

WSL Football Regulations

Section C: Competition Rules

Contents for Competition Rules

1. CONTROL OF THE COMPETITIONS AND CONSTITUTION	49
2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS – GENERAL	49
3. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS – STADIA AND PITCHES	52
4. APPROACHES.....	56
5. PLAYERS.....	56
6. LICENSED FOOTBALL AGENTS.....	76
7. CLUB COLOURS	77
8. PLAYING OF MATCHES	78
9. ADMISSION CHARGES	90
10. MATCH OFFICIALS	90
11. MEDICAL AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT.....	90
12. DETERMINING THE CHAMPIONSHIP AND PROMOTION AND RELEGATION.....	91
13. TROPHY	92
14. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS	92
15. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP AND CHANGE IN CONTROL.....	92
16. INSOLVENCY PROVISIONS	93
17. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.....	93
18. LONG SERVICE.....	94

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: RULES IN RESPECT OF THE CUP COMPETITION (“ CUP RULES ”)	95
APPENDIX 2: CODE OF CONDUCT – ADULT PLAYERS, COACHES, TEAM MEMBERS, CLUB OFFICIALS.....	99
APPENDIX 3: TABLE OF SUMMARY OFFENCES AND SANCTIONS	101
APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR CHARTER.....	104

1. CONTROL OF THE COMPETITIONS AND CONSTITUTION

- 1.1 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 WSL Football.
- 1.2 The administration of the Competitions under these Competition Rules (the “**Rules**”) will be carried out by the Board and the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with and as set out in these Rules.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 All Clubs and Players shall comply with:
 - 1.4.1 the WSL Football Regulations; and,
 - 1.4.2 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.
- 1.5 The geographic area covered by the Competitions shall be England and Wales.
- 1.6 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 the WSL Football Regulations, the Participation Agreement, WSL Football’s own internal company policies, rules and agreements and the Women’s Pyramid Regulations.
- 1.7 For the Season 2026 / 2027:
 - 1.7.1 the Tier 1 League shall be called the Barclays Women’s Super League (the “**BWSL**”);
 - 1.7.2 the Tier 2 League shall be called the Barclays Women’s Super League 2 (the “**BWSL2**”); and
 - 1.7.3 a Cup Competition shall be run for Clubs in accordance with the Rules at Appendix 1.
- 1.8 Subject to Rule 14, the Clubs competing in each League Competition for a Participation Year will be confirmed by the Board.
- 1.9 A Club which is confirmed by the Board as competing in a League Competition shall be subject to the application of the Rules.

2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS – GENERAL

- 2.1 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, the terms of WSL

Football's own internal company policies, rules and agreements, and the Women's Pyramid Regulations.

- 2.2 Notwithstanding any provision of these Rules, the WSL Football 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 fourteen (14) days of the passing of the resolution together with a copy of the change(s).
- 2.3 A Club must be party to a Participation Agreement which is in full force and effect in order to participate in the Competitions. A Club must comply with the terms of its Participation Agreement at all times.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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:
 - 2.8.1 The FA's integrity department; and
 - 2.8.2 PGMO.
- 2.9 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 WSL Football in the Participation Agreement, the PGA Regulations (Section J), 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.

- 2.10 The Executive Operational Committee and each Club shall:
- 2.10.1 be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination;
 - 2.10.2 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
 - 2.10.3 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.
- 2.11 Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning association for investigation.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 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 or equivalent.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 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 2.16.

3. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS – STADIA AND PITCHES

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 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 WSL Football annually by 31 January, and in the format required by WSL Football.
- 3.1.2 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 WSL Football.
- 3.1.3 A Club's Stadium shall be available for all home Matches which a Club is due to participate in.
- 3.1.4 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.
- 3.1.5 A Club's Stadium must comply with the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G) for the Competition in which it plays and the terms of its Participation Agreement and the WSL Football Regulations. Only Clubs which comply with the relevant Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G), the WSL Football Regulations and their Participation Agreement in full will be eligible to play in the Competitions.
- 3.1.6 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G) for the Stadium are maintained.
- 3.1.7 All Clubs must attain the standards provided for in the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G) for the following Season by 31 January annually.
- 3.1.8 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.

3.2 Alternative stadia

- 3.2.1 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G), the WSL Football 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**”).

- 3.2.2 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G), WSL Football Regulations, and Participation Agreement.
- 3.2.3 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 Operational Committee may attach any conditions to such approval as it considers appropriate.
- 3.2.4 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 WSL Football Regulations and Participation Agreement and meets the standards required in the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G). 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G).
- 3.2.5 In the event that:
 - (a) the Club does not comply with Rule 3.2.1; or
 - (b) the Alternative Proposal is not approved,the Club shall be deemed to be in material breach of these Rules.

3.3 Moving to a new Stadium

- 3.3.1 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 unreasonably withheld. 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 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G)).

3.3.2 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.

3.3.3 Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 3.3.1 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.

3.4 Stadium Sharing

3.4.1 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 3.4 is complied with; and
- (b) the Club complies at all times with the provisions of the Club's Participation Agreement, WSL Football Regulations and applicable Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G).

3.4.2 A Club will not be permitted to stadium share to gain promotion or to avoid relegation.

3.4.3 Stadium sharing may not be permitted by the Executive Operational Committee when one (1) 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G) at that other stadium.

3.4.4 Any Stadium sharing arrangement for a period exceeding thirteen (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 fourteen (14) days of the approval being sent to the Club.

3.5 The Pitch

3.5.1 Matches shall be played on:

- (a) a Grass Pitch; or
- (b) 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 and Broadcast Regulations (Section G).

3.5.2 Rule 8.4 shall apply where a breach of any of the requirements of Regulations 2.1.2 - 2.1.4, 3.1.7 - 3.1.8 and / or 2.1.11 - 2.1.12 of the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G), results in the postponement or abandonment of a Match.

3.5.3 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 Regulation 2.1.8(a) of the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G). In such circumstances the Club shall be considered to have failed to fulfil an engagement to play a Match and Rule 8.4.19 shall apply.

3.6 Pitch Protection

3.6.1 In order to protect any Pitch, unless otherwise mutually agreed between both participating Clubs and the Executive Operational Committee, and subject to Rule 3.6.2, 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 3.6.1(e) below;
- (e) the goal mouth area shall be used during the warm-up for one single continuous 15minute period, comprising a 10minute 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.

3.6.2 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 3.6.1. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between the pitch protection procedures adopted by the other league and the procedures detailed in Rule 3.6.1, the pitch protection procedures adopted by that league shall prevail.

4. 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.

5. PLAYERS

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

5.2 Player Registrations

5.2.1 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 5.16).

5.2.2 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 WSL Football's confirmation via the online player registration system to that effect. Any loan registration must also be approved by The FA and WSL Football before that Player can be considered eligible to play.

5.2.3 For a Player to be registered to play for a Club in the Competitions with the relevant Player status listed in each sub-heading below, 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; 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 have been duly completed and signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club and the Player;
 - (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;
- (c) Academy Contract Player:
 - (i) a copy of the relevant transfer forms or cancellation forms (where applicable) as specified in these Rules; and
 - (ii) the Player's Academy Contract; and
- (d) PGA Player:
 - (i) the relevant Competition registration form signed by an Authorised Signatory of the Club and the Player; 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.

5.2.4 Subject to Rule 5.4, the deadline for submission to the Competition Secretary via the online player registration system of all duly completed documents referred to in Rule 5.2.3 shall be not less than four (4) 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 5.20 shall apply if an ineligible Player plays in a Match.

5.2.5 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.

- 5.2.6 It is the responsibility of all Clubs to ensure any Player signing a registration form has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate. For Players under the age of eighteen (18), Clubs must ensure that, prior to the registration being finalised, the international clearance process for minors is completed and approved with all required documentation as per FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.
- 5.2.7 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 5.20 shall apply.
- 5.2.8 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.
- 5.2.9 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 (5) 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.
- 5.2.10 Original registration forms must be retained by the Club for a period of seven (7) 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 WSL Football'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 5.20 shall apply.
- 5.2.11 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.
- 5.2.12 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 form.
- 5.2.13 The registration of an Academy 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 an Academy Contract Player registered on loan with a Club, when the loan terminates or expires; or
 - (c) in the case of an Academy Contract Player, on the expiry or termination of her Academy Contract.
- 5.2.14 It shall be a breach of these Rules for:
 - (a) a Contract Player or Academy Contract Player to play for more than one (1) 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 (1) 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 5.2.14 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 5.2.15 In addition to Rules 5.2.13 and 5.2.14, 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 5.23).
- 5.2.16 A Player may only play under her correct status (being a Contract Player, Non Contract Player, PGA Player or Academy Contract 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.
- 5.2.17 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 5.20 shall apply in respect of Clubs who play a Player who has changed status without re-registering.
- 5.2.18 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, a PGA Player or Academy Contract Player, shall not be registered

as a Contract Player with the Cancelling Club within three (3) months of the date of the relevant cancellation, except with the consent of the Executive Operational Committee.

- 5.2.19 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 WSL Football (“**Club B**”) as a Contract Player, Non Contract or PGA Player during the six (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.
- 5.2.20 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 ten (10) matches in a period of two (2) 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 5.2.20 is subject to a right of appeal to The FA.
- 5.2.21 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.
- 5.2.22 Subject to Rule 5.4.4, any new registrations or transfers of registrations received after 17:00 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.

5.3 Player Status

- 5.3.1 The status of a Player shall be:
 - (a) Contract Player;
 - (b) Non Contract Player;
 - (c) Academy Contract Player; or
 - (d) PGA Player.
- 5.3.2 A Contract Player must be engaged on a Playing Contract and an Academy Contract Player must be engaged on an Academy 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.

5.3.3 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 (3) years;
- (b) contracts no greater than one (1) month in duration (a **"Monthly Contract"**). Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 5.4.1 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 (7) days' notice of its intention to do so; and
- (c) where the Player is registering on an International Loan, the contract expiry date may be any date that coincides with the end date of the loan period as specified in the written loan agreement between the clubs, provided such date is consistent with FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

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

5.4 Registration period

5.4.1 The Board shall nominate for each Season two (2) periods during which the following are permitted:

- (a) registrations and transfers (permanent and temporary) of Contract Players and Non Contract Players; and
- (b) temporary transfers of Academy Contract Players to Clubs.

5.4.2 The first period referred to in Rule 5.4.1 shall commence prior to the start of each Season (the **"First Transfer Window"**) and the second such period shall commence during the Season (the **"Second Transfer Window"**) (together the **"Transfer Windows"**).

5.4.3 The Board shall notify the Clubs of the dates of the Transfer Windows for each Season and, providing it has done so, the types of registration and transfers described in Rule 5.4.1 shall only take place during a Transfer Window.

5.4.4 Notwithstanding Rules 5.4.1, 5.4.3, 5.4.5, 5.4.6 and 5.7.1, the Executive Operational Committee shall give reasonable consideration to a request from any Club to register or transfer the registration of, a Contract Player, Academy Contract or Non Contract

Player (in each case either on a permanent basis, or on a temporary basis of seven (7) or fourteen (14) days) 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 (2) fully fit goalkeepers (not including registered Academy Contract Players, 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 subparagraph 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.

5.4.5 Subject to Rules 5.3.4, 5.4.4 and 5.4.6, registrations of Non Contract Players are also restricted to the Transfer Windows.

5.4.6 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.

5.5 General Registration Provisions

5.5.1 Each Club shall have at least eighteen (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.

5.5.2 Each Club shall have at least eleven (11) Players registered to play for it in the Competitions at least fourteen (14) days before its first Match of the Season and at all times throughout the Season.

5.5.3 A Player may not be registered to play in the Competitions before she has reached her 16th birthday.

5.5.4 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 5.2.14. Any Club found to have knowingly induced a registered Player of another Club to sign a registration form shall be in breach of these Regulations and shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Regulations (Section I).

- 5.5.5 A Non Contract Player registered with a Club is not permitted to hold a concurrent registration with any other Club or club.
- 5.5.6 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.
- 5.5.7 Each Club shall register its Authorised Signatories with WSL Football via the Competition Secretary and shall ensure that its registered Authorised Signatories are kept accurate and up to date.

5.6 Transfers

- 5.6.1 A transfer for the purposes of these Rules shall include permanent and loan transfers (unless otherwise specified).
- 5.6.2 The incoming transfer of a Contract Player or temporary (loan) transfer of an Academy Contract Player, to a Club must:
 - (a) take place as permitted in Rule 5.4; and
 - (b) be in writing, on the relevant transfer form, signed by the Contract Player or Academy Contract Player (as applicable) and the two clubs,and, the completed transfer 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.
- 5.6.3 A transferring Contract Player or Academy 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 5.2 has been complied with.
- 5.6.4 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.
- 5.6.5 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.

- 5.6.6 If a Playing Contract or Academy Contract is cancelled by mutual consent, the Club shall send the Competition Secretary and The FA via the online player registration system a copy of the relevant cancellation form, at which point the registration of the Contract Player or Academy Contract Player (as applicable) shall be automatically cancelled.
- 5.6.7 Upon cancellation of a Club's registration of a Contract Player or Academy 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.
- 5.6.8 A Non Contract Player whose registration for a Club is cancelled for any reason whatsoever cannot, without the consent of the Executive Operational Committee, be re-registered for that Club until a minimum of fourteen (14) days has elapsed from the date of the cancellation or transfer.
- 5.6.9 A Club cannot register the transfer of a Player unless that Player has been registered with the transferor Club for at least fourteen (14) days, unless that Player is a goalkeeper.
- 5.6.10 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.
- 5.6.11 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.
- 5.6.12 In the event of an objection to a transfer, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Operational Committee for a decision.

5.7 Loan Transfers

- 5.7.1 Subject to Rule 5.4.4, Clubs shall only be permitted to register Contract Players or Academy Contract Players to play for them on a temporary or loan basis in the Competitions on Standard Loans up to the maximum number permitted in Rule 5.8.
- 5.7.2 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 5.7.3, an International Club (an “**International Loan**”)
- 5.7.3 Standard Loans of Academy Contract Players shall be permitted from PGA Clubs to:
 - (a) Clubs in membership of the Competitions; or
 - (b) clubs in membership of The FA Women’s National League.
- 5.7.4 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 5.3.2).
 - (c) The transferee Club shall comply with the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.
- 5.7.5 The loans as are provided for in Rule 5.7.1 shall be on such terms and conditions as shall be mutually agreed by the two clubs and the Contract Player or Academy 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 5.6 and 5.2.
- 5.7.6 The Contract Player or Academy 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 or Academy 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 4).

5.8 Standard Loans

- 5.8.1 In each Season a Club can register up to a combined maximum of six (6) Contract Players and Academy Contract Players on Standard Loans to play for the Club in the Competitions, subject to the following:
 - (a) A combined maximum of three (3) Contract Players and Academy Contract Players can be registered on Standard Loans simultaneously from the same club.

- (b) A maximum of two (2) outfield players over the age of 23 can be registered on Standard Loans.
- 5.8.2 Standard Loan transfers to Clubs shall only be approved provided that the duration which the Contract Player or Academy 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.
- 5.8.3 Loan transfers to clubs (which are not Clubs) shall only be approved provided that the duration which the Contract Player or Academy Contract Player can play for the transferee club is compliant with the transferee club's league regulations (and subject to Rule 5.4.1 in respect of Academy Contract Players).
- 5.8.4 A recall clause requiring the early termination of a Standard Loan can only be (i) included in a Standard Loan entered into for a full Season and (ii) activated during the Second Transfer Window.
- 5.8.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 5.8.4, Standard Loans may be terminated by way of mutual agreement in writing between the transferor Club, the transferee Club and the Contract Player or Academy Contract Player (including by way of a recall clause within a loan agreement), but any termination or recall may only be completed after the expiry of twenty eight (28) days and during a Transfer Window. The Executive Operational Committee may, in exceptional circumstances and in its discretion, permit a termination or recall outside a Transfer Window, subject to its prior written approval.
- Guidance:** Outside a Transfer Window, issues such as injury can be addressed via amendments to the loan (e.g. wage contributions or obligations) rather than termination.
- 5.8.6 If, notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 5.8.2, 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 or Academy Contract Player shall not be eligible to play in Matches for the transferor club in that Season.
- 5.8.7 Notwithstanding the provisions of Rules 5.8.2 and 5.8.5, 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.
- 5.8.8 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.

5.9 Squad List

- 5.9.1 Except as provided in Rules 5.11.2, 5.12.1(b) and 5.16, each Player registered at a Club must be included in the Club's Squad List. As per Rule 5.2.1, 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 5.16).
- 5.9.2 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.
- 5.9.3 Except where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 5.12.1, a Club's Squad List shall include a maximum of twenty five (25) Players at any one time during a Season.

5.10 Adding Players to the Squad List

- 5.10.1 A Club with fewer than twenty five (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 twenty five (25) Players at any one time during the Season (except where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 5.12.1).

5.11 Removing Players from the Squad List

- 5.11.1 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 Rules 5.11.2, and 5.15.1 to 5.15.5; or
 - (c) where approved by the Executive Operational Committee in accordance with Rule 5.12.1(b).
- 5.11.2 A Club may remove a maximum of three (3) 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).

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

- 5.12.1 Following an application by a Club in accordance with Rule 5.12.2, 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 twenty five (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 5.12.3 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 5.11.2) 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 5.12.3 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 twenty five (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 5.12.1 (a).
- 5.12.2 Any Club wishing to make an application in accordance with Rule 5.12.1 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.
- 5.12.3 Without prejudice to a Club's right to apply for other reasons under Rule 5.12.1, 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, 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.
- 5.12.4 Where a Player is removed from the Squad List following an application made in accordance with Rule 5.12.3, the relevant Club must promptly apply for the Player to be readded to the Club's Squad List in accordance with Rule 5.12.1(c):
 - (a) in the case of Rule 5.12.3(a), when a qualified doctor confirms the Player does not have a long-term injury or illness: or
 - (b) in the case of Rules 5.12.3 (b) and (c), when the Player confirms they are ready to return to playing competitive football for the Club.

5.13 Changes to the Squad List

5.13.1 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 5.9.2 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 (4) 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 weekday before the Club's next Match. In exceptional circumstances, an extension to this deadline may be granted by the Executive Operational Committee.
- (c) Notwithstanding Rule 5.13.1(b), where an updated Squad List was submitted prior to the deadline specified in Rule 5.13.1(b) but is approved after that deadline, the Club may add the Player to its Squad List immediately upon approval by the Executive Operational Committee and, where applicable, The FA, via the online player registration system.

5.13.2 Breach of Rules 5.9.2 or 5.13.1 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 5.9.1 to 5.13.1.

5.13.3 WSL Football reserves the right to publish a Club's Squad List at any time.

5.14 Home Grown Players

5.14.1 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.

5.15 Effect of Loans on Squad List

5.15.1 Where a Player is the subject of an International Loan:

- (a) from a transferor Club, the Player shall, for the duration of that International Loan, be removed from the transferor Club's Squad List;
- (b) to a transferee Club, the Player shall, for the duration of that International Loan, be added to the transferee Club's Squad List.

5.15.2 Where a Player is the subject of a Standard Loan from a transferor Club to a transferee Club:

- (a) the Player shall, for the duration of that Standard Loan, be added to the transferee Club's Squad List and removed from the transferor Club's Squad List; and
 - (b) if the transferor Club wishes the Player to participate in any non-first team football for the transferor Club during the period of the Standard Loan, the transferor Club must first register the Player on its PGA Squad List, and the Player shall only be so registered (and count towards the PGA Squad List) to the extent that: (i) the Player satisfies all applicable PGA eligibility criteria; and (ii) there is sufficient remaining capacity within the transferor Club's PGA Squad List.
- 5.15.3 Where a Player is the subject of a Standard Loan from a transferor Club to a FA Women's National League club:
 - (a) the Player shall, for the duration of that Standard Loan, be removed from the transferor Club's Squad List; and
 - (b) if the transferor Club wishes the Player to participate in any non-first team football for the transferor Club during the period of the Standard Loan, the transferor Club must first register the Player on its PGA Squad List, and the Player shall only be so registered (and count towards the PGA Squad List) to the extent that: (i) the Player satisfies all applicable PGA eligibility criteria; and (ii) there is sufficient remaining capacity within the transferor Club's PGA Squad List.
- 5.15.4 Where a Player is the subject of a Short Term Loan from a transferor Club to a FA Women's National League club:
 - (a) the Player shall, for the duration of the Short Term Loan, be removed from the transferor Club's Squad List;
 - (b) the transferor Club must ensure that, for the duration of the Short Term Loan, there is sufficient remaining capacity within the transferor Club's Squad List or PGA Squad List to register the Player if the Short Term Loan terminates during the Season; and
 - (c) if the Short Term Loan terminates during the Season, the transferor Club must register the Player on the transferor Club's Squad List or PGA Squad List (as applicable).
- 5.15.5 Where a PGA Player or Reserve Player is the subject of an Academy Development Registration:
 - (a) the Player shall, for the duration of the Academy Development Registration, be added to the transferee Club's Squad List and removed from the transferor Club's Squad List;

- (b) if the transferor Club wishes the Player to participate in any non-first team football for the transferor Club during the period of the Academy Development Registration, the transferor Club must first register the Player on its PGA Squad List; and
- (c) if the Academy Development Registration terminates during the Season, the transferor Club must ensure that sufficient remaining capacity exists within its PGA Squad List and register the Player on that list.

5.16 PGA Players, Reserve Players and Academy Contract Players

5.16.1 During each Season, each Club shall be entitled to register:

- (a) any number of PGA Players (subject to the PGA Regulations (Section J)), or Reserve Players (where applicable) at any time including outside of the Transfer Window; and
- (b) any number of Academy Contract Players (subject to the PGA Regulations (Section J)), within applicable time limits set out in these Rules, the PGA Regulations and the PGA Competition Rules,

5.16.2 who, subject to the below, may participate in Matches.

5.16.3 Only Clubs which do not operate a Professional Game Academy may register Players as Reserve Players.

Guidance: For the avoidance of doubt, a Club promoted to the Tier 2 League from Tier 3 is not obliged to operate a fully compliant Professional Game Academy immediately upon promotion. In accordance with WSL Football's Tier 2 Promotion Application Guidance, such Clubs are required to apply for a Category 1 or 2 Professional Game Academy licence within two years of promotion and to implement the Professional Game Academy within that two-year period. During this period, the Club may register Players as Reserve Players in accordance with Rule 5.16.3. Once a Club operates a Professional Game Academy, Rule 5.16.3 applies and the Club may no longer register Players as Reserve Players.

5.16.4 If a Club intends to select a PGA Player or Academy Contract Player or Reserve Player for a Match it must complete a relevant registration form (submitted via the online player registration system in accordance with Rule 5.2.3(c)) and ensure that it is received and approved by the Competition Secretary in accordance with Rule 5.2.4.

5.16.5 Where registered, a PGA Player, Academy Contract Player or Reserve Player may participate in any number of Matches without being included in a Club's Squad List.

5.16.6 A PGA Player, Academy Contract Player or Reserve Player will be considered to have participated in a Match if they are included in the starting eleven (11) or appear on the field of play as a substitute in a Match.

5.16.7 A Reserve Player may only be a Non-Contract Player.

5.17 List of Players and transfer list

- 5.17.1 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.

5.18 Academy Development Registrations

- 5.18.1 Notwithstanding Rule 5.5.4 and subject to Rules 5.18.5 and 5.18.6, PGA Players and Reserve Players registered with a Club may concurrently register, using an **“Academy Development Registration”**, with either:
- (a) one (1) 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 (1) 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).
- 5.18.2 A PGA Player or Reserve Player to which Rule 5.18.1 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).
- 5.18.3 A PGA Player or Reserve Player to which Rule 5.18.1 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).

- 5.18.4 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.
- 5.18.5 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 5.18.1 during the next Transfer Window.
- 5.18.6 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 5.18.1 at any one time is three (3).

5.19 Substitute Players

- 5.19.1 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 5.19.2). 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.
- 5.19.2 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 WSL Football, 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 5.19.1 above.
- 5.19.3 A maximum of nine (9) substitutes may be nominated for each Match and they must be included on the official Team Sheet submitted to the Referee before the Match in accordance with Rule 8.3.8. A substitute may not be used to replace a Player who has been suspended or ejected from the Match by the Match Officials.
- 5.19.4 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.

5.20 Playing an ineligible player

- 5.20.1 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 Regulation 6 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules (Section I) or, at the Executive Operational

Committee's discretion, referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Regulations (Section I).

- 5.20.2 In the event that the Executive Operational Committee or Independent Tribunal finds that the Club has played an ineligible Player in a Match or Matches, and subject to Rule 5.20.3, the Executive Operational Committee or 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 twelve (12) points;
 - (b) order that any such Match or Matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Independent Tribunal;
 - (c) in the case of a Cup Match, order that the Cup Match or Cup Matches be forfeited and the victory awarded to the applicable opposition Club; and / or
 - (d) make any such other order that the Executive Operational Committee or Independent Tribunal may decide.
- 5.20.3 The Executive Operational Committee or Independent Tribunal may determine not to impose a points deduction, or in the case of a Cup Match, may determine not to order that the Cup Match be forfeited and the victory awarded to the applicable opposition Club, only where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or is related to the Player's status.

5.21 Financial arrangements

- 5.21.1 Subject to Rules 5.21.2 to 5.21.8 and The FA Rules, a Club may negotiate financial arrangements with its Players.
- 5.21.2 All Contract Players and Academy Contract Players must be registered with WSL Football and The FA.
- 5.21.3 All payments and benefits due and / or made to a Contract Player must be shown in the Playing Contract.
- 5.21.4 All payments and benefits due and / or made to an Academy Contract Player must be shown in the Academy Contract.
- 5.21.5 All payments made to Players must be made by the Club and fully recorded in the accounting records of the Club.
- 5.21.6 All salaried payments (whether to Contract Players, Non Contract Players or Academy Contract Players) must be subject to PAYE and National Insurance.
- 5.21.7 All salary payments due on written contracts must be stated gross, before PAYE and National Insurance deductions.

- 5.21.8 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.
- 5.21.9 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.

5.22 Player Equipment

- 5.22.1 Subject to Rules 5.22.2 to 5.22.5, electronic performance and tracking system (“EPTS”) devices may be used during Matches.
- 5.22.2 EPTS devices must not pose any danger to the Players and / or Match Officials.
- 5.22.3 Information and data transmitted from the EPTS devices are not permitted to be received or used in the technical area during a Match.
- 5.22.4 The data collected from any EPTS device may not be used for any commercial activity.
- 5.22.5 Any branding on EPTS devices must not be visible at any time during a Match.
- 5.22.6 Any breach of Rules 5.22.2 to 5.22.5 shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Dispute Disciplinary Regulations (Section I).

5.23 Playing Contract and Academy Contract Disputes and Appeals

- 5.23.1 Any dispute or difference between a Club or PGA Club and a Player or Academy Contract Player, including (without limitation) disputes or appeals in respect of:
 - (a) the termination of a Playing Contract or Academy Contract;
 - (b) grievances raised by a Player or Academy Contract Player;
 - (c) disciplinary warnings and sanctions issued under a Playing Contract or Academy Contract; and
 - (d) 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.

- 5.24 Each Club must submit its squad numbers via the online player registration system no later than 24 hours before its first Match of the Season. Following the registration approval of any new Player, the Club must add that Player’s squad number to the online player registration system no later than 24 hours before the Club’s next Match.

- 5.25 Any dispute arising between Clubs as to kit colours shall be determined by the Competition Secretary, who will take into account 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:

- 5.25.1 first priority: the outfield players of the Home Club who shall wear their first choice colours;
- 5.25.2 second priority: the outfield players of the Away Club;
- 5.25.3 third priority: the goalkeeper of the Home Club;
- 5.25.4 fourth priority: the goalkeeper of the Away Club; and
- 5.25.5 fifth priority: the Match Officials.

The Competition Secretary shall, no later than seven (7) 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.

- 5.26 Neck and cuff rim colours on shirts are not regarded as basic colours for the purpose of the Rules in respect of Club colours.
- 5.27 The goalkeeper may wear tracksuit trousers acceptable to the Match Official in a Match.
- 5.28 The team captain shall wear a distinguishing armband (of a design approved by the Executive Operational Committee) to indicate her status.
- 5.29 One (1) 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.
- 5.30 Shirt advertising must comply with FA Regulations Relating to Advertising on the Clothing of Players, Club Officials and Match Officials.
- 5.31 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.
- 5.32 The colours of clothing worn by ball assistants must not clash with the colours of the competing Clubs or the Match Officials.
- 5.33 Breach of Rules 5.23.1(c) to 5.31 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

6. LICENSED FOOTBALL AGENTS

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 All Clubs and Players must comply with The FA Football Agent Regulations and the FIFA Football Agent Regulations.

7. CLUB COLOURS

- 7.1 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 in accordance with Rule 7.4 and must be available for use in Matches from the start of the Season, including the Club’s first Match, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Operational Committee.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Notwithstanding Rule 7.2, 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 5.24 shall apply in determining which colours shall be worn (unless otherwise authorised by the Executive Operational Committee).
- 7.4 On or before a date specified by the Competition Secretary each year, each Club shall register its kits by submitting a Kit Confirmation Form to the Competition Secretary 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 Competition Secretary.
- 7.5 At least fourteen (14) days prior to a Match, the Away Club shall select their kit colours on the online portal; the Home Club’s first choice 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.
- 7.6 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 submitted 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.
- 7.7 Each Club must submit its squad numbers via the online player registration system no later than 24 hours before its first Match of the Season. Following the registration approval of any new Player, the Club must add that Player’s squad number to the online player registration system no later than 24 hours before the Club’s next Match.
- 7.8 Any dispute arising between Clubs as to kit colours shall be determined by the Competition Secretary, who will take into account 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:
- 7.8.1 first priority: the outfield players of the Home Club who shall wear their first choice colours;

7.8.2 second priority: the outfield players of the Away Club;

7.8.3 third priority: the goalkeeper of the Home Club;

7.8.4 fourth priority: the goalkeeper of the Away Club; and

7.8.5 fifth priority: the Match Officials.

The Competition Secretary shall, no later than seven (7) 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.

7.9 Neck and cuff rim colours on shirts are not regarded as basic colours for the purpose of the Rules in respect of Club colours.

7.10 The goalkeeper may wear tracksuit trousers acceptable to the Match Official in a Match.

7.11 The team captain shall wear a distinguishing armband (of a design approved by the Executive Operational Committee) to indicate her status.

7.12 One (1) 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.

7.13 Shirt advertising must comply with FA Regulations Relating to Advertising on the Clothing of Players, Club Officials and Match Officials.

7.14 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.

7.15 The colours of clothing worn by ball assistants must not clash with the colours of the competing Clubs or the Match Officials.

7.16 Breach of Rules 5.23.1(c) to 5.31 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

8. PLAYING OF MATCHES

8.1 Stadium Availability

8.1.1 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.

8.1.2 Clubs shall declare to WSL Football 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.

- 8.1.3 Any Club in breach of this Rule shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

8.2 Determining the dates for the Season and Matches

- 8.2.1 The Board shall specify the dates on which the Season shall start and end.
- 8.2.2 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 WSL Football.
- 8.2.3 No Matches shall be arranged either (i) on; or (ii) on any of the six (6) days preceding, the four (4) dates agreed between WSL Football and The FA prior to each Season upon which international matches will be played.
- 8.2.4 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.
- 8.2.5 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.
- 8.2.6 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.
- 8.2.7 All League 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.
- 8.2.8 Notwithstanding Rule 8.2.6, 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.
- 8.2.9 The relevant Clubs shall, subject to complying with the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G), mutually agree the kick off time and date of the Match (selecting from the available dates communicated to them pursuant to Rule 8.2.2). 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.

8.2.10 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 WSL Football approves from time to time.

A breach of this Rule shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Regulations (Section I).

8.2.11 The Executive Operational Committee shall determine the policy of the Competitions for the issuing of Match day passes to Away Clubs.

8.3 Playing of Matches

8.3.1 All Matches shall be played under and in accordance with The FA Rules and Regulations, WSL Football Regulations, and in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the IFAB.

8.3.2 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 8.4 shall apply where any Match is of shorter duration.

8.3.3 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.

8.3.4 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.

- 8.3.5 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.
- 8.3.6 No Match shall commence where either Club has fewer than eleven (11) Players ready to play. Where either Club does not have eleven (11) Players ready to play by 60 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 8.4.5.
- 8.3.7 A Club shall ensure that the team it selects to participate in a League Match represents its strongest team available. A breach of this Rule shall be referred to an Independent Tribunal for determination pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Regulations (Section I).
- 8.3.8 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) submit 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 7) 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.

- 8.3.9 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been submitted 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 eleven (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. For the avoidance of doubt, the removed Player may not then be listed or used as a substitute in the Match. 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 5.18 shall be unaffected;
 - (b) a substitute listed on the Team Sheet cannot be fielded due to physical incapacity which occurred after submission 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 submission 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 submission of the Team Sheet must be notified to the Referee, a representative of the opponent Club, and to the WSL Football on-call representative before the Match kick-off. WSL Football shall then initiate any enquiries it may deem fit so as to satisfy the bona fide nature of the replacement.

- 8.3.10 Both the Home and Away Club shall complete all required Match day information details on the online portal, no less than seven (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.
- 8.3.11 The Home Club shall confirm to the Away Club, the Match Officials (once appointed) and any match manager(s) (if appointed) the date and time of kick-off of each Match (as agreed in accordance with Rule 8.2.9) and the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing, along with any other relevant Match information. This information must be communicated to the Away Club at least seven (7) days prior to the Match, and must be communicated to the Match Officials and any Match Manager(s) as soon as reasonably practicable after their appointment. The Away Club and the Match Officials must acknowledge receipt at least four (4) 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 WSL Football to Clubs from time to time.
- 8.3.12 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.
- 8.3.13 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 thirteen (13) unless the team bench facility provides more than thirteen (13) individual seats.
- 8.3.14 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.

- 8.3.15 Only one (1) 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.
- 8.3.16 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.
- 8.3.17 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 WSL Football), who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.
- 8.3.18 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.
- 8.3.19 Any breach of the technical area Rules set out in Rules 8.3.13 to 8.3.18 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 8.3.20 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 PGM0.
- 8.3.21 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.
- 8.3.22 The Home Club shall supply to the Away Club a minimum of three (3) 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.
- 8.3.23 Any Club in breach of Rules 8.3.20 to 8.3.22 relating to practice and match balls shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 8.3.24 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 (7) 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.

- 8.3.25 The Home Club shall provide access to the Stadium to any third party specified by WSL Football to record Match Footage, including tactical footage in accordance with the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G). The home and Away Clubs shall only use such footage in accordance with its Participation Agreement and the WSL Football Regulations (including the Stadium and Broadcast Regulations (Section G) 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.

8.4 Abandonment and postponement

Abandonment

- 8.4.1 A Match may only be abandoned by the Referee.
- 8.4.2 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.
- 8.4.3 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.
- 8.4.4 If a Match is abandoned the Club playing at home shall retain the gate receipts for such uncompleted Match.
- 8.4.5 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 (3) 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 (1) point to each Club;
or (iii) Match is replayed on terms they specify.

- 8.4.6 Except for a determination of appropriate expenses in accordance with Rule 8.4.17, the Executive Operational Committee cannot levy a financial penalty due to the conduct of a Club under Rule 8.4.5 but may choose to take none of the actions specified and instead refer the matter to be determined in accordance with Rule 8.4.19.

Postponement

- 8.4.7 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 8.4.8, 8.4.9 and 8.4.11. 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.
- 8.4.8 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 8.4.15, 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.
- 8.4.9 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 8.4.15, 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 fourteen (14) days of the postponement.
- 8.4.10 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 WSL Football 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 8.4.12 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 8.4.19 shall apply.

- 8.4.11 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 8.4.12. 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 8.4.19 shall apply.

- 8.4.12 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 (7) 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

- 8.4.13 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.
- 8.4.14 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

8.4.15 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 twenty five (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 8.4.19 and any sanction imposed by an Independent Tribunal thereto.

8.4.16 Failure to pay the Match Officials' full match fee or half match fee and travelling expenses as required in Rules 8.4.15(a)(ii) or 8.4.15(b)(ii) shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

8.4.17 All claims for compensation of expenses by either Club under Rule 8.4.15 must be received by the Competition Secretary within fourteen (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

8.4.18 Where a Club is suspended pursuant to the Interests, Owners and Directors Regulations (Section E) 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.

8.4.19 Other than where the Executive Operational Committee have:

- (a) exercised their powers under Rule 8.4.5; 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.

8.4.20 In determining a breach of Rule 8.4.19, the Executive Operational Committee may:

- (a) issue a points deduction from the offending Club's record up to a maximum of twelve (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 8.4.15); and / or
- (d) issue any such other sanction that the Executive Operational Committee may decide.

8.4.21 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.

8.4.22 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 Regulation 8 of the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Regulations (Section I).

8.5 Notification of results

8.5.1 Within three (3) hours of the conclusion of each Match:

- (a) 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
- (b) the Home Club shall enter on the online portal the match attendance.

8.5.2 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.

8.6 Match programmes and Club websites

- 8.6.1 The Home Club is responsible for producing a full match programme in accordance with these Rules and the WSL Football Regulations. A Team Sheet will not be considered sufficient to comply with this Rule.
- 8.6.2 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 (5) days before the scheduled date of the Match between the two Clubs.
- 8.6.3 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.
- 8.6.4 Clubs will be responsible for all comments in their match day programme including any made in respect of the Competitions, WSL Football, 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, WSL Football, or The FA into disrepute.
- 8.6.5 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, WSL Football, or The FA into disrepute.
- 8.6.6 Any breach of Rules 8.6.1 to 8.6.5 shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

8.7 Representative matches

- 8.7.1 The Board shall have the power to arrange representative matches made up of Players from any Club at their discretion.
- 8.7.2 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.

8.8 Play-Off Matches

- 8.8.1 The Play-Off Matches shall each be played to a conclusion. If the score is equal at the end of 90 minutes, a period of extra time shall be played comprising of 15 minutes each way to determine the winner. A coin toss shall determine the start and directions of play. In the event that the score is still equal after extra time has concluded, the outcome of the Play-Off Matches will each be determined by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the IFAB. The venue for each of the Play-Off Matches will be confirmed by the Executive Operational Committee each year.

9. ADMISSION CHARGES

- 9.1 Admission charges, excluding Home Club concessions as appropriate, must be the same for home and visiting supporters at Matches.
- 9.2 Clubs may, with the written permission of the Executive Operational Committee, have a maximum of three (3) Match days each Season during which they can vary admission charges for adults including allowing free admission.

10. MATCH OFFICIALS

- 10.1 Match Officials for all Matches shall be appointed by the PGMO.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 The late arrival of any Match Official shall be reported by the Home Club to the Competition Secretary and the PGMO.
- 10.6 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 8.4.15.
- 10.7 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 WSL Football.

11. MEDICAL AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

- 11.1 All Clubs shall comply with Performance and Medical Requirements (Section K) and the Staff Requirements (Section L). Breach of either of these Sections shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.

12. DETERMINING THE CHAMPIONSHIP AND PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- 12.1 Three (3) points will be awarded for a win at home or away and one (1) point for a drawn League Match.
- 12.2 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 Competition. 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.
- 12.3 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:
- 12.3.1 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.
- 12.3.2 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.
- 12.3.3 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.
- 12.3.4 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.
- 12.3.5 If the records of two (2) 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.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 Promotion to BWSL and promotion or relegation to BWSL2 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 Stadium, finance, pitch, corporate governance, contact time and staffing requirements.

- 12.6 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.

13. TROPHY

- 13.1 The Executive Operational Committee (or a person nominated on its behalf) shall present to the winners of each League Competition forty (40) medals. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Executive Operational Committee, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.
- 13.2 The trophies are the property of WSL Football and may never be won outright.
- 13.3 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.”

- 13.4 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.

14. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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 WSL Football shall be forfeited. From the date of the withdrawal, no further payment shall become due from WSL Football to the Club.

15. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP AND CHANGE IN CONTROL

15.1 Transfer as a going concern

- 15.1.1 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 16 and the Insolvency Regulations (Section H) 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 WSL Football (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 twelve (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.

15.2 Ownership

15.2.1 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.

15.2.2 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.

16. INSOLVENCY PROVISIONS

16.1 Each Club agrees to comply with the Insolvency Regulations (Section H) and acknowledges that the obligations and rights set out therein shall apply and are in addition to these Rules.

17. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

17.1 Players

17.1.1 In the event of a transfer of a Player where consideration is agreed, the consideration can only be paid between the two (2) clubs (the transferor and transferee clubs).

- 17.1.2 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.
- 17.1.3 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.

18. LONG SERVICE

- 18.1 The Executive Operational Committee shall be empowered to grant a long service award for twenty (20) years' service with a Club providing such an award has not already been made by any other competition.
- 18.2 Clubs may enter into agreements with Players after five (5) years continuous service providing for a testimonial. Players shall qualify for a second testimonial after a further five (5) 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.

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

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 These Cup Rules shall apply to the Cup Competition, a Cup Competition organised by WSL Football for Clubs in the Tier 1 League and the Tier 2 League.
- 1.2 The name of the Cup Competition for the 2026 / 27 Season shall be the Subway Players Cup.
- 1.3 Any Club which has qualified to participate in UEFA Women’s Club Competitions during a Season shall not participate in the Cup Competition for that Season.
- 1.4 Subject only to Cup Rule 1.3, all other Clubs in the Tier 1 League and the Tier 2 League shall participate in the Cup Competition in each Season.
- 1.5 In order to participate in the Competitions, a Club must comply with the Cup Rules and, as appropriate, the Competition Rules.

2. APPLICABILITY OF THE COMPETITION RULES

- 2.1 Unless expressly stated otherwise in these Cup Rules, the Competition Rules shall apply to the Cup Competition and to all Cup Matches.
- 2.2 In the event of any conflict between the Rules and these Cup Rules, these Cup Rules shall take precedence in relation to the Cup Competition.
- 2.3 The following Competition Rules shall not apply to the Cup Competition and shall be replaced with the provisions below.
 - 2.3.1 **Competition Rule 12:** Determining The Championship And Promotion And Relegation – replaced by Cup Rule 5.
 - 2.3.2 **Competition Rule 13:** Trophy (of the League Competitions) – replaced by Cup Rule 6.

3. TRANSFERRED PLAYERS

- 3.1 No Player may play in the Cup Competition for more than one (1) Club in the same Season, except where the Player is on an emergency goalkeeper loan in accordance with the Competition Rules.

4. SUBSTITUTIONS

- 4.1 In all Cup Matches, each Club may make up to five (5) substitutions, using no more than three (3) substitution opportunities during normal time, in accordance with Competition Rule 5.19. Half-time does not count as a substitution opportunity.

- 4.2 Where these Cup Rules provide for penalty kicks to determine the result of a Cup Match, any substitutions permitted under the Competition Rules may continue to be made until the end of normal time; no additional substitution opportunities arise because the Match proceeds to penalties.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE CUP COMPETITION

- 5.1 The Cup Competition shall comprise:
- 5.1.1 An initial league phase played on a Swiss-style basis (the “**League Phase**”).
 - 5.1.2 A knock-out phase comprising quarter finals, semi-finals and a final (the “**Knock Out Stage**”).
- 5.2 An illustrative diagram of the structure of the Cup Competition (including League Phase and Knock Out Stage) is set out at Figure 1 to this Appendix. In the event of any inconsistency between Figure 1 and the text of these Cup Rules, the text of these Cup Rules shall prevail.

The League Phase

- 5.3 For the purposes of scheduling, Clubs shall be classified as either “**Northern Clubs**” or “**Southern Clubs**” based on their geographical location (with eleven (11) Clubs being determined to be in one region and twelve (12) Clubs in the other, depending on the composition of the Cup Competition in that Season). WSL Football shall determine the classification of each Club.
- 5.4 Each Club shall play six (6) League Phase Matches (each a “**League Phase Match**”) against Clubs from within its own region only, such Matches to be determined by way of a random draw conducted by the Executive Operational Committee. No Club shall play another Club more than once in the League Phase.
- 5.5 Each League Phase Match shall be of 90 minutes’ duration, subject to any added time in accordance with the Laws of the Game. If the score is level at the end of 90 minutes, the Match shall be decided by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by The IFAB. There shall be no period of extra time.
- 5.6 Points will be awarded as follows:
- 5.6.1 A Club which wins a League Phase Match in 90 minutes shall be awarded three (3) points.
 - 5.6.2 A Club which loses a League Phase Match in 90 minutes shall be awarded zero (0) points.
 - 5.6.3 A Club which wins a League Phase Match that is tied after 90 minutes by winning the penalty shootout shall be awarded two (2) points.
 - 5.6.4 A Club which loses a League Phase Match that is tied after 90 minutes as it loses the penalty shootout shall be awarded one (1) point.

- 5.7 The position of each Club in the league table for the League Phase shall be determined by the number of points obtained in League Phase Matches. Where two or more Clubs are equal on points, their relative positions shall be determined in accordance with the Tiebreaker Rules.
- 5.8 If the Clubs are still equal, their position shall be determined by the drawing of lots conducted by the Executive Operational Committee.
- 5.9 Upon completion of all League Phase fixtures, the Clubs finishing in the top eight (8) positions in the league table for the League Phase will progress to the Knock Out Stage.

The Knock Out Stage

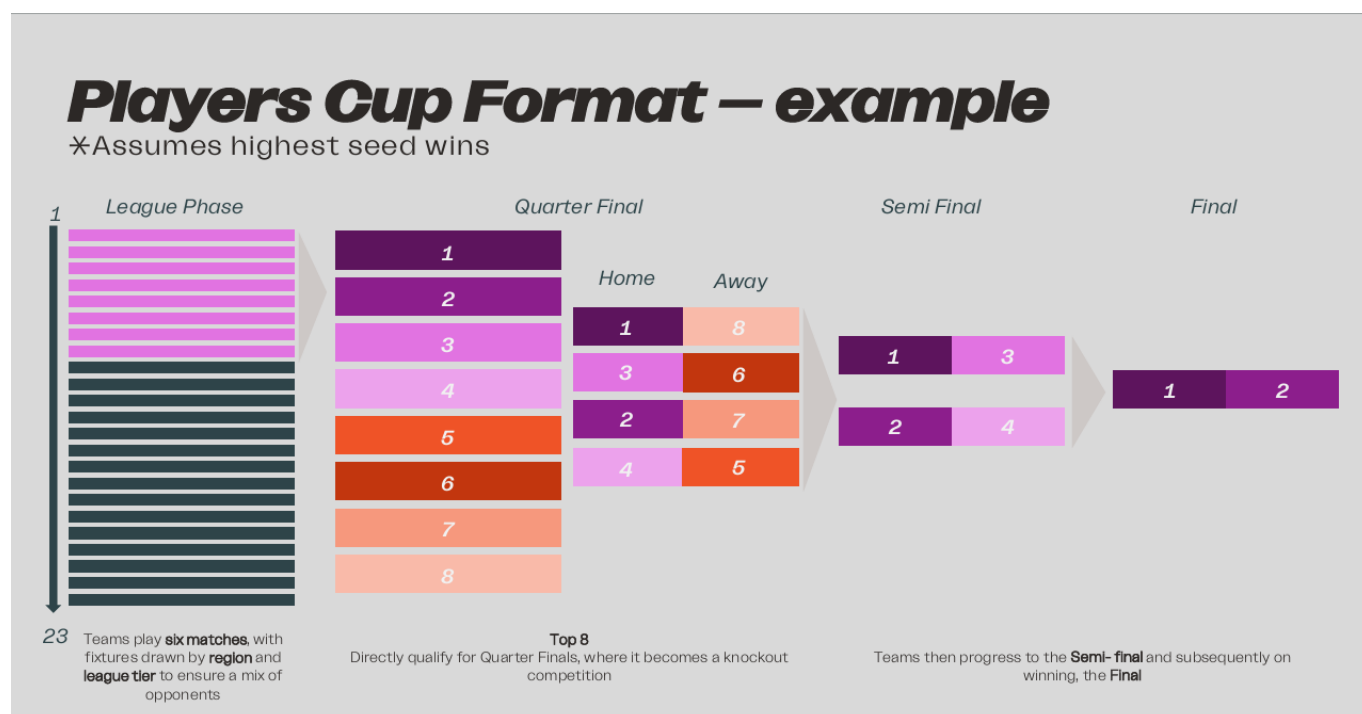
- 5.10 The Knock Out Stage shall consist of:
 - 5.10.1 four (4) quarter finals (“**Quarter Finals**”);
 - 5.10.2 two (2) semi-finals (“**Semi-Finals**”); and
 - 5.10.3 the final (“**Final**”).
- 5.11 Each Knock Out Stage Match will be of 90 minutes’ duration. If the score is level at the end of 90 minutes, the Match shall be decided by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by The IFAB. There shall be no period of extra time.
- 5.12 The Quarter Finals shall be played as follows, based on the positions of the Clubs in the league table at the end of the League Phase:
 - 5.12.1 1st v 8th (“**Quarter Final 1**”);
 - 5.12.2 2nd v 7th; (“**Quarter Final 2**”);
 - 5.12.3 3rd v 6th; (“**Quarter Final 3**”)
 - 5.12.4 4th v 5th (“**Quarter Final 4**”).
- 5.13 In each Quarter Final, the Club with the better finishing position in the League Phase shall play at home.
- 5.14 The winning four (4) Clubs from the Quarter Finals will progress to the Semi-Finals as follows:
 - 5.14.1 Semi-Final 1: winner of Quarter Final 1 v winner of Quarter Final 3;
 - 5.14.2 Semi-Final 2: winner of Quarter Final 2 v winner of Quarter Final 4
- 5.15 In the Semi-Finals, the winners of Quarter Final 1 and Quarter Final 2 shall play at home.
- 5.16 The winners of the Semi-Finals shall progress to the Final.
- 5.17 The Final shall be played at a neutral Stadium to be determined by the Board in its absolute discretion.

5.18 The winner of the Final shall be winner of the Cup Competition.

6. TROPHY

- 6.1 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 forty (40) souvenir medals. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Executive Operational Committee, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.
- 6.2 The Players Cup trophy is the property of WSL Football and may never be won outright. The winner of the Players Cup shall sign an agreement in a form prescribed by WSL Football relating to the care and return of the trophy. The trophy must be returned to WSL Football in good order and condition by the date specified by the Executive Operational Committee. Any failure to do so shall be subject to a fixed penalty in accordance with the Table of Summary Offences and Sanctions.
- 6.3 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.

Figure 1



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

WSL Football 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 WSL Football activities in line with the Club and league values.
- Follow all Club and WSL Football 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 WSL Football 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 WSL Football 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.
- Misusing social media to spread misinformation or damage reputations.
- Failing to report incidents of harmful and abusive behaviour, harassment, or unsafe conditions.

Reporting and Accountability:

- Players and staff are encouraged to report any breaches of this Code to designated Club Officials or safeguarding and player welfare officers.
- 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 WSL Football Regulations, then WSL Football may take disciplinary action in accordance with the WSL Football Regulations.
- WSL Football 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.

WSL Football 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 (£)
2.5	Failure to notify Competition Secretary of proposed changes to a membership register.	£100
2.6	Failure to return information requested by the Competition Secretary.	£100
2.14	Failure to satisfactorily attend to the business and / or the correspondence of the Competitions.	£200
5.2.9	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.	£300
5.2.13	Breach of the Rules concerning Player registrations.	£100
5.13.2	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
5.23.1(c)	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
5.23.1(c)	Players' shirts not being numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet submitted 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
5.24	Failure to submit squad numbers via the online player registration system by the stipulated deadline.	£100
5.28	Failure of the team captain to wear a distinguishing armband (of a design approved by the Executive Operational Committee) to indicate her status.	£100
5.29	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
5.30	Shirt advertising not complying with FA Regulations Relating to Advertising on the Clothing of Players, Club Officials and Match Officials.	£200
5.31	Failure to make available playing kits for review by the Match Officials in their changing room on arrival at the Stadium.	£100
7.1	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,	£100

WSL Football Regulations – Section C: Competition Rules

Rule	Summary Offence	Fixed Penalty (£)
	third kit, and goalkeeper kits, on or before the date specified by the Executive Operational Committee.	
7.5	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
8.1.1	Failure to complete and submit a fixture questionnaire.	£200
8.2.9	Failure to notify the Competition Secretary of agreed kick off time by the deadline stipulated by the Competition Secretary.	£100
8.3.3	Failure to operate a mobile telephone or email address at all times.	£500
8.3.4	Failure to enter field of play at least five minutes before scheduled kick off.	£500
8.3.5	A Club not being prepared to kick off at the scheduled time.	£300 plus £50 per minute for each minute late
8.3.8	Failure to submit Team Sheet at least 75 minutes before kick off.	£200
8.3.8	Failure for appropriate personnel to attend Team Sheet exchange.	£100
8.3.8	Incomplete or inaccurate Team Sheet.	£100
8.3.8	Failure to attend pre-match briefing with Match Officials.	£100
8.3.9	Altering Team Sheet after exchange.	£300
8.3.10	Failure to complete all required Match day information on the online portal at least 7 days before the relevant Match.	£100
8.3.10	Late confirmation of, or failure to confirm, details of match to Away Club and Match Officials and delegates.	£100
8.3.10 and 8.3.12	Late acknowledgement of, or failure to acknowledge, details of match to Home Club and team colours.	£100
8.3.13 to 8.3.18	Breach of technical area Rules.	£200
8.3.20 to 8.3.22	Breach of practice and match ball Rules.	£150
8.3.24	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
8.4.14	Failure to notify the Match Officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately.	£100

Rule	Summary Offence	Fixed Penalty (£)
8.5	Failure to notify post-Match information on the online portal.	£100
8.6.1	Failure to provide programme for spectators.	£250
8.6.2	Late sending of, or failure to send, details and photos of Away Club by Away Club to Home Club.	£150
8.6.3	Failure to submit programme to Competition Secretary.	£150
8.6.4 to 8.6.5	Club programme, website or social media bringing the Competitions, WSL Football, or The FA into disrepute.	£1000
10.4	Failure to designate a suitable part of the Pitch for Match Officials to warm up and warm down.	£100
11	Failure to comply with the Performance and Medical Requirements (Section K) or the Staff Requirements (Section L)	Up to £1,000
13.4	Failure to return Competition trophy by due date or returned in poor condition.	£400

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: 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