



**LEAGUE AND LEAGUE CUP RULES**  
**FOR THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND LEAGUE CUP AND THE**  
**HIGHLAND AND ISLAND LEAGUE AND LEAGUE CUP ("THE RULES")**

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) Unless the context otherwise requires, words or expressions contained in the League and League Cup Competition Rules shall bear the same meaning as in the Articles of Scottish Women's Football.
- (b) Unless the context otherwise requires, words importing the singular only shall include the plural and vice versa.
- (c) The headings are inserted for convenience only and shall not affect the construction of the Rules.
- (d) All references to a ground shall mean a registered ground, unless otherwise specified, within the context of these Rules.
- (e) Disciplinary matters relating to field offences and club officials misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Disciplinary Procedures of Scottish Women's Football.

**1. Name of Competitions**

The Leagues shall be called "The Scottish Women's Highland and Island League", and "The Scottish Women's Football League(s)" unless title sponsorship is achieved.

The League Cup shall be called "The Scottish Women's Highland and Island League Cup", and "The Scottish Women's Football League Cup" unless title sponsorship is achieved.

Scottish Women's Football, shall organise and administer the League(s) and the League Cup(s) in accordance with the Rules and the Laws of the Game, and as directed by the League Management Committee in conjunction with the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group.

## 2. **Management, Nomination and Election**

- (a) The Leagues and the League Cups shall be governed, in accordance with the Rules and the standard procedures of the Scottish Women's Highland and Island League, the Scottish Women's Football League, Scottish Women's Football and the Scottish FA, by a League Management Committee (the Management Committee). There will be one Management Committee for the Highlands & Islands League and one for the Scottish Women's Football League.

Each Management Committee shall comprise a total of seven representatives. The representative's period of tenure shall be for one year from the date of appointment, with the exception of the Chair whose period of tenure shall be three years.

Three representatives shall be nominated by the participating teams in the league and elected at the Scottish Women's Football League Annual General Meeting.

Scottish Women's Football shall nominate a further four representatives including the Chairperson.

A League Administrator, shall provide secretariat and administrative support to the Management Committee(s).

- (b) Management Committee members shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination.

Other club representatives seeking election to the Management Committee shall be nominated by forwarding to the League Administrator in writing their intention to stand for election, and shall be formally supported in writing by the individual's member club.

The names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Women's Football League. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the terms aforesaid, nominations may be received at the Annual General Meeting.

If an election is required to determine the Management Committee representatives from the Scottish Women's Highland and Island League, this will be conducted on the day of the Annual General Meetings by ballot.

- (c) The Management Committee shall meet as often as is necessary to deal with business as it arises.
- (d) Except where otherwise stated, all communications shall be addressed to the League Administrator who shall be responsible for all League and League Cup correspondence and the proceedings of the Management Committee.

Electronic mail (e-mail) shall be the primary method of communication used by clubs and the League Administrator in all correspondence.

- (e) Club communications and correspondence must be issued by the nominated Club Secretary.

### 3. **Powers of Management**

- (a) The Management Committee has responsibility for all matters relating to the League and the League Cup Competition. The Management Committee shall consider, review and implement, where appropriate, recommendations of the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group.
- (b) Each member of the Management Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Committee meetings and have one vote thereat. No member shall be allowed to vote on any matter directly appertaining to themselves or the club which they represent.

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

- (c) The Management Committee shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce the Rules and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Leagues and the League Cup Competitions, in consultation with the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group, including any not provided for in the Rules.

Except where the Rules provide for the imposition of a set penalty any Club, Official or Player alleged to be in breach of a Competition Rule must be formally notified in writing and given the opportunity to present their case before the Management Committee.

- (d) The decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal in accordance with the Scottish Women's Football Appeals Procedure and Guidelines.

Decisions of the Management Committee (Rule 29 (c) excluded) must be notified in writing to those concerned within seven days.

The decision against which any appeal is made will only be set aside when the appeal is received by Scottish Women's Football and agreed to be in order, and confirmation is received in writing by the parties concerned in accordance with Article 44 of the Scottish Women's Football Appeals Procedure and Guidelines.

- (e) The quorum for any meeting of the Management Committee shall be five, provided that the Chairperson must be present for a meeting to be quorate.
- (f) The Management Committee have the authority to convene an Emergency Committee meeting where urgent attention or a decision is required.

The Emergency Committee shall comprise the Management Committee Chair and one Management Committee member representing the Scottish Women's Highland and Islands League and one Management Committee member representing Scottish Women's Football.

In the absence of the Chair, a Scottish Women's Football nominated Management Committee representative will chair the Emergency Committee meeting.

The quorum for any meeting of the Emergency Committee shall be three.

- (g) Management Committee representatives may be removed from office if they are absent from three consecutive meetings without the consent of the Chairperson and the Management Committee, by simple majority, resolve that they should cease to hold office.
- (h) The Management Committee/League Administrator shall, as it may deem necessary, have the power to fill in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur on the committee after consultation with the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group.

#### **4. The League Trophies and the League Cup Trophies – Ownership and Presentation**

- (a) The trophies, are the property of Scottish Women's Football.
- (b) The League trophy shall be presented to the team that win the League. The League Cup trophy shall be presented to the team that wins the League Cup.

- (c) The League Cup trophy(s) shall be engraved and returned to the Management Committee before the end of April in the year following presentation, in good order and condition. The League trophy shall be returned to the Management Committee before the end of September in the year following presentation, in good order and condition.

**5. Awards to Players and Officials**

The Management Committee shall present a medal, 22 in total, in such form as the Management Committee may decide to the winners and the runners up of the League.

The Management Committee shall present a medal, 22 in total, in such form as the Management Committee may decide to the winners and the runners up of the League Cup Competition.

**6. Eligible Clubs**

The clubs competing in the League and the League Cup Competitions must be in membership of Scottish Women's Football.

**7. Compliance with Articles, League and League Cup Competition Rules**

The clubs eligible to compete in the Competitions shall be subject to both the Articles of Scottish Women's Football, the Scottish FA and the Rules, as amended from time to time.

**8. Season**

The Competitions shall run as decided by the Management Committee following recommendation by the League Administrator, the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group and the SWF Board.

**9. Confirmation of Clubs Competing in the Leagues**

- a) All Clubs shall complete the annual affiliation process to Scottish Women's Football which includes:
  - i) Payment of the Club Annual Affiliation Fee and any outstanding fines, fees and monies from the previous season; and
  - ii) Agreement to adhere to the Laws of the Game, these Rules, the Articles, the Code of Ethics and all SWF policies

A club shall not participate in these Competitions until the Affiliation Fee has been paid.

- b) New teams/clubs proposing to play in the SWFL league(s) must notify the league administrator, in writing, by the 1 November that they are seeking admission to the SWFL league(s) for the following season. The management committee will then circulate their proposed allocation of teams to

leagues, to clubs for consideration at the SWFL AGM, subject to teams/clubs complying with 9 a) above.

For the avoidance of doubt any team/club which withdraws from the league during the season will be treated as a new team/ club for the purposes of this rule.

#### **10. League Fixtures**

(a) The fixtures shall be arranged in the manner directed by the League Administrator, ratified by the Management Committee, and shall be played on or before the scheduled date with the agreement of both teams. Three points shall be awarded to a team for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a loss.

The League Administrator shall issue to the clubs the fixtures not later than 20th December prior to the commencement of each season.

The home club shall, at least five working days prior to a fixture date, confirm the venue (including travel directions), kick-off time and the colour(s) they are intending to play in, in writing to the opposing club, the League Administrator and the appointed match officials. The away club shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such notification.

The final round of League fixtures in each season shall have all matches scheduled with the same time of kick-off, unless otherwise agreed by the Management Committee.

(b) Any dispute between two or more clubs as to the arrangement of fixtures shall be referred to, and decided by, the Management Committee if the League Administrator is unable to find a suitable solution.

(c) If a club wishes to apply for a postponement of a fixture date such notification must be made to the League Administrator at least 7 working days prior to the date of the originally scheduled fixture. Such application must be made on a form supplied by the League Administrator containing the reason for the application, the opposing club's approval and an agreed proposed new fixture date.

Teams may only be granted a maximum of 3 postponements in any one season and may not apply for any postponements after 1<sup>st</sup> October in any season.

If, for unforeseen reasons, the home club is forced to change ground, the club must notify the League Administrator, the visiting club and the appointed match officials immediately.

Where a club's ground (or standby ground) is unplayable or unavailable on the day set for the playing of the match, both clubs can agree to reverse the venue subject to the permission of the League Administrator.

No alterations of fixtures, dates, kick-off times, grounds can be made without the prior confirmation of the League Administrator.

- (d) Notice of the postponement of any match due to an unplayable ground, or other causes over which neither club has control, must be given immediately by the home club to the visiting club, the appointed match officials and the League Administrator.

The home club should, upon request, be able to provide the League Administrator / Management Committee with written confirmation of a decision to postpone a match due to an unplayable ground signed by the ground owner.

It is the responsibility of both competing clubs to agree upon a re-scheduled fixture date and advise the League Administrator, in writing, within 7 working days from the original fixture date.

- (e) The postponement or abandonment of League fixtures requires to be immediately reported in writing to the League Administrator by the club(s) concerned.
- (f) Any match not completed, except as provided for in Rule 29 "Infringement of Rules", may be ordered to stand as a played match, or may be replayed in its entirety as the Management Committee may determine.
- (g) In extenuating circumstances, the Management Committee shall have the power to re-schedule matches, other than those prescribed in this Rule, to facilitate the smooth running of the Competition.
- (h) In the event of a club withdrawing during the course of the playing season, all points gained by clubs winning or drawing against the club withdrawing from a League shall be deducted. Similarly, goals for and against shall be declared null and void.

- (i) It is the responsibility of the home club to notify the match result and related information to the League Administrator in accordance with the guidelines agreed by the Management Committee.
- (j) The home club must ensure that the visiting club and the match officials have access to the changing facilities a minimum of 60 minutes prior to a League and League Cup match.

#### **11. Promotion and Relegation**

- (a) At the end of the season's League Competition, the team in each League securing the highest number of points shall be declared the Champion team of the League.

There is no promotion or relegation to/from any other Scottish Women's Football League.

- (b) If two or more teams are equal on points upon completion of the League, the following criteria are applied to determine the final League positions:-

- (i) Superior goal difference in all matches played.
- (ii) Higher number of goals scored in all matches played.
- (iii) Higher number of points obtained in the matches played among the teams in question.
- (iv) Higher number of goals scored away from home in the matches played among the teams in question.

If, following the application of the criteria aforesaid, the teams are still level, the determination of the League Champions, shall be determined by the teams playing a deciding game, or games, in such manner and under such conditions as the Management Committee may decide.

- (c) If any team(s) in the Leagues is expelled, resigns, or retires for any reason before the commencement of the playing season, the Management Committee will have full powers to deal with the situation as it deems appropriate.
- (d) For all circumstances not covered in the paragraphs above, the Management Committee will have full powers to deal with the situation as it deems appropriate.

#### **12. League Cup Ties**

- (a) All clubs participating in the Highlands and Islands League and the Scottish Women's Football League are eligible to enter the respective League Cup.



- (b) The format of the draw, shall be communicated following confirmation of the number of teams entered at the point of affiliation and arranged in the manner approved by the Management Committee. Fixtures shall be played on or before the dates arranged.
- (c) The home club shall, at least five working days prior to a fixture date, confirm the venue (including travel directions), kick-off time and the colour(s) they are intending to play in to the opposing club, the League Administrator and match officials in writing. It is the responsibility of the home team to advise the match official(s) once appointed of the match arrangements as outlined above. The away club shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such notification. Kick off shall be arranged at a suitable time agreed by both teams.
- (d) Any dispute between two or more clubs as to the arrangement of League Cup ties shall be referred to, and decided by, the Management Committee.
- (e) In each round of the League Cup Competitions, with the exception of the Final, ties will be played on the ground of the club first drawn in the ballot.

Where a club's ground is unavailable or unplayable, on the day(s) set for playing the tie, the competing clubs may agree to reverse the venue subject to the permission of the League Administrator.

The home club should, upon request, be able to provide the League Administrator / Management Committee with a written confirmation of a decision to postpone a League Cup tie due to an unplayable ground signed by the ground owner.

- (f) The Final tie of the League Cup Competition will be played at a neutral venue, unless otherwise decided by the Management Committee.
- (g) If a League Cup tie is drawn after 90 minutes, an extra thirty minutes shall be played. Thereafter, if the tie is still undecided the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the rules laid down by the IFAB.
- (h) If two or more teams are equal on points upon completion of the League Cup Group Stages, the following criteria are applied to determine the final Group positions:-
  - (i) Superior goal difference in all matches played.
  - (ii) Higher number of goals scored in all matches played.

- (iii) Higher number of points obtained in the matches played among the teams in question.
- (iv) Higher number of goals scored away from home in the matches played among the teams in question.

On completion of the group stages, 16 teams will qualify for the knock out stage.

### **13. Grounds for League Fixtures and League Cup Ties**

- (a) All clubs in the Leagues shall have a registered ground, the specific details of which will be provided to the League Administrator, prior to the commencement of the season.

### **14. Number of Players, Substitutes and Club Officials**

A team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to 7 substitutes. In accordance with the IFAB Laws of the Game, a match can start with as few as 7 players.

Rolling substitutes may be used in any match.

Up to a maximum of 6 approved officials may be listed on the official Team Line.

In League Cup ties, the players in a team may be changed from match to match, but a club or a team, may not play, or list as a named substitute, any player who, in the same season, has already played (as one of the eleven first named players or as a fielded substitute) for another club or team, in any other League Cup Competition.

### **15. Dimensions of the Field of Play**

- (a) The field of play shall be compliant with the IFAB Laws of the Game.
- (b) Where possible, spectators should be separated from the field of play by a wall, a rope, a railing or a fence.
- (c) Technical areas, on the same side of the field of play, marked by lines/markers etc., shall be provided at each ground.

### **16. Playing Field**

All League and League Cup Competition matches shall be played on a natural grass surface or on an artificial turf surface. Artificial turf surfaces must comply with quality standards set for football by FIFA.

Home clubs with artificial turf surfaces will be required to provide a letter from the ground owner/local authority confirming the standard of the surface, as part of the Club Registration Form.

## **17. Goals, Goal Nets, Corner Flags**

Full size goals with goal nets and corner flags shall be used at all matches.

## **18. Provision of Footballs**

Two footballs of first grade quality shall be provided by the home club for each match played

## **19. First Aid Provisions**

It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that first aid cover is available at matches played at its registered and standby grounds.

It is best practice that an appointed club medical officer and club physiotherapist are in attendance. Failing this, a club representative in possession of a current Sports First Aid Certificate or equivalent qualification recognised by Scottish Women's Football shall be in attendance.

## **20. Player Registration and Eligibility**

- (a) To be eligible to participate in the League and League Cup Competitions, players must be registered with Scottish Women's Football, in accordance with the terms of the Scottish Women's Football Registration Procedures.

To be eligible to participate in the senior Leagues and League Cup Competitions, players must be born on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

To be eligible to participate in the final of a League Cup Competition, a player must have been registered to play on the date the semi-final tie was played. Goalkeepers may gain exemption from this rule, only on the written agreement of the League Management Committee.

A goalkeeper who gains exemption may not for any reason whatsoever play in any other position.

- (b) A team in the league can list any player registered for their club, providing they have been born on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007.
- (c) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that its players are eligible to play in League and League Cup Competition matches.
- (d) Any team fielding an ineligible player in a League fixture or a League Cup tie may have points deducted from its points total in the League, or the result being awarded 3-0 in favour of the

opposing team, and/or be liable to other such penalties as the Management Committee may decide.

- (e) If a player participates in a League fixture or a League Cup tie whilst being ineligible to play in the match as a result of a suspension, the team for which the player has participated may have points deducted from its points total in the League, or the result being awarded 3-0 in favour of the opposing team, and/or be liable to other such penalties as the Management Committee may decide.
- (f) Pending suspensions can only be served by registered players.

#### **21. Playing of Players without Registration (Trialists)**

- (a) No more than three unregistered players (“trialists”) may be allowed to play, or be listed as a substitute for a club in any League match.
- (b) Each trialist may be allowed to play in, or be listed as a substitute for, a maximum of three games (including any match not completed) for any one club, provided she is otherwise eligible to do so. Clubs playing a player in these circumstances must indicate the fact by adding the letter “T” or “X” after the player’s name and date of birth on the official Team Line.
- (c) A Trialist may not be used in any League Matches after the 15<sup>th</sup> October in the current season.
- (d) A player shall not be eligible to play for a club in a League Cup tie unless registered for the club.

#### **22. Team Lines**

- (a) Not later than 30 minutes before the start of a league match, each club shall hand to the referee, a list, and to its opponent, a duplicate, both of which shall be signed by the Secretary or other accredited club official, of the proper names of the players in its team, of such substitutes as are permitted, and of the club officials. The list and the duplicate shall be produced from the Scottish FA Live admin system and must detail the correct strip numbers for each player. Handwritten team lines are not permissible (with the exception of last minute player cancellations).

Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury or due to extenuating circumstances be unable to participate after the submission of the list of players to the referee and prior to kick-off, the following provisions shall apply:-

- (i) If any of the first 11 players listed on the Team Line is not able to start the match for any reason, they may be replaced by any of the 7 substitutes. Rolling substitutes may still be used as required.
  - (ii) If any of the 7 substitutes listed on the Team Line is not able to be fielded for any reason, they may not be replaced, which means that the quota of substitute players will be reduced accordingly.
  - (iii) If a goalkeeper listed on the Team Line cannot be fielded for any reason, she may be replaced by another goalkeeper not previously listed on the Team Line.
- (b) Within three days thereafter the referee shall send to the League Administrator, the lists which were handed to him/her, which he/she shall also sign, and on which he/she shall intimate the result, the goal scorers, time of goals and which substitute or substitutes played in the match. The referee shall also submit a misconduct report.
  - (c) The League Administrator shall ensure that a record of all teamlines is kept, detailing the names of all of the players who take part in the League and League Cup Competitions, via the Football Administration system.

### **23. Registered Colours**

- (a) In accordance with SWF Registration Procedures a club shall register, by means of the Club Registration Form, the colour of shirts, shorts and stockings comprising its first and second choice playing kits. Subject to the terms of paragraphs (b) (c) and (d) below, a club shall play in its registered colours. Exceptionally, a club may, with the approval of the League Administrator, play in colours which are modified from those which have been registered.
- (b) When the first choice colours of two competing clubs are the same, or similar, the away club shall change and play in distinctive colours.
- (c) A club may play in its second colours provided that this does not prevent its opponent from observing the terms of paragraph (b) or from playing in its first choice registered colours if it chooses to do so.
- (d) If there is any dispute as to whether the colours of the teams are the same, or similar, the referee shall decide the issue.

- (e) Goalkeepers shall wear colours which distinguish them from the other players and from the match officials.
- (f) Every player and substitute of each team shall wear a distinguishing number on her shirt or shorts. Such number shall be clearly distinct from the colours of the shirt and shorts in order that it is clearly visible. Numbers on shirts shall be a minimum of 25 cm and maximum of 35 cm in height, and those on shorts a minimum of 10 cm and a maximum of 15 cm.

#### **24. Duration of League Match**

- (a) A match will consist of two halves each of 45 minutes in duration.
- (b) A match which has started and which for any reason is abandoned, may not be continued as a “friendly” match.
- (c) The half time interval shall be of 15 minutes duration, or as otherwise determined by the referee.

#### **25. Appointment of Match Officials**

- (a) Match Officials shall be appointed by Referee Co-ordinators acting on behalf of the Scottish FA Referees’ Association.
- (b) A club may not refuse the services of any match official appointed by, or on behalf of, the Scottish FA.
- (c) The home club is responsible for the payment of the match officials’ fees for League matches and for all League Cup ties up to, and including, the Semi Final Round.
- (d) Should a match official not be notified of the postponement of a match before travelling, he/she shall be entitled to payment of one half of the match fee from the home club.
- (e) A match fee is deemed to be inclusive of expenses.

#### **26. Protests**

- (a) When a club intends to lodge a protest in connection with events during a match, the Secretary of the club or other accredited official shall inform a match official and a club official of the

opposing team within 30 minutes of the end of the match, and shall, at the same time, inform them of the grounds of protest.

The Secretary or other accredited club official shall be required to confirm the protest in writing by recorded delivery letter, to the League Administrator by the end of the third day, following completion of the match.

The League Administrator will confirm receipt of the protest to both clubs and the match officials and the nature of the protest(s). A deposit of £50 will be lodged at the same time.

- (b) The Management Committee shall determine the outcome of a protest, properly constituted in accordance with the terms of paragraph (a) above, and shall have the power to retain the deposit, to order either club to pay such sum towards defraying the expenses incurred as may be considered desirable and to take such action as it deems fit.
- (c) Any objection to the ground, goal posts, crossbars, or other appurtenances of the game shall be intimated to the referee before the start of the match. The club on whose ground the match is played shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with Rule 15, and Law 1 of the Laws of the Game - The Field of Play.
- (d) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal to Scottish Women's Football in accordance with Article 44 of the Scottish Women's Football Appeals Procedure and Guidelines.

Decisions of the Management Committee (Rule 29 (c) excluded) must be notified in writing to those concerned within seven days.

The decision against which any appeal is made will only be set aside when the appeal is received by Scottish Women's Football and agreed to be in order, and confirmation is received in writing by the parties concerned.

## **27. Protest – Interested Party**

If a member of the Management Committee is connected with a club which is involved in a protest, or in any disciplinary hearing where a penalty may be imposed on the club or an official or a player of the club, then he/she shall not sit in the Management Committee while the matter is being determined.

## **28. Disorderly Conduct**

Clubs are responsible where practically possible for the behaviour of their players, officials, members, supporters and any person carrying out a function at a match on their behalf. In the event of damage being sustained to a ground where a League or League Cup Competition match is played as a consequence of misbehaviour by a player, official, member, supporters, or any other person acting on behalf of or associated with a club, then that club shall be responsible for any costs arising in the reparation of same. The Management Committee shall have the power to request such reports as may be necessary in determining responsibility for restitution and may additionally impose upon any club a censure, fine, expulsion from the competition or suspension if, in the opinion of the Management Committee, a ground is the subject of damage by that club's representatives or those associated with it.

## **29. Infringement of Rules**

- (a) Any club, official, player, or other person, who infringes any of these Rules, shall be liable to a sanction determined by the Management Committee or such other sanction(s) as specified within these Rules. The Management Committee has the power to investigate, consider and determine any allegations relative to the infringement of these Rules and to impose such sanction(s), as specified within these Rules, as it considers appropriate in order to deal justly with the case in question.
- (b) A club which is found to have infringed these Rules, may be liable to replay a specific match in question, at a time, venue and other conditions as deemed appropriate by the Management Committee in its absolute discretion.
- (c) In the event that the Management Committee decides to impose a replay or suspension on a club which is found to have infringed these Rules, an appeal from the club against such decision must be dispatched in writing to Scottish Women's Football within three days of the date of the Management Committee's written determination to the club.

## **30. Alterations and Additions to Rules**

- (a) Alterations or additions may only be made at the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Women's Football League.
- (b) Notice of any proposed alteration or addition for consideration at the ensuing Annual General Meetings shall be submitted in writing and be in the League Administrator's hands not later than 31st August.