**Cheltenham League Rules Season 2019-20**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | DEFINITIONS |
| 2 | NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION |
| 3 | CLUB NAME |
| 4 | ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT |
| 5 | MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION |
| 6 | POWERS OF MANAGEMENT |
| 7 | PROTESTS CLAIMS, COMPLAINTS, APPEALS |
| 8 | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING |
| 9 | SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS |
| 10 | AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED |
| 11 | CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB |
| 12 | EXCLUSION OF CLUBS OR TEAMS MISCONDUCT, CLUBS, OFFICIALS, PLAYERS |
| 13 | TROPHY: - LEGAL OWNERS, CONDITIONS OF TAKING OVER, AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED, AWARDS. |
| 14 | ALTERATION TO RULES |
| 15 | FINANCE |
| 16 | INSURANCE |
| 17 | DISSOLUTION |
| 18 | QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS |
| 19 | CLUB COLOURS |
| 20 | PLAYING SEASON. CONDITIONS OF PLAY, TIMES OF KICK-OFF. POSTPONEMENTS. SUBSTITUTES |
| 21 | REPORTING RESULTS |
| 22 | DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 23 | REFEREES |
| A | FEES TARIFF |
| B | FINES TARIFF |

**1. DEFINITIONS**.

(A) In these Rules:

 “Affiliated Association” means an Association accorded the status of an affiliated Association under the Rules of The FA.

 “AGM” shall mean the annual general meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Competition.

 “Deposit” means a sum of money deposited with the Competition as part of the requirements of membership of the Competition.

 “Club” means a Club for the time being in membership of the Competition and “Team” means a side from a Club especially where a Club provides more than one Team in a division in accordance with the Rules.

 “Competition” means the Cheltenham Association Football League.

 “*Competition Match*” means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Competition.

 “*Secretary*” means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition.

 “*Contract Player*” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

 “*Fees Tariff*” means a list of fees approved by the Clubs at a general meeting to be levied by the Management Committee for any matters for which fees are payable under the Rules.

 “*Fines Tariff*” means a list of fines approved by the Clubs at a general meeting to be levied by the Management Committee for any breach of the Rules.

 “*Ground*” means the ground on which the Club’s team(s) plays its Competition Matches.

 “*Management Committee*” means in the case of a Competition which is an unincorporated association, the management committee elected to manage the running of the Competition and where the Competition is incorporated it means the Board of Directors appointed in accordance with the articles of association of that company.

 “*Match Officials*” means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Competition Match.

 “*Non-Contract Player*” means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

 “*Officer”* means an individual who is appointed or elected to a position in a Club or Competition which requires that individual to make day to day decisions.

 ‘’*Participant*’’ shall have the same meaning as set out in the rules of The FA from time to time.

 “*Player*” means any Contract Player, Non-Contract Player or other Player who plays or who is eligible to play for a Club.

 “*Playing Season*” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the Competition is played each year until the date on which the last competitive fixture in the Competition is played.

 “*Rules*” means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

 “*Sanctioning Authority*” means The Gloucestershire Football Association.

 “*Scholarship*” means a Scholarship as set out in Rule C 3 (a) (i) of the Rules of The FA.

 ‘’*Season’*’ means the period between an AGM and the subsequent AGM

 ‘’*SGM*’’ means a special general meeting held in accordance with the constitution of the Competition.

 “*Team Sheet*” means a form provided by the Competition on which the names of the Players taking part in a Competition match are listed.

 “*The FA*” means The Football Association Limited.

 “*WGS*” means the Whole Game System and the procedures for the operation thereof as determined by The FA from time to time.

 “*Written*” or “*In Writing*” means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise.

(B) Unless stated otherwise, terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any terms in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa.

 **GOVERNANCE RULES**

 **2. NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION**

(A) The Competition will be known as Cheltenham Football Association. The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Competition. A Club which ceases to exist, or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall thereupon automatically cease to be a member of the Competition

(B) This Competition shall consist of not more than 74 Clubs approved by the Sanctioning Authority.

(C) The Area covered by the competition membership shall be 30 miles radius of the League headquarters in Cheltenham.

(D) The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Competition acting (save where otherwise specifically mentioned herein) through the Management Committee in accordance with the rules, regulations and policies of The FA.

(E) All Clubs shall adhere to the Rules. Every Club shall be deemed, as a member of the Competition to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Management Committee in relation thereto, subject to the provisions of Rule 7.

(F) The Rules are taken from the Standard Code of Rules “the Standard Code” determined by The FA from time to time. In the event of any omissions from the Standard Code then the requirements of the Standard Code shall be deemed to apply to the Competition.

(G) All Clubs must be affiliated to an Affiliated Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date on the Form “D” to the appropriate County Football Association and must have a constitution approved by the Sanctioning Authority.

 This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Gloucestershire County Football Association and the constituent teams of Member Clubs may be grouped in divisions, each not exceeding 14 in number.

(H) Inclusivity and Non-discrimination

 (i) The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination

 (ii) This Competition and each Club must 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.

 (iii) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate Sanctioning Authority for investigation.

(I) Clubs must comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The FA which are adopted by the Competition including but not limited to, Charter Standard and RESPECT programmes.

(J) All Participants shall abide by the Football Association Regulations for Safeguarding of Children as determined by the FA from time to time.

(K) Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of FA and County FA Competitions) except with the written consent of the Management Committee.

(L) At the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, a majority of the delegates present shall have power to decide or adjust the constitution of the divisions at their discretion. When necessary this Rule shall take precedence over Rule 12.

(M) Only one team shall be permitted from any Club to participate in the same division as another team from the same Club unless there is no viable alternative because of logistical issues and/or reasons linked to participation and geographical boundaries. The Competition will obtain the prior approval of the Sanctioning Authority in the event of a division comprising of more than one team from the same Club. This Competition will ensure that, where permission is given, teams from a Club operating in the same division are run as separate entities with no interchange of players other than via transfers of registration in accordance with these Rules.

 **3. CLUB NAME**

 Any Club wishing to change its name must obtain permission from the Sanctioning Authority and from the Management Committee.

 **4. ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT**

(A) Applications by Clubs for admission to the Competition or the entry of an additional team(s) from the same Club must be made in writing to the Secretary on or before 31st March in each year and must be accompanied by the Entry Fee, set out in the Fees Tariff, per team, which shall be returned in the event of non-election. The Entrance Fee shall be forfeited to the League if the application is withdrawn prior to the League AGM.

 At the discretion of a majority of the accredited voting members present applications, of which due notice has been given, may be received at the AGM or an SGM.

 When Rule 22(B) is applied, or a team seeks a transfer or, is compulsorily transferred to another division, no Entry Fee shall be payable.

(B) The annual subscription shall be payable in accordance with the Fees Tariff per Club/Team (£20) payable on or before the AGM/ 14th August of the Competition in each year.

(C) In the event of any issue concerning the membership of any Club with the Competition the Management Committee may require a Deposit to be paid by or on behalf of the Club on such terms and for such period as it may in its entire discretion think fit.

(D) A Club shall not participate in this Competition until the Entry Fee, Annual Subscription and Deposit (if required) have been paid.

(E) Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by 14th August of its Sanctioning Authority affiliation number for the forthcoming Season. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the prescribed form, of details of its Headquarters, Officers and any other information required by the Competition. Failure to compile with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(F) Other information required by the Competition shall include the name, address and telephone number of its Secretary, the location of its ground and dressing rooms, details of any recognised Senior Team that shares its facilities and the location of any artificial surface to be designated by the club for use as an alternative venue for home matches, as required when the club’s usual home ground is unavailable, by 1st June each year.

 If a club chooses to designate an artificial surface for use when the club's usual home ground is unavailable, the club must also forward the name, address and contact details of the person who controls the use of the artificial surface to the League Secretary on the prescribed form.

(G) No club that was in default of the league books as at 1st June, shall be eligible for membership, unless the management committee shall decide otherwise.

4(H) If any of a Club’s details, as listed in the Competition yearbook, are changed during the season the League Secretary, Assistant Secretary & Referees’ Secretary are to be informed PRIOR to the next fixture taking place. If the details of the Club Secretary have been changed the Secretary of the GFA should also be informed.

(I) Any Club whose Secretary is to be unavailable for any length of time shall notify the Competition Secretary of an alternative person who may deal with the business of the Club in his absence.

 **5. MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION**

(A) The Management Committee shall comprise the Officers of the Competition and not more than 5 ordinary members who shall all be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

(B) Retiring Officers shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination provided that the Officer notifies the secretary in writing not later than 30th April in each year.

 All other candidates for election as Officers or Members of the Management Committee shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the Secretaries of two Member Clubs, not later than 30th April in each year. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the foregoing for any office, nominations may be received at the Annual General Meeting.

(C) The Management Committee shall meet as and when required with no more than three calendar months between each meeting.

 On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the members of the Management Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee.

(D) Except where otherwise mentioned, all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings

(E) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their Officers and sent to the Secretary.

 Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 **6. POWERS OF MANAGEMENT**

(A) The Management Committee may appoint sub-committees and delegate such of their powers as they deem necessary. The decisions of all such Committees shall be reported to the Management Committee for ratification. The Management Committee shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of the Football Association or affiliated Association.

(B) Subject to the permission of the Sanctioning Authority having been obtained the Management Committee may order a match or matches to be played each season, the proceeds to be devoted to the funds of the Competition and, if necessary, may call upon each Club (including any Club which may have withdrawn during the season) to contribute equally such sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency at the end of the season.

(C) Each member of the Management Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Committee meetings and have one vote thereat, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Members or to the club so represented or where there may be a conflict of interest. (This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee)

 In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

(D) The Management Committee shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce these Rules and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competition. Any action by the Competition must be taken within 28 days of the Competition being notified.

 Except for Rules 6(I), 8(H) and 9, for all breaches of Rule a formal written charge must be issued to the Club concerned. The Club charged shall be given seven days from the date of notification of the charge to reply to the charge and given the opportunity to: -

 (i) Accept the charge and submit in writing a case of mitigation for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers; or

 (ii) Accept the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case of mitigation at a hearing before the Management Committee; or

 (iii) Deny the charge and submit in writing supporting evidence for consideration by the Management Committee on the papers; or

 (iv) Deny the charge and notify that it wishes to put its case at a hearing before the Management Committee

 Where the Club charged fails to respond within 7 days, the Management Committee shall determine the charge in such manner and upon such evidence as it considers appropriate.

 Where required, hearings shall take place as soon as reasonably practicable following receipt of the reply of the Club as more fully set out above.

 Having considered the reply of the Club (whether in writing or at a hearing), the Management Committee shall make its decision and, in the event that the charge is accepted or proven, decide on the appropriate penalty (with reference to the Fines Tariff where applicable).

 The maximum fine permitted for any breach of a Rule is £250 and, when setting any fine, the Competition must ensure that the penalty is proportional to the offence, considering any mitigating circumstances.

No participant under the age of 18 can be fined

All breaches of the Laws of the Games, or the Rule and Regulations of the FA shall be dealt with in accordance with FA Rules by the appropriate Association.

(E ) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of Appeal in accordance with Rule 7.

 Decisions of the Management Committee must be notified in writing within 7 days.

(F) More than fifty percent (50%) of its members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the Management Committee or any sub-committee thereof.

(G) The Management Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill, in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur amongst their number.

(H) A Club must comply with an order or instruction of the Management Committee and must attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition to the satisfaction of the Management Committee. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff

(I) Subject to a Club’s right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7 below, all fines and charges are payable forthwith and must be paid within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision. Any Club failing to do so will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Further failure to pay the fine including the additional fine within 14 days will result in fixtures being withdrawn until such time as the outstanding fines are paid.

(J) A member of the Management Committee appointed by the Competition to attend a meeting or match may have any reasonable expenses incurred refunded by the Competition.

(K) The Management Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the Annual General or Special General Meeting called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the Competition season.

(L) The business of the competition as determined by the Management Committee shall be transacted by electronic mail.

(M) Any Club required to attend at a Management Committee Meeting for any breach of Rules shall be specially summoned to send a representative who is able to answer the charges against his Club. The Club may be further dealt with as the League may determine. Not less than seven days notice shall be given of any meeting.

 **7. PROTESTS, CLAIMS, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

(A) (i) All questions of eligibility, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Management Committee, or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Management Committee.

 (ii) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be entertained by the Management Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match.

(B) Except in cases where the Management Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged with the Secretary within 6 days (excluding Sundays) of the match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Management Committee. A Member of the Management Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.

(C ) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Management Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Secretary a sum in accordance with the Fees Tariff. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the inquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties

(D) All parties to a protest or complaint must receive a copy of the submission and must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement at least 7 days prior to the protest or complaint being heard.

 (i)               All parties must have received 7 days’ notice of the hearing should they be instructed to attend.

 (ii)              Should a Club elect to state its case in person then it should forward a deposit of £ 10 and indicate such when forwarding the written response.

(E ) The Management Committee shall also have power to compel any party to the protest to pay such expenses as the Management Committee shall direct.

(F) Any appeal against a decision of the Management Committee must be lodged with the Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of the posting of the written notification of the decision causing the appeal, accompanied by a fee (as set out in the Fees Tariff), which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Secretary. The procedure for the appeal shall be determined by the Sanctioning Authority, in such respect the Sanctioning Authority may (but is not obliged to):

 (i)               invite submissions by the parties involved; or

 (ii)              convene a hearing to hear the appeal; or

 (iii)             permit new evidence; or

 (iv)            impose deadlines as are appropriate.

 Any appeal shall not involve a rehearing of the evidence considered by the Management Committee

(G) No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an AGM or SGM unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

(H) All protests, claims or complaints relating to these Rules and appeals arising from a Player’s contract shall be heard and determined by the Management Committee, or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Management Committee. The Clubs or Players protesting, appealing, claiming or complaining must send a copy of such protest, appeal, claim or complaint and deposit a fee (as set out in the Fees Tariff) which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld, and the party not succeeding may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Management Committee.

All such protests claim complaints and appeals must be received in writing by the Secretary within fourteen days of the event or decision causing any of these to be submitted.

 **8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

(A) The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than 1st July in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least one third Members are present and entitled to vote: -

 (i) To receive and confirm the Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting.

 (ii) To receive and adopt the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts.

 (iii) Election of Clubs to fill vacancies.

 (iv) Constitution of the Competition for ensuing season.

 (v) Election of Officers and Management Committee.

 (vi) Appointment of Auditors.

 (vii) Alteration of Rules, if any.

 (viii) Fix the date for the commencement of the season and kick off times applicable to the Competition.

 (ix) Fix the date for the end of the Playing season.

 (x) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted as being relevant to an Annual General Meeting.

(B) A copy of the duly verified Balance Sheet, Statement of Accounts and Agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least 14 days prior to the any AGM, together with any proposed change of Rules.

(C) A signed copy of the duly audited Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall be sent to Sanctioning Authority within 14 days of its adoption by the AGM.

(D) Each Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to an AGM. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. 14 days’ notice shall be given of any Meeting.

(E) Clubs who have withdrawn their membership of the Competition during the season being concluded or who are not continuing membership shall be entitled to attend but shall vote only in matters relating to the season being concluded. This provision will not apply to Clubs expelled in accordance with Rule 12

(F) All voting shall be conducted by a show of voting cards unless a ballot be demanded by at least 50% of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chairman so decides.

(G) No individual shall be entitled to vote on behalf of more than one Member Club.

(H) Any continuing Club must be represented at the AGM, by its Club Secretary. If the Club Secretary is unable to attend, the club may be represented by another Senior Officer, subject to prior approval being obtained by the League’s Management Committee. For the purposes of this rule, appropriate Senior Officers will be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer or Vice Secretary. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(I) Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an Annual General Meeting

(J) Where a Competition is an incorporated entity, the Officers of the Competition shall ensure that the Articles of Association of the Competition are consistent with the requirements of these Rules.

 **9. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

 Upon receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call an SGM.

 The Management Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time.

 At least 7 days’ notice shall be given of either meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted at such meeting.

Each Member Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all SGMs. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only.

 Any Club failing to be represented at an SGM shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Special General Meetings.

 If the Club Secretary is unable to attend, the club may be represented by another Senior Officer, subject to prior approval being obtained by the League’s Management Committee. For the purposes of this rule, appropriate Senior Officers will be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer or Vice Secretary.

 **10. AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED**

 Each Club shall complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the Competition together with the application for membership for the coming Season, or upon indicating that the Club intends to compete.

“We, (A) (name) [ ] of (address) [ ] (Chairman) and (B) (name) [ ] of (address) [ ] (Secretary) of [ ] Football Club have been provided with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Cheltenham Association Football League Competition and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the said Club to conform to those Rules and Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the Management Committee of the Competition, subject to the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 7.”

The agreement shall be signed by:

(i) Where a Club is an unincorporated association, the Club chairman and secretary; or

(ii) Where a Club is an incorporated entity, two directors of the Club.

 Any alteration of the Chairman and /or Secretary on the above Agreement must be notified to the Appropriate County Football Association(s) to which the Club is affiliated and to the Secretary of the Competition.

 Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 **11. CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB**

(A) A Club intending, or having a provisional intention, to withdraw a team from the Competition on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the Competition must notify the Secretary in writing by 31st March each Season. All clubs wishing to remain in membership of the competition for the following season must confirm their intention to do so, in writing, to the Secretary by 31st March.

(B) The Management Committee shall have the discretion to deal with a Team being unable to start or complete its fixtures for a Playing Season, including but not limited to, issuing a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff

(C) Notwithstanding the powers of the Management Committee pursuant to Rule 6(I), in the event of a Member Club failing to discharge all its financial obligations to the Competition in excess of £50, the Management Committee **are** empowered to refer the debt under The FA Football Debt Recovery provisions.

 **12. EXCLUSION OF CLUBS OR TEAMS MISCONDUCT, CLUBS, OFFICIALS, PLAYERS**

(A) At the AGM or SGM called for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9, Notice of Motion having been duly circulated on the Agenda by direction of the Management Committee, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to: (i) remove a member of the Management Committee from office (ii) exclude any Club or Team from membership which must be supported by more than two thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A member of the Management Committee or a Club which is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

(B) At the AGM, or at a SGM called for the purpose, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude from further participation in the Competition any Club whose conduct has, in their opinion, been undesirable, which must be supported by (more than) two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. Club which is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

 (C) Any official or member of a Club proved guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a player or players of another Club in the Competition to join them shall be liable to expulsion or such penalty as a General Meeting or Management Committee may decide, and their Club shall also be liable to expulsion in accordance with the provisions of Clause (A) and / or (B) of this Rule

 **13.** **TROPHY**

(A) The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the cup or trophy: -

 “We A [name] and B [name], the Chairman and Secretary of [ ] FC (Limited), members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of [ ] cup or trophy, and it having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the cup or trophy to the Competition Secretary on or before [ ]. If the cup or trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care, we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair.”

 Failure to comply will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(B) At the close of each Competition awards may/shall be made to the winners and runners-up if the funds of the Competition permit.

 **14. ALERATION TO THE RULES**

 Alterations, for which consent has been given by the Sanctioning Authority, shall be made to these Rules only at the AGM or at an SGM specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 9. Any alteration made during the Playing Season to these Rules shall not take effect until the following playing season.

 Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the AGM shall be submitted to the Secretary by 14 days prior to the AGM in each year. The proposals, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by 7 days and any amendments thereto shall be submitted to the Secretary by 2 days. The proposals and proposed amendments thereto shall be circulated to Clubs with the notice of the AGM. A proposal to change a Rule shall be carried if a majority of those present, entitled to vote and voting are in favour.

 A copy of the proposed alterations to Rules to be considered at the AGM or SGM shall be submitted to the Sanctioning Authority or The FA (as applicable) 28 days prior to the date of the meeting.

 **15. FINANCE**

 The Management Committee shall determine with which bank or other financial institution the funds of the Competition will be lodged

 All expenditure in excess of £250 shall be approved by the Management Committee. Cheques shall be signed by at least two Officers nominated by the Management Committee.

 The financial year of the Competition will end on April 30th

 The books, or a certified balance sheet, of a Competition shall be prepared and shall be audited by some suitable person(s) who shall be appointed at the AGM.

 **16. INSURANCE**

(A) All Clubs must have valid public liability insurance cover of at least 10 million pounds (£10,000,000) at all times.

(B) All Clubs must have valid personal accident cover for all Players registered with them from time to time. The Players’ personal accident cover must be in place prior to the Club taking part in any Competition match and shall be at least equal to the minimum recommended cover determined from time to time by the sanctioning Association. In instances where The Football Association is the sanctioning Association, the minimum recommended cover will be the cover required by the Affiliated Association to which a Club affiliates.

 Failure to comply with Rule 16(A) or 16(B) will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

  **17. DISSOLUTION**

 (A) Dissolution of the Competition shall be by resolution approved at an SGM by a majority of three quarters (3/4) of the members present and shall take effect from the date of the relevant SGM.

(B) In the event of the dissolution of the Competition, the members of the Management Committee are responsible for the winding up of the assets and liabilities of the Competition.

(C) The Management Committee shall deal with any surplus assets as follows:

 (i) Any surplus assets, save for a trophy or any other presentation, remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Competition shall be transferred only to another Competition or Affiliated Association or The Football Association Benevolent Fund or to such other charitable or benevolent object in the locality of the Competition as determined by resolution at or before the time of winding up, and approved in writing by the Sanctioning Authority

 (ii) If a Competition is discontinued for any reason a Trophy or any other presentation shall be returned to the Donor if the conditions attached to it so provide or, if not, dealt with as the sanctioning Association may decide.

**Match Related Rules**

 **18. QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS**

(A) A Player is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:

 (i) signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink, countersigned by an Officer, which is submitted to the Competition prior to 23:59 on the day prior to the Player playing and whose registration has been confirmed by the Competition prior to that Player playing in a Competition Match;

 Or

 (ii) signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing which is countersigned by an Officer of the Club and witnessed by an Officer of the opposing Club and submitted to the Competition within two days of the match. The Player shall not play again until the Club is in possession of the approval of the Competition. A maximum of 2 players may be registered in accordance with this paragraph 18(A)(ii);

 Or

(iii) registered through WGS.

 Any registration form which is sent by either of the means set out at Rules 18(A) (i) or ii) above that is not fully and correctly completed will be returned to the Club unprocessed. If a Club attempts to register a player via WGS but does not fully and correctly complete the necessary information via WGS, the registration will not be processed.

 For clubs registering players under Rules 18(A) (i) or (ii) registration forms will be provided in a format to be determined by the Competition. For Clubs registering players via WGS (under Rule 18 (A) (iii) Clubs must access WGS in order to complete the registration process.

 (iv) Registration forms may also be submitted to the (Registrations) Secretary by electronic mail prior to the Player playing in a Competition Match. The original document must be forwarded by email to the appropriate Officer of the Competition within 2 days of the Competition Match.

 Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(B) (i) Contract players are not permitted in this Competition with the exception of those Players who are registered under Contract with the same Club who have a team operating at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

 It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that any Player registered to the Club has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate. Clearance is required for any Player aged 10 and over crossing borders including Wales, Scotland and Ireland. In addition, a player is not eligible to play in this competition who receives any form of payment, other than the reimbursement of expenses incurred, for playing in a match under the jurisdiction of the Cheltenham League.

 (ii) Each Club must have at least 11 Players per Team registered by 14th August before the start of each Playing Season.

(C) A Player that owes a Football Debt (as defined under the Football Debt Recovery Regulations) to any Club(s) shall be permitted to register and play for a Club in the Competition, save that the Player may be liable to be suspended from playing for that Club should the Player fail to comply with the terms of the Football Debt Recovery Regulations in respect of that Football Debt.

(D) A fee as set out in the Fees Tariff shall be paid by each Club/team for each player registered.

(E) The Management Committee shall decide all registration disputes.

 In the event of a player signing a registration form or having a registration submitted for more than one Club, priority of registration shall decide for which Club the player shall be registered. The Registrations Secretary shall notify the Club last applying to register the player of the fact of the previous registration.

(F) It shall be a breach of rule for a player to:

 (i) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.

 (ii) Having registered for one Club in the Competition, register for another Club in the competition in that season except for the purposes of a transfer.

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

 Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(G) (i) The Management Committee shall have the power to accept the registration of any player subject to the provisions of Rule 18 (G) (ii) and (iii) below.

 (ii) The Management Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any player or may fine any player at their discretion who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities. (Subject to Rule 7).

 (iii) The Management Committee shall have power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct (subject to Rule 7) subject to the right of appeal to the Sanctioning Authority or FA or the relevant County Football Association. Where the Management Committee does not have enough information to enable it to make a decision pursuant to the above power, it may apply, in its absolute discretion, to the Sanctioning Authority or The FA for further information.

 Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated proven misconduct, which may deter a participant from being involved in this Competition.

 (iv) For a player who has previously had a registration removed in accordance with Rule 18(G) (iii) but has a registration accepted at the expiry of exclusion will be considered to be under a probationary period of 12 months. Whilst under a probationary period, should the player commit a further act of proven misconduct under the jurisdiction of the Competition, (excluding standard dismissals), the Competition would be empowered to consider a further charge of bringing the Competition into disrepute.

 (Note: Action under Rule 18(G) (iii) shall not be taken against a player in cases of the Player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any event be subject to an appeal to the Sanctioning Authority or The FA. All decisions must include the period of restriction. For the purpose of this Rule, bringing the competition into disrepute can only be considered where the player has received in excess of 112 days’ suspension, or 10 matches in match-based discipline, in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.

(H) Subject to compliance with FA Rule C2(a) when a Club wishes to register a Player who is already registered with another Club it shall submit a transfer form (in a format as determined by the Competition) to the Competition accompanied by a fee as set out in the Fees Tariff. Such transfer shall be referred by the Competition to the Club for which the player is registered. Should this Club object to the transfer it should state its objections in writing to the Competition and to the Player concerned within three days of receipt of the notification. Upon receipt of the Club’s consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within three days, the Registrations Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the Player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date.

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

(I) A player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after 31st March except by special permission of the Management Committee.

(J) A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played and shall produce such records on demand by the Management Committee.

(K) A register containing the names of all players registered for each Club, with the date of Registration shall be kept by the Registrations Secretary and shall be open to inspection of any duly appointed member Club representative at Management Committee meetings, or at other times mutually arranged. Registrations are valid for one season only.

 In the event of a player without a written contract changing his status to that of a contract player with the same Club, another Club in the Competition or with a Club in another Competition his registration as a player without a written contract will automatically be cancelled and declared void unless the Club conforms to the exception detailed in Rule 18(B)(i).

(L) A player shall not be eligible to play for a team in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding match (as specified in Rule 22(a)) unless the player has played 7 games for that team in this Competition in the current season.

(M) A team shall not include more than 2 players who have taken part in half or more senior competition matches during the current season unless a period of 21 days has elapsed since they played .

 For the purpose of this Competition a senior competition are Gloucestershire Northern Senior League, Gloucestershire County League, Hellenic League, Western League and Southern League

 In addition, No team, after March 1st, shall include more than 2 players who have taken part in half or more matches of a team in a higher division in this competition during the current season unless a period of 21 days has elapsed since they played

 Applications to play a player who is not otherwise qualified to play under the terms of the above paragraph, must be made IN WRITING to the League, Registration, Fixtures, Disciplinary Secretaries, AT LEAST 24hrs before the kick off time of the match in question, although in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances this time limit may be relaxed. The following details are to be submitted on such applications:

 i) The number of relevant Higher Classification fixtures completed.

 ii) Dates of appearances by the player in question.

 iii) Whether the higher team is playing on the date in question.

 Any player taking part in a match for which he is not eligible is liable to have his registration cancelled at the discretion of the Management Committee.

(N) (i) Subject to Rule 18(N)(ii), any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a Competition Match or Matches where points are awarded shall have the points gained from that Competition Match deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points, and have levied upon it a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 (ii) The Management Committee may vary the sanction as relates to the deduction of points set out at Rule 18(N)(i) only in circumstances where the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or where the ineligibility is related to the Player’s status

 (iii) Where a Club is found to have played an ineligible Player in accordance with Rule 18(N)(i) above, the Management Committee may also, at its discretion:

 (a) Award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

 (b) Levy penalty points against the Club in default; or

 (c) Order that such Competition Match or Matches be replayed (on such terms as are decided by the Management Committee).

(The following clause applies to Competitions involving Players in full-time secondary education):

(O) (i) Priority must be given at all times to school and school organisations activities.

 (ii) The availability of children must be cleared with the Head Teachers (except for Sunday Leagues).

 (iii) To play open age football the player must have achieved the age of 16.

 **19. CLUB COLOURS**

(A) Every Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the Secretary by 1st June who shall decide as to their suitability.

 Any Club wishing to change its colours during the Playing Season must obtain permission from the Management Committee.

 Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from all other players and the match officials.

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

 Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify its opponents the colours in which they will play (including the colour of the goalkeeper’s jersey) at least 3 days before the match.

 If, in the opinion of the referee, two Teams have the same or similar colours, the AWAY team shall make the change. Should a Team delay the scheduled time of kick off for a Competition Match by not having a change of colours they will be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 Shirts must be numbered, failing which a fine will be levied in accordance the Fines Tariff

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

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

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

 The Management Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facility are suitable for matches in the Competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground.

 Football Turf pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA’s Register of Football Turf pitches. For clubs playing at Step 7 and below a pitch must be tested (by a FIFA accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to the FA. The FA will give a decision on the suitability for use and add the pitch to the Register.

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

All Competition matches shall have duration of 90 minutes unless a shorter time not less than sixty (60) minutes is mutually arranged by the two Clubs in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves.

Two matches involving the same two teams can be played on the same day providing the total playing time is not more than 120 minutes.

The times of kick-off shall be fixed at the AGM and can only be altered by the mutual consent of the two competing clubs prior to the scheduled date of the match with written notification given to the Competition at least 7 days prior.

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

 The home Team must provide goal nets, corner flags and at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if the footballs are unsuitable. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 All Clubs shall be expected to play fixtures on every weekday throughout the season and if no fixture appears to be arranged the Club Secretary is responsible for contacting the Assistant Secretary to confirm that no fixture has been arranged.

(B) Except by permission of the Management Committee all matches must be played on the dates originally fixed or as rearranged by the Assistant Secretary, but priority shall be given to The Football Association and parent County Association Cup Competitions. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a match with the consent of the Assistant Secretary in charge of Fixtures. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 In the case of a revised fixture date, the Clubs must be given by the Competition 5 clear days’ notice of the match (unless otherwise mutually agreed).

 Any Club may, upon application to the Assistant Secretary in charge of Fixtures, request two vacant possible fixture dates, per team, during each season, such application having been lodged with the Assistant Secretary at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the fixture in question

(C) The Secretary of the home Club must give notice, full particulars of the location of, and access to, the ground and time of kick-off to the match officials and the Secretary of the opposing Club at least 3 clear days prior to the playing of the match. If not so provided, the away club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(D) A minimum of 7 players will constitute a team for a Competition match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(E) (i) In competitions where points are awarded, home and away matches shall be played. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall have power to impose a fine, deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points from the match in question to the opponents, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals. Notwithstanding the foregoing home and away provision, the Management Committee shall have power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent’s ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.

(ii) Any Club with more than one Team in the Competition shall always fulfil its fixture, within the Competition, in the following order of precedence: - First Team, Reserve Team, A Team.

(iii) Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a fixture has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the (Fixtures) Secretary, the Competition Referees Appointments Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials.

 (iv) In the event of a match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it shall be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Management Committee. Failing such agreement and notification to the Fixtures Secretary within 7 days the Management Committee shall have power to order the match to be played on a named date or on or before a given date. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and the Clubs involved agree, the Management Committee shall also be empowered to order the score at the time of an abandonment to stand.

 Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

 (v) The Management Committee shall review all matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) they shall be empowered to award the points for the match to the opponent. In cases where a match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both teams or their Club member(s), the Management Committee shall rule that neither Team will be awarded any points for that Competition Match and it shall not be replayed. No fine(s) can be applied by the Management Committee for an abandoned Competition Match.

 (vi) The Management Committee shall review any match that has taken place where either or both teams were under a suspension imposed upon them by the Association or Affiliated Association. In each case the team that was under suspension would be dealt with in the same manner as if they had participated with ineligible players in accordance with Rule 18(N)(i) above. Where both teams were under suspension the game must be declared null and void and shall not be replayed.

(F) A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use 5 substitute Players in any Competition Match.

The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitute Players not later than 1 minute before the start of the Competition Match and a Player not so named may not take part in that Competition Match.

A Player who has been named as a substitute before the start of the Competition Match but does not actually play in that game shall not be considered to have been a Player in that Competition Match within the meaning of Rule 18 of this Competition.

(G) The half time interval shall be of 5 minutes duration, but it shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the match referee.

(H) The Teams taking part in Competition Match shall identify a team captain who may wear an armband shall have a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of his team mates. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(I) If a club's home pitch is not able to be used, because of adverse weather conditions, and the home club has designated an alternative pitch for use in such circumstances, the venue of the match will be switched to the alternative pitch. The arrangements for the match to be played on the alternative pitch will be undertaken by the Assistant Secretary in charge of fixtures. Home clubs failing to inform the Assistant Secretary of the need to switch to an alternative pitch in enough time to ensure that all necessary arrangements can be made will be charged with failing to fulfil a fixture under the provisions of rule 20(E)(i). If the home side has not designated an alternative pitch to be used, then the match will be postponed.

(J) In complying with the requirements of rule 20(C), the home club must copy the email, which they send, to the email address designated by the League for the receipt of such messages. If the home club has designated the use of an artificial surface for use in circumstances in which its usual home ground is unavailable, due to adverse weather conditions, details of this venue must also be included in the particulars given to the opposing club.

 **21. REPORTING RESULTS**

(A) The FA Full-Time Facility / The Registration Secretary must receive within **3** days of the date played and prior to 12 noon on the third day, the result of each Competition match in the prescribed manner. This must include the forename(s) and surname of the team players and the Referee markings required by Rule 23, or any other information required by the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff

(B) Both Clubs shall SMS the result of each match to the FA Full-Time Facility by 150 minutes after the prescribed kick off. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff

(C) The match Result notification for all fixtures shall be fully and correctly completed by a responsible member of the club and shall be entered on the FA’s Full-Time (as prescribed by the Competition) facility by no later than 12 noon on the day that is **3** days after the completion of the fixture. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Any defaulting Club will then be notified by the Registration Secretary that it has a further five days to submit the correctly completed details to the FA’s Full-Time facility.

 (D) Text messages with the details of the result of each competition match, or County Cup match involving one or more League teams, must be sent to Full-Time, in reply to the message received from Full-Time, by each League team involved in the fixture.

 Text message replies with the details of the result must be sent in exactly the format prescribed by the text message sent out by Full-Time, unless otherwise instructed, in advance of the fixture, by the League's Results Secretary.

 If nominated individuals do not receive the text message from Full-Time or that they are unable to respond because of signal reception problems, the result must be rung to the League Results Secretary, by each League team involved in the fixture, to the timescales detailed above

(G) For all fixtures, each club SHALL hand a list of the first names and the surnames of players taking part in the fixture (including the names of nominated substitutes) to the referee and a representative of the opponents in the presence of the referee at least 1 minute before the stated time of kick off. This list should be signed by the club official in charge of the team, the referee and the representative of the opposition to whom the sheet is handed. Each player named on the team sheet must be assigned a number and this number must be written on the sheet next to the player’s name. The numbers on the shirts must correspond to the number the player has been given on the team sheet. No player who is named on the team sheet and who was eligible to play in the match in question at the time that the team sheet was handed to the match referee shall be able to subsequently become ineligible for that match, for whatever reason. The home team shall be responsible for forwarding its copies of the teamsheets for both teams for each fixture to the League Results Secretary within 3 days of the match

 **22. DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP**

(A) In Competitions where points are awarded Team rankings within the Competition will be decided by points with three points to be awarded for a win and one point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the end of the Playing Season shall be adjudged the winners. Matches must not be played for double points.

In the event of two or more Teams being equal on points at the end of the Playing Season, rankings shall be determined by goal difference (where the goals scored against each Team shall be deducted from the goals scored by that Team and the Team with the most favourable goal difference shall be placed highest).

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team which has scored the most goals during the Playing Season shall be placed highest.

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team that has won the most matches during the Playing Season shall be placed highest.

In the event of two or more Teams still being equal, the Team which has the better playing record against the other Team in their head to head Competition Matches during the Playing Season will be placed highest.

If the records of two or more Teams are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the Teams affected shall play a deciding match or matches under conditions as determined by the Management Committee.

(B) Automatic promotion shall be applied for the first 1 team and automatic relegation shall be applied for the last 2 teams in each Division except as provided for hereunder, subject to the provisions of Rule 2(L).

 (i) Should one or more teams withdraw from any one Division after the fixtures have commenced an equal number of teams to those withdrawing in that Division shall not be automatically relegated.

 (ii) Vacancies occurring after the conclusion of the Playing Season may be filled in any of the following ways:

 (a) retention of otherwise relegated Team(s); or

 (b) additional promotion of the next ranked Team(s) from the division below; or

 (c) election

 (iii) The last 2 teams in the lowest Division shall retire, but be eligible for re-election except as below and be subject to the conditions of Rule 22 (B)(i)

 (iv) Should either or both leading teams in any of the Divisions have its senior team in the next higher Division, promotion shall fall, at the discretion of the General Meeting, to the next highest team or teams in the Division concerned.

 (v) When a senior team is relegated to a lower Division of which its reserve team is a member, or entitled to be a member, such reserve team must accept relegation to, or retain its position in, the next lower Division; and should the senior team be relegated to the lowest Division its reserve team automatically retires from the Competition.

 (vi) If a relegated team from the Gloucestershire Northern Senior League, or the Champion Club of the Cirencester League, is accepted into Division One with no team being promoted or withdrawing from that Division, the Division shall contain one additional team for the forthcoming season. The following season where necessary three teams shall be relegated in any Divisions to regularise the number of teams in each Division.

(C) In addition to the team(s) automatically promoted under Rule 22(B), a maximum of one further team shall be promoted by virtue of being the winner of a series of matches (the “Play-Offs). The eligibility criteria and format of the Play-Offs are as follows: The teams finishing in position 2 to 4 (in Divisions 2-4)will automatically be entered into the Play-Offs. The team finishing 2nd will play the team finishing 5th and the team finishing 3rd will play the team finishing 4th known as the Play-Offs Semi Finals.

 The semi-final will be a single, knockout match or that it will be played at the home ground of the team that finishes the season in the highest League position. The winner of each Play-Off Semi-Final will compete in the play-off final at a neutral venue, with the winning team automatically promoted. If, at the end of the allotted playing time the scores are still level, the result of the match will be resolved by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the decision of the International Board on 27th June 1970.

(D) In the event of a team withdrawing from the Competition before completing 75% of its fixtures for the season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting team shall be expunged from the Competition table. For the purposes of this Rule 22(D) a completed fixture shall include any Competition Match(es) which has been awarded by the Management Committee.

 **23. REFEREES**

 (A) Registered Referees (and Assistant Referees where approved by the FA or County FA) for all matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the Sanctioning Authority.

(B) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee the appointed senior assistant referee shall take charge and a substitute assistant referee appointed by the competing Teams. In cases where there are no officially appointed Match Officials in attendance, the Clubs shall agree upon a referee. An individual thus agreed upon shall, for that Competition Match, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered referee. Individuals under the age of 16 must not participate either as a referee or assistant referee in any Competition Match.

(C) Where assistant referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club assistant referee. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine (in accordance with the Fines Tariff) being imposed on the defaulting Club.

(D) The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final subject to either in the case of a ground of a Local Authority or the owners of a ground, the Representative of that body is the sole arbiter and whose decision must be accepted.

(E) Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the Sanctioning Authority, Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee in accordance with the Fees Tariff (£25) and travel expenses of 0.36 per mile/ or inclusive of travel expenses.

Match Officials will be paid their fees and/or expenses by the home Club before the Competition Match. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(F) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to half fee plus expenses. Where a match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Officials, if they attend the ground, their full fee and expenses.

(G) A Referee not keeping his or her engagement and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be reported to the Association with which he or she is registered.

(H) Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The FA, award marks to the Referee for each match. The name of the Referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the Full-Time Facility. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined or dealt with as the Management Committee shall determine.

(I) The Competition shall keep a record of the markings and, on the Form provided by the prescribed date each season, shall submit a summary to The Football Association/County Association.

(J) The Referee shall submit a report Form, supplied by the Competition, giving the result of the match, the number of players in each team and the time of kick-off to the Disciplinary Secretary within 2 days of the match.

 In the absence of an officially appointed referee, the name of the stand in referee, provided and mutually agreed by the two clubs in accordance with League 23(b), shall be entered on a Club Referee’s Card before the game. This card must then be signed by representatives of both the home side and the away side before the commencement of the match and completed by the stand in referee after the match. The home club Secretary shall then submit the Club Referee’s Card to the League’s Results Secretary within 6 days of the match.

(K) Not Used

(L) Not Used

(M) Dressing Room accommodation and washing facilities must be provided for Referees, and for ALL Divisions the accommodation for Referees shall be separate to the Home and Away teams accommodation for each match played.