixture, an additional charge of £50 for loss of revenue by the home team. If a club fails to notify the Fixtures Secretary before midday on the Saturday prior to the match, this will result in the full referee costs being levied against the defaulting team, unless the Referee can be reallocated on an alternative fixture on the same date by the Referee's Secretary. (See Rule 23)).</p> <p>A receipt of the permit invoice for that specific date will be required within seven (7) days for reimbursement of the permit costs otherwise</p>



	the claim will be void. The HOME team must contact the Fixtures Secretary as soon as possible if their permit becomes available due to a non-played fixture to see whether their permit can be used elsewhere and also contact the Referee's Secretary to ensure that the official can be utilized in another fixture
20Q	Notice of all abandoned matches must be given to the Fixtures Secretary by both Teams on the day of the match and also to the Results Secretary via text using the code A-A. Both teams shall write to the League General Secretary within four (4) days explaining the reason for this postponement/abandonment (email is acceptable). Any rearranged abandoned fixture will be 50/50 split costs between both competing teams, failure to report will attract a fine in accordance with the fines tariff.
20R	<p>Double Header Matches – In the event of inclement weather and/or adverse playing conditions the Management Committee may authorize the playing of Double-Header games in order to ensure that the League programme is brought to an orderly completion. Double-Header games only consist of two teams playing one another twice on the same day at the same location. Double-Header games will only be introduced when strictly necessary. The Home team will be determined and notified by the Fixtures Secretary.</p> <p>Each match may consist of different registered players for each team. Full match card procedure must be followed for each separate match and separate match and separate team sheets must be completed for each game and sent to the Registration Secretary in accordance with Rule 21(A).</p> <p>A team not ready to play at the time of the first scheduled kick-off shall be deemed as absent, the second game will be played as soon as possible.</p> <p>No more than a 15 minute break shall be allowed between the two separate matches. Half-time intervals may be reduced if agreeable to both sides and the referee. Should a second match of a double header not be fulfilled the defaulting team will be charged for non-fulfillment of fixture and attract a fine of £10 only.</p> <p>All permit costs are to be shared equally for Double-Headers between the two competing teams on the day. Note: An exception to this rule is if two competing teams play their Home matches at the same venue and pay annually for pitch hire rather than on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Each team shall share the costing of the match official(s). A player who is dismissed from the field of play by the referee in the first match shall be eligible to take part in the second game. The duration of each game shall be 30 minutes each way. (See Standing Order I)</p>
20S	If fixtures are arranged late, or altered, or any other problems concerning match arrangements, the Teams must keep the Fixtures Secretary, match official(s) and opponents fully informed of the situation. They must contact all parties no later than the Tuesday prior to the match and any further details must be confirmed to all parties by the Thursday preceding the match. If the kick-off time of a scheduled match is different from a 10.30 kick-off (except for Cup Finals) then the Fixtures Secretary must obtain written confirmation from both affected teams of their acceptance of this change with a copy of such records sent to the League Secretary. Member clubs are advised that due to inclement weather, pitch availability and exceptional circumstances, the kick-off time may be moved on a pro-rata basis but verbal communication (email sent is not accepted in this case as confirmed notice) will be the primary contact method.
20T	Any Team not wishing to play on a specific date must make a written application (a "no game request") to the Fixtures Secretary at least 28 days before the date they wish not to play.) This does not apply to Cup Finals, where no such dispensation will be granted). Successful applications outside of this limit will not be considered. Teams may submit only two requests per season, unless evidence of extraordinary circumstances can be provided (bereavement, etc). If your team does not want to play Easter Sunday you will need to submit a no game request at least 28 days before, however this will not form part of your 2 no game requests. (Not: Wedding parties, "stag" weekends or other pre-arranged social arrangements will NOT be permitted as a reason for not playing without due notice – all such events are inevitably subject to planning and such details should be well-known to a club, therefore allowing ample time to submit a "no game request"). Any applications may be declined if it is detrimental to the Competition.
20U	When the home team plays on the away Club's permit, the cost of the permit must be paid for on the day. Teams in default will be fined in accordance with the fines tariff. The defaulting team will have until noon on the following Thursday to settle the outstanding permit cost. After this Rule 6(I) applies.
20V	If a player is sent off the field of play for any offence, they must remove themselves from the sideline and away from the field of play. The distance required is subjective however they cannot be heard or participate in any capacity for the remainder of that match. Any player that is reported to the Management Committee for non-adherence of this rule will be reported to the County Football Association for further sanctioning.
20W	After the month of January in the playing season, should the home team pitch not be playable/available then the opposition pitch shall be used. This is regardless of teams having played each other in the playing season. Should the opposition pitch also not be playable or available



	then the Management Committee shall decide on another ground before postponing the game.
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