



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL CHALLENGE CUP RULES



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1. INTRODUCTION

- (a) Unless the context otherwise requires, words or expressions contained in the Challenge 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.

2. GOVERNANCE RULES

2.1 Competition Name and Structure

- A) The Competitions will be known as:
 - "SWF Youth Challenge Cup" (14, 16, 18)
SWF organise and administer the Competitions in accordance with the Rules and the Laws of the Game.
- B) 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 League Administrator in relation to them.
- C) The clubs eligible to compete in the Competitions shall be subject to the Articles of Scottish Women's Football and all SWF Policies as amended from time to time.

2.2 Confirmation of Eligible Clubs

- A) Regional teams (Club Pathway) and community membership teams must enter the Challenge Cup via the affiliation window and must opt-in for each team they wish to enter.

B) Any withdrawal from the SWF Challenge Cup after a draw may be subject to a **penalty in line with the sanction tariff** unless agreed by the Cup Administrator that there are reasonable unexpected circumstances for the withdrawal.

3. PLAYING SEASON, CONDITIONS OF PLAY, ARRANGEMENTS AND FIELD OF PLAY

3.1. Playing Season

A. The League Administrator shall determine the months in which the cup competitions shall run.

3.2 Conditions of Play

A) The draw for all rounds shall be determined by the number of entrants, undertaken by the Cup Administrator, and the clubs involved shall be advised of the draw format of the competition no later than 21 days before the first round.

B) The draw for the Challenge Cup will be regionalised at rounds prescribed by the Cup Administrator on confirmation of the number of participating entries. Ties shall be arranged in the manner approved by the League Administrator and shall be played on the dates advised by the Cup Administrator.

C) All matches shall be played on or before the prescribed date, as agreed between both clubs and confirmed by the Cup Administrator, and shall be played on the recognised day in which the team drawn as home normally plays. Should the agreement not be met, the arrangement of the Cup tie shall be referred to, and decided by, the Cup Administrator. The only exception is semi-final and final ties, which shall be played on dedicated dates determined within the fixtures calendar.

D) All rounds of the cup shall be decided in one match only. Should the score remain level after full time is complete, then the result of the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the rules laid down by the International Football Board. (Laws of the Game)

E) In accordance with the Laws of the Game, the minimum number of Players which will constitute a Team for a Competition Match is 7.

F) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that a club official in possession of a current Sports First Aid Certificate or equivalent qualification recognised by the Scottish FA is available at all matches played at its registered ground.

- G) The duration of play will be:
 - a. 18's - 90 minutes (two halves of 45 mins)
 - b. 16's - 80 minutes (two halves of 40 mins)
 - c. 14's - 70 minutes (two halves of 35 mins)
- H) A match which has started and which for any reason is abandoned, may not be continued as a "friendly" match.
- I) The half-time interval shall be of 10 minutes duration, or as otherwise determined by the referee.
- J) For 16's - 18s a size 5 ball will be used
- K) For 14s a size 4 ball will be used
- L) All ties shall be played at the recognised ground of the home team, the specific details of which will be provided to the Cup Administrator during the club affiliation process.
- M) Choice of ground for the semi-final and final shall be made by the Scottish Women's Football.

3.3 Arrangements

- A) The home club must confirm the venue (with directions), kick-off time, and team colours in writing to the away club, League Administrator, match officials, and/or Referee Co-ordinator by 6 pm, five days before the fixture (or by 6 pm Tuesday for Sunday matches). The away club must acknowledge receipt within 24 hours of receiving the notification.
- B) Kick-off times for Saturday and Sunday matches must be between 9 am and 5 pm, or 12 pm and 4 pm if the distance exceeds 100 miles each way unless agreed otherwise. Weekday matches must kick off no later than 8 pm unless mutually agreed otherwise.
- C) Failure by the home club to meet the notification deadline may result in a fine or other disciplinary action as determined by the Cup Administrator. The away club's failure to acknowledge receipt may lead to follow-up communication requirements or potential sanctions if issues arise.
- D) Any club without just cause failing to fulfil its fixture obligations in respect of any such match in the Cup on the appointed date or dates shall be liable to such sanctions as the Cup Administrator may determine, but not limited to including a fine or expulsion from the competition.
- E) Any club failing to fulfil its fixture obligations shall be liable to pay compensation for any actual expenses incurred as a direct result of its failure. The amount of compensation payable in these circumstances will be determined by the Cup Administrator.
- F) Applications for reimbursement shall be lodged in writing with the Cup Administrator not later than five days following the match.
- G) In the event of a club withdrawing during the course of the Cup, the opposing team from the previous round shall automatically qualify for the next round of the Cup, unless otherwise determined by the Cup Administrator.

- H) It is the responsibility of the home club to notify the match result and related information to the Cup Administrator (by text or e-mail) no later than 60 minutes following the conclusion of the match.
- I) The home club must ensure that the visiting club and the match official(s) have access to the changing facilities (for the avoidance of doubt this includes toilet and hand washing facilities) a minimum of 60 minutes prior to a **Challenge Cup match**. If the venue cannot be found with toilet facilities and all possible options explored, clubs must instead signpost the nearest appropriate facilities.
- J) Any dispute between two or more clubs as to the arrangement of Cup ties shall be referred to, and decided by, the Cup Administrator.
- K) In each round of the Cup Competitions, with the exception of the Semi-final and Final, ties will be played on the ground of the club first drawn in the ballot.
- L) The Semi-Final and Final ties of the Cup Competition will be played at neutral venues unless otherwise decided by the Cup Administrator.

3.4 Appointment of Match Officials

- A) Match Officials shall be appointed by the Referee co-ordinators acting on behalf of Scottish Women's Football. The appointment of assistant referees may be made on behalf of the Association by a Referees' Association as deemed appropriate.

Appointments shall take precedence over all other appointments, except with the permission and consent of the Association.

- B) A team may not refuse the services of any match official appointed by, or on behalf of, the Association.
- C) The home club is responsible for the payment of the match officials' fees for all Scottish Cup ties up to, and including, the Quarter Final Round.
- D) The abandonment of a Cup fixture requires to be immediately reported in writing to the Cup Administrator by the club(s) concerned. Factors that will be considered are the duration of the match played, the reason for abandonment, the time of the season, and calendar constraints.
- E) A match fee is deemed to be inclusive of expenses.
- F) In all Cup Competition matches each team if requested, shall supply a team official who may be called upon to act as an assistant referee
- G) In the event that the appointed referee fails to appear, it is the responsibility of the two participating clubs to reach a signed agreement with regard to appointing a club official to supervise the match.
- H) Match official fees are as follows:
14's – 18's (11v11) - £50
- E) A match fee is deemed to be inclusive of expenses.

3.5 Field of Play

- A) For 14's, 16's and 18's age groups the length of the field of play shall be compliant with the dimensions provided in the IFAB Laws of the Game.
- B) Spectators should be separated from the field of play by a wall, a rope, a railing or a fence (the distance from the touchline should be a minimum of 1m).
- C) Spectators shall be positioned on the opposite side of the field of play from the technical areas.
- D) Technical areas, on the same side of the field of play, marked by lines/markers etc., shall be provided at each ground (the distance from the touchline should be 1m).
- E) Matches in the Challenge Cup Competition(s) 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.
- F) The home club is responsible for ensuring that the ground is of a standard that will not compromise the safety of players or spectators.
- G) Appropriate size goals with goal nets shall be used at all matches. Corner flags are recommended at all matches as per IFAB rules.
- H) Two Match balls of first-grade quality shall be provided by the home club for each match played. *Specified type and brand as per SWF partnership agreement.
- I) Scottish Women's Football shall provide the match balls for the semi-finals and final.

4. QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

4.1 Player eligibility

- A) To be eligible to participate in the Youth Challenge Cup Competition football, players must be registered with the Scottish FA through Scottish Women's Football.
- B) For all rounds up to and including the semi-final, a player must have been a recognised playing member of her club.
- C) This means a Player is one who, being in all other aspects eligible, has:
 - i. signed a fully and correctly completed Scottish Football Association Player Registration Form, have the status confirmed on their COMET Player Profile and has subsequently been added to a team's Player Catalogue. A Player must be added to a team Catalogue by no later than 4pm on the Friday before a weekend Competition Match, or no later than 4pm on the day of a midweek Competition Match, and the Catalogue has been confirmed by SWF prior to that Player playing in a Competition Match.

Guide: [Player Registration \(exists on Admin system\)](#)

Guide: [Add player to Catalogue](#)

- ii. If a Player is under 16 years of age, the registration form must be signed (in pen or electronically) by the Player's guardian.

- D) Any registration that is not fully and correctly completed will be returned to the Club unprocessed and the Player classed as unregistered. If a Club attempts to register a Player via the Player Registration System but does not fully and correctly complete the necessary information via the Player Registration System, the registration will not be processed.
- E) No player shall be allowed to play in the Cup Final unless she is eligible to participate in the semi-final. This rule however is not relevant to goalkeepers who may gain exemption at any time, should her club contact the Cup Administrator and their request be accepted. Should a goalkeeper gain exemption, she may not under any circumstances whatsoever, play in any other position.
- F) To be eligible to participate in the League and League Cup/Plate Competitions, players must comply with the following Age Eligibility:

Age eligibility for Season 2026:

Age Group	From	To
18s	01-Jan-2008	31-Dec-2010
16s	01-Jan-2010	31-Dec-2012
14s	01-Jan-2012	31-Dec-2014

It should be noted that any girl who is age-eligible to play in different age groups will be considered cup-tied to that age group once they make an appearance (and cannot subsequently play in a different age group cup competition).

- G) A player is Cup-tied for a team if they have already played, as a member of the starting eleven or entered the field as a substitute for another club or team.
- H) Players of teams who withdraw during the course of the playing season who had competed in the Youth Challenge Cup Competition shall not be considered cup-tied. However, players whose teams have already been eliminated from the competition are still cup-tied and may not participate in the same competition for another club in the same season.
- I) Age-eligible players may also play in the SFA Scottish Cup Competition, without being considered cup-tied for their recognised youth. Relevant age criteria must be met.
- J) To play up age groups and out with age eligibility outlined above for the Youth Challenge Cup, A player must have an approved dispensation application for that season's competitions.
- K) Each team must add its players to their "Player Catalogue" before the competition begins. Once the catalogue is created, a team's "List of Players" will be based on this catalogue.

4.2 Playing of Players without Registration (Trialists)

A) Trialists are not allowed to play or be listed as a substitute for a team in the Challenge Cup.

4.3 Team List Submission:

Not later than 30 minutes before the start of a League Match, each Club shall submit the Team Line on COMET. Handwritten Team lines are not permissible. 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.
- 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.
- iv. The referee shall complete the match report on Comet on completion of the match. On which they shall intimate the result, the goal scorers, time of goal scorers, time of goals and which substitute or substitutes played in the Match. The referee shall also submit a misconduct report.

Failure to comply will result in a sanction in accordance with the [Sanction Tariff](#).

Any club, on discovering an ineligible player has been listed on a team line should bring this to the immediate attention of the League Administrator, who shall advise. The League Management Committee and take any required action.

5 TEAM LINES, CLUB COLOURS, POSTPONEMENTS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

5. 1 Teamlines

- A) For 14's, 16's and 18's age groups a team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to 7 substitutes of whom all may take part in the match. Players who have been substituted may return to the field of play as often as necessary.
- B) Up to a maximum of six approved officials may be listed on the official Team Line.

- C) All players must comply with the requirements of Section 4.
- D) The substitutes' requested details must appear on the team list and be numbered respectively. The Referee will record on the team lists the names and number of the substitutes who actually participated in the tie.
- E) Rolling substitutes may be used in all matches.

5.2 Club Colours

- A) Through the SWF Club Affiliation process each year, a club shall register 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, failing which it shall be liable to disciplinary action. 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 teams are the same, or similar, the away club shall change and play in distinctive colours.
- C) A team 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 a 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 a maximum of 35 cm in height, and those on shorts a minimum of 10 cm and a maximum of 15 cm.

5.3 Postponements

- A) If a club wishes to apply for a postponement of a fixture date, such notification must be made to the Cup Administrator not later than seven days prior to the date of the originally scheduled fixture. Such application must be made on a form supplied by the Cup Administrator containing the reason for the application, the opposing club's approval and an agreed proposed new fixture date.
- B) Postponement of a Challenge Cup game shall only occur with mutual agreement between both the opposing teams and the Cup Administrator. In the absence of unanimous agreement regarding postponement, the original fixture date must be adhered to.
- C) Any request to postpone a match due to players on International Duty will only be accepted when players' selection is confirmed by the Scottish F.A. The Cup Administrator will make the final decision.

- D) If, for unforeseen reasons, the home club is forced to change ground, the club must notify the Cup Administrator, the visiting club and the appointed match officials immediately.
- E) 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 Cup Administrator.
- F) No alterations of fixtures, dates, kick-off times, or grounds can be made without the prior confirmation of the Cup Administrator.
- G) Notice of the postponement of any match due to an unplayable ground, or other cause over which neither club has control, must be given immediately by the home club to the visiting club, the appointed match officials and the Cup Administrator. Any club failing to comply with instructions in this regard shall be referred to Scottish Women's Football.
- H) The home club should, where possible, be able to provide the Cup Administrator with written confirmation of a decision to postpone a match due to an unplayable ground signed by the ground owner.
- I) The postponement or abandonment of a Cup fixture requires to be immediately reported in writing to the Cup Administrator by the club(s) concerned. Factors that will be considered are the duration of the match played, reason for abandonment, time of season, and calendar constraints.
- J) Any match not completed, except as provided for in Rule 8 "Infringements of Rules", may be ordered to stand as a played match, or maybe replayed in its entirety as the Cup Administrator may determine.
- K) In extenuating circumstances, the Cup Administrator shall have the power to re-schedule matches, other than those prescribed in this Rule, to facilitate the smooth running of the Competitions.

6. TROPHY AND AWARDS

- A) The Cup(s), including any replica, is the property of Scottish Women's Football.
- B) The Cup(s) shall be presented to the club which wins the competition.
- C) The Cup(s) shall be returned to Scottish Women's Football no later than the first day of October in the year following presentation, fully engraved and in good order and condition.
- D) For 14's, 16's and 18's Scottish Women's Football shall present a medal, 20 in total, in such form as the League Administrator may decide the winners and the runners-up of the Cups.
- E) A medal shall be presented to the Match Referee, Assistants and Fourth Official if appointed, for the Final ties only.

7. DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Club & Spectator Conduct

Clubs are responsible 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 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. The LMC 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 LMC, a ground is the subject of damage by that Club's representatives or those associated with it.

Fireworks and dangerous objects

The following articles must not be brought into a ground: prohibited weapons, knives, fireworks, smoke canisters, air-horns, flares, weapons, dangerous or hazardous items, laser devices, bottles, glass vessels, cans, poles and any article that might be used as a weapon and/or compromise public safety. It is an offence punishable by law and Unacceptable Conduct for any person to enter or attempt to enter the Ground whilst in possession of any article which is a firework or any article or substance whose purpose or any part of its purpose is the emission of a flare for purposes of illuminating or signalling or the emission of smoke and/or gas and any person in possession of such articles will be refused entry to the Ground and if having entered, to expulsion from the ground and such other sanction as may be determined by SWF.

Alcohol

A person who has alcohol in their possession at any time during, while entering or while trying to enter a ground will be prohibited from entering or will be removed from the ground. A person who is drunk at any time during the match or is drunk while entering or trying to enter will be prohibited from entering the ground or will be removed from the ground.

8. INFRINGEMENT OF RULES

A) Any club, official, player, or other person, who infringes any of these Rules, shall be liable to a fine or suspension, or both or such other sanction(s) as specified within these Rules. Scottish Women's Football 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, not limited to expulsion from the Cup competition.

D) Any club official, player or other person who wishes to make a formal complaint against an infringement of any of these rules or SWF policy must submit SWF's alleged breach of policy form within five working days upon completion of the match. Exceptional circumstances will be considered.

9. ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

- A) All proposed alterations and additions must be submitted to the Board of the SWF, in consultation with the Girls'/Women's Policy Working Group, for approval before the Regional League's AGM. They will then be presented to the SWF AGM for ratification and acceptance. No alterations or additions shall be made to these Rules except at the Annual General Meeting or a General Meeting convened for that purpose. For the avoidance of doubt, any changes to these rules must be submitted for consideration and approval at the Regional League's AGM.
- B) Notice of any proposed alteration or addition for consideration at the ensuing Regional Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Women's Football Youth Regional Leagues shall be submitted in writing and be received by the League Administrator no later than 31st August.
- C) The League Administrator shall circulate a copy of any proposed amendments to all clubs not less than twenty-one days in advance of the Regional Annual General Meeting.
- D) The Board of SWF, in consultation with the Girls/Women's Policy Working Group, shall be empowered to propose any amendment.

Further sanctions

Further sanctions may apply on failure to fulfil fixtures.

- A) Any club failing to fulfil its fixture obligations shall be liable to pay compensation for any actual expenses incurred as a direct result of its failure. The amount of compensation payable in these circumstances will be determined by the Regional Management Committee and shall be based upon the current tariff approved by the Regional Management Committee.

Applications for reimbursement shall be lodged in writing with the League Administrator not later than five days following the match.