

Cheshire County Football Association

Senior Cup Competition Rules

Season 2024-2025

1. Control

- a) The ownership, organisation, control and management of the competition and any rights associated with it of any nature shall be vested entirely and exclusively in the Council of the Cheshire County Football Association.
- b) The Council should have the power to make, delete and amend regulations for the organisation, control and management of the Competition as it, from time to time, deems expedient (the "Competition Rules") subject only to the authority of the Board where such matters relate to financial or commercial matters.
- c) All participants participating in anyway in the competition shall be bound by and comply with the Competition Rules (and any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the competition rules)
- d) The Council shall have the power to appoint a committee (the "Cups Committee") The Cups Committee shall have the power to exercise all powers of the Council in relation to the Competition and to make decisions on all matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to eligibility and qualification) which shall be deemed decisions of the Council and shall be final and binding on all participants in the Competition in relation to these and any other matters not specifically mentioned in the Competition rules. The Cups Committee shall have on behalf of the Council, the power to take such action and make decisions, orders, rulings and impose such penalties as it deems necessary and follow such procedures as it considers appropriate, and such shall be final and binding on all participants subject to rule 17. In considering such matters the Council shall not be bound by any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceedings before a Court of Law. The Cups Committee shall have the power to appoint a Sub-Committee to exercise the powers of the Council in order to expedite decisions to ensure the progress of the Competition.
- e) A Club participating in the Competition shall only have such rights in relation to the Competition (and any match in the Competition) as are expressly granted to the Club under the Competition Rules or by the Association in writing.
- f) In addition to any other action or penalty, the Council shall have the power to disqualify any competing Club, or player for any competing Club which determines is to have breached the Rules of the Association or the Competition Rules (any rules or regulations issued pursuant to the Competition Rules), and the decision of the Council be final and binding.

2. Entry into the Competition

The entry fee for the competition shall be £75 and the closing date for entry is the 31st of August. Full or Associate Member Clubs who do not enter by the required date shall be fined £50 and entered into the competition, if appropriate, and shall be required to pay the entry fee.

3. Eligibility of Players

- a) In all rounds of the competition prior to the final, a player must be a registered player of his club.
- b) Any such registration in the case where a player is under a written contract must have been received and accepted by the Football Association, or in the case of a player

without written contract, registered with the league in which his club competes, by 12 noon on the day prior to the playing of the tie and the registration must be continuous throughout the date of the match.

- c) In order to be eligible to play in the final tie, players must have a 28-day qualification which will have all have been eligible to play in the semi-final ties.
- d) An International Transfer Certificate for players coming from overseas Associations including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland takes precedence over a player's registration. Therefore, this is also required by 12 noon on the day prior to the playing of the tie for the player's registration to be valid.
- e) A player shall not in the same season play for more than one competing club in this Competition. In the case of postponed matches only those players shall be allowed to play who were eligible to play in the original game. A player who has been suspended may play in a postponed, drawn or replayed ties after the term of his suspension has expired.
- f) Any club playing an ineligible player will be struck from the Competition and the Cups Committee or a Committee appointed by the Cups Committee may impose such other penalty as it considers appropriate.
- g) All questions of eligibility or qualification of the competition shall refer to the Association whose decision shall be final.
- h) A player on temporary loan transfer is ineligible to play in this competition unless permission to do so is given by the lending club in writing and the copies received by Cheshire County FA office by 12 noon on the day prior to the date fixed for the playing of the tie.
- i) A player subject to a loan agreement may not play against his parent club in this competition.

4. Playing strength.

Clubs must be represented by their strongest available team. Youth teams are not acceptable in this competition. Any clubs failing to comply with this rule shall be liable to a fine of not less than £500.

5. Competition arrangements.

- a) The names of the clubs entered into the competition shall be placed in one lot and shall be drawn in couples at a time. As each draw up to and including the semi-final ties the club first drawn shall have the choice of ground (subject to conditions of entry as decided by the Association) and rule (6e)
- b) The Association may exempt such clubs as they deem fit from all rounds preceding the semi-finals.
- c) After each drawing, the Secretary shall notify to each of the Clubs drawn the name of the Clubs against who is drawn and the date, and the kick off time by which the game must be played, except that Clubs may, by mutual agreement, make applications to play on any date in the week preceding the conference date.
- d) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against whom it has been drawn within the time intimated to do so, and without sufficient reason for doing so, shall be adjudged to have lost the match, and may be deemed to have been guilty of misconduct, and shall be liable to a fine and/or otherwise dealt with as the Cups Committee shall determine. Any club withdrawing from the competition shall be liable to a fine of not less than £1000.

- e) The Host club shall provide hospitality for the match officials and visiting team after each match to a maximum of £100 which is to be included in the chargeable expenses.

6. Grounds.

- a) All cup ties must be played on private enclosed grounds having appropriate floodlighting facilities and where admission can be charged.
- b) All cup ties must be played on a ground where the playing area is enclosed by a fixed barrier. No person should encroach within this area without the permission of the match officials.
- c) Separate dressing accommodation and separate showers or bathing facilities must be available for each team and the match officials.
- d) All amenities must be approved by the Cups Committee. Club failing to comply with this rule are liable to be struck from the Competition and subject to a fine of not less than £50.
- e) If the ground of the club having choice of ground shall be considered unsuitable for the cup tie, their opponents may protest to the Association, who may order the match to be played on the ground of the protesting club or on a neutral ground. Such protest to be made within six days of the draw being received.
- f) In the case of appurtenances of the ground being temporarily unfit in consequence of special causes, a protest may be lodged with the Referee before the start of the game, the game shall be played under protest, and the Association shall consider such protest. If the protest is sustained it shall order the game to be replayed on such ground and date as it may deem fit.
- g) No club may change its registered address of the ground for the playing of any cup tie without first receiving permission from the Competition Secretary or Association Secretary. Any club found to be in breach of this rule shall be liable for expulsion from the Competition and a fine of not less than £50.
- h) The Association shall have the power to order the game to be played on their opponents ground or neutral ground if the ground of the club having choice is repeatedly unfit thus hindering the progress of the competition.
- i) The home club is responsible with statutory pitch markings, provision of corner posts of regulation height, goal nets and match balls. Failure to provide renders a club liable to a fine of not less than £50 and possibly dismissal from the competition.
- j) Inspection of the ground for fitness may be made only by the appointed Match Officials or other Officials with the prior approval of the Association, sanctioned through the Competition Secretary or Referee Secretary. A Match Postponement Form to be completed in the circumstances outlined on the form and forwarded to the Competition Secretary as directed.
- k) When a match has been postponed or abandoned before the completion of 90 minutes, and neither club being at fault, it should be played on the chosen ground of the first drawn club on or before the following Thursday week. If a match is postponed or abandoned a second time before the completion of 90 minutes and neither club being at fault it should be played as directed by the Council. If a match is postponed on two occasions the Council shall have the power to order the match to be played on a ground of the club second drawn. Matches abandoned through the fault of the Clubs shall be dealt with by the council.
The Council shall have the power to vary these arrangements if it is deemed necessary.

- l) Football Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in this competition provided they meet the required performance standard and are listed on the FA's register of Football Turf Pitches. The HOME club is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with Rule 11, and also allow opponents to train on the facility for a period of 60 minutes before the fixture, if requested.

7. Colours

In the final tie, clubs having similar colours, both must change. In all other ties the HOME club must change. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from the other players. Player's shirts shall be clearly numbered on the back in accordance with the Official Team Sheet. No change of numbers during the match shall be allowed excepting a change of goalkeeper or where a player has been required by the Referee to change his shirt because of a blood injury. Failure to comply with this rule the club will be liable to a fine of £20 for each offence.

8. Officials

Match and Club Officials must be in attendance at least one hour prior to the appointed kick off time. Black uniforms only to be worn. It shall be within the power of the Association to impose fines on referees, assistant referees or club officials who caused late starts or are guilty of other offences. The association should have the power to impose a fine of not less than £5 for each offence.

9. List of Players/Substitutes

- a) Each team shall be allowed to nominate no more than five substitutes in each game, 5 of which may be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Substitutes must be included on the team sheet handed to the Referee before the start of the game (see rule 9b) and only those nominated will be allowed to participate in the game.
- b) In all rounds of the Competition, each club shall provide a list of names of the players in the game including the names of substitutes, to the referee and the representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee, at least 30 minutes before the kick-off time. Players named on the list must wear the corresponding shirt number in the game. Any club failing to carry out these provisions will be to a fine not exceeding £50.
- c) Should a nominated player or substitute sustain an injury after the submission of the 'Official Team Sheet' to the Referee and before kick-off time, he or she may be replaced providing the referee is informed.
- d) Referees are requested to retain the Official Team Sheet for a minimum of 56 days after the game.

10. Team Benches.

- a) In the semi-final and final ties, clubs will be advised by the County Association of the number of technical staff and substitutes who may occupy the team benches and a list of the permitted number of authorised personnel must be provided by each club to the referee at least 30 minutes before kick-off.
- b) With the exception of the Team Official, when issuing instructions, and the substitutes when warming up, all other personnel must remain seated.
- c) The occupants of the bench must behave in a reasonable manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants will be reported by the referee to the County Football Association, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.

11. Location of grounds.

Each home club must confirm in writing to the match officials and the visiting club the location of the ground and their playing colours, seven days before the date of the game. Clubs failing to comply with this rule shall be liable to a fine of not less than £25.

12. Time of Kick Off and Playing Understrength.

Evening fixtures shall kick off at 7:45pm. Clubs must be prepared to kick off at the appointed time. Those clubs responsible for a late kick off shall be fined £5 per minute delayed.

No deviation from the appointed time will be allowed unless prior permission has been given by the Competition Secretary or County Secretary. Clubs not fielding 11 players at the appointed kick off time may be subject to a fine of less than £20 per player short or as the Association shall direct.

13. Duration of Games.

In all rounds of the competition up to and including the final tie, the duration of the game shall be 90 minutes, the half time interval should be 15 minutes, and this only may be altered with the consent of the match referee.

14. Drawn/Postpone Games

- a) In all rounds of the competition up to and including the final tie if the scores are level after 90 minutes the game shall be determined by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the International Football Association Board.
- b) Postponed or abandoned game shall be played by arrangement with Cheshire County FA.
 - i) When a first match has been postponed or abandoned before the completion of 90 minutes and neither club being at fault, it must be replayed on the same ground.
 - ii) Matches abandoned through the fault of Clubs shall be dealt with by the Association.
 - iii) Any postponement by a registered match official will require the completion of the "Match Postponement Form - Cheshire FA Senior Cup".

15. Advice of Result.

Immediately each game is completed the home team must telephone the result to the Competition Secretary or as directed.

Notice of the results of each match together with full names of the completing players (showing name against the number on the shirt worn in the match) shall be sent by each of the competing Clubs on the Match Report Form provided so as to reach the Competition Secretary within 72 hours of the game being played.

Clubs failing to comply with this rule will be subject to a fine of £20 for each offence.

16. Protests.

- a) Protests other than those under rule 6(e) must be lodged in duplicate with the Competition secretary within three days after the match. Two copies of the protest must be lodged and must be accompanied by a fee of £60. If the protest is dismissed such fee may be forfeited to the funds of the Association. The Club adjudged in default may be called upon to pay such expenses as the Association shall determine.
- b) In the Final Tie all protests to player's eligibility must be lodged prior to the conclusion of the game.

- c) Should either of the two clubs in connection with the protested Cup tie have a member on the Council of the Association, such member shall withdraw whilst the said protest is being considered.

17. Provisions Concerning Appeals.

- a) A club, within seven days of receipt by them of written notification of the decision of the Cheshire County FA Cup Committee may appeal against such decision by lodging particulars in duplicate, accompanied by a fee of £35, such appeal being addressed to the Chief Executive of the Cheshire County Football Association Limited for the adjudication of a Board of Appeal, whose decision shall be final and binding on all concerned.
- b) In the event of an appeal being successful the fee shall be returned to the club in whole or part at the discretion of the Board of Appeal, who shall decide by whom the cost of the appeal must be borne.
- c) Any such appeal shall only be permitted on one or more of the following grounds,
 - i) The Cups Committee or a Committee appointed by the Cups Committee misinterpreted/failed to comply with the procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge.
 - ii) The Cups Committee or a Committee appointed by the Cups Committee came to a decision on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached
 - iii) The Cups Committee or a Committee appointed by the Cups Committee imposed the sanction that is excessive.
- d) Any appeal must be made in accordance with such procedures as may be determined by the Cheshire County FA from time to time.
- e) For the avoidance of doubt a Club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the competition.

18. Percentage of Gate.

In all rounds of the competition, the Association make take a percentage of the net gate receipts as decided by the Association at the start of each season. Details of the net gate receipts, showing income and payments of allowable expenses, shall be forwarded on the form provided by the Competition Secretary and opponents within seven days of game being played. Where monies are due to the Association, and or opponent, these must be paid within seven days of the game being played. (See Match Expenses for "allowable expenses"). Clubs failing to comply with this rule shall be liable to be fined.

19. Semi-Final and Final Ties.

- a) In all rounds of the competition, upward including the final tie, if the scores are level after 90 minutes, that shall be determined by the taking of penalty kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the procedure adopted by the international Football Association board.
- b) Each club shall be provided with 25 tickets to gain access to the changing facilities.
- c) In the Semi-Final and Final ties, the Association shall take one third of the net gate and the remainder in each case equally being divided between competing teams, whose second-class travelling expenses shall be paid out of the gate.

20. Award to Finalists.

- a) The Association may present 16 trophies to the winners, runners-up, and trophies to the match officials in the Final Ties.

No player/club official sent from the field of play, or dismissed prior to or after the final tie, for whatever reason, shall receive a trophy/medal on the day.

It shall be open to such a player's club or club official's club to apply to the Competition Secretary, in writing, within 14 days of the final tie, for the player club official to receive a trophy/medal giving reasons why it felt this should be agreed.

The Cups Committee shall have the sole discretion in considering such a request once the alleged misconduct which resulted in the player/club official dismissal has been dealt with by the County Football Association and his decision shall be final and binding.

21. Receipt of the Trophy.

At the conclusion of the Final tie (provided no protest has been lodged) the Cup and Awards shall be Presented on the ground. The winners will be allowed to celebrate and have photos etc taken with the trophy. The Trophy to be returned to a member of the County FA one hour after the end of the game.

On request the winners will be allowed to have access to the Cup for any Presentation Evening or similar event but must be returned to the County FA the day following the event.

Failure to return the trophy by the required date will incur a fine of £100

All Cups belonging to the Competition shall be insured annually by the Cheshire County Football Association

22. Postponed Games.

It is the responsibility of the home club to advise the County Football Association, their Opponents and the Match Officials, when a game has been postponed for whatever reason (See also rule (6H)).

23. Match Expenses.

Allowable Match Expenses.

- a) Match Officials' expenses, Printing and Advertising, Police, Turnstile Operators (were employed), Floodlights (up to a maximum of £50 where used).

These are the responsibilities of the home club when gate receipts are insufficient to cover all such expenses.

- b) The home club must guarantee the incurred transport expenses with the visiting club up to a maximum claim of £200. The travelling expenses of the visiting club must be calculated from the club's headquarters (calculated at £5 per coach mile or a maximum of five cars at 40p per mile both, from the visiting club's headquarters).

Disbursement of Residual Gate.

After payment of the allowable expenses the residual gate shall be dispersed within seven days as follows:

Shared equally by both clubs (subject to the percentage to be paid to the Association). In the semi-final and final ties the Association shall take 1/3 of the net gate.

Disputes.

The Association should decide any dispute as to excessive charges.

Decision of the Council. (Regarding Match Expenses)

Clubs entering the competition being drawn at home and not having a ground acceptable for the playing of the game and then having to play on their opponent's ground, shall be treated as being drawn away from home.

Cup Tie Charges and Expenses.

The minimum charge in all cup ties shall be £5 or the amount charged for first team games of the home club.

Referee and Assistant Referee Fees.

All match official fees are to be paid by the home club.

Cup tie charges and expenses

All rounds (Excluding Final)

Referees fee £65 (including Travel)

Assistant Referee fee £45 (including Travel)

Final Tie

Souvenir Trophy and Travel Expenses @ 40p per mile.

In the event of a reserve official being appointed to any game he or she will be entitled to the same fee as the Assistant Referee.

If attended, Officials are entitled to half their fees if the match to which they were appointed to is not played.

24. EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

An Emergency Committee to deal with matters of extreme urgency shall consist of at least three members appointed by the Board.