



Women's Super League Football Handbook

Competition Rules

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1. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 In these Rules:

"Academy Development Registration" has the meaning given in Rule 7.11.

"Affiliated Association" means an association accorded the status of an affiliated association under The FA Rules.

"Alternative Proposal" shall have the meaning given in Rule 5.2.1.

"Artificial Pitch" means a field of play (as that term is defined in the Laws of the Game) that is not a Grass Pitch.

"Associate" means in relation to any Person:

- (a) anyone of a close relationship with that Person who, in the reasonable opinion of Leagues OpCo, is or is likely to be acting with that Person; or
- (b) any company of which that Person is a director or over which that Person is able to exercise control or influence; or
- (c) any person who is an employee or partner of that Person or is in close relationship with any such employee or partner; or
- (d) if that Person or any associate of that Person is a company, then any holding company or subsidiary of that company or a subsidiary of its holding company, or any director or employee of the company or any such holding company or subsidiary or person in a close relationship with any such director or employee; or
- (e) if that Person has an agreement or arrangement (whether legally binding or not) with any other person in relation to the exercise of their voting power in a Club or in relation to the holding or disposal of their interest in a Club, then that other person.

"Authorised Signatory" means any:

- (a) director of the Club; or
- (b) Club Official duly authorised by a resolution of its Club's board of directors to sign forms or enter into agreements on that Club's behalf either as required by these Rules or in connection with a Club's application for a UEFA Club Licence,

whose particulars shall have first been submitted to the Executive Operational Committee via the form issued by the Executive Operational Committee.

"Away Club" means in respect of a relevant Match, the Club playing at the Stadium of the opposing Club.

"Board" means the board of directors of Leagues OpCo and where reference is made to the Board taking or authorising any action, or to powers of the Board, such references shall be construed as being subject to Leagues OpCo's own internal company policies, rules and agreements.

"Broadcasting Regulations" means the document which may be published by Leagues OpCo on a Season by Season basis which sets out:

- (a) how certain Club Footage and Match Footage may be used by the Club; and
- (b) any additional requirements relating to broadcasting and media for the League Competitions.

Currently contained in the League Competition Regulations at Chapters 4 and 5 of the Leagues OpCo Handbook.

"Business Day" means a day other than a Saturday or a Sunday or a public holiday in England and Wales.

"Claimant" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.10.1(a).

"Club" means any football club for the time being participating in any Competition. Where reference is made to "each Club" or "the Club" it shall be construed as referring to "a Club" to whom the reference applies from time to time as the context requires.

"Club Officials" means all coaches, support staff, officers and other persons working within a Club whether employed or in a consultancy or voluntary capacity.

"Club Player" means any player registered to play for the Club in the Competitions.

"Code of Conduct" means the document set out at Appendix 2 of these Rules - the 'Code of Conduct – Adult Players, Coaches, Team Members, Club Officials'.

"Compensation Fee Tribunal" has the meaning given to it in The FA Rules.

"Competitions" means the League Competitions and the Cup Competitions.

"Competition Secretary" means such person or persons appointed by Leagues OpCo to carry out the administration of the Competitions.

"Complaint" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.10.3.

"Conditions" means:

- (a) the Out of Contract Player is under the age of 24 on 30 June in the year her contract of employment with a Club expires;
- (b) within 7 days of the last Saturday in May or the date of the last competitive match of the Club's first team in the year in which the Player's contract is to expire, the Club has offered re-engagement to the Contract Player; and
- (c) the terms of re-engagement are no less favourable overall than those which applied under the initial period of employment.

"Contract Player" means any football player who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

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

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

For the purposes of the above, any rights or powers of a nominee or of an Associate of a person shall be attributed to that person.

"County Association" means a County Association as defined in The FA Rules.

"Creditor Compromise" means a company voluntary arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986, a scheme of arrangement under part 26 of the Companies Act 2006, a restructuring plan under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006 or any other compromise agreement reached with a company's creditors as a whole.

"Cup Competition" means the annual league cup competition for Clubs, the format of which is set out in Appendix 1.

"Cup Match" means a Match played or to be played in the Cup Competition.

"Data Sharing Agreement" has the meaning given in Clause 10.2 of the Participation Agreement.

"Default Event" has the meaning given in Rule 22.4.1.

"Directive" means an order or instruction issued by the Board or Executive Operational Committee.

"Disqualifying Event" has the meaning given to it in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10).

"Effective Date" means 1 August 2025.

"Embargo" means a ban on a Club in respect of player registrations.

"EPTS" shall have the meaning given in Rule 7.16.1.

"Executive Operational Committee" means the sub-committee appointed by the Board to carry out the day to day management and administration of the Competitions.

"FA Home Grown Player Rule" means the home grown player rules for each League set out in The FA Rules and Regulations (as amended from time to time).

"Fellow Subsidiary Undertaking" has the meaning set out in Section 1161(4) of the Companies Act 2006.

"FIFA" means Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

"FIFA Quality Programme" means the FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf, October 2015 which provides the framework for the use of high quality artificial turf playing surfaces.

"Financial Sustainability Regulations" means the Financial Sustainability Regulations set out in Chapter 4.

"Football Agent" has the meaning given in The FA Football Agent Regulations.

"Football Creditor" means any one of the following:

- (a) Leagues OpCo.
- (b) The FA.
- (c) Any club affiliated with an Affiliated Association.
- (d) Any league sanctioned by The FA or an Affiliated Association.
- (e) Any full time or part time employee of a club, or former full time or part time employee of a club, in respect of sums due to such person by way of arrears of remuneration or expenses. This excludes for these purposes all and any claims for redundancy, unfair or wrongful dismissal or other claims arising out of the termination of the contract or in respect of any period after the actual date of termination.
- (f) The Professional Footballers' Association Limited.
- (g) The Football Foundation.
- (h) Any Affiliated Association.

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

"Group Undertaking" has the meaning set out in section 1161(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and every statutory modification or re-enactment in force from time to time.

"Half Season" means: (a) the period from the start of a Season to the start of the Second Transfer Window in that Season; or (b) the period from the start of the Second Transfer Window in a Season to the end of that Season.

"HMRC" means His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

"Home Club" means in respect of a relevant Match, the Club playing at its Stadium.

"Home Grown Player" has the meaning given to it in the FA Home Grown Player Rule.

"IATS" means International Artificial Turf Standard.

"Independent Tribunal" means a person appointed by Sport Resolutions UK in accordance with Rules 3.10.7 and 3.10.8.

"Insolvency Event" means, with respect to Leagues OpCo or a Club, if Leagues OpCo or that Club:

- (a) enters into a Company Voluntary Arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986 (**"the 1986 Act"** which expression shall include any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force) or a compromise or arrangement with its creditors under Part 26 or Part 26A of the Act, or it enters into any compromise agreement with its creditors as a whole; or
- (b) applies to court for, or obtains, a moratorium under Part A1 of the 1986 Act; or
- (c) lodges, or its shareholders or its directors or any holder of a qualifying floating charge over its assets lodge in relation to it, a Notice of Intention to Appoint an Administrator or a Notice of Appointment of an Administrator at the Court in accordance with paragraphs 18, 26 and 29 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act or it, or any other party make an application to the Court in respect of it for an Administration Order under paragraph 12 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act or where an Administrator is appointed or an Administration Order is made in respect of it (**"Administrator"** and **"Administration Order"** having the meanings attributed to them respectively by paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act); or
- (d) has an Administrative Receiver (as defined by section 251 of the 1986 Act) or a Law of Property Act Receiver (appointed under section 109 of the Law of Property Act 1925) or any receiver appointed by the Court under the Senior Courts Act 1981 or any court appointed receiver or any other receiver appointed over any of its assets which, in the opinion of the Board, are material to the Club's ability to fulfil its obligations as a Member; or
- (e) has its shareholders pass a resolution pursuant to section 84(1) of the 1986 Act to voluntarily wind it up; or
 - (i) has a winding up order made against it by the Court under section 122 of the 1986 Act or a provisional liquidator is appointed over it under section 135 of the 1986 Act; or
 - (ii) ceases wholly or substantially to carry on its business save for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation otherwise in accordance with a scheme of proposals which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Board; or
 - (iii) enters into or is placed into any insolvency regime in any jurisdiction outside England and Wales which is analogous with the insolvency regimes detailed above.

and a Club or Leagues OpCo suffering an Insolvency Event is considered to be **"Insolvent"** or subject to **"Insolvency"**.

"Insolvency Policy" means the insolvency policy for, *inter alia*, the Competitions as updated by Leagues OpCo from time to time, as set out in Chapter 9

"Insolvent" has the meaning given in these Rules.

"Interested" means a Club, Person, or Associated Party of that Person, who in relation to a Club:

- (a) holds or deals in (or has made any application to hold or deal in or underwrite an issue of) the securities or Shares of that Club; or
- (b) is a member of that Club; or
- (c) is involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management or administration of that Club; or
- (d) has any power whatsoever to influence the financial, commercial or business affairs or the management or administration of that Club; or
- (e) has lent money to, gifted money to, purchased future receivables from (or any other arrangement of substantially similar effect) or guaranteed the debts or
- (f) obligations of that Club, otherwise than in the ordinary course of banking at arm's length.

"Intellectual Property Rights" means any and all patents, utility models, rights to inventions, copyright and neighbouring and related rights, trade marks and service marks, business names and domain names, rights in get-up and trade dress, goodwill and the right to sue for passing off or unfair competition, rights in designs, database rights, rights to use, and protect the confidentiality of, confidential information (including know-how and trade secrets), and all other intellectual property and intangible property rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered.

"International Club" means any association football club not sanctioned by or affiliated to The FA.

"International Loan" has the meaning given in Rule 7.6.2(c).

"International Transfer Certificate" means the certificate issued on the transfer of a Player from one national association to another national association under FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

"Kit Confirmation Form" means the form prescribed by, and made available to Clubs by, the Competition Secretary for the submission of Clubs' first choice ('home'), second choice ('away') and third choice kits for the upcoming Season.

"Laws of the Game" means the laws of the game as determined by The IFAB from time to time.

"League Appeals Committee" means a committee constituted in accordance with Rule 7.19.

"League Competition Regulations" means the rules and regulations implemented by Leagues OpCo from time to time and which include the following:

- (a) Competition Rules (Women's Super League, Women's Super League 2, & Women's League Cup)
- (b) Compliance Requirements
- (c) Commercial Rights and Regulations
- (d) Broadcasting Regulations (Women's Super League)
- (e) Broadcasting Regulations (Women's Super League 2)

- (f) Stadium Regulations (Women's Super League)
- (g) Stadium Regulations (Women's Super League 2)
- (h) Performance Support Regulations
- (i) Insolvency Policy
- (j) Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations
- (k) Professional Game Academy Rules
- (l) Professional Game Academy Competition Rules.

"League Competitions" means the Tier 1 League and the Tier 2 League, each of which is a "League Competition", owned and operated by Leagues OpCo pursuant to the Competition Rules (Chapter 1).

"League Match" means a first team match played under the jurisdiction of Leagues OpCo in the League Competitions.

"Leagues OpCo" means Leagues OpCo Limited (company number 15731019) whose registered address is at Wembley Stadium, Wembley, London, United Kingdom, HA9 0WS, unless the Competitions become directly owned and operated by Women's Professional Leagues Limited (of which Leagues OpCo Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary), in which case such reference to Leagues OpCo shall refer to Women's Professional Leagues Limited.

"Leagues OpCo Handbook" means the single handbook of rules and regulations known as the League Competition Regulations.

"Licensing Procedure" means: (i) where The FA and Leagues OpCo have agreed procedures relating to applications for and the granting of licences enabling Clubs to play in UEFA club competitions, these agreed procedures; or (ii) where The FA and Leagues OpCo have not agreed procedures as referred to in (i) of this definition, the procedures specified by The FA.

"Matches" means League Matches and Cup Matches and "Match" shall be construed accordingly.

"Match Footage" means audio visual, audio and / or visual only footage of Matches played by the Club during the Term.

"Match Officials" means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Match by PGMOL.

"Monthly Contract" shall have the meaning given to it in Rule 7.2.3(b).

"Non Contract Player" means any football player who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

"Officer" means an individual who is required to make an Owners' and Directors' Declaration by Leagues OpCo.

"Official" means: (a) any director, employee or representative of a Club, excluding any Player, intermediary or auditor; and (b) any employee of any Group Undertaking or Fellow Subsidiary Undertaking who spends (or is to spend) at least 50% of their annual working time undertaking activity for or on behalf of the Club (and **"Club Official"** shall be construed as being an Official of a Club).

"Out of Contract Player" means a Contract Player whose contract of employment with a Club has expired but does not include a Terminated Player.

"Owners' and Directors' Declaration" means a "Declaration" as that term is defined in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10).

"Paid in Full" means payment of (or security for) the whole sum outstanding, or payment of (or security for) such smaller sum as may be agreed between the Club and the relevant creditor on an arm's length commercial basis, in each case demonstrated to the Board's satisfaction.

"Participant" means a Club, Club Official, intermediary, Player, Head Coach, Match Official (and observers, coaches or mentors thereof), member or employee of a Club and all persons who are from time to time participating in any activity sanctioned either directly or indirectly by Leagues OpCo.

"Participant Behaviour Charter" means the document set out at Appendix of these Rules.

"Participation Agreement" means a participation agreement (as amended from time to time) entered into between a Club and Leagues OpCo under which Leagues OpCo grants the Club permission to participate in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 (as applicable), and the Cup Competitions.

"Participation Year" means in relation to the first "Participation Year" the period from the Effective Date to 30 June 2026 and any references to subsequent "Participation Years" shall be to each following 12-month period between 1 July to 30 June.

"Person" means any natural person and / or any Entity.

"PGA Competitions" means the league and cup competitions organised by Leagues OpCo for Clubs which operate a Professional Game Academy.

"PGA Competition Rules" means the competition rules for the PGA Competitions, as specified by Leagues OpCo from time to time, as set out in Chapter 12.

"PGA Player" means a female Player (other than a Non Contract Player or a Contract Player) aged between 14 and 20 years old on 31 August of a PGA Registration Period that is registered with a PGA Club.

"PGA Registration Period" means 1 July to 30 June.

"PGA Rules" means the PGA rules (which are separate from the PGA Competition Rules) which covers matters relating to player registration, player retention, and recognition fee payments and which are specified by Leagues OpCo from time to time, as set out at Chapter 11.

"PGMOL" means the Professional Game Match Officials Limited.

"Pitch" means a Grass Pitch or Artificial Pitch.

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

"Player" means any Contract Player, Non Contract Player or other football player who, subject to these Rules, plays or who is eligible to play for a Club in the Competitions.

"Player Related Dispute Commission" means a commission constituted in accordance with Rule 7.18.

"Playing Contract" means an employment contract in a form specified by Leagues OpCo from time to time for use in the Competitions.

"Pre-Season Shareholders' Meeting" means the Shareholders' Meeting which shall take place year after 30 June but before the start of the upcoming Season

"Previous League Competition Regulations" means rules and regulations of the Competitions which applied prior to 1 August 2025 (including the terms of any previous Tier 1 and / or Tier 2 licences) but which shall not, for the avoidance of doubt, include any of The FA Rules and Regulations which applied at the relevant time.

"Professional Game Academy" or "PGA" means an academy licensed by Leagues OpCo to provide a training and playing environment for players of particular ages.

"Referee" means the Match Official appointed by PGMOL to officiate a Match and who has ultimate authority for enforcing the Laws of the Game and making decisions.

"Relegated Club" means a club which was relegated from the Women's Super League 2 at the end of any of the three previous three Seasons and which remains relegated.

"Reserve Player" means a player registered to play in the Club's reserve or development team.

"Respondent" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.10.1(b).

"Response" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.10.9.

"Rules" means these competition rules.

"Satisfied" shall mean that a creditor has consented, and provided evidence of such, to accept a sum in full and final settlement of its debt from a Club. For the avoidance of doubt, a vote to approve a Creditor Compromise by the creditors of a Club, held in accordance with insolvency law in operation from time to time, shall deem those debts admitted to the Creditor Compromise as being Satisfied. The Board shall determine at its absolute discretion whether an amount is Satisfied under the Rules.

"Season" means the period specified by the Board in accordance with Rule 10.2.1 which shall be between the date in each football season on which the first Match is played until the date on which the last Match is played and references to [YYYY / YY Season] shall be construed accordingly.

"Secured" shall mean that one of the following legally recognised undertakings has been provided for the payment of the specified sum in full by the Pre-Season Shareholders' Meeting held each year.

- (a) a solicitor's undertaking for the full amount outstanding; or
- (b) a bank guarantee is held for the full amount outstanding.

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

"Shareholders' Meeting" means a meeting of shareholders of Leagues OpCo.

"Shares" means shares of any class or other equity securities.

"Significant Interest" means in relation to a Club, a person who:

- (a) holds and / or has possession of the legal or beneficial interest in at least:
 - (i) 10% of the nominal value of the share capital in the Club; or
 - (ii) 50% of the nominal value of the share capital in any Group Undertaking of the Club, or
- (b) has the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to any shares or other securities in:
 - (iii) the Club which confer in aggregate 10% or more of the total voting rights exercisable in respect of the shares or any class of shares in the Club; or
 - (iv) any Group Undertaking of the Club which confer in aggregate 50% or more of the total voting rights exercisable in respect of the shares or any class of shares in that Group Undertaking.

All or part of any such interest may be held directly or indirectly or by contract including, but not limited to, by way of membership of any group that in the opinion of the Board is acting in concert, and any rights or powers held by an

Associate shall be included for the purposes of determining whether an interest or interests amounts to a "Significant Interest".

"Sporting Sanctions Appeal" shall have the meaning given in Rule 18.1.9.

"Squad List" means a list of Players prepared by the Club and submitted to the Competition Secretary in accordance with Rule 7.8.

"Stadium" means the stadium or stadia at which a Club plays home Matches which shall be the stadium or stadia stated in the Club's Participation Agreement unless otherwise agreed with Leagues OpCo in accordance with these Rules and / or the League Competition Regulations and **"Stadium"** shall be construed accordingly".

"Standard Loan" means a loan transfer in excess of 93 days.

"Summary Jurisdiction Notice" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.8.3.

"Summary Offence" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.7.1.

"Summary Offence Notice" shall have the meaning given in Rule 3.7.1.

"Table of Fees and Expenses" means the table of fees and expenses set out in Appendix 4 of these Rules.

"Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions" means the table of summary offences and sanctions set out in Appendix 3.

"Team Sheet" means a form provided for use in the Competitions by the Executive Operational Committee which should be completed by Clubs so it includes the forename and surname (including any alias displayed on the Player's shirt) and shirt numbers of the Players (including any nominated substitutes) taking part in the Match and the name of the doctor in attendance.

"Term" shall have the meaning given to it in clause 5.1 of the Participation Agreement.

"Terminated Player" means a Contract Player whose contract has been unilaterally terminated by her Club or mutually terminated by agreement between the Club and Contract Player.

"The FA" means The Football Association Limited (company number 00077797) which is the national governing body for football in England.

"The FA Rules" means the Rules of The Football Association Limited as amended from time to time.

"The FA Rules and Regulations" means all of the rules and regulations of The FA as amended from time to time including those set out in The FA Handbook but which shall not include the League Competition Regulations.

"The IFAB" means the International Football Association Board.

"Tier 1" means the top tier of women's league football in England organised by Leagues OpCo, currently known as the Barclays Women's Super League.

"Tier 1 League" means the league competition for clubs in Tier 1.

"Tier 2" means the second tier of women's league football in England organised by Leagues OpCo, currently known as the Barclays Women's Super League 2.

"Tier 2 League" means the league competition for clubs in Tier 2.

"Transfer Windows", "First Transfer Window" and "Second Transfer Window" shall have the meaning given in Rule 7.3.1.

"UEFA" means the Union of European Football Associations.

"UEFA Club Licence" means the licence granted by The FA enabling Clubs to play in UEFA club competitions.

"UKAS" means The United Kingdom Accreditation Service.

"Women's FA Cup" means The Women's FA Cup, being the highest annual domestic club cup competition for women's football clubs in English football organised by The FA.

"Women's Professional Leagues Limited" means Women's Professional Leagues Limited (company number 15675947) whose registered address is at Wembley Stadium, Wembley, London, HA9 0WS.

"Women's Pyramid Regulations" means the means The FA's Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the Women's Football Pyramid (as amended from time to time).

1.2 Construction

In these Rules and throughout the Leagues OpCo Handbook, unless otherwise specified or the context otherwise requires:

- 1.2.1 words importing the singular only shall include the plural and vice versa;
- 1.2.2 words importing the whole shall be treated as including a reference to any part;
- 1.2.3 "person", unless otherwise defined, includes any individual, firm, company, corporation, body corporate, government, state or agency of state, trust or foundation, or any association, partnership or unincorporated body of two or more of the foregoing (whether or not having separate legal personality and wherever incorporated or established);
- 1.2.4 "written" or "in writing" means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise;
- 1.2.5 reference to any legal term for any action, remedy, method of judicial proceeding, legal document, legal status, court, official or any legal concept, state of affairs or thing shall in respect of any jurisdiction other than England be deemed to include that which most closely approximates in that jurisdiction to the English legal term;
- 1.2.6 headings used are for reference only and shall not affect its construction or interpretation;
- 1.2.7 any phrase introduced by the term "include", "including", "in particular" or similar expression shall be construed as illustrative and shall not limit the sense of the words preceding that term; and
- 1.2.8 any reference to "Part" or "Chapter" refers to the relevant part or chapter (as applicable) of the Rules or Leagues OpCo Handbook.

2. CONTROL OF THE COMPETITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

- 2.1 The ownership, organisation, control and management of the Competitions and any rights associated with them of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in Leagues OpCo.
- 2.2 The administration of the Competitions under these Rules will be carried out by the Board and the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with and as set out in these Rules.
- 2.3 All Clubs and Players participating in the Competitions shall be bound by and comply with the Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant thereto). Every Club and Player shall be deemed, as a participant in the Competitions to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Board and Executive Operational Committee in relation thereto (and the decisions of any other dispute resolution body established by these Rules), subject to any right of appeal prescribed in these Rules.

- 2.4 All Clubs and Players shall comply with:
- 2.4.1 the League Competition Regulations; and,
 - 2.4.2 The FA Rules and Regulations which are applicable including Rule D of The FA Rules in respect of international and other representative matches and call-ups.
- 2.5 The geographic area covered by the Competitions shall be England and Wales.
- 2.6 The membership of the Competitions, their composition, format and the number of Clubs in each League shall be determined annually by the Board at their discretion subject to compliance with these Rules, the Participation Agreement, Leagues OpCo's own internal company policies, rules and agreements and the Women's Pyramid Regulations.
- 2.7 For the Season 2025 / 2026:
- 2.7.1 the Tier 1 League shall be called the Barclays Women's Super League (the "WSL");
 - 2.7.2 the Tier 2 League shall be called the Barclays Women's Super League 2 (the "WSL 2"); and
 - 2.7.3 a Cup Competition shall be run for Clubs in accordance with the rules at Appendix 1.
- 2.8 Subject to Rule 16, the Clubs competing in each League for a Participation Year will be confirmed by the Board.
- 2.9 A Club which is confirmed by the Board as competing in a League shall be subject to the application of the Rules.

3. POWER OF THE BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE

3.1 General powers of the Board and the Executive Operational Committee

- 3.1.1 Subject to Leagues OpCo's own internal company policies, rules and agreements, the Board may appoint such sub-committees as it deems appropriate which shall be fully empowered to act on the Board's behalf subject to (save as set out below) ratification by the Board. Pursuant to this power, the Board has appointed the Executive Operational Committee to carry out the day to day management of the Competitions and as such, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the powers set out under these Rules until such time as the Board determines otherwise. Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee, unless otherwise specified by the Board, shall not require ratification when made pursuant to a power contained within these Rules.
- 3.1.2 The Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to deal with matters within the Competitions in accordance with Rule G of The FA Rules. For the avoidance of doubt, Misconduct (as defined in The FA Rules) under Rule E1.1 of The FA Rules shall only be dealt with by The FA or an Affiliated Association.
- 3.1.3 Save where specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to apply, act upon and enforce these Rules and shall have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competitions including any not provided for in these Rules.

3.2 Composition of the Executive Operational Committee

The Executive Operational Committee shall be comprised of such persons as the Board considers appropriate except that a Club Official or Player may not be a member of the Executive Operational Committee.

3.3 Attendance and voting at Executive Operational Committee meetings

Voting and attendance at Executive Operational Committee meetings shall be in accordance with the procedure set by the Board (as may be amended from time to time).

3.4 Executive Operational Committee Powers of Inquiry

Without prejudice to the powers of The FA under Rule F of The FA Rules, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to inquire into any suspected or alleged breach of these Rules. For these purposes, the Executive Operational Committee may require any Club, Club Official, Player or other Participant to appear before it and produce any information, documents or materials as the Executive Operational Committee may request. All Clubs, Club Officials, Players or other Participants must take all reasonable measures to assist the Executive Operational Committee in the collection of evidence. Any failure by any of the above to comply with a requirement of the Executive Operational Committee pursuant to this Rule shall constitute a breach of these Rules and shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).

3.5 Directives

- 3.5.1 The Board and Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to issue an order or instruction, by way of a Directive, where it considers it to be in the best interests of the Competitions to do so, on any matter not provided for in these Rules, with which Participants must comply. No Directive shall be issued which is inconsistent with the League Competition Regulations, or The FA Rules.
- 3.5.2 Failure by a Participant to comply with a Directive within 14 days of notification of such, or within 14 days of an operative date specified, shall constitute a breach of these Rules and shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).

3.6 Breaches of the Rules

- 3.6.1 Save where specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to deal with any suspected or alleged breach of these Rules by:
 - (a) imposing a fixed penalty for a Summary Offence in accordance with Rule 3.7.3;
 - (b) exercising its summary jurisdiction in accordance with Rule 3.8;
 - (c) exercising any of the powers in accordance with Rule 10.4.20;
 - (d) referring the matter to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9; or
 - (e) referring the matter to The FA for determination under The FA Rules.

3.7 Summary Offences

- 3.7.1 Subject to Rules 3.7.3 and 3.7.4, if the Executive Operational Committee determines, in its absolute discretion, that a Club has breached a Rule set out in the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions (a "**Summary Offence**"), a fixed penalty noted next to the relevant Summary Offence will be imposed on the Club and shall be payable by the Club to Leagues OpCo within 14 days of the Club being notified of the breach in writing (a "**Summary Offence Notice**").
- 3.7.2 Each instance of breach constitutes an individual and separate breach of these Rules and will attract its own fixed penalty.
- 3.7.3 Fixed penalties imposed on a Club pursuant to Rule 3.7.1 will escalate according to the number of breaches committed by a Club of a particular Rule in any three consecutive Participation Years. The fixed penalty for each breach, over and above the first breach in any three consecutive Participation Years, will be doubled up until the fifth breach whereupon each subsequent fixed penalty shall remain equal to the fixed penalty payable for the fifth breach.

For example, if a Club fails to send to the Competition Secretary any information requested in accordance with Rule 4.6 the following fixed penalties will apply:

- (a) Breach 1 £100;
- (b) Breach 2 £200;
- (c) Breach 3 £400;
- (d) Breach 4 £800.

For each breach over and above the fourth breach in any three consecutive Participation Years the applicable fixed penalty will be £1600 per breach. The applicable fixed penalty will be determined by the number of breaches and there will be no maximum limit on the cumulative value of fixed penalties payable by a Club.

3.7.4 An additional fixed penalty of £250 will be imposed on the Club and payable by the Club to Leagues OpCo for every five breaches of any of the Rules set out in the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions in any Participation Year.

3.7.5 Any appeal against the imposition of a fixed penalty under this Rule 3.7 shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9 and the appeal fee set out in the Table of Fees and Expenses shall be payable by the Club to Leagues OpCo.

3.8 Summary Jurisdiction and Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee

Summary Jurisdiction

3.8.1 The Executive Operational Committee's summary jurisdiction shall extend to any suspected or alleged breach of these Rules (other than a Summary Offence or a matter for which referral to an Independent Tribunal is prescribed in these Rules or a matter for which the Executive Operational Committee determines that referral to an Independent Tribunal is appropriate).

3.8.2 In exercising its summary jurisdiction, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to impose a fine not exceeding £1,000. The Executive Operational Committee shall also have the power to suspend any portion of any fine imposed in accordance with this Rule.

3.8.3 The Executive Operational Committee shall exercise its summary jurisdiction by giving notice to the Participant allegedly in breach ("**Summary Jurisdiction Notice**").

3.8.4 The Participant to which the Summary Jurisdiction Notice is addressed shall respond in writing to the Competition Secretary within seven days of receipt of the Summary Jurisdiction Notice stating whether it:

- (a) agrees to pay the fine imposed; or
- (b) elects for the matter to be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.6.1(d).

3.8.5 Where no response is received, the Participant shall be deemed to have submitted to the Executive Operational Committee's jurisdiction and agreed to pay the fine imposed.

Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee

3.8.6 Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee made pursuant to these Rules may be appealed by a relevant Participant in accordance with this Rule 3.8.6.

3.8.7 Where a Participant elects to appeal a decision of the Executive Operational Committee it shall notify the Competition Secretary within seven days of being informed of the decision.

3.8.8 Any appeal against a decision of the Executive Operational Committee shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9 and the appeal fee set out in the Table of Fees and Expenses shall be payable by the Participant to Leagues OpCo.

3.9 Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee

- 3.9.1 Decisions of the Executive Operational Committee made pursuant to these Rules (for example, a decision on an objection to a transfer pursuant to Rule 7.5.11 or on the postponement of a Match under Rule 10.4.7) may be appealed by a relevant Participant.
- 3.9.2 The Participant to which the decision is addressed must notify the Competition Secretary of its intention to appeal within seven days from being informed of the decision.
- 3.9.3 Any appeal against a decision of the Executive Operational Committee shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.10 and the appeal fee set out in the Table of Fees and Expenses shall be payable by the Participant to Leagues OpCo.

3.10 Matters to be determined by an Independent Tribunal

Parties

- 3.10.1 Subject to Rule 3.10.2, the parties to proceedings before an Independent Tribunal shall be:
 - (a) Leagues OpCo (the "**Claimant**"); and
 - (b) the Participant allegedly in breach of these Rules (the "**Respondent**").
- 3.10.2 Where the proceedings are commenced pursuant to a right of appeal prescribed in these Rules (for example, an appeal against the imposition of a fixed penalty pursuant to Rule 3.7.5 or a Sporting Sanctions Appeal) the Participant lodging the appeal shall be the Claimant and the entity that has made the specific decision(s) being appealed shall be the Respondent.

Complaint

- 3.10.3 Proceedings before an Independent Tribunal shall be commenced by way of a notice of complaint drafted by or on behalf of the Claimant (the "**Complaint**").
- 3.10.4 Where proceedings are commenced pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d), the Complaint shall:
 - (a) identify the Rule alleged to have been breached;
 - (b) state briefly the nature of the alleged breach of these Rules;
 - (c) set out a statement of facts upon which the Complaint is based; and
 - (d) enclose copies of documents or other material referred to in the Complaint.
- 3.10.5 Where proceedings are commenced pursuant to a right of appeal prescribed in these Rules, the Complaint shall:
 - (a) identify the specific decision(s) being appealed;
 - (b) set out the ground(s) of appeal with supporting reasons;
 - (c) set out a statement of facts upon which the appeal is based; and
 - (d) enclose copies of documents or other material referred to in the Complaint.
- 3.10.6 The Claimant shall send the Complaint to the Competition Secretary. The Competition Secretary shall then provide the Complaint to the Respondent and Sport Resolutions UK within three days of receipt.

Appointment of the Independent Tribunal

- 3.10.7 Within five days of receipt of the Complaint, Sport Resolutions UK shall appoint an Independent Tribunal to determine the Complaint which shall be comprised of one solicitor or barrister.
- 3.10.8 If an individual appointed to the Independent Tribunal doubts their ability to be impartial, or believes there to be a materially conflicting interest in the proceedings, they shall declare it as soon as possible, and unless all parties waive it then the individual shall withdraw completely from the proceedings. In such circumstances, Sport Resolutions UK shall immediately appoint a replacement to the Independent Tribunal.

Response

- 3.10.9 The Respondent shall respond in writing to the Competition Secretary (the "**Response**") within seven days of receipt of the Complaint.
- 3.10.10 The Response shall:
- (a) set out a brief response to the Complaint;
 - (b) where proceedings have been commenced pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d) state whether the alleged breach of these Rules outlined in the Complaint is admitted or disputed;
 - (c) where proceedings have been commenced pursuant to a right of appeal prescribed in these Rules, state whether the appeal outlined in the Complaint is disputed or not; and
 - (d) state whether the Respondent wishes for the Complaint to be determined by an Independent Tribunal by way of written submissions or a personal hearing (subject to Rule 3.10.14).
- 3.10.11 Where no Response is received, the Independent Tribunal shall determine the Complaint in such manner and upon such evidence as it considers appropriate.
- 3.10.12 Subject to Rule 3.10.14, where:
- (a) the Complaint is disputed and the Respondent wishes for it to be dealt with by way of written submissions; or
 - (b) the Complaint is admitted but the Respondent wishes to submit a plea of mitigation,
- those written submissions or the plea in mitigation must be provided at the same time as the Response.
- 3.10.13 Subject to Rule 3.10.14, where the Respondent disputes the Complaint and requests a personal hearing, it shall provide to the Competition Secretary copies of any documentation, evidence, mitigation or other relevant material (of whatever nature) on which the Respondent intends to rely within 14 days of receipt of the Complaint.
- 3.10.14 Where the proceedings are an appeal against the imposition of a fixed penalty pursuant to Rule 3.7.5, the Complaint may only be determined by way of written submissions which must be provided by the Respondent at the same time as the Response.
- 3.10.15 The Competition Secretary shall provide the Response (and any materials provided in accordance with Rule 3.10.13) to the Claimant and Sport Resolutions UK within three days of receipt.

Directions

- 3.10.16 The Independent Tribunal can regulate its own procedure and may issue any further directions considered necessary for the proper conduct of the proceedings, including but not limited to:
- (a) extending or reducing any time limit; and

- (b) ordering disclosure of specific and identifiable documents in the possession of the Claimant, the Respondent or a third-party Participant which are considered by the Independent Tribunal as relevant to the Complaint.

Determination

Written Submissions

3.10.17 Where the Complaint is dealt with by way of written submissions, the Independent Tribunal shall determine:

- (a) the Complaint; and
- (b) any applicable order or sanction.

Personal Hearing

3.10.18 Where the Complaint is dealt with at a personal hearing:

- (a) the Competition Secretary shall establish a date, time and place of the personal hearing;
- (b) either party must, if an individual, attend the personal hearing in person or, where appropriate and directed by the Independent Tribunal, via video conference. If either party is a Club, it shall attend through a Club Official;
- (c) the Claimant shall nominate an individual or individuals to present the Complaint, adduce evidence and make submissions in support of the Complaint;
- (d) each party appearing before an Independent Tribunal has the right to be represented (including a legal representative), provided that they notify the Competition Secretary both of the fact that they are to be represented and the identity of the representatives:
 - (i) in the case of the Respondent, when the Response is provided in accordance with Rule 3.10.9; and
 - (ii) in the case of the Claimant, within three days of receipt of the Response.

3.10.19 A personal hearing may proceed in the absence of either party where the Independent Tribunal is satisfied there are not reasonable grounds for such failure to attend.

3.10.20 Where the Complaint is dealt with at a personal hearing the Independent Tribunal shall determine:

- (a) the Complaint; and
- (b) any applicable order or sanction.

Decision and Reasons

3.10.21 The Independent Tribunal shall notify the Claimant and the Respondent of its decision as soon as reasonably practicable and in such manner as it considers appropriate.

3.10.22 The Independent Tribunal shall as soon as reasonably practicable send to the Claimant and the Respondent a written statement of its decision, which shall state:

- (a) the Complaint considered and whether it was admitted or disputed;
- (b) the decision, including (where applicable) whether:
 - (i) a Rule breach alleged in the Complaint has been proven or not; or
 - (ii) an appeal set out in the Complaint has been successful or not, and

(c) any sanction or order imposed.

3.10.23 Written reasons of the Independent Tribunal may be requested by either party to the proceedings. Requests must be made within seven days of provision of the written statement of the decision.

3.10.24 Where written reasons are requested, they shall be provided within 28 days of provision of the written statement of decision and state (where applicable):

- (a) the findings of fact made by the Independent Tribunal;
- (b) the reasons for the decision of the Independent Tribunal, including the reasons for (where applicable):
 - (i) finding any Rule breach alleged in the Complaint proven or not; or
 - (ii) finding any appeal set out in the Complaint successful or not, and
- (c) the reasons for any sanction or order imposed.

Sanction

3.10.25 The Independent Tribunal may order any sanction that it considers to be appropriate, including but not limited to:

- (a) a reprimand or warning as to future conduct;
- (b) a financial penalty payable to Leagues OpCo;
- (c) a deduction of points;
- (d) an Embargo; and
- (e) any other sanction as the Independent Tribunal considers fit.

3.10.26 Where the proceedings are an appeal against the imposition of a fixed penalty pursuant to Rule 3.7.5, the Independent Tribunal may affirm, repeal or vary the fixed penalty originally imposed.

Costs

3.10.27 Save where otherwise provided, any costs incurred:

- (a) in bringing or defending a Complaint will be borne by the party incurring the costs; and
- (b) by an Independent Tribunal, which are considered by the Independent Tribunal to be appropriate, may be ordered to be paid in full or in part by either party (such costs may include, but are not limited to, the costs of the Independent Tribunal and related expenses).

Confidentiality / Publication

3.10.28 The proceedings of an Independent Tribunal shall take place in private.

3.10.29 Leagues OpCo shall have the power to publish, in any manner considered appropriate:

- (a) the outcome of any proceedings before an Independent Tribunal; and
- (b) any findings made or sanction imposed by an Independent Tribunal.

Appeals

3.10.30 All decisions of an Independent Tribunal shall be final and binding and there shall be no right of further challenge.

4. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS - GENERAL

- 4.1 A Club shall be considered a member of the Competitions where it has a right to participate in a Competition in accordance with these Rules, its Participation Agreement and the Women's Pyramid Regulations.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding any provision of these Rules, the League Competition Regulations, The FA Rules, or otherwise, a Club must be incorporated in England and Wales and will not be entitled to participate in the Competitions if it is not so incorporated. Any amendments to the Memorandum of Association and / or Articles of Association of a Club must be notified to the Competition Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution together with a copy of the change(s).
- 4.3 A Club must be party to a Participation Agreement which is in full force and effect in order to participate in the Tier 1 League, Tier 2 League or the Cup Competition. A Club must comply with the terms of its Participation Agreement at all times.
- 4.4 A Club must be affiliated at all times to a County Association or the Football Association of Wales. Each Club shall notify the Competition Secretary of its affiliation number each year as soon as practicable after it has received the same and in any event, by no later than 1 July each year.
- 4.5 The Executive Operational Committee will hold a membership register setting out the full name of the company constituting each Club and its registration number. A Club must notify the Competition Secretary of all proposed changes to the information held by the Executive Operational Committee in the membership register including any proposed change of company name. Failure by a Club to notify the Competition Secretary of all proposed changes shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 4.6 Each Club shall return to the Competition Secretary such other information as is requested by the Competition Secretary from time to time by the date specified by the Competition Secretary. Failure by a Club to comply with this Rule shall result in the Club in default being subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 4.7 Each Club shall communicate the Code of Conduct and Participant Behaviour Charter to its Players and Club Officials and shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that all of its Players and Club Officials comply with the Code of Conduct and Participant Behaviour Charter.
- 4.8 Prior to its first Match of the Season, a Club must hold a meeting between its Players and Club Officials and representatives of each of:
 - 4.8.1 The FA's integrity department; and
 - 4.8.2 PGMOL.
- 4.9 Each Club must have a Professional Game Academy. The permission for a Club to have a Professional Game Academy shall be governed by that Club's Participation Agreement, and the Club shall comply with applicable criteria and requirements stipulated by Leagues OpCo in the Participation Agreement, the PGA Rules (Chapter 11), the PGA Competition Rules (Chapter 12), and by The FA in relation to the criteria which Clubs must meet to operate a PGA, and any arrangements that a Club has with The FA regarding PGA funding.
- 4.10 The Executive Operational Committee and each Club shall:
 - 4.10.1 be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination;
 - 4.10.2 not in any manner whatsoever (including through its rules or regulations) unlawfully discriminate against any person within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination (whether by way of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise); and

- 4.10.3 make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise.
- 4.11 Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning association for investigation.
- 4.12 All Participants shall abide by The FA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure, the Safeguarding Children Regulations, The FA Safeguarding Adults Policy and Regulations, The FA's betting rules and The FA Anti-Doping Regulations as amended from time to time.
- 4.13 Except where otherwise mentioned, all communications shall be addressed to the Competition Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competitions and keep a record of its proceedings. All communications from Clubs shall be sent through their club secretary or the Head of Women's Football.
- 4.14 A Club must at all times attend satisfactorily to the business of the Competitions and / or the correspondence of the Competitions. If a Club fails to satisfactorily attend to the business and / or the correspondence of the Competitions, it shall be liable to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 4.15 A Club shall at all times respect the needs of Players related to their menstrual cycle and menstrual health. Subject to the production of a valid medical certificate issued by: (i) the Player's personal gynaecologist, or specialist and suitably qualified medical practitioner; or (ii) the Club doctor; the Club shall ensure that a Player may be absent from training or Matches whenever her menstrual health so requires. Without prejudice to the foregoing, a Club shall comply with any and all applicable legislation relating to menstrual health in England and Wales in force from time to time. Players shall be entitled to receive their full remuneration when exercising these rights related to menstrual health in accordance with all relevant legislation.
- 4.16 A Club must ensure that it provides suitable facilities for Players to breastfeed an infant and / or express breast milk while on duty and / or performing services for the Club under their Playing Contract. Without prejudice to the foregoing, a Club shall comply with any and all applicable legislation relating to breastfeeding in England and Wales in force from time to time. A Player's remuneration shall not be affected by virtue of the Player exercising her rights under this rule 4.16.

5. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS – STADIA AND PITCHES

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Each Club shall have a Stadium and such Stadium shall (i) where the Club is based in England be situated in England; or (ii) where the Club is based in Wales, be situated in Wales. The Competition Secretary shall send the names and particulars for each Stadium to Leagues OpCo annually by 31 January, and in the format required by Leagues OpCo.
- 5.1.2 Unless otherwise specified in these Rules or as provided in the Participation Agreement, a Club shall not play home Matches at a stadium other than its Stadium, without the prior approval of Leagues OpCo.
- 5.1.3 A Club's Stadium shall be available for all home Competitions Matches which a Club is due to participate in.
- 5.1.4 Each Club shall register its Stadium and its Pitch dimensions, with the Executive Operational Committee prior to the start of each Season. It will be misconduct on the part of a Club to alter its Pitch dimensions during a Season unless it obtains the prior written consent of the Executive Operational Committee. The Executive Operational Committee may at any time require a Club, at its own cost, to submit a report from a qualified independent source certifying the Pitch dimensions.
- 5.1.5 A Club's Stadium must comply with the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) for the League Competition in which it plays and the terms of its Participation Agreement and the League Competition

Regulations. Only Clubs which comply with the relevant Stadium Regulations, the League Competition Regulations and their Participation Agreement in full will be eligible to play in the Competitions.

- 5.1.6 The Executive Operational Committee shall establish a procedure for inspecting Clubs' Stadia from time to time to ensure that the standards required in the Stadium Regulations for the Stadium are maintained.
- 5.1.7 All Clubs must attain the standards provided for in the Stadium Regulations for the following Season by 31 January annually.
- 5.1.8 A Club shall ensure that its Stadium has all licences, permits and certificates required for the staging of each Match (including but not limited to the relevant fire, health and safety, local authority and alcohol licences, permits and certificates) and that these are complied with in full such that the Stadium is fully compliant with all applicable legislation and regulations for the duration of the Match.
- 5.1.9 No alcohol shall be consumed in view of the Pitch before, during or after a Match. Glasses, glass bottles and cans containing alcohol must not be brought into the Stadium or taken into any area of the Stadium in view of the pitch. This rule 5.1.9 shall not apply to Clubs participating in the Tier 2 League during the 2025 / 26 Season, or to Clubs who participate in a formal pilot scheme authorised by WSL from time-to-time.

5.2 **Alternative stadia**

- 5.2.1 If at any point the Stadium is or will not be available for home Matches, inspection or falls below the standards required in the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7), the League Competition Regulations, or Participation Agreement (including in relation to usage), the Club must immediately submit to the Executive Operational Committee in writing its proposal for a stadium at which its home Matches are to be played ("**Alternative Proposal**").
- 5.2.2 The Alternative Proposal must contain documentary evidence in support of any stadium sharing arrangements and evidence that the proposed Stadium is demonstrably suitable for the Competitions and Matches and that it satisfies the standards set out in the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7), League Competition Regulations, and Participation Agreement.
- 5.2.3 The Alternative Proposal shall be considered by the Executive Operational Committee at the earliest opportunity and, if it is considered suitable, the Executive Operational Committee shall notify the Club. The Executive Operation Committee may attach any conditions to such approval as it considers appropriate.
- 5.2.4 Any approval of the Alternative Proposal will be subject to the Executive Operational Committee being satisfied that the stadium in the Alternative Proposal complies with the League Competition Regulations and Participation Agreement and meets the standards required in the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). The Executive Operational Committee will use reasonable endeavours to ensure a person nominated by it inspects such stadium after receiving the Alternative Proposal and prior to the Executive Operational Committee meeting where it is considered, but if it is unable to do so, any approval of the Alternative Proposal will be subject to the Executive Operational Committee being satisfied that the stadium in the Alternative Proposal complies with the Participation Agreement and meets the standards required in the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).
- 5.2.5 In the event that:
 - (a) the Club does not comply with Rule 5.2.1; or
 - (b) the Alternative Proposal is not approved,

the Club shall be deemed to be in material breach of these Rules.

5.3 Moving to a new Stadium

- 5.3.1 No Club shall permanently move to a stadium (other than the Stadium) without first obtaining the written consent of the Executive Operational Committee; such consent not to be withheld unreasonably. In considering whether to give such consent the Executive Operational Committee shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and shall not grant consent unless it is reasonably satisfied that the move to a new stadium:
- (a) would be consistent with the objectives of the Competitions;
 - (b) would be appropriate having in mind the relationship (if any) between the locality with which by its name or otherwise the applicant Club is traditionally associated and that in which such Club proposes to establish its Stadium;
 - (c) would not adversely affect such Club's Club Officials, Players, supporters, shareholders, Club Sponsors and others having an interest in its activities;
 - (d) would not have an adverse effect on Away Clubs;
 - (e) would not adversely affect Clubs or clubs having their registered Stadium or stadium in the immediate vicinity of the proposed location;
 - (f) would enhance the reputation of the Competitions and promote the game of association football generally; and
 - (g) would ensure a high standard of Stadium in the Competitions (including that the proposed stadium meets the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7)).
- 5.3.2 The Club must disclose to the Executive Operational Committee, by 31 January in the preceding season, plans and details of any proposed move to a new stadium.
- 5.3.3 Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 5.3.1 a Club shall forthwith notify the Executive Operational Committee of any proposed change in its circumstances relating to the occupation of its Stadium. By way of example, and without limitation, a proposed change may include a sale of any freehold interest (with or without subsequent leaseback) or any surrender or variation of a lease or licence.

5.4 Stadium Sharing

- 5.4.1 A Club's Stadium may be shared with another Club or any other club (including a club engaged in another sport) provided that:
- (a) the consent of the Executive Operational Committee is obtained in advance and the remainder of this Rule 5.4 is complied with; and
 - (b) the Club complies at all times with the provisions of the Club's Participation Agreement, League Competition Regulations and applicable Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).
- 5.4.2 A Club will not be permitted to stadium share to gain promotion or to avoid relegation.
- 5.4.3 Stadium sharing may not be permitted by the Executive Operational Committee when one of the sharers retains the use of another stadium unless the Club seeking to share can show by means of a refused planning permission or similar that it cannot meet the requirements of the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) at that other stadium.
- 5.4.4 Any Stadium sharing arrangement for a period exceeding 13 weeks must be in writing and the written agreement must be sent to the Executive Operational Committee for approval before being entered into and (except in an emergency) must be completed by the Board meeting held in January each year (unless

the Board determines otherwise) to be effective for the following Season. A copy of the completed signed and dated agreement must be received by the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the approval being sent to the Club.

5.5 The Pitch

Matches shall be played on:

5.5.1 a Grass Pitch; or

5.5.2 where the Match is hosted by a Club in the Tier 2 League an Artificial Pitch,

and in each case where the Pitch complies with the requirements of these Rules and the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).

5.6 Pitch and Stadium Maintenance

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

5.7 Pitch Standards

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

5.7.2 The relevant Club shall take such steps as the Executive Operational Committee may specify from time to time if the Executive Operational Committee is not satisfied that the Pitch is being maintained to an adequate standard, including but not limited to the Executive Operational Committee commissioning an independent report (including a Pitch Test) on the state of the Pitch, the cost of such independent report to be borne by that Club.

5.8 Artificial Pitches

5.8.1 Subject to Rule 5.8.2, where an Artificial Pitch is to be used for a Match hosted by a Club in the Tier 2 League, it must have been awarded a FIFA Quality / FIFA Quality Pro Certificate (or the previous FIFA Recommended Two-Star Certificate or an equivalent International Artificial Turf Standard ("IATS") accreditation or an International Match Standard ("IMS") and conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

5.8.2 A Club which has a Pitch with the FIFA Quality Certificate (or the previous FIFA Recommended One-Star Certificate or an equivalent IATS accreditation) which was installed before 1 November 2016 can be promoted to, and participate in, Tier 2 using the Pitch provided that it undertakes that upon renewal of the Pitch that the Club will install a Pitch with a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate or be relegated to the appropriate step.

5.8.3 Without prejudice to the obligations set out in Rules 5.7.1 and 5.7.2, Clubs that have an Artificial Pitch shall:

(a) take such steps and / or refrain from such actions as are necessary to ensure that the Artificial Pitch continues to meet the requirements in Rules 5.8.1 or 5.8.2 at all times during each Season including, without limitation, complying with all requirements of the FIFA Quality Programme;

(b) where required, undertake Pitch Tests and:

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

- (ii) provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate (or where Rule 5.8.2 applies, the FIFA Quality Certificate), by 31 May prior to the commencement of each Season; and
 - (c) co-operate with all reasonable requests made by the Executive Operational Committee, the Board or Leagues OpCo (and / or The FA or FIFA as applicable) for the performance of the Artificial Pitch to be measured.
- 5.8.4 Where the Executive Operational Committee is aware, by whatever reason, that an Artificial Pitch fails to meet the requirements in Rules 5.8.1 or 5.8.2, including following any Pitch Test, the Club shall forthwith, at its cost, take such steps as the Executive Operational Committee shall specify to ensure the Artificial Pitch is restored to such requirements.
- 5.8.5 Where a Club has an Artificial Pitch installed, any Away Club is allowed to train, at no cost to that Away Club, on the Artificial Pitch on the day before the relevant Match or at a mutually agreed time. The length of this training session may not exceed one hour, unless agreed otherwise with the Home Club. The Away Club must notify the Home Club of its intention to exercise this right no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled Match (or within 48 hours of the arrangement of the fixture, if later).
- 5.8.6 Rule 10.4 shall apply where a breach of any of the requirements of Rules 5.7.1 to 5.8.5 results in the postponement or abandonment of a Match.
- 5.8.7 The Executive Operational Committee shall have the right to order the postponement of a Match where the Artificial Pitch fails to meet the requirements in Rules 5.8.1 or 5.8.2. In such circumstances the Club shall be considered to have failed to fulfil an engagement to play a Match and Rule 10.4.19 shall apply.
- 5.8.8 Where a Club proposes to install an Artificial Pitch (or replace an existing Artificial Pitch) the following shall apply:
- (a) the Club shall disclose to the Executive Operational Committee, as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event not later than seven days following the Club's final match of the Season preceding the scheduled commencement of installation, full details of the proposed contractor installing the Artificial Pitch and the timescales for installation. The proposed Artificial Pitch must have a design and specification that is capable of attaining the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate following installation;
 - (b) no installation works shall commence until such time as the Executive Operational Committee has approved the proposed installation and the timetable thereof. Installation may only take place outside the Season;
 - (c) installation must be scheduled to be completed in sufficient time to enable the completion of a Pitch Test and for confirmation of the results thereof to be supplied to the Executive Operational Committee no later than 14 days prior to the commencement of the upcoming Season;
 - (d) the Club shall procure that:
 - (i) a Pitch Test is carried out on the newly installed Artificial Pitch; and
 - (ii) the FIFA accredited field test institute provides the Executive Operational Committee with a copy of its official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and
 - (e) the Club shall provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate within seven days of receipt to the Competition Secretary.

5.9 Pitch Protection

5.9.1 In order to protect any Pitch, unless otherwise mutually agreed between both participating Clubs and the Executive Operational Committee, and subject to Rule 5.9.2, the following procedures shall be adopted by Players and Club Officials in the periods immediately before and after a Match and at half time:

- (a) the Pitch shall only be used for warming up or warming down by Players named on the Team Sheet plus an additional goalkeeper;
- (b) pre-match warming up by either team shall not commence until 45 minutes for outfield Players and 60 minutes for goalkeepers before the kick-off time at the earliest, shall not last for more than 30 minutes for outfield Players and 45 minutes for goalkeepers, and shall end no later than 10 minutes before the kick-off time;
- (c) each team shall complete all warm-up activities in areas of the pitch as directed by the pitch map(s) produced by the Home Club and agreed by the Executive Operational Committee;
- (d) if portable goals are provided they shall be used for all goalkeeping drills other than crossing practice; and as permitted in Rule 5.9.1(e) below;
- (e) the goal mouth area shall be used during the warm-up for one single continuous 15-minute period, comprising a 10-minute period for use solely by goalkeepers i.e., crossing, plus an additional five minutes for use with outfield Players i.e., shooting;
- (f) Players using the Pitch at half time shall give due consideration to any other activity or entertainment taking place on the Pitch at the same time;
- (g) the Home Club may water and / or carry out any remedial or repair work to the Pitch at half time provided that it gives reasonable notice to the Referee and the Away Club that it intends to do so and that any such watering and / or remedial work is carried out evenly over the entire length and width of the Pitch; and
- (h) any warming down after the conclusion of the Match shall last for no longer than 20 minutes, no footballs shall be permitted and shall only take place in the areas as defined by the pitch map(s) produced by the Home Club and agreed by the Competition Secretary, which must not include either penalty area.

5.9.2 Where a Match is played on an Artificial Pitch used by a club in another league, the pitch protection procedures adopted by that league shall be adopted by Players and Club Officials in addition to the procedures detailed in Rule 5.9.1. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between the pitch protection procedures adopted by the other league and the procedures detailed in Rule 5.9.1, the pitch protection procedures adopted by that league shall prevail.

6. APPROACHES

A Club shall comply with Rule C of The FA Rules whenever it wishes to make an approach to a Player with a view to negotiating a contract with her.

7. PLAYERS

The FA Rules and Regulations will apply in respect of all matters concerning Players.

7.1 Player Registrations

7.1.1 A Player shall not be eligible to play for a Club in any Match unless the Player is registered to play for the Club in the Competitions in accordance with these Rules and the Player is included in the Club's Squad List (except where permitted by Rule 7.9).

- 7.1.2 A Player shall be deemed to be registered to play for the Club in the Competitions and included in the Club's Squad List upon receipt of both The FA's and Leagues OpCo's confirmation via the online player registration system to that effect. Any loan registration must also be approved by The FA and Leagues OpCo before that Player can be considered eligible to play.
- 7.1.3 For a Player to be registered to play for a Club in the Competitions, the Club must have submitted via the online player registration system in accordance with these Rules:
- (a) Non Contract Player:
 - (i) the relevant Competition registration form signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club and the Player (such signature to be witnessed by a second person); and
 - (ii) a copy of the relevant transfer forms or cancellation forms (where applicable) as specified in these Rules;
 - (b) Contract Player:
 - (i) the relevant registration form as specified in these Rules and The FA Rules which has been duly completed and signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club and the Player (such signature to be witnessed by a second person);
 - (ii) a copy of the relevant transfer forms or cancellation forms (where applicable) as specified in these Rules; and
 - (iii) the Player's Playing Contract (in the case of a Contract Player); and,
 - (c) PGA Player:
 - (i) the relevant Competition registration form signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club and the Player (such signature to be witnessed by a second person); and
 - (ii) a copy of the relevant cancellation forms (where applicable) as specified in these Rules;
- and such documents must be approved and registered by the Competition Secretary and The FA, where applicable, in accordance with these Rules.
- 7.1.4 Subject to Rule 7.3, the deadline for submission to the Competition Secretary via the online player registration system of all duly completed documents referred to in Rule 7.1.3 shall be not less than four hours before the scheduled kick-off time of the Match in which the Player is due to play or, if the Match is on a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday, by 16:00 on the last week-day before the Match in which the Player is due to play. In exceptional circumstances, an extension to this deadline may be granted by the Executive Operational Committee. Where these documents are not received in accordance with the above, the relevant Player shall not be eligible to play. Rule 7.13 shall apply if an ineligible Player plays in a Match.
- 7.1.5 It is the responsibility of the Club to ensure a Player participating in a Match for it is not registered with any other Club. When the Player was previously registered with another Club it is necessary for that Club to complete the relevant transfer form or to have completed the relevant cancellation of registration form prior to or at the same as the registration to the new Club.
- 7.1.6 It is the responsibility of all Clubs to ensure any Player signing a registration form has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate.
- 7.1.7 Clubs are responsible for all Players being correctly registered and ensuring that they are so registered before any Player is fielded in a Match. Fielding an unregistered Player in a Match shall constitute fielding an ineligible Player and Rule 7.13 shall apply.

- 7.1.8 A reference to a relevant registration form or cancellation form in these Rules shall mean the form prescribed by the Competition Secretary for that type of registration (for example a loan, permanent or PGA Player or Reserve Player registration) or registration cancellation (as applicable). Registration forms will be made available to Clubs by the Competition Secretary. The status of a Player must be clearly stated on the registration form provided to the Competition Secretary.
- 7.1.9 Player registration forms must be submitted to the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system so that they are received by the Competition Secretary and The FA within five days of having been signed by the Player. Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 7.1.10 Original registration forms must be retained by the Club for a period of seven years. The Competition Secretary has the power to call for inspection of the original registration form should they wish to do so. If a Club fails to comply with the provisions of this Rule, the Player shall not be eligible to play in the Competitions. The original registration form, if sent to the Competition Secretary must contain the same information as the registration form that was sent via Leagues OpCo's approved electronic system. If a Club fields a Player for which falsified registration forms have been submitted, that Club will be deemed to have fielded an ineligible Player and Rule 7.13 shall apply.
- 7.1.11 The registration of a Non Contract Player to participate in the Competitions with a Club will terminate at the end of that Season or where transferred or cancelled in accordance with these Rules.
- 7.1.12 The registration of a Contract Player to participate in the Competitions with a Club shall terminate:
- (a) upon it being transferred in accordance with these Rules;
 - (b) in the case of a Contract Player registered on loan with a Club, when the loan terminates or expires;
 - (c) in the case of an Out of Contract Player in respect of whom the Conditions have been satisfied, upon a transferee club effecting her registration;
 - (d) in the case of an Out of Contract Player in respect of whom the Conditions have not been satisfied, on the expiry of her contract; or
 - (e) in the case of a Terminated Player on receipt by the Competition Secretary of a copy of the relevant FA form.
- 7.1.13 It shall be a breach of these Rules for:
- (a) a Contract Player to play for more than one Club in the Competitions in the same Season without first being transferred in accordance with these Rules;
 - (b) any Player to be registered for more than one Club in the same League at the same in time; or
 - (c) any Player to sign or submit a registration form that the Player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

Breach of this Rule 7.1.13 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

- 7.1.14 In addition to Rule 7.1.13, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power in its absolute discretion to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any Player or fine a Player who is found to have breached any rules or regulations concerning Player registrations (subject to the right of appeal as set out in Rule 7.17).

- 7.1.15 A Player may only play under her correct status (being a Contract Player, Non Contract Player or a PGA Player). Any change of a Player's status during the currency of a registration must be notified to the Competition Secretary within five days of the change of registration being affected.
- 7.1.16 In the event of a Player changing her status with the same Club, that Player must sign a new relevant registration form and be re-registered. If such a Player is not re-registered, the Player will be ineligible to play in a Match and Rule 7.13 shall apply in respect of Clubs who play a Player who has changed status without re-registering.
- 7.1.17 A Contract Player whose registration at a Club (the "**Cancelling Club**") is cancelled by mutual consent and who is subsequently re-registered by any Club as a Non Contract Player or a PGA Player, shall not be registered as a Contract Player with the Cancelling Club within three months of the date of the relevant cancellation, except with the consent of the Executive Operational Committee.
- 7.1.18 In the event of a Contract Player terminating her Playing Contract with a Club ("**Club A**") pursuant to clauses 54 and 55 of her Playing Contract and registering for another Club in membership of Leagues OpCo ("**Club B**") as a Contract Player, Non Contract or PGA Player during the 6-month period after such termination, Club B shall pay a compensation fee to Club A to be determined, in default of agreement, by the Compensation Fee Tribunal.
- 7.1.19 The Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to refuse or cancel the registration of any Player it considers guilty of undesirable conduct or where a Player brings any of the Competitions into disrepute. For the purposes of this Rule, bringing any of the Competitions into disrepute means that the Player has received in excess of 112 days suspension, or 10 matches in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence. Undesirable conduct shall mean incidents of repeated conduct which may deter others (including corporate entities) from being involved in the Competitions. The right of the Executive Operational Committee pursuant to this Rule 7.1.19 is subject to a right of appeal to The FA.
- 7.1.20 The Executive Operational Committee shall also have the power to place an Embargo on any Club deemed to be in breach of these Rules regarding Players. Where a Club has been subject to an Embargo that is on-going (if applied by the Executive Operational Committee or otherwise) then the Embargo shall continue to apply until the Club can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Executive Operational Committee that the circumstances that resulted in the Embargo no longer apply.
- 7.1.21 Subject to Rule 7.3.4, any new registrations or transfers of registrations received after 5 pm on the fourth Thursday in March of each Season will be declined, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to reconsider, on request, and approve any declined registrations or transfers, subject to such limitations and restrictions as the Executive Operational Committee may determine.

7.2 Player Status

- 7.2.1 The status of a Player shall be:
 - (a) Contract Player;
 - (b) Non Contract Player; or
 - (c) PGA Player.
- 7.2.2 A Contract Player must be engaged on a Playing Contract. All contracts and financial arrangements shall comply with Rule C of The FA Rules and be in the full name of the Club including the Club's registered number.
- 7.2.3 Subject to the exceptions set out below and the requirements of The FA Rules, a Playing Contract may be for any period provided that its expiry date is 30 June. The exceptions to this Rule are:

- (a) contracts with Contract Players under the age of 18 which must not be capable of lasting for longer than three years; and
- (b) contracts no greater than one month in duration (a **"Monthly Contract"**). Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 7.3.1 a Club may apply at any time to extend a Monthly Contract registration provided it has not expired. There shall be no limit to the number of times a Monthly Contract registration may be extended, provided that a Club intending to apply to extend the Monthly Contract registration of a Player for a third or subsequent time shall give to the Player not less than seven days' notice of its intention to do so.

7.2.4 Rule C of The FA Rules in respect of Non Contract Players shall apply to the Competitions.

7.3 Registration period

7.3.1 The Board shall nominate two periods during which Contract Player and Non Contract Player registrations and transfers are permitted. The first of which shall commence prior to the start of each Season (the **"First Transfer Window"**) and the second shall commence during the Season (the **"Second Transfer Window"**) (together the **"Transfer Windows"**).

7.3.2 The Board shall notify the Clubs of the dates of the Transfer Windows for each Season.

7.3.3 Subject to Rule 7.3.2, Contract Player registrations and transfers shall only take place during a Transfer Window.

7.3.4 Notwithstanding Rules 7.3.1, 7.3.3, 7.3.5, 7.3.6 and 7.6.1, the Executive Operational Committee shall give reasonable consideration to a request from any Club to register or transfer the registration of, (i) a Contract Player, or (ii) a Non Contract Player, (in each case either on a permanent basis, or on a temporary basis of one or two weeks) outside of a Transfer Window in circumstances where:

- (a) the Player to be transferred is a goalkeeper and where, as a result of injuries, the relevant Club has less than two fully fit goalkeepers (not including registered PGA Players or Reserve Players) available for selection for Matches;
- (b) the Player to be transferred or registered was last registered with a Club (or club) which has ceased to trade, irrespective of whether it ceased to trade during a Transfer Window or otherwise;
- (c) either (i) the Player to be transferred or registered is to temporarily replace a Player that has exercised her rights linked to pregnancy, adoption or family leave (provided that no other request has been accepted under this sub-paragraph in relation to replacing the same Player for the same period of leave) or (ii) subject to her contractual status, the Player to be transferred or registered is returning to work upon completion of her maternity, adoption or paternity leave; or
- (d) where it considers that exceptional circumstances apply,

and in any such case the Executive Operational Committee may impose such limitations and restrictions as it considers necessary in its absolute discretion.

7.3.5 Subject to Rules 7.2.4, 7.3.4 and 7.3.6, transfers and registrations of Non Contract Players are also restricted to the Transfer Windows.

7.3.6 Where (i) a Player's registration has expired or was cancelled at any time prior to the end of a Transfer Window, and (ii) she has not been registered with any Club or club since, that Player shall be permitted to register with a Club outside of the Transfer Windows.

7.4 General Registration Provisions

- 7.4.1 Each Club shall have at least 18 Contract Players registered to play for it in the Competitions by the date on which the First Transfer Window closes and at all times throughout the Season.
- 7.4.2 Each Club shall have at least 11 Players registered to play for it in the Competitions at least 14 days before its first Match of the Season and at all times throughout the Season.
- 7.4.3 A Player may not be registered to play in the Competitions before she has reached her 16th birthday.
- 7.4.4 In the event of a Player signing registration forms for more than one Club, priority of registration shall decide for which Club she is entitled to play. The Club submitting the later form shall be notified of the prior registration of the Player, and the circumstances under which the registration forms were signed shall be investigated by the Executive Operational Committee. Any Player found to have signed registration forms for more than one Club shall be considered in breach of Rule 7.1.13. Any Club found to have knowingly induced a registered Player of another Club to sign a registration form shall be in breach of these Rules and shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).
- 7.4.5 If a Non Contract Player has concurrent registrations for a Club and a club which does not participate in the Competitions, her registration for the Competitions may be retained by the Club.
- 7.4.6 The Executive Operational Committee may place an Embargo on any Club which has overdue payables to another Club (or club) in relation to a transfer or loan, which have not been Secured.
- 7.4.7 Each Club shall register its Authorised Signatories with Leagues OpCo via the Competition Secretary and shall ensure that its registered Authorised Signatories are kept accurate and up to date.

7.5 Transfers

- 7.5.1 A transfer for the purposes of these Rules shall include permanent and loan transfers (unless otherwise specified).
- 7.5.2 The incoming transfer of a Contract Player or Non Contract Player to a Club must take place as permitted in Rule 7.3, be in writing, on the relevant transfer form, signed by the Contract Player or Non Contract Player (as applicable) and the two clubs, and the form and, where the Player is a Contract Player, the Player's Playing Contract must be forwarded to the Competition Secretary and The FA for approval and registration via the online player registration system. A transferring Contract Player or Non Contract Player shall not become eligible to play in the Competitions for a Club until the relevant transfer form has been approved and registered by the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system and Rule 7.1 has been complied with.
- 7.5.3 A reference to a relevant transfer form in these Rules shall mean the particular transfer form or documentation prescribed by the Competition Secretary for that type of transfer (for example a loan transfer or permanent transfer). These forms shall be made available to Clubs by the Competition Secretary.
- 7.5.4 Transfer forms must be sent to the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system so that they are received by the Competition Secretary and The FA within five days of having been signed.
- 7.5.5 If a Player's Playing Contract is cancelled by mutual consent, the Club shall send the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system of a copy of the relevant cancellation form, at which point the registration of a Contract Player shall be automatically cancelled.
- 7.5.6 Upon cancellation of a Club's registration of a Contract Player, the Club must immediately provide written notification, signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club, to the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system.

- 7.5.7 A Non Contract Player whose registration for a Club is cancelled or transferred for any reason whatsoever cannot, without the consent of the Executive Operational Committee, return to that Club until a minimum of 14 days has elapsed from the date of the cancellation or transfer.
- 7.5.8 A Club cannot register the transfer of a Player unless that Player has been registered with the transferor Club for at least 14 days, unless that Player is a goalkeeper.
- 7.5.9 When any Player is transferred between Clubs (or between Clubs and clubs) it is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that the Competition Secretary and The FA, where relevant, receive copies of all relevant documents pertaining to the transfer including full details of any payment schedules agreed in writing or otherwise between the two Clubs via the online player registration system. Should a Club fail to meet the payment schedules lodged with the Competition Secretary, an Embargo on further Player registrations may be placed upon the defaulting Club together with a levy of one percent per day on the outstanding payments.
- 7.5.10 Any Player intending to register for a Club shall not be permitted to do so without first providing evidence to the Club which she intends to register with that she has discharged all financial liabilities (if any) to her previous club or Club (if any). A Club is not permitted to register a Player without first ascertaining that such liabilities have been discharged to the satisfaction of the relevant Club or club.
- 7.5.11 In the event of an objection to a transfer, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Operational Committee for a decision.

7.6 Loan Transfers

- 7.6.1 Subject to Rule 7.3.4, Clubs shall only be permitted to register Contract Players to play for them on a temporary or loan basis in the Competitions on Standard Loan up to the maximum number permitted in Rule 7.7.
- 7.6.2 Standard Loans of Contract Players shall be permitted to or from:
 - (a) Clubs in membership of the Competitions;
 - (b) any other league authorised by The FA from time to time; or
 - (c) subject to Rule 7.6.3, an International Club (an “**International Loan**”)
- 7.6.3 Clubs may sign players on International Loans in accordance with the principles set out in Article 10 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players subject to the following:
 - (a) The transferee Club shall identify whether the signing of the player from an International Club is a permanent transfer or an International Loan. Players may not be signed from an International Club on any other basis.
 - (b) Players signed on International Loan must sign a Playing Contract with the transferee Club (as provided for at Rule 7.2.2).
 - (c) The transferee Club shall comply with the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.
- 7.6.4 The loans as are provided for in Rule 7.6.1 shall be on such terms and conditions as shall be mutually agreed by the two clubs and the Contract Player. A relevant transfer form shall be required for a loan transfer. Different forms are required for loan transfers between clubs in the same League Competition and those in different League Competitions or other competitions. The relevant transfer form should be completed and delivered in accordance with Rules 7.5 and 7.1.
- 7.6.5 The Contract Player being taken on loan must sign a relevant registration form which shall be valid for the full period of the loan, including any extension to the loan period. A relevant cancellation form must be used to prematurely end the loan period. The loan registration for a Contract Player to play in the Competitions

for the transferee Club will automatically be cancelled at the end of the loan period, at which time the Player shall automatically become registered to play in the Competitions for the transferor Club (without the registration being subject to any additional requirements or restrictions under this Rule 6).

7.7 Standard Loans

- 7.7.1 In each Season a Club can register up to a maximum of six Contract Players on Standard Loans to play for the Club in the Competitions, subject to the following:
- (a) A maximum of three players can be registered on Standard Loans simultaneously from the same club.
 - (b) A maximum of two outfield players over the age of 23 can be registered on Standard Loans.
- 7.7.2 Standard Loan transfers shall only be approved provided that:
- (a) the duration which the Contract Player can play for the transferee Club in the Competitions pursuant to the Standard Loan is for a Half Season or a full Season; and
 - (b) a recall clause requiring the early termination a Standard Loan can only be included in a Standard Loan entered into for a full Season and this can only be activated during the Second Transfer Window.
- 7.7.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 7.7.2(b), Standard Loans may be terminated by way of mutual agreement in writing between the transferor club, the transferee club and the Contract Player (including by way of a recall clause within a loan agreement) but any recall can only be completed after the expiry of 28 days and only during a Transfer Window.
- 7.7.4 If, notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 7.7.2(a), a Standard Loan expires (or terminates) at the end of the Season of the transferee club but prior to the completion of the Matches of the transferor club (where it is a Club), that Contract Player shall not be eligible to play in Matches for the transferor club in that Season.
- 7.7.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of Rules 7.7.2 and 7.7.3, a Standard Loan of a goalkeeper (but not otherwise) may be subject to a recall clause exercisable at any time. Any recall may only be implemented in extenuating circumstances and with the consent of the Executive Operational Committee, such extenuating circumstances to be determined in the Executive Operational Committee's absolute discretion. A goalkeeper shall not be permitted to resume any Standard Loan following the exercise of a recall.
- 7.7.6 To extend the period of any Standard Loan transfer a further relevant transfer form must be completed and copies sent to the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system.

7.8 Squad List

- 7.8.1 Except as provided in Rules 7.8.6, 7.8.7(b) and 7.9, each Player registered at a Club must be included in the Club's Squad List. As per Rule 7.1.1, a Player shall not be eligible to play for a Club in any Match unless the Player is included in the Club's Squad List (except where permitted by Rule 7.9).
- 7.8.2 Each Club shall submit to the Competition Secretary its Squad List for the upcoming Season via the online player registration system not later than 24 hours before its first Match of the Season. Any changes to the Squad List during the Season must be made in conformity with these Rules.
- 7.8.3 Except where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 7.8.7, a Club's Squad List shall include a maximum of 25 Players at any one time during a Season.

Adding Players to the Squad List

- 7.8.4 A Club with fewer than 25 Players in its Squad List at any one time during a Season may, subject to compliance with these Rules, add Players to its Squad List provided that it does not exceed a maximum of 25 Players at any one time during the Season (except where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 7.8.7).

Removing Players from the Squad List

- 7.8.5 A Player may be removed from the Club's Squad List:

- (a) if they are no longer registered with the Club;
- (b) in accordance with Rule 7.8.6; or
- (c) where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 7.8.7(b).

For the avoidance of doubt, a Player transferred on a Standard Loan from a transferor Club to a transferee club shall cease being part of the transferor Club's Squad List for the duration of the Standard Loan.

- 7.8.6 A Club may remove a maximum of three Players from its Squad List for that Season for any reason during the Second Transfer Window of that Season by updating the online player registration system but may continue to hold the registration of such Players. In such circumstances, the Club may continue to hold the registrations of such Players until the commencement of the following Season at which point the Player must be included in the Club's Squad List for that Season or have their registrations transferred, cancelled or de-registered (as appropriate).

Applications to the Executive Operational Committee to remove, increase or re-add

- 7.8.7 Following an application by a Club in accordance with Rule 7.8.8, the Executive Operational Committee may on a case by case basis and in its sole discretion:

- (a) approve an increase in the of the Club's Squad List to more than a maximum of 25 Players for the remainder of the Season (such approval will be valid for that Season only);
- (b) approve the removal of a Player from a Club's Squad List for the remainder of the Season for reasons specified in Rule 7.8.9 or for any other reason with that Player no longer counting towards the Club's Squad List (outside of the three Players referred to in Rule 7.8.6) but the Club may continue to hold the registration of the Player; or
- (c) approve a Player removed from the Squad List following an application made in accordance with Rule 7.8.9 to be readded to the Club's Squad List. If the addition of the readded Player to the Squad List will lead to the Club's having more than 25 Players on its Squad List, the Executive Operational Committee may also approve an increase in the size of the Club's Squad List in accordance with Rule 7.8.7 (a).

- 7.8.8 Any Club wishing to make an application in accordance with Rule 7.8.7 must submit a written request to the Competition Secretary detailing what action it wants to be approved, along with all supporting information, evidence and documentation in respect of its request. The Executive Operational Committee may approve or refuse any such application in its absolute discretion, and may make any approval subject to such limitations, restrictions and conditions as it sees fit.

- 7.8.9 Without prejudice to a Club's right to apply for other reasons under Rule 7.8.7, a Club may apply to remove a Player from the Squad List in the following circumstances:

- (a) where the Player is deemed to have a long-term injury or illness, as confirmed in writing by a qualified doctor;

- (b) where the Player is pregnant, as confirmed in writing by a qualified doctor; or midwife; or
 - (c) where the Player is on maternity, adoption and paternity leave.
- 7.8.10 Where a Player is removed from the Squad List following an application made in accordance with Rule 7.8.9, the relevant Club must promptly apply for the Player to be readmitted to the Club's Squad List in accordance with Rule 7.8.7(c):
- (a) in the case of Rule 7.8.9(a), when a qualified doctor confirms the Player does not have a long-term injury or illness: or
 - (b) in the case of Rules 7.8.9 (b) and (c), when the Player confirms they are ready to return to playing competitive football for the Club.

Changes to the Squad List

- 7.8.11 If, in accordance with the provisions of these Rules, there are any changes to the Players that make up a Club's Squad List, the Club shall submit an updated Squad List to the Competition Secretary via the online player registration system:
- (a) in the event that the change occurs between the time at which the Club has submitted its Squad List pursuant to Rule 7.8.2 and the start of the Season, immediately on the change occurring; or
 - (b) if the change occurs during the Season as soon as possible and in any event not less than four hours before the scheduled kick-off time of the Club's next Match or, if the Club's next Match is on a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday, by 16:00 on the last week-day before the Club's next Match. In exceptional circumstances, an extension to this deadline may be granted by the Executive Operational Committee.
- 7.8.12 Breach of Rules 7.8.2 or 7.8.11 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions. For the avoidance of doubt, the Players that make up a Club's Squad List shall be determined in accordance with Rules 7.8.1 to 7.8.11.
- 7.8.13 Leagues OpCo reserves the right to publish a Club's Squad List at any time.
- 7.8.14 Each Club shall comply with the FA Home Grown Player Rule. From the first Match of the Season to the date of its final Match of the Season, each Club is required to have at least the number of Home Grown Players registered in its Squad List as set out in the FA Home Grown Player Rule.

7.9 PGA Players and Reserve Players

- 7.9.1 During each Season, each Club shall be entitled to register any number of PGA Players (subject to the PGA Rules (Chapter 11)) or Reserve Players (where applicable) at any time including outside of the Transfer Window who, subject to the below, may participate in Matches.
- 7.9.2 A Club may only register PGA Players or Reserve Players (not both).
- 7.9.3 If a Club intends to select a Reserve Player for a Match it must complete a relevant registration form (submitted via the online player registration system in accordance with Rule 7.1.3(c)) and ensure that it is received and approved by the Competition Secretary in accordance with Rule 7.1.4.
- 7.9.4 Where registered, a PGA Player or Reserve Player may participate in any number of Matches without being included in a Club's Squad List.
- 7.9.5 A PGA Player or Reserve Player will be considered to have participated in a Match if they are included in the starting 11 or appear on the field of play as a substitute in a Match.
- 7.9.6 A Reserve Player may only be a Non-Contract Player.

7.10 List of Players and transfer list

A Club shall keep a list of the Players it registers and a record of the games in which each Player has played. A Club shall produce this list upon demand by the Executive Operational Committee.

7.11 Academy Development Registrations

7.11.1 Notwithstanding Rule 7.4.4 and subject to Rules 7.11.5 and 7.11.6, PGA Players and Reserve Players registered with a Club may concurrently register, using an **"Academy Development Registration"**, with either:

- (a) one other Club, provided it participates in a different league competition to that in which the Player's current Club participates (i.e. PGA Players and Reserve Players registered at a Club in the Tier 1 League may concurrently register with a Club in the Tier 2 League and vice versa); or
- (b) one other club which does not participate in the Competitions, and provided that the relevant forms are completed and the online registration system is updated (as directed by the Executive Operational Committee from time to time).

7.11.2 A PGA Player or Reserve Player to which Rule 7.11.1 applies shall (subject to applicable competition rules) be eligible to play in:

- (a) League fixtures (and League Cup fixtures if agreed by both clubs) for the Club holding the Academy Development Registration;
- (b) the PGA Competitions or reserve or development fixtures (as applicable) for the Club to which they were initially registered; and
- (c) in the Competitions for the Club to which they were initially registered, provided that Club provides at least 24 hours' prior written notice to the Club holding the Academy Development Registration (which shall have the effect of terminating their concurrent registration).

7.11.3 A PGA Player or Reserve Player to which Rule 7.11.1 applies shall (subject to applicable competition rules) be eligible to play in:

- (a) first team matches for the club holding the Academy Development Registration;
- (b) the PGA Competitions or reserve or development fixtures (as applicable) for the Club to which they were initially registered;
- (c) the Competitions for the Club to which they were initially registered, provided that Club provides at least 24 hours' prior written notice to the club holding the Academy Development Registration (which shall have the effect of terminating their concurrent registration).

7.11.4 Without prejudice to the foregoing, a Player shall not be permitted to play, and a Club shall not select a Player to play, for both the Club they were initially registered and the Club holding the Academy Development Registration within a 48-hour period.

7.11.5 Academy Development Registrations of PGA Players and Reserve Players shall only be permitted outside of the Transfer Windows if the club holding the Academy Development Registration participates in tiers 3 to 5 of the Women's Football Pyramid, save that where a Reserve Player or PGA Player is named on a Team Sheet, they may only concurrently register with another Club pursuant to Rule 7.11.1 during the next Transfer Window.

7.11.6 The maximum number of Reserve Players and / or PGA Players that a Club may permit to be registered on an Academy Development Registration by another single Club pursuant to Rule 7.11.1 at any one time is three.

7.12 Substitute Players

- 7.12.1 A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. A Club at its discretion may use five substitute Players during a Match, subject to the conditions set out in Law 3 of the Laws of the Game. For the avoidance of doubt, each Club has no more than three substitution opportunities in each Match (in addition to the ability to make substitutions at half time and any concussion or additional substitutions in accordance with Rule 7.12.2). Where both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as a used substitution opportunity for each team. When a Club is making a substitution the Club shall be required to use a board to show the number of the Player to be substituted and the number of the substitute Player.
- 7.12.2 If a Player suffers concussion (or potential concussion), the Player's Club and its opponent shall be permitted to use concussion and additional substitution(s) in accordance with the relevant IFAB protocol adopted by Leagues OpCo, in force from time to time, and as notified to Clubs. For the avoidance of doubt, any concussion or additional substitutions made in accordance with this Rule may be used in addition to the substitutions permitted by Rule 7.12.1 above.
- 7.12.3 A maximum of nine substitutes may be nominated for each Match and they must be included on the official Team Sheet handed to the Referee before the Match in accordance with Rule 10.3.8. A substitute may not be used to replace a Player who has been suspended or ejected from the Match by the Match Officials.
- 7.12.4 If a Player does not take part in the Match for which she is a nominated substitute she shall be deemed as not having played for the Club in that Match.

7.13 Playing an ineligible player

- 7.13.1 Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a Match or Matches shall be in breach of these Rules and the matter shall be dealt with by the Executive Operational Committee exercising its Summary Jurisdiction pursuant to Rule 3.8 or, at the Executive Operational Committee's discretion, referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).
- 7.13.2 In the event that the Independent Tribunal finds that the Club has played an ineligible Player in a Match or Matches and subject to Rule 7.13.3, the Independent Tribunal may:
 - (a) order that any points gained from that Match or Matches are deducted from the Club's record up to a maximum of 12 points;
 - (b) order that any such Match or Matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Independent Tribunal; and / or
 - (c) make any such other order that the Independent Tribunal may decide.
- 7.13.3 The Independent Tribunal may determine not to impose a points deduction only in circumstances where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or where the ineligibility is related to the Player's status.

7.14 Financial arrangements

- 7.14.1 Subject to Rules 7.14.2 to 7.14.7 and The FA Rules, a Club may negotiate financial arrangements with its Players.
- 7.14.2 All Contract Players must be registered with the Executive Operational Committee and The FA.
- 7.14.3 All payments and benefits due and / or made to a Contract Player must be shown in the Playing Contract.
- 7.14.4 All payments made to Players must be made by the Club and fully recorded in the accounting records of the Club.

- 7.14.5 All salaried payments (whether to Contract Players or Non Contract Players) must be subject to PAYE and National Insurance.
- 7.14.6 All salary payments due on written contracts must be stated gross, before PAYE and National Insurance deductions.
- 7.14.7 Any Players paid expenses should be reimbursed via an expense claim form. The Club should retain all expense records in a format acceptable to the HMRC.
- 7.14.8 Any Club or Club Official found to have committed a breach of The FA Rules regarding payments to Players may have its right to participate in the Competitions revoked and, in addition, shall be fined such sums as the Board shall determine in its absolute discretion.

7.15 **Salary Cap**

All Clubs, Players and any other Participants who are involved in the Competitions shall ensure that they comply with the provisions of the Financial Sustainability Regulations (as amended from time to time).

7.16 **Player Equipment**

- 7.16.1 Subject to Rules 7.16.2 to 7.16.5, electronic performance and tracking system ("EPTS") devices may be used during Matches.
- 7.16.2 EPTS devices must not pose any danger to the Players and / or Match Officials.
- 7.16.3 Information and data transmitted from the EPTS devices are not permitted to be received or used in the technical area during a Match.
- 7.16.4 The data collected from any EPTS device may not be used for any commercial activity.
- 7.16.5 Any branding on EPTS devices must not be visible at any time during a Match.
- 7.16.6 Any breach of Rules 7.16.2 to 7.16.5 shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).

7.17 **Playing Contract Disputes and Appeals**

Termination of Playing Contract

- 7.17.1 A Club, on giving 14 days' notice to a Player to terminate her Playing Contract, must state in the notice the Player's right of appeal to a Player Related Dispute Commission in accordance with Rule 7.18. The notice must advise the Player of the procedural steps to comply with in accordance with Rule 7.17.3. The Club shall also notify both The FA's Player Status Department and the Competition Secretary of the reasons for the termination.
- 7.17.2 A Player on giving 14 days' notice to her Club to terminate her Playing Contract must also notify the Competition Secretary of the reasons for the termination. A copy of such notice must be received by the Competition Secretary within seven days of the sending of the notice to the Club in order to be valid.
- 7.17.3 If the recipient of a notice referred to in Rules 7.17.1 and 7.17.2 wishes to do so, they may appeal against the relevant termination to a Player Related Dispute Commission in accordance with Rule 7.18 within 14 days of receipt of the notice.

Grievances under the Playing Contract

- 7.17.4 Within 14 days of a Player receiving a decision of their Club's board regarding a grievance raised pursuant to their Playing Contract, that Player may appeal the decision to a Player Related Dispute Commission in accordance with Rule 7.18.

Disciplinary Warnings and Sanctions

- 7.17.5 Within 14 days of receipt of any notice of a written warning or sanction imposed by a Club under the Playing Contract, the Player may appeal that decision to a Player Related Dispute Commission in accordance with Rule 7.18.

Other Playing Contract Disputes

- 7.17.6 Any dispute or difference between a Club and a Player arising from a Playing Contract not otherwise provided for in these Rules shall be determined by a Player Related Dispute Commission in accordance with Rule 7.18.

7.18 Player Related Dispute Commission Proceedings

Commencement of Proceedings

- 7.18.1 Proceedings brought in accordance with Rule 7.17 shall be commenced by an application in writing to the other party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary) which shall:
- (a) identify the other party;
 - (b) identify the relevant part of Rule 7.17 pursuant to which the proceedings have been commenced;
 - (c) provide a brief description of the matters in dispute; and
 - (d) annex copies of any documents relied upon.
- 7.18.2 Within 14 days of receipt of an application commencing proceedings, the other party shall:
- (a) provide a brief response to the matters raised in the application; and
 - (b) annex copies of any documents relied upon.

Appointment of the Player Related Dispute Commission

- 7.18.3 Subject to Rule 7.18.6 the Player Related Dispute Commission shall comprise three members appointed in accordance with Rule 7.18.4 and Rule 7.18.5.
- 7.18.4 Within 14 days of a party commencing proceedings in accordance with Rule 7.18.1 each party shall by notice in writing addressed to the other party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary) appoint one member to sit on the Player Related Dispute Commission, who shall be:
- (a) independent of the party appointing them and able to render an impartial decision; and
 - (b) suitably qualified (if not a solicitor or barrister of at least five years' post-qualification experience, shall be a person capable of rendering an impartial decision and is not otherwise subject to a Disqualifying Event);

If a party refuses or fails to appoint a member in accordance with this Rule 7.18.4, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

- 7.18.5 Within 14 days of their appointment (i.e. the date of the second member being appointed), the two members appointed pursuant to Rule 7.18.4 shall appoint a third member to sit as chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission, who shall be:
- (a) a solicitor or barrister of at least five years' post-qualification experience; and

- (b) independent of the parties (and the other members appointing them) and able to render an impartial decision;

If the two members refuse or fail to appoint a chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

- 7.18.6 Notwithstanding Rule 7.18.4 and Rule 7.18.5, the parties may agree to the appointment of a single member (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.18.5(a)). In such cases, Rule 7.18 shall be interpreted on the basis that the Player Related Dispute Commission comprises a single member who shall undertake the duties of the chair. The parties shall notify the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary of such an appointment.
- 7.18.7 If the parties agree that the Player Related Dispute Commission should comprise of a single member (pursuant to Rule 7.18.6), but cannot agree on an appointment, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

Replacing a Member of the Player Related Dispute Commission

- 7.18.8 If the chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission is unable to act or continue acting as chair, either:
 - (a) the two other members shall appoint a replacement chair (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.18.5(a)); or
 - (b) where either (i) the two members refuse or fail to appoint a replacement chair, or (ii) a single member has been appointed in accordance with Rule 7.18.6, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the replacement appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).
- 7.18.9 If following their appointment any other member of the Player Related Dispute Commission is unable to act or continue acting, their appointer may appoint a replacement (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.18.4) so that the composition of the Player Related Dispute Commission is maintained as provided for in Rule 7.18.3.

Procedural Rules

Communications

- 7.18.10 Any communications from the Player Related Dispute Commission to a party shall be copied to the other party, the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary.
- 7.18.11 Any communications sent by either party to the Player Related Dispute Commission shall be addressed to its chair and shall be copied to the other party, the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary.

Directions and Conduct of Proceedings

- 7.18.12 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall decide all procedural and evidential matters and for that purpose within 14 days of their appointment they shall give directions for the conduct of the proceedings addressed in writing to each party or require their attendance at a preliminary meeting at which they will give directions.

- 7.18.13 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall have the power to extend or abridge the time limits set out in this Rule 7.18.13 if there is a compelling reason why the proceedings need to be extended or conducted expeditiously.
- 7.18.14 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall have overall control of the conduct of proceedings and shall have the power to regulate the proceedings as it sees fit.
- 7.18.15 The parties shall do all things necessary for the proper and expeditious conduct of the proceedings and shall comply without delay with any direction of the Player Related Dispute Commission as to procedural and evidential matters.
- 7.18.16 If either party is in breach of Rule 7.18.5, the Player Related Dispute Commission shall have power to:
- (a) make peremptory orders prescribing a time for compliance;
 - (b) make orders against a party which fails to comply with a peremptory order;
 - (c) dismiss a claim for want of prosecution in the event of inordinate or inexcusable delay by a party which appears likely to give rise to a substantial risk that it will not be possible to have a fair resolution of the issues or will cause serious prejudice to the other party; and / or
 - (d) debar that party from further participation and proceed with the proceedings and make an award but only after giving that party written notice of its intention to do so.

Hearings

- 7.18.17 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall have the power to summon any Participant to attend a hearing to give evidence and to produce documents and any person who is bound by these Rules and who, having been summoned, fails to attend or to give evidence or to produce documents shall be in breach of these Rules.
- 7.18.18 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall fix the date, time and place of a hearing and shall give the parties reasonable notice thereof. The Competition Secretary and / or another representative of Leagues OpCo shall be entitled to attend the hearing as an observer.
- 7.18.19 If a party to the proceedings fails to attend the hearing, the Player Related Dispute Commission may either adjourn it or proceed in their absence.
- 7.18.20 The chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission shall decide the manner in which hearings are conducted.
- 7.18.21 The Player Related Dispute Commission shall not be bound by any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceedings before a court of law.
- 7.18.22 Each party shall be entitled to be represented at the hearing by a solicitor or counsel provided that they have given the other party and the chair of the Player Related Dispute Commission 14 days' prior written notice to that effect.

Decision

- 7.18.23 The Player Related Dispute Commission may make such decisions as it thinks fit.
- 7.18.24 If the members of the Player Related Dispute Commission fail to agree the final decision unanimously, they shall decide by a majority.
- 7.18.25 The Player Related Dispute Commission shall inform the parties of its decision as soon as practicable and, if possible, at the end of the hearing. A written version of the decision must also be provided to the parties and

shall contain reasons for the decision (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary). The decision shall be binding on the parties.

Costs

- 7.18.26 A Player Related Dispute Commission shall have the power to make an order for costs in determining disputes under this Rule 7.18 and shall determine the amount of any such costs.
- 7.18.27 In proceedings before a Player Related Dispute Commission, Leagues OpCo shall contribute £2,500 to the administrative costs (including the costs of the members of the Player Related Dispute Commission).
- 7.18.28 Any order for costs pursuant to Rule 7.18.26 shall be for any costs in excess of the sum payable by Leagues OpCo in Rule 7.18.27.
- 7.18.29 Parties to proceedings before a Player Related Dispute Commission must act in a proportionate and reasonable manner in respect of the costs they incur in the proceedings.
- 7.18.30 When considering what order to make about costs, the Player Related Dispute Commission shall have regard to all the circumstances, including:
- (a) the conduct of the parties; and
 - (b) whether a party has succeeded on part of its case, even where it has not been wholly successful.
- 7.18.31 The conduct of the parties shall include:
- (a) conduct before and during the proceedings;
 - (b) whether or not it was reasonable for a party to raise, pursue or content a particular allegation or issue; and
 - (c) the manner in which a party has pursued or defended its case or a particular allegation or issue.

Publication

- 7.18.32 Proceedings of a Player Related Dispute Commission under this Rule 7.18 shall be confidential and shall be conducted in private save that, unless otherwise agreed between the parties, and subject to Rule 7.18.33, the Player Related Dispute Commission's decision shall be published on the Leagues OpCo's website. Where a decision contains any information that is either (a) medically sensitive, (b) confidential in relation to safeguarding and / or (c) commercially sensitive, a party may request within two days of the notification of the decision that the Player Related Dispute Commission publishes an anonymised or a redacted version. In such cases, reasonable prior notice of the date of publication of any decision must be provided to the parties.
- 7.18.33 Notwithstanding any decision taken in respect of publication pursuant to Rule 7.18.32, a copy of any decision by a Player Related Dispute Commission must be provided to the Board within 24 hours of the making of the decision. When the Board considers, acting reasonably, that the terms of the decision are of general importance to Clubs, the Board may produce an anonymised version and / or summary of the decision for distribution to Clubs.

Appeal

- 7.18.34 Within 14 days of receipt of the written decision of a Player Related Dispute Commission pursuant to Rule 7.18.25, either party may by notice in writing appeal against such decision to the League Appeals Committee in accordance with Rule 7.19 whose decision shall be final.

7.19 League Appeals Committee Proceedings

Appointment of the League Appeals Committee

- 7.19.1 Subject to Rule 7.19.4 the League Appeals Committee shall comprise three members appointed in accordance with Rule 7.19.2 and Rule 7.19.3.
- 7.19.2 Within 14 days of a party commencing proceedings in accordance with Rule 7.18.34 each party shall by notice in writing addressed to the other party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary) appoint one member to sit on the League Appeals Committee, who shall be:
- (a) independent of the party appointing them and able to render an impartial decision; and
 - (b) suitably qualified (if not a solicitor or barrister of at least five years' post-qualification experience, shall be a person capable of rendering an impartial decision and is not otherwise subject to a Disqualifying Event);

If a party refuses or fails to appoint a member in accordance with this Rule 7.19.2, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

- 7.19.3 Within 14 days of their appointment (i.e. the date of the second member being appointed), the two members appointed pursuant to Rule 7.19.2 shall appoint a third member to sit as chair of the League Appeals Committee, who shall be:
- (a) a solicitor or barrister of at least 10 years' post-qualification experience; and
 - (b) independent of the parties (and the other members appointing them) and able to render an impartial decision;

If the two members refuse or fail to appoint a chair of the League Appeals Committee, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

- 7.19.4 Notwithstanding Rule 7.19.2 and Rule 7.19.3, the parties may agree to the appointment of a single member (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.19.3(a)). In such cases, Rule 7.19 shall be interpreted on the basis that the League Appeals Committee comprises a single member who shall undertake the duties of the chair. The parties shall notify the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary of such an appointment.
- 7.19.5 If the parties agree that the League Appeals Committee should comprise of a single member (pursuant to Rule 7.19.4), but cannot agree on an appointment, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the relevant appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

Replacing a Member of the League Appeals Committee

- 7.19.6 If the chair of the League Appeals Committee is unable to act or continue acting as chair, either:
- (a) the two other members shall appoint a replacement chair (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.19.3(a)); or
 - (b) where either (i) the two members refuse or fail to appoint a replacement chair, or (ii) a single member has been appointed in accordance with Rule 7.19.4, the Executive Operational Committee shall instruct Sport Resolutions UK to make the replacement appointment giving notice in writing to that effect to each party (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary).

- 7.19.7 If following their appointment any other member of the League Appeals Committee is unable to act or continue acting, their appointer may appoint a replacement (who must meet the requirements set out in Rule 7.19.2) so that the composition of the League Appeals Committee is maintained as provided in Rule 7.19.1.

Procedural Rules

Communications

- 7.19.8 Any communications from the League Appeals Committee to a party shall be copied to the other party, the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary.
- 7.19.9 Any communications sent by either party to the League Appeals Committee shall be addressed to its chair and shall be copied to the other party, the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary.

Directions and Conduct of Proceedings

- 7.19.10 The chair of the League Appeals Committee shall decide all procedural and evidential matters and for that purpose within 14 days of their appointment they shall give directions for the conduct of the proceedings addressed in writing to each party or require their attendance at a preliminary meeting at which they will give directions.
- 7.19.11 The chair of the League Appeals Committee shall have overall control of the conduct of proceedings and shall have the power to regulate the proceedings as it sees fit.
- 7.19.12 The parties shall do all things necessary for the proper and expeditious conduct of the proceedings and shall comply without delay with any direction of the League Appeals Committee as to procedural and evidential matters.
- 7.19.13 If either party is in breach of Rule 7.19.12, the League Appeals Committee shall have power to:
- (a) make peremptory orders prescribing a time for compliance;
 - (b) make orders against a party which fails to comply with a peremptory order;
 - (c) dismiss a claim for want of prosecution in the event of inordinate or inexcusable delay by a party which appears likely to give rise to a substantial risk that it will not be possible to have a fair resolution of the issues or will cause serious prejudice to the other party; and / or
 - (d) debar that party from further participation and proceed with the proceedings and make an award but only after giving that party written notice of its intention to do so.

Hearings

- 7.19.14 The chair of the League Appeals Committee shall have the power to summon any Participant to attend a hearing to give evidence and to produce documents and any person who is bound by these Rules and who, having been summoned, fails to attend or to give evidence or to produce documents shall be in breach of these Rules.
- 7.19.15 The chair of the League Appeals Committee shall fix the date, time and place of a hearing and shall give the parties reasonable notice thereof. The Competition Secretary and / or another representative of Leagues OpCo shall be entitled to attend the hearing as an observer.
- 7.19.16 If a party to the proceedings fails to attend the hearing, the League Appeals Committee may either adjourn it or proceed in their absence.
- 7.19.17 The chair of the League Appeals Committee shall decide the manner in which hearings are conducted.

- 7.19.18 The League Appeals Committee shall not be bound by any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceedings before a court of law.
- 7.19.19 Each party shall be entitled to be represented at the hearing by a solicitor or counsel provided that they have given the other party and the chair of the League Appeals Committee 14 days' prior written notice to that effect.

Decision

- 7.19.20 The League Appeals Committee may make such decisions as it thinks fit.
- 7.19.21 If the members of the League Appeals Committee fail to agree the final decision unanimously, they shall decide by a majority.
- 7.19.22 The League Appeals Committee shall inform the parties of its decision as soon as practicable and, if possible, at the end of the hearing. A written version of the decision must also be provided to the parties and shall contain reasons for the decision (copied to the Executive Operational Committee and the Competition Secretary). The decision shall be final and binding on the parties.

Costs

- 7.19.23 A League Appeals Committee shall have the power to make an order for costs in determining disputes under this Rule 7.19 and shall determine the amount of any such costs.
- 7.19.24 Parties to proceedings before a League Appeals Committee must act in a proportionate and reasonable manner in respect of the costs they incur in the proceedings.
- 7.19.25 When considering what order to make about costs, the League Appeals Committee shall have regard to all the circumstances, including:
- (a) the conduct of the parties; and
 - (b) whether a party has succeeded on part of its case, even where it has not been wholly successful.
- 7.19.26 The conduct of the parties shall include:
- (a) conduct before and during the proceedings;
 - (b) whether or not it was reasonable for a party to raise, pursue or content a particular allegation or issue; and
 - (c) the manner in which a party has pursued or defended its case or a particular allegation or issue.

Publication

- 7.19.27 Proceedings of a League Appeals Committee under this Rule 7.19 shall be confidential and shall be conducted in private save that, unless otherwise agreed between the parties, and subject to Rule 7.19.28, the League Appeals Committee's decision shall be published on Leagues OpCo's website. Where a decision contains any information that is either (a) medically sensitive, (b) confidential in relation to safeguarding and / or (c) commercially sensitive, a party may request within two days of the notification of the decision that the League Appeals Committee publishes an anonymised or a redacted version. In such cases, reasonable prior notice of the date of publication of any decision must be provided to the parties.
- 7.19.28 Notwithstanding any decision taken in respect of publication pursuant to Rule 7.19.27, a copy of any decision by a League Appeals Committee must be provided to the Board within 24 hours of the making of the decision. When the Board considers, acting reasonably, that the terms of the decision are of general importance to Clubs, the Board may produce an anonymised version and / or summary of the decision for distribution to Clubs.

8. LICENSED FOOTBALL AGENTS

- 8.1 A Football Agent cannot have any involvement in any Club in an official capacity (as defined by the Board from time to time) nor may he or she hold office with the Competitions.
- 8.2 All Clubs and Players must comply with The FA Football Agent Regulations and the FIFA Football Agent Regulations.

9. CLUB COLOURS

- 9.1 For each Season each Club shall have a first choice ("**home**") kit, a second choice ("**away**") kit, and a third choice kit (each to include shirt, shorts, and socks) for outfield Players and goalkeepers. The kits shall be registered with the Competition Secretary in accordance with Rule 9.4.
- 9.2 Each kit registered by a Club must differ visibly from and contrast with each other. No changes to the registered kits, or combination of kits, shall be permitted without the consent of the Executive Operational Committee.
- 9.3 Notwithstanding Rule 9.2, if on the day of the Match, the Match Officials determine that the two Clubs have the same or similar colours such that the colours of the Clubs are not clearly distinguishable, the order of precedence set out at Rule 9.7 shall apply in determining which colours shall be worn (unless otherwise authorised by the Executive Operational Committee).
- 9.4 On or before a date specified by the Executive Operational Committee each year, each Club shall register its kits by submitting a Kit Confirmation Form to the Executive Operational Committee together with computer aided drawings ("**CADs**") and physical samples of its home kit, away kit, third kit, and goalkeeper kits. Details of the registered kits will be circulated to the Clubs by the Executive Operational Committee.
- 9.5 At least 14 days prior to a Match, the Away Club shall select their kit colours on the online portal; the Home Club's home kit colours will be selected automatically. If the Competition Secretary requires either Club (home or away) to make amendments to its kit selection, the Club shall resubmit its selection within 24 hours of receiving notification of that fact.
- 9.6 The Players' shirts must be clearly numbered (with league branded numbers) from 1 to 99 so that Players can be clearly identified by the Match Officials and spectators. Each Player's shirt must include that Player's forename or surname (or any other alias, provided that this is recorded on the Team Sheet handed to the Referee before a Match). The shirts must be numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet and there must be no change of numbers during the Match except for a change of goalkeeper or if permitted by the Referee because of a blood injury.
- 9.7 Any dispute arising between Clubs as to kit colours shall be determined by the Competition Secretary, with assistance from Colour Blind Awareness on colour vision deficiency considerations. The following order of precedence shall, unless otherwise authorised by the Competition Secretary, apply in determining which colours shall be worn:
 - 9.7.1 1st priority: the outfield players of the Home Club who shall wear their first choice colours;
 - 9.7.2 2nd priority: the outfield players of the Away Club;
 - 9.7.3 3rd priority: the goalkeeper of the Home Club;
 - 9.7.4 4th priority: the goalkeeper of the Away Club; and
 - 9.7.5 5th priority: the Match Officials.

The Competition Secretary shall, no later than seven days prior to the Match, approve the kit colours via the online portal which will notify both Clubs and the Match Officials of the colours to be worn.
- 9.8 Neck and cuff rim colours on shirts are not regarded as basic colours for the purpose of the Rules in respect of Club colours.
- 9.9 The goalkeeper may wear tracksuit trousers acceptable to the Match Official in a Match.

- 9.10 The team captain shall wear a distinguishing armband (of a design approved by the Executive Operational Committee) to indicate her status.
- 9.11 One sleeve of the shirts of all Players in Matches shall carry a logo of the relevant Competition as supplied by the Executive Operational Committee on an annual basis.
- 9.12 Shirt advertising must comply with FA Regulations Relating to Advertising on the Clothing of Players, Club Officials and Match Officials.
- 9.13 Playing kits (shirts, shorts and socks) for both the Home Club and the Away Club should be made available for review by the Match Officials in their changing room on arrival at the Stadium.
- 9.14 The colours of clothing worn by ball boys / girls must not clash with the colours of the competing Clubs or the Match Officials.
- 9.15 Breach of Rules 9.1 to 9.13 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions

10. PLAYING OF MATCHES

10.1 Stadium Availability

- 10.1.1 Before the start of the Season, Clubs shall complete and submit a fixture questionnaire confirming Stadium availability and fixture scheduling information for their primary and secondary Stadiums. This should indicate when the Stadium is in use (e.g. by another team), as well as other events that could reasonably affect the smooth operation of a Match day due to impact on local resources or shared facilities.
- 10.1.2 Clubs shall declare to the League any changes to Stadium availability that may compromise the ability to deliver a home Match (or broadcast selection) at one of their venues at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.1.3 Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

10.2 Determining the dates for the Season and Matches

- 10.2.1 The Board shall specify the dates on which the Season shall start and end.
- 10.2.2 The available dates for all Matches shall be fixed by the Competition Secretary in conjunction with the Executive Operational Committee and notified to Clubs. All Intellectual Property Rights and all other rights in all lists of arrangements of such fixtures shall be vested in Leagues OpCo.
- 10.2.3 No Matches shall be arranged either (i) on; or (ii) on any of the six days preceding, the four dates agreed between Leagues OpCo and The FA prior to each Season upon which international matches will be played.
- 10.2.4 The Executive Operational Committee reserves the right to amend scheduled fixtures and kick-off times to satisfy requirements of broadcasters as necessary. Notification will be provided by the Competition Secretary in writing to both Clubs for fixtures so rescheduled.
- 10.2.5 The Executive Operational Committee may change any fixtures in the Competitions at any time during the Season to suit the overall interests of the Competitions or if it is satisfied that such action is warranted in the circumstances.
- 10.2.6 A Club may apply to the Executive Operational Committee for permission to rearrange a fixture to a different date, kick-off time, or Stadium. If the application is made within 21 days or less of the fixture taking place, the Executive Operational Committee will only accept the application in exceptional circumstances.

- 10.2.7 All Matches shall be played on the home and away principle and the Executive Operational Committee shall determine how the fixtures shall be arranged. Such fixtures shall take precedence over all competitions in which a Club may engage.
- 10.2.8 Notwithstanding Rule 10.2.6, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to order that a Match shall be played at a neutral stadium or at the opponent's Stadium at the Home Club's cost if it is satisfied that such action is warranted in the circumstances.
- 10.2.9 The relevant Clubs shall, subject to complying with the Broadcasting Regulations (Chapter 5), mutually agree the kick off time and date of the Match (selecting from the available dates communicated to them pursuant to Rule 10.2.2). The Home Club shall notify the Competition Secretary of the kick off time and date agreed between the Clubs by the deadline stipulated by the Competition Secretary. The Competition Secretary shall have the power to decline the kick-off time and date agreed between the Clubs in circumstances where it does not suit the overall interests of the Competitions, provided always that the Competition Secretary must act reasonably when exercising this discretion. Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions. In the event that the Clubs are unable to agree the date of the Match and / or the kick off time, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Operational Committee for determination.
- 10.2.10 A Club shall not enter its first team in any competition, other than the Competitions or those listed below, without the prior permission of the Executive Operational Committee. The Competition Secretary must be informed of all fixtures, postponements and results of all matches played in any other competition. The other competitions which a Club is permitted to enter without the approval of the Executive Operational Committee are as follows:
- (a) Any UEFA competition which The FA has approved the Club's entry into.
 - (b) The Women's FA Cup.
 - (c) Any cup competition introduced by the Board.
 - (d) Any other competition or fixture which Leagues OpCo approves from time to time.
- A breach of this Rule shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).
- 10.2.11 The Executive Operational Committee shall determine the policy of the Competitions for the issuing of Match day passes to Away Clubs.

10.3 **Playing of Matches**

- 10.3.1 All Matches shall be played under and in accordance with The FA Rules and Regulations, League Competition Regulations, and in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the IFAB.
- 10.3.2 All Matches shall be of 90 minutes duration (excluding stoppage time and extra time where applicable). The half time interval in all Matches shall not exceed 15 minutes. Rule 10.4 shall apply where any Match is of shorter duration.
- 10.3.3 All Clubs must have a mobile telephone and an email address operational at all times. Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 10.3.4 For all Matches, and unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, Clubs shall be required to enter the field of play together, preceded by the Match Officials, not less than five minutes before the scheduled time of kick-off. Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

- 10.3.5 Each Club shall be prepared to kick-off at the scheduled time unless a satisfactory explanation is offered. Any Club commencing a Match late shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 10.3.6 No Match shall commence where either Club has fewer than 11 Players ready to play. Where either Club does not have 11 Players ready to play by thirty minutes past the scheduled kick off time, the Match shall be abandoned by the Referee and shall be determined by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 10.4.5.
- 10.3.7 A Club shall ensure that the team it selects to participate in a Match represents its strongest team available. A breach of this Rule shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).
- 10.3.8 The person at each Club who is in charge, or a senior member of the coaching staff who will occupy the bench, from each participating Club must:
- (a) hand the Team Sheet to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee at least 75 minutes before the scheduled time of kick-off. The Players' forename and surname (and, if applicable, any other alias displayed on the Player's shirt), numbers and the colours of the playing strip (in accordance with Rule 9) must be clearly stated; and
 - (b) attend a pre-match briefing with the Match Officials at least 60 minutes before the scheduled time of kick-off.

Any Clubs in breach of the requirements in respect of the Team Sheet or the pre-match briefing with the Match Officials shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

- 10.3.9 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions provided that no such fixed penalty shall apply where:
- (a) a Player indicated on the Team Sheet as forming the starting 11 cannot start the match due to physical incapacity which occurred after exchange of the Team Sheet but prior to kick off, in which case the Player may be replaced by one of the substitutes listed on the Team Sheet. The substitute in question may then be replaced by a registered Player not previously listed on the Team Sheet, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. The number of substitutions that a Club may make during a Match under Rule 7.11 shall be unaffected;
 - (b) a substitute listed on the Team Sheet cannot be fielded due to physical incapacity which occurred after exchange of the Team Sheet but prior to kick off, in which case the substitute may be replaced by a registered Player not previously listed on the Team Sheet; or
 - (c) none of the goalkeepers listed on the Team Sheet can be fielded due to physical incapacity which occurred after exchange of the Team Sheet but prior to kick off, in which case they may be replaced by registered goalkeepers not previously listed on the Team Sheet.

Any changes after the exchange of the Team Sheet must be notified to the Referee, a representative of the opponent Club, and to the Leagues OpCo on-call representative before the actual kick-off. Leagues OpCo shall then initiate any enquiries it may deem fit so as to satisfy the bona fide nature of the replacement.

- 10.3.10 Both the Home and Away Club shall complete all required Match day information details on the online portal, no less than 7 days prior to the Match itself. Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

- 10.3.11 The Home Club shall confirm to the Away Club, the Match Officials (once appointed) and the match manager/s (if appointed) the date and time of kick-off of each Match (which was agreed in accordance with Rule 10.2.9) and the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing, along with any other relevant Match information, to be received at least seven days prior to the Match. The Away Club and the Match Officials must acknowledge receipt to be received at least four days before the Match. Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions. For the purposes of this Rule, "other relevant Match information" shall be such other relevant Match information reasonably required for Home Clubs, as set out in the applicable guidance notes issued by or on behalf of the Executive Operational Committee to Clubs from time to time.
- 10.3.12 The Away Club must include in its acknowledgement the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing. Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 10.3.13 In all Matches, and unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, the number of Players and Club Officials seated on the team benches, in the designated technical area, must not exceed 13 unless the team bench facility provides more than 13 individual seats.
- 10.3.14 In all Matches, and unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, the Home Club shall provide a seat in the technical area for its doctor and its physiotherapist, and the Away Club shall provide a seat in the technical area for its physiotherapist, as well as its doctor should the Away Club's doctor be in attendance at the Match.
- 10.3.15 Only one person from a Club at a time (who shall be the team manager or the team coach) has the authority to issue instructions to its Players during the Match from within the technical area.
- 10.3.16 All Club Officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the official Team Sheet when it is submitted to the Match Officials. Only those persons listed on the official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.
- 10.3.17 The occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to The FA (and copied to Leagues OpCo), who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.
- 10.3.18 The person at each Club who is in charge of the team on the day (for example, the team manager or team coach) is the only person who has the authority to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to the team. All other personnel are to remain seated in the technical area, save for:
- (a) a second member of the Club's coaching personnel, who may stand but must remain next to the team's bench at all times; and
 - (b) any substitutes who are warming up or warming down.
- 10.3.19 Any breach of the technical area Rules set out in Rules 10.3.13 to 10.3.18 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 10.3.20 In all Matches, Clubs shall utilise a system of replacement balls in accordance with Law 2.3 of the Laws of the Game and any guidance issued by the Executive Operational Committee in conjunction with the PGMOL.
- 10.3.21 It is the responsibility of the Club playing at home in each Match to use match balls at all times in accordance with a Competition ball sponsorship agreement.
- 10.3.22 The Home Club shall supply to the Away Club a minimum of three practice balls for use prior to the start of a Match. The balls provided must be in good condition and, if applicable, as supplied by the Board or Executive Operational Committee under a Competition ball sponsorship agreement.

10.3.23 Any Club in breach of Rules 10.3.20 to 10.3.22 relating to practice and match balls shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

10.3.24 The Home Club shall, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, provide to the Away Club and Match Officials: (i) drinks on arrival, at half time and at full time; and (ii) at full time, a hot, nutritionally balanced meal (which shall include, where requested at least seven days prior to the Match (or, in respect of Match Officials, on appointment to the Match), a hot, nutritionally balanced vegetarian and / or vegan option).

Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

10.3.25 The Home Club shall provide access to the Stadium to any third party specified by Leagues OpCo to record Match Footage, including tactical footage in accordance with the Stadium Regulations (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). The home and Away Clubs shall only use such footage in accordance with its Participation Agreement and the League Competition Regulations (including the Broadcasting Regulations (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) referred to therein) and these Rules. In any event, the Away Club shall not be permitted to duplicate any such footage for financial gain without first obtaining the written permission of the providing Club and the Executive Operational Committee. Match Footage can be used for disciplinary purposes.

10.4 **Abandonment and postponement**

Abandonment

10.4.1 A Match may only be abandoned by the Referee.

10.4.2 If it is found necessary to stop play owing to the weather or other cause outside the control of the participating Clubs, the Referee shall wait a reasonable length of time before deciding on abandonment.

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

10.4.4 If a Match is abandoned the Club playing at home shall retain the gate receipts for such uncompleted Match.

10.4.5 If the Executive Operational Committee considers that a Match has been abandoned:

- (a) for reasons which are not due to the conduct of either Club or its members or supporters or because of matters over which neither Club had control, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to order that the: (i) result of the Match at the time of abandonment should stand and the points awarded accordingly; or (ii) Match is replayed on terms they specify;
- (b) due to the conduct of one Club or its members or supporters, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to order that the Match: (i) is replayed on terms they specify; or (ii) is not replayed and to award three points to the Club not at fault; or
- (c) due to the conduct of both Clubs or their members or supporters, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to order that the: (i) result of the Match at the time of abandonment should stand and the points awarded accordingly; (ii) Match is not replayed and to award one point to each Club; or (iii) Match is replayed on terms they specify.

10.4.6 Except for a determination of appropriate expenses in accordance with Rule 10.4.17, the Executive Operational Committee cannot levy a financial penalty due to the conduct of a Club under Rule 10.4.5 but may choose to take none of the actions specified and instead refer the matter to be determined in accordance with Rule 10.4.19.

Postponement

- 10.4.7 A Match may only be postponed by a Club if that Club has made a request to that effect and the Executive Operational Committee have approved the request. A Club shall only be entitled to request the postponement of a Match where expressly specified in Rules 10.4.8, 10.4.9 and 10.4.11. The Club requesting a postponement shall, at the same time as making the request to the Competition Secretary, notify the opposing Club of the request and, immediately upon being made aware of the Executive Operational Committee's decision, inform the opposing Club of the decision. The Executive Operational Committee shall decide in their absolute discretion whether the postponement shall be approved.
- 10.4.8 A Club shall be entitled to request a postponement of a Match where it is suffering an epidemic affecting the availability of its Players and such request shall only be valid where it is received by the Competition Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled time of kick-off of the Match to be postponed. When a Club obtains the approval of the Executive Operational Committee to so postpone, that Club shall be considered at fault for the purposes of Rule 10.4.15, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, and shall be liable to pay expenses incurred in accordance with that Rule. Medical certificates for those Players affected, signed by the Players' own doctors, must also be forwarded to the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the postponement, along with a full list of Contract Players and Non Contract Players currently registered by the Club at the date of the Match which was postponed, giving full reasons against each name for the Player's unavailability.
- 10.4.9 A Club shall be entitled to request a postponement of a Match where, following the Club's arrival at the Stadium, one of the Players named (or due to be named, as the case may be) on the Club's Team Sheet suffers a life-threatening medical issue and requires emergency medical care. When a Club obtains the approval of the Executive Operational Committee to postpone pursuant to this Rule, that Club shall be considered at fault for the purposes of Rule 10.4.15, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Operational Committee, and shall be liable to pay expenses incurred in accordance with that Rule. A medical certificate for the Player affected, signed by the Player's own doctor, must also be forwarded to the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the postponement.
- 10.4.10 Where a Club considers that a Pitch or Stadium may be unsuitable due to adverse weather it shall follow the procedures provided for in the document published by Leagues OpCo entitled "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of stadia in adverse weather conditions" (as may be amended from time to time). Should the Stadium or Pitch be declared unfit under this procedure by the appointed Referee, the Home Club shall immediately advise the Competition Secretary, the Away Club and the Match Officials. In these circumstances, the match will be rescheduled under Rule 10.4.12 unless the Club has failed to follow properly the procedures provided for in the "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of stadia in adverse weather conditions", in which case, the Club shall be considered to have failed to fulfil an engagement to play a Match on the appointed date and Rule 10.4.19 shall apply.
- 10.4.11 Where a Club considers that a Stadium may be unsafe, or travel to an away fixture may be unsafe, the Club may request that a Match be postponed, provided that it contacts the Competition Secretary at the earliest opportunity and provides detailed evidence of the circumstances giving rise to the request. Any such request shall be determined by the Executive Operational Committee, and may only be granted in circumstances which the Executive Operational Committee deem:
- (a) to be exceptional; and
 - (b) not to have arisen from reasons which are due to the conduct of the Club or its members or supporters, or the owner or operator of the Stadium.

Where the Executive Operational Committee grants the Club's request for the match to be postponed, then the match will be rescheduled under Rule 10.4.12. Where the Club's request is rejected, then the Club shall

be considered to have failed to fulfil an engagement to play a Match on the appointed date and Rule 10.4.19 shall apply.

- 10.4.12 In the event of a Match being postponed, not completed or abandoned for any reason, and the Match is to be rescheduled, the Clubs must within seven days of the date of the original Match agree the date on which the re-scheduled Match is to be played and notify the Competition Secretary accordingly. Should the Clubs fail to reach agreement or notify the Competition Secretary in accordance with the above, the Executive Operational Committee shall have the power to order that the Match is played on a date set by the Executive Operational Committee.

Notice

- 10.4.13 In the event of a Match being postponed, not completed or abandoned, the Home Club must immediately notify the Competition Secretary's authorised representative, the Away Club and the Match Officials.
- 10.4.14 Where a Match is abandoned, postponed, re-arranged or cancelled after the Match Officials have been appointed, it is the duty of the Home Club to notify the Match Officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately. Clubs in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

Expenses

- 10.4.15 In the event of a Match being postponed, abandoned or a Club otherwise failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Match, the Executive Operational Committee shall consider whether a participant Club was at fault. Where the Executive Operational Committee considers:
- (a) one Club to be at fault:
 - (i) the non-defaulting Club shall be compensated for its incurred expenses by the Club at fault. In the case of an Away Club where it has undertaken all or part of its journey, this shall include travelling expenses and meal allowances which may be claimed based on the total mileage involved in respect of the whole journey. In exceptional circumstances, expenses for overnight accommodation for up to a maximum of 25 persons may be claimed; and
 - (ii) all Match Officials who have travelled to the Match shall be entitled to claim travelling expenses and the full match fee from the Club at fault; or
 - (b) neither Club to be at fault:
 - (i) expenses may be claimed at the discretion of the Executive Operational Committee; and
 - (ii) all Match Officials who have travelled to the Match will be entitled to claim travelling expenses and half their match fee from the Home Club.

This obligation to pay fees and expenses is without prejudice to Rule 10.4.19 and any sanction imposed by an Independent Tribunal thereto.

- 10.4.16 Failure to pay the Match Officials' full match fee or half match fee and travelling expenses as required in Rules (i) or (ii) shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 10.4.17 All claims for compensation of expenses by either Club under Rule 10.4.15 must be received by the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the scheduled date of the Match to which the claim relates. In case of a dispute over the payment of expenses, the Executive Operational Committee shall determine the amount of compensation payments to be made, if any.

Failure to fulfil an engagement

10.4.18 Where a Club is suspended pursuant to the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10) or pursuant to The FA Rules and Regulations or has its Participation Agreement suspended or terminated and that causes a Match not to be played, the Executive Operational Committee shall determine how the outcome of that Match shall be treated.

10.4.19 Other than where the Executive Operational Committee have:

- (a) exercised their powers under Rule 10.4.5; or
- (b) approved the postponement of a Match,

any Club which has failed to fulfil an engagement to play a Match in full on the appointed date shall be in breach of these Rules and the matter shall be referred to the Executive Operational Committee for determination.

10.4.20 In determining a breach of Rule 10.4.19, the Executive Operational Committee may:

- (a) issue a points deduction from the offending Club's record up to a maximum of 12 points;
- (b) determine that the Match be replayed on terms it specifies;
- (c) require the payment of any expenses reasonably incurred by the offending Club's opponent (but not those already recovered pursuant to Rule 10.4.15); and / or
- (d) issue any such other sanction that the Executive Operational Committee may decide.

10.4.21 In the event that the Executive Operational Committee issues a points deduction from the offending Club's record, the Executive Operational Committee may determine that the Club not at fault shall be awarded points as if the Match had been played and the Club not at fault had won the Match 3 - 0, and the League Competition table shall reflect that position accordingly.

10.4.22 A Club may appeal against the decision of the Executive Operational Committee and any such appeal will be determined by an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9.

10.5 Notification of results

Within three hours of the conclusion of each Match:

- 10.5.1 each Club shall enter on the online portal: (i) the forenames and surnames of the Players which have played in the Match; (ii) details of relevant match events as required by the Executive Operational Committee or The FA; and (iii) any other information required by the Executive Operational Committee or The FA from time to time; and
- 10.5.2 the Home Club shall enter on the online portal the match attendance.

Any Club which fails or partially fails to comply with this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

10.6 Match programmes and Club websites

- 10.6.1 The Home Club is responsible for producing a full match programme in accordance with these Rules and the League Competition Regulations. A Team Sheet will not be considered sufficient to comply with this Rule.
- 10.6.2 The Away Club must send in writing to the Home Club details of the full squad list together with their Club history and up-to-date pictures of their Players registered with the Club for the Competitions for the Season

and the latest team photograph at least five days before the scheduled date of the Match between the two Clubs.

- 10.6.3 The Home Club must include the details sent by the Away Club in the match day programme. A copy of the match day programme may be requested by the Competition Secretary from time to time.
- 10.6.4 Clubs will be responsible for all comments in their match day programme including any made in respect of the Competitions, Leagues OpCo, The FA or other member Clubs, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary. No part of a Club's programme issued for a Match shall, in the reasonable opinion of the Executive Operational Committee, bring the Competitions, Leagues OpCo, or The FA into disrepute.
- 10.6.5 All Clubs will be responsible for their official website, social media accounts and similar related information system, which is within the public domain. Nothing shall be included on the above which in the opinion of the Executive Operational Committee brings the Competitions, Leagues OpCo, or The FA into disrepute.
- 10.6.6 Any breach of Rules 10.6.1 to 10.6.5 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

10.7 Representative matches

- 10.7.1 The Board shall have the power to arrange representative matches made up of Players from any Club at their discretion.
- 10.7.2 A match may be played each Season between two Clubs nominated by the Board. All matters concerning the match will be decided by the Board.

11. ADMISSION CHARGES

- 11.1 Admission charges, excluding Home Club concessions as appropriate, must be the same for home and visiting supporters at Matches.
- 11.2 Clubs may, with the written permission of the Executive Operational Committee, have a maximum of three Match days each Season during which they can vary admission charges for adults including allowing free admission.

12. MATCH OFFICIALS

- 12.1 Match Officials for all Matches shall be appointed by the PGMOL.
- 12.2 In the event that any of the Match Officials appointed to a Match are not in attendance at the Match or become unable to complete the Match it shall be completed under the control of the remaining Match Officials unless the competing Clubs are able to agree upon a replacement who is acceptable to the remaining Match Officials. Should the appointed Match Referee fail to appear then the fourth official shall take charge. Any replacement official agreed for a Match shall be considered a Match Official or Referee for the purposes of that match.
- 12.3 Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least 90 minutes prior to the scheduled time of kick-off, unless otherwise directed. The appointed Referee may be required to visit the Club's Stadium earlier if requested to do so by the Home Club. A Club Official of the Home Club shall be at the Stadium to meet the Match Officials. Failure of the Home Club to comply with this Rule shall be reported by the Referee to the Competition Secretary.
- 12.4 The Home Club shall designate a suitable part of the Pitch demarcated by cones which the Match Officials may use for the purposes of warming up and warming down. Failure to do so will be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 12.5 The late arrival of any Match Official shall be reported by the Home Club to the Competition Secretary and the PGMOL.

12.6 In the event of a Match being postponed, abandoned or a Club otherwise failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Match, the Match Official expenses and fees shall be payable in accordance with Rule 10.4.15.

12.7 Referees must send via The FA's approved electronic system a fully completed Referee's report form which includes details in respect of all breaches of these Rules and a mark (between one and five with one being low and five high) in respect of the Home Club's Pitch in writing within two days of the Match. Any report(s) of a Referee provided to The FA shall be copied to Leagues OpCo.

13. MEDICAL AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

All Clubs shall comply with the Performance Support Regulations (Chapter 8). Breach of the Performance Support Regulations shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

14. DETERMINING THE CHAMPIONSHIP AND PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

14.1 Three points will be awarded for a win at home or away and one point for a drawn League Match.

14.2 At the end of the Season of each League Competition a table will be compiled showing the playing record of each Club in each League. The playing record of each Club must include any points deduction made by the Executive Operational Committee, Board, The FA or an Independent Tribunal and in any situation where points per game are calculated, the calculation will be made after taking into account the deduction of any such points.

14.3 The position of each Club in the table for each League Competition so compiled shall be determined in an order so that the Club awarded the highest number of points is first and the Club awarded the second highest number of points is placed second and so on. In the event of two or more Clubs being awarded the same number of points the highest placed Club shall be decided in the order set out below:

14.3.1 Goal difference – the goals scored against each Club in the League Competition shall be deducted from the goals scored by that Club in the League Competition and the Club with the largest positive or smallest negative difference shall be placed the highest.

14.3.2 In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has scored the most goals in the League Competition.

14.3.3 In the event that two or more Clubs have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals in the League Competition then the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has won the most matches in the League Competition.

14.3.4 In the event of the two Clubs still being equal the Club which has the better playing record against the other Club in their head to head League Matches will be the highest placed Club.

14.3.5 If the records of two or more Clubs are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each Club, then the Clubs concerned shall play off a deciding match or matches at a neutral stadium or stadiums with the net gate money after deducting the usual match expenses being divided equally between the two competing Clubs.

14.4 The promotion and relegation rules set out in the Women's Pyramid Regulations will apply at the end of the Season. If a League Competition ceases to exist, the relevant provisions of the Women's Pyramid Regulations shall apply.

14.5 Promotion to Tier 1 and promotion or relegation to Tier 2 shall be subject to the relevant Club entering into a Participation Agreement and complying with all terms and conditions set out therein including (but not limited to) those in respect of Stadiums, finance, Pitch, corporate governance, contact time and staffing requirements.

Qualification for UEFA club competitions shall be on sporting merit through domestic competitions controlled or sanctioned by The FA. Clubs qualifying for a UEFA club competition must apply for a UEFA Club Licence in accordance with the applicable Licensing Procedure.

15. TROPHY

- 15.1 The Executive Operational Committee (or a person nominated on its behalf) shall present to the winners of each League Competition 40 medals. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Executive Operational Committee, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.
- 15.2 The trophies are the property of Leagues OpCo and may never be won outright.
- 15.3 The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the trophies:
- "We, A.B. the of Football Club, C.D. and E.F members of and representing the said Club, having been declared winners of the [] Trophy and the same having been delivered to us by the Competition Secretary, do hereby on behalf of the Club, jointly and severally agree to return the same to the Competition Secretary, on or before in good order and condition, in accordance with the Rules of the Competition and if the Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care, we agree to refund to the Competition Secretary the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair."*
- 15.4 Any Club not returning the League Competition trophy by the due date or returning it in poor condition shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

16. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

- 16.1 If any Club ceases to operate or withdraws or is removed from a Competition (for any reason), the Board may, in its absolute discretion, either replace the Club or opt to make no adjustments to the number of Clubs participating in the relevant Competition and allow the remaining Clubs to participate in the relevant Competition for that Season. If the Board elects not to replace a Club, the number of relegation places from the relevant League Competition will be reduced accordingly.
- 16.2 A Club which for any reason ceases to operate or is removed from a Competition at any time during the Season shall have its playing record expunged and any monies due to them from Leagues OpCo shall be forfeited. From the date of the withdrawal, no further payment shall become due from Leagues OpCo to the Club.

17. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP AND CHANGE IN CONTROL

17.1 Transfer as a going concern

- 17.1.1 In the event that any Club resolves to transfer its membership in the Competitions from one legal entity to a different legal entity, other than where the Club is Insolvent or on exit from an Insolvency Event (in which case Rule 18 and the Insolvency Policy (Chapter 9) shall apply), the Club shall obtain the written consent of the Board prior to the transfer. In order to obtain the approval of the Board the Club must demonstrate, as a minimum, that each of the following have been achieved:
- (a) The proposed new entity has become a shareholder of Leagues OpCo (or has legally agreed to become such a shareholder subject to the Board's approval under this Rule).
 - (b) The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree to the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity.
 - (c) All Football Creditors in the Club have been Paid in Full or transferred in full (with each Football Creditor's consent) to the new entity, and evidenced as such.
 - (d) All other creditors in the Club have been Paid in Full or Secured or transferred in full (with each creditor's consent) to the new entity and evidenced as such.
 - (e) The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts to the Board showing its ability to fund the Club for the next 12 months or to the end of the Season following the transfer (whichever is the longer) and that evidence of funding sources has been provided.

- (f) The proposed new entity agreeing to enter into a Participation Agreement and agreeing to comply with all terms and conditions set out therein.

17.2 Ownership and Change of Control

17.2.1 Each Club shall publish:

- (a) its legal name, form (e.g. company limited by shares or guarantee) and any company number; and
- (b) identities of the ultimate owner (i.e. the name of the individual) of each Significant Interest in the Club.

Such information shall as a minimum be published on the Club's official website on a page accessible directly from the home page of that official Club website and / or within the Club's official match day programme.

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

- (a) the Club shall submit to the Board up to date information including financial information (such as budgets) prepared to take into account the consequences of the change in Control on the Club's future financial position as soon as reasonably practicable prior to the change of Control, or if submission is not reasonably practical prior to the change of Control then no later than 10 Business Days thereafter;
- (b) the Board shall have the power to require those that are to acquire or have acquired Control of the Club to appear before it and to provide evidence of the source and sufficiency of any funds which the purchaser proposes to invest in or otherwise make available to the Club; and
- (c) on considering all information available the Board shall, acting reasonably, apply any conditions in respect of the Club's on-going membership in the Competitions including the provision of any further information, adherence to a budget, the application of an Embargo and / or request for financial guarantees.

This Rule shall not apply where Rule 17.1.1 applies.

18. INSOLVENCY PROVISIONS

Each Club agrees to comply with the Insolvency Policy (Chapter 9) and acknowledges that the obligations and rights set out therein shall apply and are in addition to these Rules.

18.1 Sporting sanctions

- 18.1.1 In the event that an Insolvency Event occurs in relation to any Club, that Club must immediately inform and keep informed the Competition Secretary.
- 18.1.2 If an Insolvency Event shall occur in relation to any Club, that Club shall be deducted 10 points awarded or to be awarded in the League Competition in which it participates (or the league it will play in for the following season where Rule 18.1.5(a) applies).
- 18.1.3 If a Group Undertaking of a Club becomes subject to or suffers an Insolvency Event, then the Board shall have the power to impose upon the Club a deduction of 10 points awarded or to be awarded in the League Competition in which it participates (or the league it will play in for the following season where Rule 18.1.5(a) applies). In exercising this power, the Board shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and to:
 - (a) such of the provisions of the Insolvency Act 1986, the Competition Act 1998 and the Enterprise Act 2002 as are relevant and then in force;
 - (b) the need to protect the integrity and continuity of the Competitions;

- (c) the reputation of the Competitions and the need to promote the game of association football generally; and
 - (d) the relationship between the Club and the Group Undertaking.
- 18.1.4 Where the Club becomes subject to or suffers an Insolvency Event or the Board imposes a points deduction in accordance with Rule 18.1.3:
 - (a) during the Season but prior to 5 pm on the fourth Thursday in March, the points deduction shall apply immediately;
 - (b) during the Season but after 5 pm on the fourth Thursday in March, Rule 18.1.5 shall apply;
 - (c) outside the Season, the points deduction shall apply in respect of the following Season such that the Club starts that Season on minus 10 points (this also applies to a Club which may have been relegated).
- 18.1.5 Where the circumstances set out in Rule 18.1.4(b) apply and at the end of that Season, having regard to the number of League Competition points awarded (ignoring any potential deduction):
 - (a) the Club would be relegated in accordance with Rule 14.4, the points deduction will apply in the next Season (including in the Tier 2 League or The FA Women's National League if appropriate); or
 - (b) the Club would not be relegated as aforesaid, the points deduction will apply in that Season and Rule 14.4 will then apply (if appropriate) following imposition of the points deduction.
- 18.1.6 For the purposes of this Rule 18:
 - (a) where any Insolvency Event is taken or suffered other than on a Business Day (as defined by the Insolvency Rules 1986 as amended from time to time) then for the purposes of determining the timing of any points deduction only, the action taken or suffered will be deemed to have been taken or suffered on the immediately preceding Business Day; and
 - (b) if a Creditor Compromise is approved, then approval of that Creditor Compromise shall be deemed to have been given (i) in respect of a company voluntary arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986, at the date of the first meeting of creditors called to consider that company voluntary arrangement, and not the date of any adjourned meeting of the creditors or the meeting of shareholders; and (ii) in respect of a scheme of arrangement under part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 or a restructuring plan under part 26A of the Companies Act 2006, at the date of the relevant court order approving the plan or arrangement (as appropriate).
- 18.1.7 For the avoidance of doubt, where a Club and / or Group Undertaking is subject to more than one Insolvency Event during a Participation Year (for example administration followed by a Creditor Compromise), the Club shall only be deducted one set of 10 points, such deduction to apply with effect from the first Insolvency Event.
- 18.1.8 Where a points deduction is to be applied, the Competition Secretary shall serve the Club with a written notice of this.
- 18.1.9 A Club may appeal against:
 - (a) a decision of the Board to impose a points deduction arising from an Insolvency Event of a Group Undertaking under Rule 18.1.3; and / or
 - (b) an automatic points deduction imposed where a Club suffers an Insolvency Event under Rule 18.1.2;

but only on the ground that the relevant Insolvency Event(s) arose solely as a result of a Force Majeure Event ("**Sporting Sanctions Appeal**") and provided that the appeal is made within 14 days of notification of the points deduction.

- 18.1.10 For the purposes of this Rule 18, a "**Force Majeure Event**" shall be an event that, having regard to all of the circumstances, was caused by and resulted directly from circumstances, other than normal business risks, over which the Club and / or Group Undertaking (as the case may be) could not reasonably be expected to have control and its Officers had used all due diligence to avoid happening.
- 18.1.11 Any Sporting Sanctions Appeal will be determined by an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9 and the appeal fee set out in the Table of Fees and Expenses shall be payable by the Club to Leagues OpCo.
- 18.1.12 The Independent Tribunal may:
- (a) confirm the deduction of 10 points;
 - (b) set aside the deduction of 10 points and substitute a deduction of such lower number of points as it deems appropriate; or
 - (c) make any such other order that the Independent Tribunal may decide.

19. FOOTBALL CREDITORS

Where a Club defaults in making any payments to any Football Creditor, the Club shall be subject to such penalty as the Board may decide, including, but not limited to, an Embargo, a points deduction, a suspension or any combination thereof.

20. OWNERS' AND DIRECTORS' TEST REGULATIONS

- 20.1 The Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10) shall apply to the Competitions and all Clubs and Officers. An Officer and any person wishing to be appointed as an Officer to a Club must comply with the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations and send to the Competition Secretary a copy of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration.
- 20.2 No individual will be permitted to act as an Officer if they fail to meet any of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration.
- 20.3 In the event that an individual, entity or Club is found to have either:
- 20.3.1 completed false or misleading statements on their Owners' and Directors' Declaration;
 - 20.3.2 acted as an Officer when in breach of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration; and / or
 - 20.3.3 acted as an Officer without the Executive Operational Committee having given written confirmation to the Club in accordance with the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations that the individual may so act,
- then the individual, entity or Club shall be subject to such fine or other sanction as may be determined in accordance with the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations.
- 20.4 In the event that a notice is issued in accordance with the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations for the suspension of a Club's Competition membership, then that Club shall be suspended from the Competitions with effect from 14 days from the date of the notice. An appeal of the effect of the notice is to Leagues OpCo and can only be made by the affected Club and in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations. The effect of the notice shall be suspended pending the outcome of an appeal.
- 20.5 The Executive Operational Committee shall advise the Club in writing where it becomes satisfied that a Disqualifying Event no longer applies. In such circumstances, the Executive Operational Committee may, in its absolute discretion, remove the suspension of the Club's Competition membership.

21. INTERESTS IN MORE THAN ONE CLUB

Except with the prior written consent of the Board, no person, company or business institution (including insolvency practitioners) may at any time be Interested in:

21.1.1 more than one Club; or

21.1.2 a Club and any other club playing in a competition sanctioned by The FA.

22. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

22.1 Financial records

All Clubs shall keep accounting records to record the fact and nature of all receipts and payments which show with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position, including the assets and liabilities, of the Club.

22.2 Change of Significant Interest

Within 14 days of a change in a Significant Interest in a Club or the appointment or removal of any director of a Club, written notice thereof, together with such details as are required to be filed with the Registrar of Companies, shall be sent to the Competition Secretary. Breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

22.3 Financial Standards

If during the course of a Participation Year the Board decides that the organisation and management or finances of a particular Club falls below the standards appropriate to membership of the Competitions, the Competition Secretary shall be instructed to warn the Club that the Board may, in the Board's absolute discretion, take the action described in the Insolvency Policy (Chapter 9) and / or have its membership of the Competitions terminated or suspended at the end of that Participation Year. If the Board subsequently determines that a Club should be excluded from a Competition, such a Club shall have the right to appeal within 14 days of the date of notification of the Board's decision. Any such appeal shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9 and the appeal fee set out in the Table of Fees and Expenses shall be payable by the Club to Leagues OpCo.

22.4 Current HMRC debt

22.4.1 Any Club which has not, within 28 days of the relevant due date, paid to HMRC any amounts due to be paid to HMRC to discharge:

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

(each a "Default Event") shall report the Default Event to the Competition Secretary within two Business Days of the Default Event.

22.4.2 When a Club reports a Default Event to the Competition Secretary it shall at the same time provide to the Competition Secretary details of any and all amounts due to HMRC from the Club in respect of liabilities set out in 22.4.1(a) to (c) together with the periods to which they relate.

22.4.3 A Club which is subject to a Default Event shall be subject to an Embargo such that it shall not be permitted to register any Player to participate in Matches with that Club without the prior written consent of the Board for the period that the Club is subject to a Default Event.

- 22.4.4 A Club which fails to report a Default Event shall be in breach of these Rules and shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9.

22.5 Gate receipts

- 22.5.1 The Home Club shall retain all gate receipts from home Matches.
- 22.5.2 Clubs must ensure that all gate receipts are fully and properly recorded and accounted for in the accounting records of the Club and a return is made via Leagues OpCo's approved electronic system within 14 days of the Match.
- 22.5.3 Clubs should have a system in operation for home Matches that enables them to accurately report on the following:
- (a) number of all tickets sold in advance;
 - (b) reconciliation of cash received by category of entrant through each turnstile;
 - (c) number of entrants through each turnstile;
 - (d) the numbers admitted to parts of the stadium that do not pass through a turnstile; and
 - (e) complimentary tickets authorised.
- 22.5.4 This documentation should be reconciled to the overall takings and declared attendance for each home game.

22.6 Players

- 22.6.1 In the event of a transfer of a Player where consideration is agreed, the consideration can only be paid between the two clubs (the transferor and transferee clubs).
- 22.6.2 The full name of each contracting Club or club should be stated in the transfer agreement. The full consideration involved must be recorded in the accounting records of both clubs.
- 22.6.3 Any Club loaning a Player's registration to another Club or club should invoice the receiving Club or club in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement. The Player concerned should remain on the payroll of the Club or club holding her permanent registration for the period of the loan.

22.7 Financial loans

- 22.7.1 All loans extended to a Club must be documented in full in the accounting records of the Club. Documentation supporting each loan must be retained and should include the following information:
- (a) The value of the loan.
 - (b) The length of the loan.
 - (c) The interest rate charged, and whether this is fixed or variable.
 - (d) Repayment terms.
 - (e) The full names of the individual or corporate body extending the loan.
 - (f) The terms in the event of a default on the loan.
- 22.7.2 The document should be signed by two directors, a Club's Officers or executive committee members who are independent of the party extending the loan.

23. INSURANCE

23.1 Players

All Clubs shall insure its Players through Leagues OpCo's approved group insurance scheme and shall comply at all times with the provisions of its Participation Agreement in respect of insurance. Each Club shall submit to the Executive Operational Committee a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt at least 14 days prior to the start of the Season.

23.2 Public liability

All Clubs must have public liability cover of at least ten million pounds (£10,000,000). Each Club shall submit to the Board a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt at least 14 days prior to the start of the Season.

24. CONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS

24.1 Undertakings to be given by Club employees

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

24.1.2 Without prejudice to the generality of this Rule, all Clubs must ensure they, and where appropriate any Club Officials, comply with the obligations of the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10).

24.2 Other misconduct

Any person charged and found guilty of bringing a Competition into disrepute and any Club, Club Official or Player charged and found guilty of misconduct as defined by the Executive Operational Committee or of inducing or attempting to induce a player of another Club to join her own Club shall be liable to such penalty as the Executive Operational Committee shall deem appropriate.

25. LONG SERVICE

25.1 The Executive Operational Committee shall be empowered to grant a long service award for 20 years' service with a Club providing such an award has not already been made by any other competition.

25.2 Clubs may enter into agreements with Players after five years continuous service providing for a testimonial. Players shall qualify for a second testimonial after a further five years continuous service. If a Player is eligible for and entitled to a testimonial, her Club may grant her a monetary consideration, sanctioned by the Club's board of directors, in lieu of such testimonial.

26. CONFIDENTIALITY

26.1 Leagues OpCo shall treat all information disclosed by the Clubs pursuant to these Rules as confidential and shall only use such information for the proper performance of its duties under these Rules including (but not limited to) disclosing such information in confidence to those of its employees, officers and professional advisers who need to have access to it.

26.2 The provisions of Rule 26.1 shall not apply to information which:

26.2.1 has been anonymised and is used by Leagues OpCo to consult on and / or review these Rules;

26.2.2 is required to or may be disclosed in accordance with The FA's Rules and Regulations or FIFA or UEFA rules or regulations or in relation to Leagues OpCo fulfilling its regulatory obligations generally;

- 26.2.3 was known to Leagues OpCo before receipt;
 - 26.2.4 is disclosed in accordance with Rule 3.10.29;
 - 26.2.5 is in or enters the public domain through no wrongful default by or on behalf of Leagues OpCo with effect from the date when that information enters the public domain;
 - 26.2.6 was received from a third party without obligations of confidence owed directly or indirectly to a Club;
 - 26.2.7 is required to be disclosed in order to comply with applicable law or regulations (whether of any football authority or otherwise), to the extent of the required disclosure; or
 - 26.2.8 was disclosed to Leagues OpCo pursuant to a Participation Agreement (in which case the confidentiality undertaking therein shall apply).
- 26.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 26.1, Leagues OpCo shall in its sole discretion have the power to and / or may permit The FA to publish in the public press, on a website or in any other manner considered appropriate:
- 26.3.1 the outcome of any inquiry;
 - 26.3.2 reports of any hearing, order, requirement, instruction, decision, proceedings, acts, resolution, finding and penalty; and
 - 26.3.3 any representations, submissions, evidence and documents created in the course of proceedings whether or not this reflects on the character or conduct of a Club,
- provided: (a) in each case that the name of any Player and any Playing Contract are not identifiable; and (b) the provisions in Rules 7.18.32, 7.18.33, 7.19.27 and 7.19.28 shall apply in respect of publication of proceedings of Player Related Dispute Commissions and League Appeals Committees instead of those above.
- 26.4 Each Club shall be deemed to have consented to any inquiry or to the publication of any report where done so in accordance with these Rules.
- 26.5 Leagues OpCo shall have the right to use and rely upon any oral or written representations, submissions, evidence and documents that are provided to it or created during the course of any inquiry and / or are created or otherwise generated during the proceedings of an Independent Tribunal for the purpose of carrying out its regulatory functions and monitoring and implementing compliance with its rules and regulations.
- 27. SEVERABILITY**
- If any provision of these Rules shall be found to be illegal, invalid or unenforceable, that shall not affect the legality, validity or enforceability of any other provision of the Rules.
- 28. GOVERNING LAW**
- These Rules and all matters arising from or connected with them are governed by English law.
- 29. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS**
- Each Club shall at all times comply with all applicable laws, statutes and regulations from time to time in force.
- 30. COMMENCEMENT AND ALTERATIONS TO RULES**
- 30.1 These Rules shall be deemed to have come into effect on 1 August 2025.
 - 30.2 These Rules shall be effective until amended.
 - 30.3 No amendment of these Rules shall be made or implemented until it has been approved by Leagues OpCo in accordance with Leagues OpCo's own internal company policies, rules and agreements.

31. PREVIOUS RULES

Each Club acknowledges and agrees that Leagues OpCo shall be entitled to enforce Previous League Competition Regulations in accordance with the Previous League Competition Regulations that applied at the relevant time. Where Leagues OpCo exercises this right to enforce, it shall be treated as having the same power and authority to enforce the Previous League Competition Regulations as The FA or Leagues OpCo (as applicable) had under the applicable Previous League Competition Regulations (whether directly, via a committee or otherwise).

32. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

32.1 Membership of Leagues OpCo and entering a Participation Agreement agreeing to be bound by the League Competition Regulations, and / or signing an Owners' and Directors' Test Declaration, shall constitute an agreement in writing between Leagues OpCo and each Club (and Director as that term is defined in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10)) and as between each of the Clubs for the purposes of section 5 of the Arbitration Act 1996 in the following terms:

- 32.1.1 Any dispute that arises between Leagues OpCo and a Club (and / or a Director as that term is defined in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10)) which falls within the scope of Rule 3 shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule 3;
- 32.1.2 Any other dispute which arises between either: (i) Leagues OpCo and a Club (or several Clubs); (ii) Leagues OpCo and a Director (and / or Directors as such term is defined in the Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations (Chapter 10)); or (iii) any of the Clubs themselves; outside the scope of Rule 3 but in relation to the League Competition Regulations or otherwise, shall be submitted to arbitration in accordance with Rule K of The FA Rules. This includes, in the case of a Relegated Club, any dispute concerning matters relating to a period of time where the Relegated Club participated in the League Competitions.

Appendix 1: Rules in respect of the Cup Competition ("Cup Rules")

1. APPLICABILITY OF THE RULES TO THE CUP COMPETITION

- 1.1 The Rules shall apply to the Cup Competition save as otherwise set out below. References to Competitions (including Match and Competition Secretary) within the Rules include the Cup Competition.
- 1.2 In the event of any conflict between the Rules and these Cup Rules, these Cup Rules will take precedence in relation to the Cup Competition.
- 1.3 In order to participate in the Competitions, a Club must comply with the Cup Rules and, as appropriate, the provisions of the Rules.
- 1.4 The provisions of the Rules as set out in the first column of the table below shall not apply to the Cup Competition and shall be replaced with the text set out in the second column. Where the Rule is referred to as a "New Rule" this shall apply as an additional Rule.

Rule	Provision within the Cup Rules
New Rule 2.10	All Clubs shall participate in the Cup Competition. The Cup Competition will be based on a group stage followed by a knock out stage organised as set out below at Cup Rule 13. Subject to Rule 16, the composition and organisation of the Cup Competition for each Season will be confirmed by the Executive Operational Committee each year. A Club being party to a Participation Agreement which is in full force and effect shall be subject to the application of the Cup Rules.
New Rule 2.11	Subject always to the powers of the Executive Operational Committee and the Board (including Leagues OpCo's own internal company policies, rules and agreements), the Executive Operational Committee may amend the structure of the Cup Competition at any time where it considers it reasonably necessary in its sole discretion. If the Executive Operational Committee exercises such discretion, it shall notify the participating Clubs promptly of any such change, which shall represent an amendment to the provisions contained in these Competition Rules.
Rule 7.12.1	A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. A Club at its discretion may use five substitute Players during a Match, subject to the conditions set out in Law 3 of the Laws of the Game. For the avoidance of doubt, each Club has no more than three opportunities to make substitutions during normal time in the Match (in addition to the ability to make substitutions at half time and any concussion or additional substitutions in accordance with Rule 7.12.2). If the Match proceeds to extra time, each Club will be permitted to carry over any unused substitution opportunities into extra time and will be permitted an additional (fourth) opportunity to make a substitution (excluding (i) the break between full time and extra time and (ii) at half time of extra time). Where both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as a used substitution opportunity for each team. When a Club is making a substitution the Club shall be required to use a board to show the number of the Player to be substituted and the number of the substitute Player.
Rules 7.13.1 to 7.13.3	6.13.1 Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a Cup Match or Cup Matches shall be in breach of these Rules and the matter shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Rule 3.6.1(d).

Rule	Provision within the Cup Rules
	6.13.2 In the event that the Independent Tribunal finds that the Club has played an ineligible Player in a Cup Match or Cup Matches and subject to Rule 6.13.3, the Independent Tribunal may: (a) order that the Cup Match or Cup Matches be awarded to the opposition Club; or (b) make any such other order that the Independent Tribunal may decide. 6.13.3 The Independent Tribunal may determine not to order that the Cup Match be awarded to the opposition Club only in circumstances where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or where the ineligibility is related to the Player's status.
New Rule 6.20	No Player may play for more than one Club in the Cup Competition in a Season.
Rules 10.7.1 and 10.7.2	Intentionally left blank.
Rule 14	13. STRUCTURE OF THE CUP COMPETITION 13.1 The first round of the Cup Competition shall be played in a group format (the "Group Stage"). Subsequent rounds shall be played on a 'knock-out' basis (the "Knock Out Stage"). The Group Stage 13.2 The Group Stage will consist of five groups of Clubs ("Groups" and each a "Group") split geographically so that two Groups shall contain the most northerly Clubs competing in the Cup Competition ("Northern Groups") and three Groups shall contain the most southerly Clubs competing in the Cup Competition ("Southern Groups"). Four Groups will have four Clubs and one Group will have five Clubs. The three Clubs who have qualified for the UEFA Women's Champions League for the 2025 / 26 Season will be exempt from the Group Stage, and will enter at the Quarter Finals. Should any of these three Clubs exit the UEFA Women's Champions League in Round 1 or 2, they will enter the Cup Competition at the Group Stage and be drawn in an existing group of four Clubs in the appropriate geographical location in accordance with Cup Rule 13.3 (unless that would result in one Group having more than five Clubs, in which case, any of the three Clubs exiting the Champions League in Round 1 or 2 may be drawn into a Group which does not reflect their geographical location). 13.3 In order to determine the allocation of Clubs to Groups, an open draw will take place as follows: 13.3.1 the most northerly Clubs will be drawn against each other and allocated to the Northern Groups; and 13.3.2 the most southern Clubs will be drawn against each other and allocated to the Southern Groups 13.4 Each Club shall play the other Clubs in its Group once. 13.5 The Group matches will be 90 minutes duration. If the result of a Group match is a draw after 90 minutes then the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by The IFAB will take place. There shall be no period of extra time. 13.6 Points will be awarded as follows: 13.6.1 A Club which wins a Group match in 90 minutes will score three points. 13.6.2 A Club which wins a Group match that is tied after 90 minutes by winning the penalty shootout will score two points.

Rule	Provision within the Cup Rules
	13.6.3 A Club which loses a Group match that is tied after 90 minutes as it loses the penalty shootout will score one point. 13.7 The position of each Club in the Group shall be determined in the order set out below with the Club placed highest being the Club which has: 13.7.1 the highest number of points; 13.7.2 a superior goal difference (which shall be calculated as follows: the goals scored against each Club shall be deducted from the goals scored by that Club and the Club with the largest positive or smallest negative difference shall be placed the highest); 13.7.3 scored the most goals; 13.7.4 won the most matches in the Group Stage; 13.7.5 better playing record against the other Club in their Group match; and 13.7.6 the drawing of lots. 13.8 The Clubs finishing in first place in each Group will progress to the Knock Out Stage. If any Clubs competing in the UEFA Women's Champions League enter the Cup Competition at the Group Stage, then the equivalent number of best second placed teams or team, as appropriate, (based on and in the order of, highest number of average points per game, highest average goal difference per game, highest average goals scored per game, drawing of lots) will progress to the Knock Out Stage. The Knock Out Stage 13.9 The Knock Out Stage will consist of: 13.9.1 four quarter finals ("Quarter Finals"); 13.9.2 two semi finals ("Semi Finals"); and 13.9.3 the final ("Final"). 13.10 The matches in the Knock Out Stage shall be played to a conclusion with extra time (a period of 30 minutes split into two halves of 15 minutes) to be played if there is no winner after 90 minutes. If there is no winner after extra time, the winner shall be determined by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by The IFAB. 13.12 The Clubs which progress from the Group Stage as per Cup Rule 13.8, shall progress to the Quarter Finals. 13.13 In order to determine which Clubs will play each other in the Quarter Finals, an open draw will take place. 13.14 The winning four Clubs from the Quarter Finals will progress to the Semi Finals. 13.15 In order to determine which Clubs will play each other in the Semi Finals, an open draw will take place. 13.16 The Semi Finals shall be played at the home Stadium of the first drawn Club or a neutral stadium to be determined by the Board in its absolute discretion. 13.17 The winning two Clubs from the Semi Finals will progress to the Final. 13.18 The Final shall be played on a neutral stadium to be determined by the Board in its absolute discretion. 13.19 The winner of the Final will be winner of the Cup Competition
Rule 15.1	The Executive Operational Committee (or a person nominated on its behalf) shall present to each of the winners and runners up of the Cup Competition 40 souvenir medals. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Executive Operational Committee,

Rule	Provision within the Cup Rules
	and then at the expense of the requesting Club. When a player taking part in the final is ordered to leave the field of play for misconduct, the medal to which she may be entitled may be withheld at the discretion of the Executive Operational Committee.
Rule 18	17.1 Each Club agrees to comply with the Insolvency Policy (Chapter 9) and acknowledges that the obligations and rights set out therein shall apply and are in addition to these Rules. 17.2 In the event that an Insolvency Event occurs in relation to any Club or Group Undertaking, the Club must immediately inform and keep informed the Competition Secretary and The FA. 17.3 The Board will then, in its absolute discretion, determine whether to accept the Club's application to participate in the Cup Competition and / or allow the Club to continue to compete in the Club Competition and may set any terms and conditions in relation to the Club's on-going participation. 17.4 Where a Club is removed from the Cup Competition under Cup Rule 17.3, the Competition Secretary shall serve the Club with a written notice of this ("Notice of Removal"). 17.5 A Club may appeal against a Notice of Removal but only on the ground that the relevant Insolvency Event(s) arose solely as a result of a Force Majeure Event ("Sporting Sanctions Appeal"). 17.6 For the purposes of this Cup Rule 17, a "Force Majeure Event" shall be an event that, having regard to all of the circumstances, was caused by and resulted directly from circumstances, other than normal business risks, over which the Club and / or Group Undertaking (as the case may be) could not reasonably be expected to have control and its Officers had used all due diligence to avoid happening. 17.7 Any Sporting Sanctions Appeal will be determined by an Independent Tribunal in accordance with Rule 3.9. 17.8 The Independent Tribunal may: 17.8.1 confirm the Club's removal from the Cup Competition; 17.8.2 set aside the Club's removal from the Cup Competition; and / or 17.8.3 make any such other order that the Independent Tribunal may decide.

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct – Adult Players, Coaches, Team Members, Club Officials

Leagues OpCo aims to promote safer environments, that are respectful, inclusive and enable people to thrive. Everyone involved in our game has the right to:

- A safe environment free from harm, abuse, harassment and discrimination where healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries are maintained.
- Access to advice, guidance and support following any concerns raised.
- Protection from retaliation when harmful behaviours, misconduct or unsafe conditions have been reported.
- Fair and thorough trauma-informed investigations following any concerns raised, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

This Code of Conduct outlines the expected standards of behaviour for Players and Club staff, both online and offline. To protect the integrity of our game, the well-being of all individuals, along with the reputation of the league, Clubs and its Players, it is essential to follow this Code.

Core Values

Respect and Inclusion: Treat everyone with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation or any other status.

Safety and Well-being: Ensure the physical and psychological safety of all individuals within the football community.

Professionalism and Integrity: Maintain high standards of conduct, honesty, and accountability in all actions and communications.

Responsible Digital activity: Use online platforms responsibly and refrain from any activity that could cause offence or harm others and bring our game into disrepute.

Positive Behaviours / what to do:

- Display professionalism on and off the field, including during training, Matches, and public appearances.
- Respect the decisions of Match Officials and participate with the spirit of fair play.
- Respect the privacy and boundaries of teammates, staff, Match Officials, opponents and fans.
- Participate in Club and Leagues OpCo activities in line with the Club and league values.
- Follow all Club and Leagues OpCo policies regarding safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and codes of conduct.
- When using social media and other digital platforms, aim to engage in respectful, positive communications.
- Promote inclusivity and support for teammates, staff, and the broader football community.
- When using social media, aim to inspire, educate, and encourage others.
- Report any instances of harmful and abusive behaviours (online and in person) in line with Club and Leagues OpCo policies.

Unacceptable Behaviours / what to avoid:

- Engaging in physical or verbal abuse, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour.
- Participating in activities that compromise the physical and psychological safety and well-being of others.
- Violating Club and Leagues OpCo policies, including those related to codes of conduct, safeguarding, substance use, integrity, and health and safety.
- Posting or sharing offensive, discriminatory, or other content deemed harmful.
- Engaging in cyberbullying, trolling, or harassment of any individual or groups.
- Sharing confidential or sensitive Club information without approval.

- o Misusing social media to spread misinformation or damage reputations.
- o Failing to report incidents of harmful and abusive behaviour, harassment, or unsafe conditions.

Reporting and Accountability

- o Players and staff are encouraged to report any breaches of this Code to designated Club Officials or safeguarding and player welfare officers.
- o Players and staff behaviour shall primarily be governed by the terms of their employment with a Club. If such behaviour independently constitutes a breach of the League Competition Regulations, then Leagues OpCo may take disciplinary action in accordance with the League Competition Regulations.
- o Leagues OpCo will regularly review and update this Code of Conduct to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

Commitment to the Code

All Players and staff acknowledge and commit to upholding this Code of Conduct. By doing so, they declare their commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and professional environment.

Leagues OpCo is committed to providing resources and support to help all members uphold this code. By working together, we can create a positive and enjoyable environment for everyone involved in our sport.

Appendix 3: Table of summary offences and sanctions

Rule	Summary Offence	Fixed Penalty (£)
4.5	Failure to notify Competition Secretary of proposed changes to a membership register.	£100
4.6	Failure to return information requested by the Competition Secretary.	£100
4.14	Failure to satisfactorily attend to the business and / or the correspondence of the Competitions.	£200
7.1.9	Failure to complete and send a player registration form which is received by the Competition Secretary within five days of having been signed by the Player.	£100
7.1.13	Breach of the Rules concerning Player registrations.	£100
7.8.12	Failure to submit a Squad List not later than 24 hours before the of its first Match of the Season or failure to submit an updated Squad List within the prescribed timeframes.	£200
9.1	Failure to register its kits by submitting a Kit Confirmation Form to the Executive Operational Committee together with computer aided drawings ("CADs") and physical samples of its home kit, away kit, third kit, and goalkeeper kits, on or before the date specified by the Executive Operational Committee.	£100
9.5	Failure of Away Club to select the kit colours on the online portal that it intends that its Players will wear at least 14 days prior to a Match.	£100
9.6	Failure to ensure the Players' shirts are clearly numbered from 1 to 99 (with league branded numbers). Players' shirts not including the Player's name.	£100
9.6	Players' shirts not being numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet handed to the Referee before a Match and a change of numbers during the Match except for a change of goalkeeper or if permitted by the Referee because of a blood injury.	£200
9.10	Failure of the team captain to wear a distinguishing armband (of a design approved by the Executive Operational Committee) to indicate her status.	£100
9.11	Failure to have one sleeve of the shirts of all Players in Matches carrying a logo of the relevant Competition as supplied by the Executive Operational Committee.	£100
9.12	Shirt advertising not complying with FA Regulations Relating to Advertising on the Clothing of Players, Club Officials and Match Officials.	£200
9.13	Failure to make available playing kits for review by the Match Officials in their changing room on arrival at the Stadium.	£100
10.1.1	Failure to complete and submit a fixture questionnaire.	£200
10.2.9	Failure to notify the Competition Secretary of agreed kick off time by the deadline stipulated by the Competition Secretary.	£100
10.3.3	Failure to operate a mobile telephone or email address at all times.	£500
10.3.4	Failure to enter field of play at least five minutes before scheduled kick off.	£500

Rule	Summary Offence	Fixed Penalty (£)
10.3.5	A Club not being prepared to kick off at the scheduled time.	£300 plus £50 per minute for each minute late
10.3.8	Failure to present Team Sheet at least 75 minutes before kick off.	£200
10.3.8	Failure for appropriate personnel to attend Team Sheet exchange.	£100
10.3.8	Incomplete or inaccurate Team Sheet.	£100
10.3.8	Failure to attend pre-match briefing with Match Officials.	£100
10.3.9	Altering Team Sheet after exchange.	£300
10.3.10	Failure to complete all required Match day information on the online portal at least 7 days before the relevant Match.	£100
10.3.10	Late confirmation of, or failure to confirm, details of match to Away Club and Match Officials and delegates.	£100
10.3.10 and 10.3.12	Late acknowledgement of, or failure to acknowledge, details of match to Home Club and team colours.	£100
10.3.13 to 10.3.18	Breach of technical area Rules.	£200
10.3.20 to 10.3.22	Breach of practice and match ball Rules.	£150
10.3.24	Failure to provide food, drinks and refreshments (as applicable) for Clubs and Match Officials before, at half time and after the conclusion of a Match.	£200
10.4.14	Failure to notify the Match Officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately.	£100
10.5	Failure to notify post-Match information on the online portal.	£100
10.6.1	Failure to provide programme for spectators.	£250
10.6.2	Late sending of, or failure to send, details and photos of Away Club by Away Club to Home Club.	£150
10.6.3	Failure to submit programme to Competition Secretary.	£150
10.6.4 to 10.6.5	Club programme, website or social media bringing the Competitions, Leagues OpCo, or The FA into disrepute.	£1000
12.4	Failure to designate a suitable part of the Pitch for Match Officials to warm up and warm down.	£100
13	Failure to comply with the Performance Support Regulations (Chapter 8).	Up to £1,000
15.4	Failure to return Competition trophy by due date or returned in poor condition.	£400

Rule	Summary Offence	Fixed Penalty (£)
22.2	Failure to send details of a change in a Significant Interest or a director of a Club to the Competition Secretary.	£250

For the avoidance of doubt, the statements made in the second column above entitled "Summary Offence" are summaries of the relevant offences and are provided for convenience only. Reference should be made to the relevant Rule for complete details of the particular offence.

Appendix 4: Table of fees and expenses

Rule	Subject Matter	Fee (£)
3.7.5	Appeal to an Independent Tribunal	£500
7.17.3	Appeal to a Player Related Dispute Commission in relation to the termination of a Playing Contract	£150
7.17.4	Appeal to a Player Related Dispute Commission in relation to a player grievance	£500
18.1.11	Sporting Sanctions Appeal	£500
22.3	Appeal to an Independent Tribunal in relation to exclusion from the Competitions for management or finances falling below the appropriate standards	£500

Appendix 5: Participant Behaviour Charter

Principles

- **Respect** – in your every action and interaction
- **Protect** – your reputation, the reputation of your role and the reputation of the game
- **Fairness** – promote positively through your contribution to the game

Managers, Coaches and Technical Area Occupants

Pre-match briefing

- Manager / Head Coach is expected to attend and participate in pre-match briefings

Conduct in the Technical Area

- Must behave in a responsible manner
- Compliance with the maximum number of staff and substitutes allowed by the competition
- Players and team officials not listed on the team sheet must not enter the technical area
- Must not use technology to challenge any decision made by the match officials
- Must remain within your own technical area during the match
- Must not enter the pitch to confront any match official at half-time or full-time

Coaching

- Only one person is permitted to stand at the front of the technical area and coach during the match
- A second person may stand but must remain very close to the technical area seating
- All conversations between the two standing must happen close to the technical area seating
- All other technical area occupants should remain seated

Captains

- Should take responsibility for the behaviour of their team-mates, encouraging them to play fairly and show respect towards the match officials and their decisions

Players

- Must not confront, invade the personal space of, or make physical contact with the match officials
- 2 or more players surrounding a match official in a confrontational manner will result in a yellow card and be reported to The FA
- Must not instigate or escalate a mass confrontation with opposing players and / or technical area occupants

Disciplinary Action

Match Officials

- Empowered to take a robust approach, issue yellow and red cards where behaviour falls below expected standards and submit further reports to The FA

The FA

- Issue misconduct charges where appropriate to take further disciplinary action