

## **Section 5: Amateur Football Combination Rules**

### **1. Nomenclature and Constitution**

- 1 a:** This League shall be designated the "Amateur Football Combination" and shall consist of Clubs who shall be full member Clubs or associate member Clubs. The object of the League is to foster and provide competitive football for Clubs in membership.
- 1 b:** All such Clubs must be affiliated to a County Football Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date on the Form "D" to the Amateur Football Alliance. The area covered by the League Membership shall be the Home Counties.
- 1 c:** The League shall apply annually for sanction to the Amateur Football Alliance and the constituent teams of Clubs shall be grouped in divisions.
- 1 d:** Full member Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the League in any other Saturday League Competitions except with the written consent of the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee. Teams shall not be permitted to compete in more than three Saturday Cup Competitions (including any F.A. and County F.A. Cup Competitions).
- 1 e:** A full member Club must maintain its first team in the League.

### **2. Admission to the League, Annual Subscription**

- 2 a:** Clubs wishing to become associate members shall apply to the Secretary. The Amenities Committee shall have the power to grant associate membership to any Club at any time.
- 2 b:** Non-member Clubs and associate member Clubs wishing to become full member Clubs of the League must be proposed and seconded in writing by two full member Clubs and must be approved by the Executive Committee. Election into membership will be by a majority vote at an AGM. Applications to join the League must be made in writing to the Secretary not later than 31<sup>st</sup> March each year. New Clubs shall serve a minimum of a one year probationary period. After not less than one year their probationary membership shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee which shall decide whether to recommend to the AGM that the Club be confirmed as a full member Club of the League. If then recommended for admission a Club may be admitted to full membership of the League.

A Non-member Club or associate member Club applying for membership must be represented at the AGM that considers its application. Such Clubs may not vote at that AGM.

The teams of a new member Club shall be placed within divisions as determined by the AGM.

- 2 c:** Applications by Clubs for the entry of any additional team(s) must be made in writing to the Secretary. Applications shall indicate the venue for matches of any additional teams and provide a list of friendly matches played during the current or previous season.
- At the discretion of a majority of the accredited voting members present, applications, of which due notice has been given, may be received at the AGM or a SGM.
- 2 d:** The Annual Subscription and due payment date shall be due not later than 31<sup>st</sup> October or such later date as the Executive Committee may set. A Club shall not participate in the League if it is in default of its Annual Subscription.
- 2 e:** Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by 30<sup>th</sup> June of all its county affiliation numbers for the forthcoming season, failing which they shall be fined. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the prescribed form, details of its Grounds, Officers and any other information required by the League.

### **3. Officers**

- 3:** The Officers of the League shall be the President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary (Discipline), Committee Chairmen, Results Secretaries, League Match Secretaries, Minutes Secretary, Publications Secretary, Referees' Secretaries and Representative Team Manager. They shall be elected annually at the AGM.

**4. Management, Nomination, Election**

- 4 a:** The League shall be governed in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association by an Executive Committee elected at the AGM. The Executive Committee shall comprise the President, Immediate Past President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary (Communications), Assistant Secretary (Discipline), Treasurer, Committee Chairmen, Minutes Secretary, Representatives to the Amateur Football Alliance Council, and up to twelve Representatives of full member Clubs and a maximum of six Vice-Presidents. All participants shall abide by the Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding Children as determined by the Association from time to time.
- 4 b:** Retiring Officers shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination. All other candidates for election as Officers or Members of the Executive Committee shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the Secretaries of two Clubs, not later than 30<sup>th</sup> April in each year, or by nomination by the Executive Committee without a seconder. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the AGM. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the foregoing for any office, nominations may be received at the AGM.
- 4 c:** The Executive Committee shall meet as often as is necessary to deal with business as it arises.  
Upon receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the Members of the Executive Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee.
- 4 d:** Except where otherwise mentioned all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the League and keep a record of its proceedings.
- 4 e:** All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their nominated Officers.
- 4 f:** New Vice-Presidents shall be elected at the AGM. Such election shall be based upon their contributions to the League and its predecessors over a number of years.
- 4 g:** The Executive Committee shall elect League representatives to the Council of the Amateur Football Alliance. The number shall be determined by the Amateur Football Alliance.

**5. Powers of Management**

- 5 a:** The Executive Committee shall appoint sub-Committees (known as Committees) that shall have the power to make decisions. The minutes of all such Committees shall be reported to the Executive Committee.  
The designation of Committees shall normally include: Emergency, Finance, Constitution, Development, Amenities, Referees, Fixtures, Spirit of Football, Discipline, Communications, Rules Revision, Representative Team and Dinner.
- 5 b:** Each Member of any Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Meetings of that Committee and have one vote thereat, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Member or to the Club(s) of which he is a Member. Should the Chairman have a personal interest, or be a member of the Club under discussion, it shall be declared and a deputy shall be elected for the purpose of that agenda item.  
In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman or Acting Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
- 5 c:** Each Committee shall have the powers to apply, act upon and enforce the Rules of the League and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting its terms of reference or area of operation within the League, including any not provided for in the Rules. Except where these Rules provide for the imposition of a set penalty, any Club, Official or Player, alleged to be in breach of a League Rule must be formally charged in writing and given the opportunity to present their case before the relevant Committee. All breaches of the Laws of the Game, Rules and Regulations of the Football Association shall be dealt with in accordance with F.A. Rules by the appropriate County Association.
- 5 d:** All decisions of Committees shall be binding subject to the right of appeal to the Appeals Committee under Rule 15. Decisions of Committees must be notified in writing to those concerned within 21 days.
- 5 e:** 10 Members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

- 5 f:** The Executive Committee and other League Committees shall have power to fill any vacancies that may occur amongst their number and may co-opt additional members as necessary. Co-opted members shall have voting powers if approved by the Executive Committee.
- 5 g:** A member of any Committee appointed by the League to attend a meeting or match may have any expenses incurred refunded by the League at a rate to be determined by the Executive Committee.  
Officers and Committee members of the League shall also be reimbursed expenses for attendance at Committee Meetings at a rate to be determined by the Executive Committee.
- 5 h:** No member of the Executive Committee or member of any Committee appointed by the Executive Committee shall, or shall be entitled to, receive any remuneration or honoraria for work done or services rendered for or on behalf of the League and no other persons undertaking work on behalf of the League shall be entitled to remuneration save under a separate contract.
- 5 i:** The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the League between the AGM or any SGM called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the League season.
- 5 j:** On occasions it may be necessary for the Executive Committee to convene special meetings at which specified Club Officers or their deputies must be present. Notice of such meetings shall be forwarded to relevant Clubs not less than 28 days prior to the meeting, except in cases of extreme urgency, when a shorter period of time may be given.
- 5 k:** The Emergency Committee shall consist of the Chairman, Secretary, Vice-Chairmen and the Chairmen of the Discipline and Fixtures Committees.
- 5 l:** The Executive Committee shall have the authority to interpret these Rules. All matters not provided for by the Rules shall be dealt with by the Executive Committee as it may determine.
- 5 m:** The business of the League as determined by the Executive Committee may be transacted by electronic mail or facsimile.

### **6: Annual General Meeting**

- 6 a:** The AGM shall be held not later than 30<sup>th</sup> June in each year. Each full member Club shall have the right to send two delegates but shall have one vote only. Each associate member club shall have the right to send two delegates but not to vote.

At this meeting the following business shall be transacted:

- (i) To receive and confirm the Minutes of the preceding AGM.
  - (ii) To consider any business arising therefrom.
  - (iii) To receive and adopt the Annual Report.
  - (iv) To receive and adopt the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet.
  - (v) Alteration of Rules and Notices of Motion, if any (of which notice has been given under rule 20b).
  - (vi) Election of Officers and the Executive Committee.
  - (vii) Appointment of Auditors.
  - (viii) Election of new Clubs.
  - (ix) Constitution of the League for ensuing season.
  - (x) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted as being relevant to an AGM.
- 6 b:** Not less than 14 days' notice shall be given of the AGM.
- 6 c:** A copy of the duly audited Statement of Accounts, Balance Sheet and Agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least fourteen days prior to the meeting.
- 6 d:** A signed copy of the duly audited Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet shall be sent to the Amateur Football Alliance within fourteen days of its adoption by the AGM.

- 6 e:** Full member Clubs who have withdrawn their membership of the League during the season being concluded or who are not continuing in Membership shall be entitled to attend but shall vote only on matters relating to the season being concluded.
- 6 f:** All voting shall be conducted by a show of voting cards unless a ballot is demanded by at least one-third of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chairman so decides.
- 6 g:** No individual shall be entitled to vote on behalf of more than one Club.
- 6 h:** Any Club failing to be represented at the AGM shall be fined.
- 6 i:** Officers shall be entitled to attend and vote at an AGM. Subject to rule 5b no person shall exercise a second vote on any individual item at the AGM.

### **7. Agreement to be Signed**

The Chairman and the Secretary of each Club shall annually complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the League for the coming season.

"We, .....(signature)..... of .....(address)..... (Chairman) and  
.....(signature)..... of .....(address)..... (Secretary) of the  
.....(Club name)..... Football Club have been provided with a copy of the  
Rules and Regulations of the Amateur Football Combination and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the  
said Club to conform to those Rules and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions  
of the Executive Committee and other Committees of the League subject to the right of appeal in accordance  
with Rule 16".

Any alteration of the Chairman and/or Secretary on the above Agreement must be notified to the Amateur Football Alliance, any other *County Football Association to which the Club is affiliated and to the Secretary of the League.*

### **8. Qualification of Players**

- 8 a:** Contract players, as defined in Football Association Rules, are not permitted in this Competition. A contract player may only play for the Club that holds his contract.
- 8 b:** A registered playing member of a Club is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:-
- (i) Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink, countersigned by an Officer of the Club, and who has been registered on Full Time prior to playing
  - (ii) Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing, countersigned by an Officer of the Club and entered on Full Time within 48 hours subsequent to the match.
  - (iii) While serving in any branch of Her Majesty's Regular Forces, a player must first obtain the consent of his Association Secretary before signing a registration form to play for a Club.
- 8 c:** A player having taken part in matches for any Club affiliated to any County Football Association shall not be allowed to join, be transferred to, or sign for a Club in the Competition without first proving to the officials of the intended Club that the player has discharged all reasonable financial liabilities to the previous Club or Clubs, and a Club official may not accept such player's signature without first ascertaining whether such claims have been discharged to the satisfaction of the Club, or Clubs, for which the player last played.
- 8 d:** The Fixtures Committee shall decide all registration disputes.
- In the event of a player signing a registration form or having a registration submitted for more than one Club priority of registration shall decide for which Club the player shall be registered. The Chairman of the Fixtures Committee shall notify the Club last applying to register the player of the fact of the previous registration.
- 8 e:** It shall be a breach of Rule for a player to:-
- (i) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.
  - (ii) Having signed for one Club in the Competition, sign for another Club in the Competition in that season except for the purpose of a transfer.

- (iii) Submit a signed registration form for registration that the player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

- 8 f:** (i) The Executive Committee shall have power to accept the registration of any player.
- (ii) The Fixtures Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any player or may fine any player, except those under 18 years of age, at their discretion who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities (Subject to Rule 16).
- (iii) The Fixtures Committee shall have power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct (subject to Rule 16) 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 Clause (iii) 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 purpose of this Rule, bringing the competition into disrepute can only be considered where the player has received in excess of 12 days' suspension, or 10 matches in match based discipline, in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.*

- 8 g:** Subject to The Football Association Rules dealing with players without a written contract when a player desires a transfer, the Club the player wishes to transfer to shall submit a transfer form to the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee. Such transfer shall be referred by the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee to the Club for which the player is registered. Should this Club object to the transfer it should state its objections in writing to the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee and to the player concerned within seven days of receipt of the transfer form. Upon receipt of the Club's consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within seven days, the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee may, on behalf of the Fixtures Committee, transfer the player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date.

In the event of an objection to a transfer the matter shall be referred to the Fixtures Committee for a decision.

- 8 h:** A player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition except by special permission of the Fixtures Committee.
- 8 i:** A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played must be entered on Full Time within 48 hours of the match.
- 8 j:** Registrations are valid for one Season only.
- 8 k:** (i) Any team playing an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player or players may have the points gained in the match deducted from its total and may be fined and/or otherwise dealt with at the discretion of the Fixtures Committee.
- (ii) In addition the team may have points deducted from its total at the discretion of the Fixtures Committee and may be dealt with in any further manner which is thought to be fit.
- (iii) The Fixtures Committee may, at its discretion, award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

### **9. Club Colours, Club Names**

- 9 a:** Each Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the League which shall decide as to their suitability.

Goalkeepers must wear colours that distinguish them from other players and the referee.

No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.

Where two Clubs have similar colours the home Club shall change, unless agreement is reached to the contrary.

Players' shirts in all teams shall be uniquely numbered. Any Club failing to comply with this rule shall be liable to a fine by the Amenities Committee.

*Note: From season 2007/8 it will be expected that team Captains will wear arm bands to distinguish them in that role*

**9 b:** Any Club wishing to change its name and/or its colours must obtain the approval of the Fixtures Committee.

**10. Playing Season, Conditions of Play, Times of Kick Off, Postponements, Substitutes**

**10 a:** Clubs should start their programmes as early as possible. All teams in the Premier and Senior Divisions must have started league games by the penultimate Saturday in September, unless otherwise involved in Cup fixtures or requesting "no fixture" (see 10 g). All other teams must have started league games by the last Saturday in September. Every Saturday in the season shall be considered as available for League matches, unless otherwise agreed by the Fixtures Committee. The League Match Secretary may require matches to be played during April and May in midweek and on Sundays to ensure completion of the League programme. No Club shall be compelled to play on a Public Holiday.

Fixtures arranged by League Match Secretaries shall not be re-arranged by Clubs without the permission of the League Match Secretary.

**10 b:** All 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. The Amenities Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for matches in the League and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground. If through the fault of the home team a match has to be replayed, the Fixtures Committee shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

All matches shall last two equal periods of 45 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed between the referee and the two participating teams, and in any event shall be of equal halves. Any agreement to alter the periods of play must be made before the start of play. No match shall last for less than 60 minutes.

The half-time interval shall be of five minutes' duration and may be altered only with the consent of the referee.

The latest times of kick-off shall be set by the Fixtures Committee. Any Club failing to commence at the appointed time may be fined.

Referees shall order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the League.

In the event of a team not being ready at the appointed time, provided 7 or more of the players are available, the referee shall order the game to proceed as soon as he sees fit. If it is not possible to commence the game within 30 minutes of the scheduled kick off time, the referee has the right to refuse to officiate and will be entitled to his fee from the home team. Any team not able to commence the game within 30 minutes of the due kick off time is liable to such action as the Fixtures Committee considers appropriate.

The home team must provide at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the League if the footballs are unsuitable.

**10 c:** Except by permission of the Fixtures Committee all matches must be played on the dates originally fixed but priority shall be given to The Football Association and all relevant County Association Cup Competitions and where relevant to matches played against the parent school/college/university of the Club. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may only change the date of a match with the consent of the League Match Secretary.

**10 d:** The home Club must give full particulars of, and directions to, the ground and time of kick off to the match officials and to the away Club at least 5 days prior to the playing of the match. The two Clubs should also confirm team colours.

The home Club must ensure that the away Club and match officials confirm these details. It is not sufficient for the home Club to simply leave a message and assume that it will be collected.

Any Club failing to comply with this Rule shall be fined by the Fixtures Committee.

**10 e:** A Club shall play its strongest team as its first team, second strongest as its second team and so on. Clubs must operate selection policies that ensure there is completely free movement of players between teams throughout the Club based on playing strengths. Clubs must be able to demonstrate compliance with this

rule if required to do so by the Fixtures Committee. Any Club infringing this rule may be liable to a fine, a deduction of points or to any other sanctions which the Fixtures Committee considers appropriate.

**10 f:** Any Club needing to cancel a fixture due to a shortage of players must: -

- (i) cancel the fixture of its lowest XI, and
- (ii) notify its opponents of the cancellation not later than 7.00 p.m. on the day preceding the fixture.

In the event of any Club failing to comply with these requirements, or otherwise failing to fulfil a fixture, the Fixtures Committee shall have power to impose a fine, deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points from the match in question to the opponents, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents, order the replaying of a fixture or fixtures or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals.

**10 g:** Subject to rule 10f, a Club may cancel the fixture of its lowest team (unless in the Premier/Senior Divisions) because of a shortage of players, as follows: -

<b>Teams entered by the Club in the League</b>	<b>Maximum cancellations by the Club per season</b>
1 – 2	2
3 - 5	3
6 or more	4

**Excessive Cancellations:** Any Club cancelling more than the maximum permitted fixtures in any season may on each occasion be fined and be further penalised by the Fixtures Committee as follows:-

<b>Further cancellation</b>	<b>Points deductions</b>
First	1
Second	2
Third and subsequent	3

A Club cancelling any further fixtures thereafter, or any Premier or Senior Division fixture, may be further penalised by the Fixtures Committee.

The Fixtures Committee may require a Club to withdraw a team from the League if the Club has been unable to make that team regularly available for League matches.

**10 h:** A Club may request that “no fixture” be allocated to a team where there is good cause on a particular Saturday during the season. Such requests must be made to the relevant League Match Secretary at least four weeks in advance of the date concerned, who will then decide at his discretion whether to agree to such a request. A team is limited to one such request per season.

When a side has been granted “no fixture” the Club concerned must ensure that its remaining lower sides are not “over-strength”. This rule only applies to league fixtures.

**10 i:** Notice of postponement of any match must be given without delay to the opposing club and by both Clubs to the Referees’ Secretary, the match officials and the Appropriate Results Secretary. Both Clubs must ensure that the postponement is confirmed. It is not sufficient for Clubs to simply leave a message and assume that it will be collected. Should the opposing Club Fixtures Secretary be unavailable, contact must be made with the opposing Club’s Honorary Secretary, Emergency contact, and/or any other relevant Club Officer.

Both Clubs must inform the appropriate League Match Secretary of any postponed or abandoned matches no later than 9.00 pm on the day of the match, as well as reporting to the Results Secretary in the usual manner. The reason for the postponement shall be included on the Comprehensive Results Sheet.

Any Club involved in a drawn, postponed or abandoned cup tie must advise the appropriate League Match Secretary no later than 9 pm on the same day.

Any Club failing to comply with these requirements shall be dealt by the Fixtures Committee who may impose any penalty deemed suitable.

In all cases where the Fixtures Committee is satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the misconduct of one team or its Club Member(s) it shall be empowered to award the match to the opposition and/or to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand.

The Fixtures Committee shall review all abandoned matches in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both teams. Where it is to the advantage of the League and does no injustice to either Club, the Fixtures Committee shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Fixtures Committee is satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) it shall be empowered to award the points for the match to the opposition and/or to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In cases where a match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both teams or their Club members, the Fixtures Committee shall rule all points for the match as void. No fine(s) can be applied by the Fixtures Committee for an abandoned match.

**10 j:** The Fixtures Committee may give any Club(s) not less than 28 days written notice of a closing date by which all their games in that season are to be completed and may fine any Club which fails to complete its fixture programme by that date for each game which has not been played.

**10 k:** A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game nominate and use up to a maximum of 3 substitute players in any match in the League.

The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitutes before the start of the match. A player not so named shall not be allowed to take part in the game.

**10 l:** In circumstances when the programme of fixtures becomes disrupted, League Match Secretaries may ask Clubs, or in exceptional circumstances, order Clubs to play games as double headers. This is to ensure the League Programme can be completed. In such circumstances two games shall be played, each game being of 60 minutes' duration. Each game is treated entirely separately, with each side as the home team for one game. Substitutes must be nominated for each match in the normal way. Matches cannot be played for double points.

The referee shall be entitled to a full match fee for each game, each club paying one match fee.

### **11. Reporting Results**

**11 a:** Each Club must submit details of results in a format prescribed by the League, including referees' marks, hospitality marks, Spirit of Football marks and any other information required by the League, to arrive not later than four days following the match. Clubs failing to do so shall be liable to be fined by the Fixtures Committee.

**11 b:** Each Club must submit match results by SMS text message to the FA Full-Time system, by 7.00pm on a Saturday, or within 2 hours of the completion of a match played on any other day. Clubs failing to do so shall be liable to be fined by the Fixtures Committee.

### **12. Determining Championship**

**12:** Team rankings within the League will be decided by points with 3 points to be awarded for a win and 1 point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners.

In the event of two or more teams being equal on points team rankings will be decided by:

- (i) Goal Difference, or if that is equal
- (ii) Goals Scored.

If the Goal Difference and Goals Scored are equal the Championship in that Division shall be shared

### **13. Referees**

**13 a:** Registered referees for all matches shall be appointed by the Referees' Secretary in a manner approved by the Referees' Committee and by the Amateur Football Alliance.

When no official referee is appointed by the Referees' Secretary, the home Club shall provide an appropriate person to undertake the duties of a referee.

Please see guidance notes in section 1 of the handbook on the meaning of 'appropriate persons.'

- 13b:** In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee the game must be played and shall rank as a League fixture. If it is not possible to obtain a mutually acceptable substitute referee for the whole match each side must provide a referee for one half. Clubs shall have a whistle available for all home games.

A referee thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered referee.

**Note:** *a referee may not also play in the match whilst refereeing.*

- 13c:** The Referees' Committee may, if it considers it desirable or upon application by the competing clubs, appoint any available Assistant Referees to a match. In that event the away team shall pay the home team the fee for one of the Assistant Referees.
- 13d:** The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final, unless the authority owning or controlling the ground, whose decision must be accepted, has declared it unfit for play.
- 13e:** The home Club shall offer the match officials their fees before the match and if not accepted then, pay them immediately after the match. The fees shall be agreed at the AGM and published in the League Handbook.
- 13f:** In the event of a match not being played for any reason, the home Club shall pay the match officials their fees in full, provided that they have made the journey to the ground. If the match is not played owing to the default of the away Club the Fixtures Committee shall have the power to require the away Club to refund the home Club the fee paid to the referee.

**Note:** *Subject to enquiry by the Fixtures Committee, the away side may be called upon to meet some or all of the expenses*

- 13g:** A match official not keeping his engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to his non-appearance, may have his name removed from the list of Referees at the annual review during the close season and the fact reported to the Association with which he is registered.
- 13h:** Each Club shall award a mark out of 100 for the referee for each match. Where a Club marks a referee 60 or less, a written explanation must be sent within 7 days of the match to the appropriate Referees' Secretary giving the name of the Referee and the reason(s) for such a mark. The League shall keep a record of all marks awarded to Referees.

**Note:** *Please refer to the guidance for marking referees in section 1 of this handbook.*

#### **14. Continuation of Membership or Withdrawal of a Club**

- 14a:** A Club intending or having a provisional intention to withdraw from the League on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the League must notify the Secretary in writing by 31<sup>st</sup> March each Season or be liable to a fine.
- 14b:** Any Club wishing to withdraw a team must do so in writing, stating its reasons, to the Chairman of the Fixtures Committee with a copy to the League Match Secretary. The Fixtures Committee will consider each request on its own merit, and may determine that any request made after 31<sup>st</sup> October will apply only to the lowest team of the Club making the request.
- 14c:** A Club shall not be allowed to withdraw any or all of its teams from the League after the AGM for the following Season without the permission of the Fixtures Committee.
- 14d:** In the event of a Club which is an unincorporated association withdrawing and/or disbanding it shall be immediately liable to discharge all its financial and other obligations to the League.

In the event of any such obligation remaining undischarged after a period of twenty-one days then such obligation shall be met by the then current Club Members, excluding those under the statutory school leaving age. Until a Member's pro rata obligation is discharged in full the Member shall not be allowed to participate in the League, which may apply to the Club's Parent County Association for a suspension order. If the debt remains unpaid after 84 days, the Competition may apply to the Club's parent County Association for the debt to be recovered in accordance with the FA Football Debt Recovery System. Once the matter has been passed to the Club's parent County Association the debt can only be cleared by payment to that County Association.

**15. Complaints and Protests**

- 15a:** (i) All questions concerning the eligibility of players, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules on those matters shall be referred to the Fixtures Committee.
- (ii) Objections relating to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be considered by the Fixtures Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match.
- 15b:** Except in cases where the Executive Committee decides that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints under rule 15a (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged with the Secretary of the League within 7 days of the match or occurrence to which they refer.
- 15c:** No protest or complaint shall be considered by the Executive Committee unless the Club concerned shall have deposited with the Secretary of the League a sum of £25.00. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the protest or complaint being dismissed. The Executive Committee shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the enquiry or, if it is determined that two or more Clubs concerned were at fault, to order that the costs be shared by them, up to a maximum of £200.
- 15d:** All parties to a protest or complaint shall be afforded an opportunity to make a statement when the protest or complaint is being heard and shall have received 7 days notice of the hearing, together with a copy of the protest or complaint. When dealing with a protest or complaint the relevant Committee shall take into consideration the possession by the protesting or complaining Club of any information which, if properly used, might have avoided the protest or complaint. A Member of the Executive Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present, except as a witness or representative of his Club, when such protest or complaint is being determined.
- 15e:** The Secretary of any Club wishing to complain against a decision of a League Officer shall notify the appropriate Committee Chairman within 14 days of notification of the decision requesting an informal review. The Committee Chairman shall respond within 14 days confirming whether the decision has been changed.

**16. Board of Appeal of the A.F.A.**

- 16:** Within 14 days of the posting of written notification of any decision of the League a Club, Official or Player against whom the action is taken may appeal against such decision by lodging particulars in duplicate with the Secretary of the Amateur Football Alliance, including a fee as set by the Amateur Football Alliance, for adjudication of a Board of Appeal. A copy of this appeal must be sent to the Secretary of the League.
- The grounds of appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules. The Board of Appeal may order the appeal fee to be forfeited and shall decide by whom the costs of the appeal shall be borne. The decision of the Board of Appeal is final and binding on all parties concerned.

**17. Suspension and Exclusion of Clubs or Teams. Misconduct. Clubs, Officials, Players**

- 17a:** At the AGM, or SGM called for the purpose, Notice of Motion having been duly circulated on the Agenda, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude any Club from further membership upon a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot.
- 17b:** At the AGM, or SGM called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 19, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude from further participation in the League any Club whose conduct has, in their opinion, been undesirable upon a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A Club whose conduct is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.
- 17c:** Any official or member of a Club proved guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a player or players of another Club in the League to join them shall be liable to expulsion or such penalty as a General Meeting or the Executive Committee may decide, and their Club shall also be liable to expulsion in accordance with the provisions of Clauses 17 a and 17 b.
- Such a decision shall require a simple majority of those present and voting.

- 17 d:** The Executive Committee shall have the power to suspend or terminate membership to or from any associate member Club at any time.
- 17 e:** The Executive Committee may make a recommendation to the AGM concerning the future membership of any Club.
- 17 f:** Any Club called to a hearing must be represented as a minimum by any three of its senior Officers. The Executive Committee shall have the power to specify which Officers shall attend the meeting. The Club shall be liable to pay the costs of the hearing.
- 17 g:** Any Club that expels a player independently of action taken by the Executive Committee shall inform the Secretary of the League within 7 days of the decision.

**18: Trophy: Legal Owner, Conditions of Taking Over, Agreement to be Signed, Awards**

- 18 a:** The trustees shall deal with the property of the League, including any assets, equipment, trophies, the funds and any Intellectual Property rights, as directed by resolution of the Executive Committee (of which an entry in the Minute Book shall be conclusive evidence) and they shall be indemnified against risk and expense out of League property.
- 18 b:** The President, the Chairman and Treasurer for the time being shall be and are hereby expressly appointed for all intents and purposes, trustees and legal owners of the Trophies and all other property or assets of the League. The trophies shall remain the property of the League and shall not be won outright by any Club.
- 18 c:** Trophy holders must return the Trophy or Cup to the engravers by 31<sup>st</sup> March. This date shall be set at the AGM. Clubs who breach this Rule shall be fined an amount not less than £5 per day per trophy.
- 18 d:** Winners of the trophy must send a representative to the Annual Dinner to collect the trophy. Clubs who breach this Rule shall be fined by the Dinner Committee. Trophies not so collected will be retained by the League.

The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of each trophy:-

- 18 e:** "We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the Chairman and Secretary of \_\_\_\_\_ FC, members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of the Amateur Football Combination Division \_\_\_\_\_ Trophy, and it having been delivered to us by the League, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the trophy to the League on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March. If the Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care we agree to refund to the League the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair. Any such losses shall be notified to the Secretary of the League immediately."
- 18 f:** Intellectual Property rights of the League shall include the League logo or badge and any patents, trade marks, designs, copyright or rights in the nature of copyright relating to the League and its operations. Clubs may reproduce the League logo or badge upon their playing kit, letter heading or website in order to indicate membership of the League. Any such reproduction by Clubs must be in accordance with guidelines laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee for reproduction of the League logo or badge. Any Club leaving the League (for whatever reason) shall immediately remove all reproductions or references to the League logo or badge from all items.

**19. Special General Meetings**

- 19 a:** Upon receiving a requisition signed by one-third of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call a SGM. Such a meeting must be held within 28 days.
- 19 b:** The Executive Committee may call a SGM at any time.
- 19 c:** At least 7 days' notice shall be given of a meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted thereat including a copy of any resolution to be placed before the meeting. Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all SGMs. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only.
- 19 d:** Any Club failing to be represented at such a Meeting may be fined by the Executive Committee.
- 19 e:** Officers shall be entitled to attend and vote at all SGMs.

**20. Alteration to Rules and Notices of Motion**

- 20 a:** Alterations to these Rules may only be made at the AGM or at a SGM specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 19.
- 20 b:** Notice of proposed alterations to these rules or Notices of Motion to be considered at the AGM shall be submitted by clubs to the Secretary by the 30<sup>th</sup> April and shall be proposed and seconded by two Clubs at the AGM or SGM. These, together with any proposals by the Executive Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs with the notice of the AGM or SGM. A proposal to change a rule shall be carried if a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote are in favour. A Motion shall be carried if more than half of those present and entitled to vote are in favour.

Any request to vary or amend a proposed alteration to the Rules must be proposed and seconded by Clubs and shall be carried if a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote are in favour.

**21. Rules Binding on Clubs**

- 21:** Each Club shall be deemed to have given its assent to the foregoing Rules and agreed to abide by the decisions of the Executive Committee or any other League Committee subject to Rule 16.

**22. Finance**

- 22 a:** The Executive Committee shall determine with which bank or other financial institution the funds of the League will be lodged.
- 22 b:** The Executive Committee shall, each financial year, agree a budget for League expenditure and income. All expenditure in excess of the agreed budget shall require approval by the Executive Committee.
- 22 c:** The financial year of the League shall end on 31<sup>st</sup> May of each year.
- 22 d:** The books, or a certified balance sheet, of the League shall be prepared for annual audit by suitable person(s) who shall be appointed at the AGM.

**23. Club Administration**

- 23 a:** Each Club must be governed by a set of rules and must hold an AGM that shall elect officers and a Committee to administer the affairs of the Club. Minutes of all Club meetings must be recorded and made available for inspection at the request of the Executive Committee.
- 23 b:** Each Club must nominate members of its Committee to act as its Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Club Fixtures Secretary and must provide telephone numbers which can be used in emergency.
- Any change to the information declared in the handbook must be notified to the Secretary of the League within 7 days. Clubs in breach are liable to a fine by the Executive Committee.
- Where a Club receives correspondence from a League Officer which requires a reply then such reply must be sent to the Officer concerned within 14 days, unless an alternative reply date is indicated in the original letter. Failure to reply will render the Club liable to a fine by the Executive Committee.
- 23 c:** Subject to any agreed arrangements to the contrary, Clubs must accept full responsibility for the ground, match officials and refreshments for every home game in accordance with Rule 10b.
- 23 d:** The Executive Committee or any other League Committee shall have the power to impose a fine on a Club for administrative failure that causes serious inconvenience to another Club, to a match official or to the League and for default of the Rules.
- 23 e:** All fines and charges shall be paid within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification. Clubs committing a breach of this Rule will incur such penalties as the Executive Committee may impose.
- 23 f:** Each Club shall maintain a Code of Conduct or Disciplinary Code containing details of how misconduct by players, officials or other persons associated with the Club will be handled within the club. The Code shall be submitted to the League annually and again with amendments or additions where appropriate within 7 days of any request from the League. Failure to do so shall render the club liable to a fine by the Discipline Committee.

**24. Representative Matches**

- 24 a:** The Representative Team Committee shall arrange and be responsible for representative matches.
- 24 b:** Any player selected to represent the League or the Amateur Football Alliance may not play for his Club on the date of any such match without the consent of the Representative Team Committee. When more than one player from any single Club is selected to represent the League or the Amateur Football Alliance, that Club may seek permission from the Fixtures Committee to postpone its fixture.
- 24 c:** Players representing the League in five or more Representative matches shall be awarded a League Representative tie.

**25. Standards of Amenities**

- 25 a:** All Clubs must register their grounds for approval by the Amenities Committee and must notify subsequent changes to the Amenities Committee for approval before use.

The requirements from home sides for accommodation, playing facilities and hospitality are as follows:

**(a) Accommodation:**

- (i) Hooks, pegs and seating accommodation must be provided.
- (ii) Adequate electric lighting must be provided.
- (iii) Adequate hot showers must be provided.
- (iv) Home Clubs must notify visitors of arrangements for the safe-keeping of valuables and clothing.

**(b) Field of Play and Match Balls:**

- (i) Goal nets and four corner flags must be used.
- (ii) All lines must be clearly marked, preferably in white.
- (iii) Pitches shall be of grass or 3G (Long Pile Rubber Crumb), or later generation artificial pitch. Any other surface must be agreeable to the participating Clubs.
- (iv) The home club shall give due notice to the away club and match official(s) should the home club propose playing any game on an artificial pitch.
- (v) The home club must provide at least two footballs that are fit for match play.

**(c) Hospitality and Refreshments:**

- (i) The Home team shall provide at least a cup of tea and a cake or biscuit without charge to the visiting players and match officials at or near to the match venue after the match.
- (ii) The Home team shall welcome the visitors and match officials to the ground and show them the changing accommodation and pitch and confirm the hospitality venue. They shall act as hosts at all times whilst the visitors and match officials are at the ground and at the hospitality venue. (NB. The visiting team should respond to hospitality offered.)
- (iii) Where a visiting Club wishes to decline the refreshments provided by the home Club it must do so no later than two days before the day of the match.
- (iv) Details must be given to visiting captains and match officials on the day of the game detailing the facilities available for the provision of refreshment.
- (v) After accepting or not declining a home Club's offer of refreshment the visiting team shall ensure that it honours that arrangement. Any Club failing to do so shall be liable to reimburse the home Club's reasonable expenses.
- (vi) Refreshments must be offered to the match officials at half-time.

**(d) Emergency Treatment:**

- (i) The home Club shall ensure that they are aware of the nearest Accident & Emergency Department.

**Note:** *It is recommended that every team should have at least one member trained and certified in the Emergency Aid FA Training Scheme or be in possession of a recognized up-to-date First Aid Qualification. Re-certification is required every three years.*

**Addenda:**

- (i) Separate changing rooms are desirable but not essential.
- (ii) Match officials should be provided with separate changing accommodation. If none is available they should change with the home team.
- (iii) Pitches for matches in the Premier and Senior Divisions should not be shorter than 110 yards, or narrower than 66 yards. In all other Divisions the minimum dimension should be 100 yards by 60 yards.

**26. Spring Cup Competitions**

**26 a:** The Fixtures Committee may at its discretion establish short competitions for teams whose League programme is likely to be completed at an early date before the end of the season.

**26 b:** In the event that any tie in the competition requires a result on the day, two fifteen-minute periods of extra time shall be played if the score is level at the end of normal time. If the score still remains level the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark. The referee shall have discretion to reduce extra time to two ten-minute periods or to dispense with extra-time and go straight to the penalty competition if conditions make this necessary to obtain a decision.

**27. Interpretation**

In these rules, unless otherwise expressly stated: -

“Club” means a Club in full or associate membership of the League, including full member Club during its probationary membership, unless expressly stated otherwise.

“League” means the Amateur Football Combination

“AGM” means the Annual General Meeting

“SGM” means a Special General Meeting

References to the masculine shall be taken to include the feminine

“Registered Referee” and “Referee” shall include any person engaged in any then current FA basic referee training course for eleven-a-side football and having successfully completed the FA’s basic written examination for referees.

**Appendix 1**

*Payments, fines and charges which may apply under League Rules (to be paid within 14 days of notification under rule 23e). Full details can be found within the relevant paragraph of the League Rules.*

**Standard Fines and Charges**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fine</b>	<b>Committee</b>
2d	Failure to Pay Annual Subscription	£50	Executive
2d	Failure to Pay Annual Subscription after Reminder and Fine	£50 & Susp.	Executive
2e	Failure to Confirm County FA Affiliation Number	£25	Executive
6h	Failure to Attend AGM/SGM	£50	Executive
8b	Late Submission of Player Registration Details	£25	Fixtures
8b	Playing ineligible players	£25 & up to 4 pts	Fixtures
9a	Team wearing un-numbered shirts	£20	Amenities
10b	Late Kickoff (11-15 minutes)	£15	Fixtures
10b	Late Kickoff (16-25 minutes)	£20	Fixtures
10b	Late Kickoff (25-30 minutes)	£25	Fixtures
10b	Late Kickoff (30+ minutes)	£30	Fixtures
10d	Home clubs failing to provide details of game 5 days in advance of match	£25	Fixtures
10e	Club playing over strength side	variable	Fixtures
10f	Cancellation of Match after the 7.00pm Friday Deadline	£30 & 3 pts	Fixtures
10f	Failure to Fulfil a fixture (i.e. not turning up)	£50 & 3 pts *	Fixtures
10f	Failure to cancel fixture of lowest side ("packing a side")	£25 & 3 pts	Fixtures
10g	Excessive Cancellation of Fixtures due to lack of players (1st time) **	£20 & 1 pt	Fixtures
10g	Excessive Cancellation of Fixtures due to lack of players (2nd time) **	£30 & 2 pts	Fixtures
10g	Excessive Cancellation of Fixtures due to lack of players (3rd time) **	£50 & 3 pts	Fixtures
10i	Failure to advise League Officer of fixture not played or altered	£20	Fixtures
10j	Failure to Complete League Programme (per fixture not completed)	up to £50	Fixtures
11a	Comprehensive Results Sheet not received or received late	£20	Fixtures
11a	Comprehensive Results Sheet incomplete or incorrect	£10	Fixtures
11b	Failure to text Result by the required deadline	£10	Fixtures
13e	Failure to Pay Referee or Assistant Match Fee	£20	Referees
13h	Failure to Provide Written Report to explain a low mark for a referee	£20	Referees
14a	Failure to Notify League Secretary of Club Withdrawal by due deadline	£100	Executive
15c	Deposit to lodge a Protest/Complaint	£25	Executive
15c	Costs of a Frivolous Protest	£200 (max.)	Executive
16	Costs of Appeal to AFA	£100	AFA
17f	Costs of hearing at any League Committee	£200 (max.)	Executive
18c	Failure to Return League Trophy to Engravers by due date	£5/day (max£50)	Executive
18d	Failure to respond to Dinner Organiser about attendance at dinner	£20	Dinner
18d	Failure to Collect Trophy at League Dinner	£50	Dinner
23b	Failure to notify League Secretary of Change of Club details	£50	Executive
23b	Failure to respond to Correspondence within 14 days	£20	Executive
23b	Failure to respond to Correspondence within 14 days after reminder	£40	Executive
23d	Serious administrative Failure	£50	Executive
23e	Failure to settle Outstanding Fines within 14 days of request	£20	Executive
23e	Failure to Settle Outstanding Fines after initial fine and reminder	£40	Executive
23e	Failure to settle Outstanding Fines after two reminders	Suspension	Executive
23f	Failure to Submit Disciplinary Code to Discipline Secretary	£25	Discipline
25	Failure to provide hospitality to Match Officials	£15/£20/£25	Amenities
25	Failure to provide hospitality to Opposition	£15/£20/£25	Amenities

\*\* in addition any results gained by lower sides may be expunged

\*\*\* this includes the cancellation of any Premier/Senior Division fixture