

**Cheshire County Football Association**  
**Sunday Challenge 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. These rules will apply to the Cheshire County FA Amateur Cup, Sunday Cup, Vets and Women's Challenge Cup Competitions.
- b) The Council shall 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 related 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 should 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 make decisions on matters arising out of or in relation to the organisation, control and management of the Competition (including as to the 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 actions and make such decisions, orders rulings and impose such penalties as it deems necessary to follow such procedures as are considered 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 proceeding before a court of law. The Cups Committee shall have the power to appoint a Subcommittee 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 is 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 should have the power to disqualify any competing club or a player for any competing club(s), which it determines 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 will be final and binding.

**2. ENTRY IN TO THE COMPETITION**

- a. The entry fee for the Competition shall be £40 and the closing date of entry is the 31st of July. Full or Associate member clubs who do not enter by the required date shall be fined £10 and entered into the Competition, if appropriate, and shall be required to pay the entry fee.
- b. The Cup shall be competed for annually in accordance with these rules.

**3. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS.**

- a) Contract players are not allowed to play in these Competitions. In all rounds of these Competitions prior to the final the player must be a registered player of his or her club.

In order to be eligible to play in the final tie, players must have a 28-day playing qualification or have been eligible to play in the semi-final ties.

- i) In the Saturday & Sunday Vet's Competitions, only players aged 35 years and older are eligible to play subject to Rule 3 (a to h)
- b) Any such registration for the Cup Competitions must have been received and accepted by the league in which the club competes, by 12 noon on the day prior to the playing of the tie and that registration must be continuous throughout the day of the match.
- c) An International Transfer Certificate from overseas Associations including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland takes precedence over the player's registration. Therefore, it is also required by 12 noon on the day prior to the playing of the tie for the players registration to be valid.
- d) In all competitions a player shall not in the same season play for more than one competing club or team in more than one competition.
- e) In the case of postponed matches only those players shall be allowed to play who were eligible for the original game. A player who has been suspended may play in the postponed, matches after the term of his or her suspension has expired.
- f) Any club playing an ineligible player will be struck from the Competition and the Cups Committee or 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 be referred to the Association whose decision shall be final.

#### **4. PLAYING STRENGTH.**

Clubs must be represented by their strongest available team. Any clubs failing to comply with the rule shall be liable to a fine of not less than £50.

#### **5. COMPETITION ARRANGEMENTS.**

- a) The names of the clubs entered for the Competition shall be placed in one lot and shall be drawn in couples at a time. At each draw up to the semi-final ties the Club first drawn shall have the choice of ground (subject to conditions of entry as decided by the Association)
- b) The Association may exempt the previous semi-finalists and such additional Clubs from the first two rounds of the Amateur, Sunday, Vets and Women's Cups.
- c) After each drawing, the secretary shall notify each of the clubs drawn the name of the club against to whom it is drawn and the date and kick off time on which the game must be played, except that Clubs may, by mutual arrangement, make applications to play on a date in the week preceding the Conference Date.
- d) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against whom it has been drawn on the date intimated to it, and without sufficient reason for so doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and may be deemed by the Council to have been guilty of misconduct and liable to such out of pocket expenses and liabilities as are incurred by their failure to play. The Council shall decide whether "sufficient reason" is acceptable, and their decision shall be final.

#### **6. GROUNDS**

- a) All cup ties must be played on a ground where the playing areas enclosed by a fixed barrier, or completely roped off by a rope material of not less than 8 mm in diameter. No person should encroach within this area without the permission of the match officials.

- b) Separate changing accommodation must be available for each team and the Match Officials with showers or bathing facilities.
- c) Clubs with approved floodlighting shall kick off at 3:00pm or 7:30pm for evening games or unless prior agreement with the Competition Secretary.
- d) All amenities must be approved by the Cups Committee. Clubs failing to comply with this rule are liable to be struck from the Competition and be subject to a fine of not less than £20.
- e) If the grounds of the club having choice of ground shall be considered unsuitable for a 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 the neutral ground. Such protests to be made within six days of the draw being received. In the case of appurtenances of the ground being temporarily unfit in consequence of special causes, protests may be lodged with the referee before the start of the game, the game should be played under protest, and the Association shall consider such protest. If the protest is sustained the game should be ordered to be replayed on such grounds and date as the Association deems appropriate.
- f) No club may change the registered address of his ground for the playing of any cup tie without first receiving permission from the Competition Secretary. Any club found to be in breach of this rule shall / may be liable to expulsion from the Competition and be liable to a fine not less than £20.
- g) Notwithstanding the provision of rule 5 (a) (i) The Associations shall have the power to order the game to be played on the opponents or neutral ground if the ground of the Club having choice is repeatedly unfit, thus hindering the progress of the Competition at the discretion of the Competition Secretary
- h) The home club is responsible for the 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 £20 and possible dismissal from the Competition.
- i) Inspection of grounds for the fitness may be made only by the appointed Match Official or Official with the prior approval of the Association, sanctioned through the Competition Secretary or Referee Secretary.
- j) Any club causing the postponement of the match without due cause or reason may be struck from the Competition and fined a sum of not less than £25.
- k) Football Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in these Competitions provided that they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's register of Football Turf Pitches. The home club is also responsible for advising participants of the footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements in accordance with rule 11.

## 7. COLOURS

- a) Clubs having similar colours must change. In all ties the HOME Club must change. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from other player and match officials. 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 except on 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 renders the Club liable to a fine of £20 for each offence.
- b) In the final tie both clubs must play in their registered first choice colours or as notified to this Association at least 14 days prior to the Final. Failure to do so will incur a fine

of £25. If their colours are deemed by the Council or appointed match official to be similar both clubs must change unless mutually agreed. Clubs failing to change colours, as required, in any match will be subject to a fine of not less than £25.

- c) No player should wear shirts that in any way conflict with the black shirts worn by the match officials.

## **8. MATCH OFFICIALS**

- a) In all rounds prior to the Final, the Match Officials' fee shall be £50 inclusive of travelling expenses and shall be the responsibility of the BOTH clubs. In the Semi-Final ties, the Referees and Assistant Referee Fees shall be the responsibility of Cheshire FA.
- b) In the event of a postponed or cancelled game, the Match Officials attending shall be entitled to a half fee.
- c) Match Officials, where applicable, shall be appointed by the Cheshire County Football Association. In those games where, official Assistant Referees are not appointed, each Club must provide a suitable person to assist the Referee in line duties. Clubs failing to supply such a person shall be fined £15.
- d) Appointed Match Officials must be in attendance at least 30 minutes prior to the appointed time of kick-off. Match officials must wear black kit.
- e) It shall be within the power of the Association to impose fines on Referees, Assistant Referees or Club Officials who cause late starts or are guilty of other offences. The Association shall have the power to impose a fine of not less than £5 for each offence.

## **9. LIST OF PLAYERS**

- a)
  - i) In all games, each Club shall provide a list of the names of players in the game on the Official Team Sheet (including the names of substitutes) to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee at least 15 minutes before the kick-off in matches prior to the Semi-Final, and 30 minutes in the Semi-Final and Final on the Official Team Sheet. Players named on the list must wear the corresponding shirt number and also be named correctly on the match report form returned to the County FA in accordance with Rule 16. Any Club failing to do so will be liable to be fined a sum not exceeding £25.
  - ii) Each team shall be allowed to nominate no more than five substitutes in each game, five of which may be used in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Substitutes must be included on the team 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) 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 before the commencement of the match.
- c) 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 the 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 issuing instructions and the substitutes when warming up, all other personnel must remain seated.

- c) The occupants of the benches must behave in a reasonable manner at all times. Misconduct by occupants will be reported by the Referee to the County Football Association, which will have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit.

#### **11. ADVISING OPPONENTS AND MATCH OFFICIALS**

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. KICK OFF TIME AND PLAYING STRENGTH**

- a) Clubs must be prepared to kick off at the appointed time. In the Sunday Challenge Cup, the time of kick off shall be 11am or 2pm. Those clubs responsible for the late kick off shall be fined £1 per minute delayed. When a fixture is played on the ground with approved floodlighting, the game shall kick off in accordance with the provisions in Rule 6C.
- b) No deviation from the appointed time will be allowed unless prior agreement with the Competition Secretary.
- c) Clubs not fielding 11 players at the appointed kick off time may be subject to a fine of not less than £20 per player short or as the Association shall direct.

#### **13. DURATION OF GAMES**

- a) The duration of all games shall be 90 minutes. The half time interval shall be a maximum of 15 minutes, and this may be altered with the consent of the match referee.

#### **14. DRAWN OR POSTPONED GAMES**

- a) In all rounds of the Competition up to and including in the final tie, if the scores are level after 90 minutes the tie shall be determined by the taking of 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 on or before the following Saturday / Sunday or where clubs have floodlights on before the following Thursday by arrangement with CCFA
- c) When the first match had been postponed or abandoned before the completion of 90 minutes and neither club being at fault it must be replayed on the same ground.
- d) Matches abandoned through the fault of the club shall be dealt with by the Association.
- e) When games are postponed, it is the RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOME CLUB to inform appointed Match Officials, opponents, League Secretary, and the Competition Secretary. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £15

#### **15. GROUND INSPECTIONS**

In the event of the appointed Match Officials being unavailable only a Cheshire County FA registered Referee may inspect grounds for fitness, and then only with the consent of the Competition Secretary or the Honorary Referee Appointments Officer – subject to the organisation

#### **16. ADVICE OF RESULT**

- a) Immediately each game is completed the home team must notify the result to the Competition Secretary as directed.
- b) Notice of the result of each match together with the full names of the competing players (showing name against number on the shirt worn in the match) shall be sent by each of the competing club on the Match Report Form provided 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.

## **17. PROTESTS**

- a) Protests other than those under rule 6 (e) must be lodged in duplicate with the Competition Secretary within three days of 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 as to the players eligibility must be lodged prior to the conclusion of the game.
- c) All protests will be heard by a panel of members (at least 3) from Council members on the Cups Committee or as appointed by CCFA Chairman or his nominee.
- d) 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 protests being considered.

## **18. PROVISIONS CONCERNING APPEALS**

- a) A club, within seven days of receipt by them of written notification of the decision of the Cheshire County FA Cups 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 should decide by whom the costs of the appeal must be borne.
- c) Any such appeals will 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 Football Association from time to time.
- e) For the avoidance of doubt the club may not appeal against any penalty imposed on it other than expulsion from the Competition.

## **19. SEMI FINAL AND FINAL TIES**

- a) Semi-final ties will be played on the ground of the first drawn club, subject to the provisions of rule 6, as determined by the Cheshire County FA. The Cheshire County FA will be responsible for the payments of match official fees and expenses.
- b) When a 'Gate' is being taken this may only be done with the permission of the Cheshire County FA and under such conditions as agreed by the Cheshire County FA.
- c) In the final tie each club should be provided with 25 tickets to gain access to the changing facilities.

- d) In the semi-final and final tie, the Association will take 1/3 of the net gate the remainder in each case being equally divided between the competing clubs who standard class travel expenses as agreed by Cheshire County FA shall be paid.

## 20. AWARD TO FINALISTS

- a) The Association will present 16 trophies to the winners and runners up and trophies to the match officials in the final ties.
- b) 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.
- c) It shall be open to such player's or club official's club to apply to the Competition Secretary, in writing within 14 days of the final tie, for the players club officials to receive a trophy medal giving reasons why it felt this should be agreed.
- d) 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 its discretion shall be final and binding.

## 21. RECEIPT OF TROPHY.

- a) 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 be allowed to celebrate and have photos etc taken with the trophy. The Trophy to be returned to a member of the County FA within one hour after the end of the game.
- b) On request the winners 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.
- c) Failure to return the trophy by the required date will incur a fine of £100
- d) All Cups belonging to the Competition shall be insured annually by the Cheshire County Football Association

## 22. OTHER RULES

The Council shall have powers to make other rules as they from time to time deem expedient.

## 23. MATCH EXPENSES

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 at their opponent's ground shall be treated as having been drawn away from home. Where a Fixture has been reversed due to continual postponements, the first drawn (Home Club) shall become the Away Club and Vice Versa.

All match official fees are to be paid by BOTH clubs up to the Semi-Final ties. In the Semi-Final ties, the Referees and Assistant Referee Fees shall be the responsibility of Cheshire FA.

Cup tie charges and expenses  
All rounds (Excluding Final)

Referees fee £50 (including Travel)  
Assistant Referee fee £37 (including Travel)

Final Tie

Souvenir Trophy and Travel @ 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 of Council who are members of the Youth Committee.