

# COUNTY YOUTH COMPETITION RULES



2009/2010 Rule changes are in bold type

## 1. NOMENCLATURE

The Hertfordshire Football Association's Youth County Competitions will comprise of :

The Hertfordshire F.A Boys County Cup at Under 18, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12 & 11  
The Hertfordshire F.A. Mini Soccer competitions at Under 10 and Under 9  
The Hertfordshire F.A. Youth Inter-League Cup at Under 18, 16, 14, & 12  
The Hertfordshire F.A. Girls County Cups at Under 16, 15, 14, 13 & 12 subject to the Competitions' Committee deciding the actual age groups dependant upon the numbers of entries received. And such other competitions as the Competitions' Committee may, from time to time, deem expedient to run.

## 2. MANAGEMENT

- (a) The County Competitions shall be under the entire control and management of the Hertfordshire F.A. Competitions' Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Competitions' Committee.
- (b) The Competitions' Committee shall comprise of the members as per Councils Standing Order 15 (1).
- (c) The Competitions Committee shall determine the dates on which County Cup matches shall be played and the length of it's playing season within the limits laid down by the Football Association.
- (d) The County Youth Competitions shall be conducted and decided on either a knock-out or league basis commensurate with the number of entries.
- (e) The Match Officials for all County Youth Competitions shall be appointed by members of the Referees' Committee or their nominated deputies.
- (f) Clubs/Leagues who fail to comply with the Competitions Rules or, whose behaviour is not commensurate with the competition shall be charged with misconduct.
- (g) The Competitions Committee shall have power to alter or add to the Rules of the County Youth Competitions as they may from time to time deem necessary or expedient; any such changes to be ratified by the Hertfordshire F.A Council.
- (h) The County Competitions shall take precedence over all Leagues and other competitions except the F.A. Youth Challenge Cup. and the F.A. County Youth Challenge Cup.
- (i) All decisions made by the Competitions' Committee shall be final and binding.

## 3. METHOD OF ENTRY

- (a) The Honorary Secretary will include the respective method of entry on, or with, the Annual Affiliation Form, which will automatically be distributed to clubs/leagues who were affiliated the previous year and to new clubs/leagues on request.
- (b) Youth Clubs and Leagues should complete the appropriate form and return it with the respective entry fee to the Chief Executive Officer of the Association by the closing date of the 15 June of each year. The entry fee is £ 8.00 for all Youth Competitions except the Under 9 & Under 10 Mini Soccer Competitions which shall have an entry fee of £ 5.00.
- (c) All Youth Clubs affiliated to the Association are required, unless exempted by the Council, to enter **at least one** team in the appropriate County Youth Competitions save for the Under 9 and Under 10 Mini Soccer Competitions where entry is voluntary. Above the ages of Under 12 Football, i.e. from Under 13 Competitions upwards, each TEAM entering a County Cup Competition must be a member of an affiliated Sunday League.
- (d) Youth Clubs are permitted to enter more than one team in each age group under one club affiliation, but a player can only play for one team in the County Cup in any one season.
- (e) The Competitions' Committee reserve the right to refuse the entry of any Club/League. Any Club under suspension at the time of the draws for the Cup Competitions being made shall not have it's Cup entry accepted and such entry fee will be refunded.

#### 4. DRAW AND NOTIFICATION

- (a) The draws shall be made by members as designated by the Competitions' Committee. Once the draw notification bulletins have been issued, no team will be accepted into a competition as a late entrant unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Once the actual draw bulletin has been issued, no team under any circumstances will be added to the competition.
- (b) After each draw, the Honorary Assistant Competitions Secretary shall advise each of the Clubs drawn the name of the Club it is drawn against and the date on which the tie is to be played.
- (c) All ties shall be played on the day and commence at the time ordered by the Competitions' Committee. All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game, the Rules of Association Football and the Rules of Hertfordshire FA.
- (d) The home Club in each tie shall confirm the game with its opponents and referee (and assistant referees where appointed) at least seven days before the date of the tie, and when doing so, the home Club must give details of their colours to be worn and the exact location of the ground on which the game is to be played and a route to be taken to reach it. Match Officials must also acknowledge to the Home Club the receipt of their match confirmation details once received.

#### 5. GROUNDS, FOOTBALLS, COLOURS AND MATCH DELEGATE

- (a) In each tie the game shall be played on the ground of the club first drawn, unless otherwise mutually arranged and the consent of the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary obtained.

The kick off time in each tie (except the Final Tie) will be at the discretion of the home drawn team. In the event of a dispute regarding the kick off time as set by the home team, the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary has the authority to stipulate the actual kick off time having taken all the facts into account.
- (b) All playing grounds must be within the borders of the Hertfordshire County, but the Competitions' Committee has the discretion to allow certain grounds outside the County boundary to be used if considered appropriate. Any Club wishing to play a fixture on a ground which is different from that shown in the Handbook and is outside County boundaries must apply for permission to do so from the Association Officer responsible for the Club's relevant Cup Competition. Any Club who is found to have played a match in contravention of these conditions, having ignored this instruction, may be dealt with at the discretion of the Competitions' Committee.
- (c) In all County Competitions changing facilities for players and officials must be provided together with washing facilities i.e. running water. If a Home Team/ League is unable to provide this, an alternative venue must be found unless both teams agree prior to the date of the match to use the existing facilities.
- (d) A Club wishing to play on any surface other than grass must apply for permission to do so from the nominated Competitions Officer at least 21 days before the date of the first round of matches in their relevant Competition(s). Failure to comply within these requirements may result in that team being unable to play on their normal pitch for some or all of their matches in the Competition(s).
- (e) **In the event of a fixture being postponed on two (or more) occasions both Clubs should have an alternative ground available in case a change of venue is required. The Competitions' Committee has the authority to switch a venue (to either another ground supplied by the home drawn team, or to the away team's ground) if the circumstances are considered appropriate and beneficial to both Clubs and the running of the Competition concerned. However, the switching of a venue is not an automatic procedure and will be at the discretion of the appointed Competitions Officer.**
- (f) Any request for consideration of the Competitions' Committee to allow a postponement of a tie must be at least 28 days before the scheduled date of the fixture. No other request for a postponement of a match will be granted, whether the match in question is on the original published date, or on a later date due to an earlier postponement caused by the weather or unplayable ground conditions etc., unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Competitions' Committee prevail. Consideration for requesting a postponement of a match on a particular date on the grounds of religious dispensation will only be given if it is included by the Football Association on their list of Major Religious Festival dates. The granting of a postponement will be the final decision of the Competitions' Committee.

- (g) When a match has been postponed it must be played on the same ground on or before the following Sunday. If a match is abandoned through no fault of either team, at the completion of normal time or during extra time, the re-arranged game will be played on the ground of the "away" team in the original tie.
- (h) If a match is declared void for any reason, it shall be re-arranged as directed by the Competitions' Committee.
- (i) By agreement between the two competing Clubs/Leagues, which must be notified to the Honorary Assistant Competitions Secretary and the Referee before the game, the whole, or part, of any match in County competitions may be played under floodlights.
- (j) The Referee shall decide as to the fitness of the ground and each Club/League must take every precaution to keep its ground in a playing condition. If necessary either Club/League may apply to the Referee Appointments Officer who shall require a Referee or Officer of the Association to examine the ground and decide as to its fitness for play in sufficient time to save expenses being incurred by the Clubs/Leagues' unnecessary journeys. The Club/League applying shall pay the cost of such inspection and the cost shall not be charged on the gate receipts, if any are taken.
- (k) Grounds must be marked in accordance with the laws of the game with corner flags and goal nets provided.
- (l) Footballs  
  
Size 5 balls will be used in the Under 18, Under 16 and Under 15 sections.  
Size 4 balls will be used in the Under 14, Under 13, Under 12, Under 11 and Mini Soccer Sections.
- (m) Colours  
  
If both teams have the same or similar colours the AWAY team shall change except in the Final when the second named team shall change.
- (n) In all ties, the players must wear distinctive individual numbers on their shirts
- (o) It shall be the responsibility of every Club involved in Youth Football to provide a Match Delegate for each match in which it participates. The delegate must report to the Match Referee at least 15 minutes prior to kick off. Clubs in breach of this rule shall be liable to a fine of £10.00.
- (p) If a match in any Competition has the venue switched to the ground of the away drawn team, whether by mutual consent or by order of the Competitions' Committee, the fixture shall be reversed – i.e. the away drawn team becomes the home team and vice versa.

## 6. DURATION AND COMPLETION OF GAMES

- (a) The duration of play in Youth County Competitions shall be as follows:
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|-----------------------------|--|
| Under 18 section            | 45 minutes each way plus 15 minutes each way extra time if necessary |
| Under 16 & Under 15 section | 40 minutes each way plus 10 minutes each way extra time if necessary |
| Under 14 & Under 13 section | 35 minutes each way plus 10 minutes each way extra time if necessary |
| Under 12 & Under 11 section | 30 minutes each way plus 10 minutes each way extra time if necessary |
| Under 10 section            | 20 minutes each way plus 5 minutes each way extra time if necessary  |
| Under 9 Section             | 20 minutes each way plus 5 minutes each way extra time if necessary  |

By arrangement between the Managers of the opposing Club/Leagues. The duration of each match, except in the semi-final and final ties may be reduced by up to a period of 10 minutes each half, such arrangements must be notified to the Referee prior to the commencement of the match.

- (b) All matches shall be concluded at the first meeting. If the scores remain level after full time, extra time shall be played. If the scores are still equal, kicks from the penalty mark shall decide the result according to the procedure laid down in the Laws of Association Football. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the completion of the kicks from the penalty mark, the game shall be played again the following week at the ground of the "away" team in the original match.
- (c) Clubs/Leagues shall not mutually arrange to play a match in lieu of a cup-tie. If a match is played to a conclusion, it must be a cup-tie. Postponed matches shall be played on or before the following Sunday unless application for a later date is made to the Honorary Assistant Competitions Secretary and approved.
- (d) When a match has been postponed, or abandoned before the completion and neither side being at fault, it must be played again on the same ground on or before the following Sunday. Matches abandoned through the fault of one or both Clubs shall be dealt with by the Council. If a game is abandoned, through no fault of either team, at the completion of normal time or during extra time, the re-arranged game will be played on the ground of the "away" team in the original tie.
- (e) Kick off times shall be between 10.00am and 2.00pm except in the months of November, December, January and February when the kick off time must be no later than 1.30pm. **Mini soccer matches are permitted to begin at 2pm throughout the season.**
- (f) In the Semi Final Round where Assistant Referees are appointed the playing pitch must have a railed or roped off area at least five feet from the goal and touch lines. Where local regulations do not allow this the home Club must find an alternative ground or play on the ground of their opponents, which must comply with the foregoing conditions. Fluorescent tape is not considered a satisfactory replacement for rope. All posts or stakes used must be of material considered satisfactory for players' safety.

## 7. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- (a) All players must be Under the age of 18 years to be eligible to play in the designated Under 18 sections, Under 16 years to play in the designated Under 16 sections, Under 15 to play in the designated Under 15 sections, Under 14 years to play in the designated Under 14 sections, Under 13 to play in the designated Under 13 sections, Under 12 to play in the designated Under 12 sections, Under 11 to play in the designated Under 11 sections; and all players must be over the age of ten (10) years. **The qualifying date for all age groups shall be at least one year under the age group title on 31st August.** A player in the age ranges Under 11, Under 12, Under 13 and Under 14 must not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match where any other player is older or younger by 2 years or more than that person. Note: All players must be over the age of ten (10) years by the qualifying date in the current season. In the Boys U11 Challenge Cup it is acceptable for a Girl or Girls to participate so long as they are bona fide members of an eligible club in the competition. In the mini soccer competitions all players under the age of 10 years to be eligible to play in the designated Under 10 section and Under 9 to play in the Under 9 section. The qualifying dates for Under 9 and Under 10 shall be players who are aged at least one year and no more than two years under the age group title on 31st August in the playing season.

- (b) Except in the first round all players must have been recognised playing members of their Club for the 7 days previous to the match. A playing member is one who has been registered with a League in which his team plays for at least seven days prior to the date of the match concerned. No player may play for more than one team in the County Cup Competitions in the same season, whether **it be for different clubs or within the same club** (nor more than one League in the Inter League Competitions). When a Club is playing in an Affiliated League, then only players registered with the respective league will be considered to be recognised playing members of their club.

League Identity Cards must be carried and be presented to the opposition along with a team sheet 20 minutes prior to the scheduled kick off time. Only those players with a valid League identification card are eligible to play on the scheduled date. If a Club is found guilty of failing to present its League Identification cards to the opposition it **will be struck out of the competition unless exceptional circumstances, as decided by the Competitions' Committee, prevail. Other penalties may also be incurred as the Competitions' Committee deem appropriate.**

Where Leagues do not use player registration ID cards, such Clubs must apply to the Association Office for a registration form to ensure eligibility of their players. The form must be completed and returned to the Association Office at least 7 days prior to the first match. In return the Hertfordshire FA will issue registration cards which **MUST** be presented to the opposition in accordance with the above procedure for League ID cards.

- (c) In the case of postponed matches only those players who were eligible on the date fixed for the completion of the round shall be allowed to play. (Not including players who were serving a period suspension.)

- (d) Under 18's

A Club may, at its discretion, use THREE substitutes from FIVE named at any time in a cup-tie, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee after play has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. The Referee must be informed of the names of the substitutes before the start of the game.

Under 11's to Under 16's inclusive

A Club may, at its discretion, use FIVE substitutes from FIVE named at any time in a cup-tie, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee after play has commenced. The substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. The Referee must be informed of the names of the substitutes before the start of the game.

In accordance with the subsequent paragraph repeated substitutions are permissible up to and including the Under 16 age group as follows:

A player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

- (e) The eligibility of a substitute to play in any other County cup-tie shall not be impaired unless he has entered the field of play to participate in the match.
- (f) In Inter-League Competitions no players shall represent more than one League in the same season and players must have played at least three games during the current season in the Domestic Competition of the League they represent.
- (g) If a Club/League is found guilty of knowingly or unknowingly playing an ineligible player in a County Cup Competition match it shall be struck out of the competition, unless exceptional circumstances as decided by the Competitions' Committee prevail, and shall suffer such other penalties as the Committee may deem appropriate. A Club found guilty of playing an ineligible player will be subject to a fine of not less than £25.00.

## 8. REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES

- (a) Referees and Assistant Referees shall be appointed by the Honorary Youth Referees' Secretary. Referees shall be entitled to charge fees as follows:-

Under 18	Referee <b>£27.00</b>	Assistant Referee £19.00
Under 16/15	Referee <b>£23.00</b>	Assistant Referee £16.00
Under 14/13	Referee <b>£20.00</b>	Assistant Referee £15.00
Under 12/11	Referee <b>£18.00</b>	Assistant Referee £13.00
Under 9/10	Referee £15.00	

The above are also entitled to claim travel expenses of 35p per mile

In these Competitions the Home Team is responsible for payment of all Referees' fees up to and including the Semi-Finals. Where Assistant Referees are appointed their fees shall be shared equally by the two teams. The Home Team shall be responsible for ensuring payment is made to all Match Officials.

- (b) In the event of the unavailability or non-appearance of the appointed referee, the senior Assistant Referee shall referee the game. He shall receive the referee's fee and the Clubs must agree to provide an Assistant Referee to take his place. When Assistant Referees are not appointed, each Club must provide an Assistant Referee who shall report to the referee five minutes before the appointed time of kick-off. In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed referee at a game, for which there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, the Clubs must agree upon a substitute to referee the game. Failure to do so may result in one or both clubs being eliminated from the Competition. In all cases where an officially appointed Referee or Assistant Referee fails to appear, or is late for the kick-off, the matter must be reported to the Honorary Secretary of the Referee's Committee by the home club.
- (c) Prior to the semi-finals the home Club/League shall be responsible for payment of the Referee's fee. In the semi-finals, where Assistant Referees are appointed, the Referees fee shall be paid by the home team and the Assistant referees' fees shall be shared equally by both teams. The home team shall be responsible to ensure full payment is made.
- (d) In the Final ties the match officials will receive suitable mementoes in lieu of any fee and shall be entitled to claim traveling expenses for incurred costs of **35 pence** per mile.
- (e) In the event of a match not being played owing to causes over which neither Club/League has control, the Referee in attendance shall be entitled to traveling expenses from the home Club/League. Should a match not be played owing to the default of one of the Clubs/Leagues concerned, the Referee in attendance shall be entitled to the fee from the defaulting Club/League.
- (f) Appointed Match Officials shall acknowledge acceptance of appointments once received for all County Competition ties to the appropriate appointing Officer. Match Officials must also acknowledge to the Home Club the receipt of their match confirmation details once received.

## 9. MATCH RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES

- (a) In all rounds, except the Final, gate receipts and/or proceeds from collection by sale of programs etc. shall be retained by the home Club/League. after all the customary expenses have been met.
- (b) The Association shall take the proceeds of the Final ties.

## 10. SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL TIES

- (a) Every Club playing in a semi-final or final of a County Competition shall post or deliver by hand to the opposing Club, the Association Headquarters and to the nominated Officer of the Competitions' Committee a list of players which must include their dates of birth from whom the team for the semi-final or final must be selected giving 7 clear days notice. No player will be considered eligible unless his/her name appears in the list. Additions to the team lists can only be made with the consent of both the opposing Club and the nominated Association Officer. No objection to the qualifications of any players mentioned in such list shall be entertained unless notice of objection, setting out in detail the grounds of such objection, is in the hands of both the Secretary of the opposing Club and the nominated Association Officer prior to the date of the kick off for the match. Failure to submit a list of players with 7 clear days notice will result in the offending Club being fined.
- (b) **All semi-final ties must be played on the days and at times fixed by the Council. Where neutral grounds are used for Semi Final matches, the venue, kick off time and spectator entry fees will be as stipulated by the Competitions' Committee.**
- (c) The Competitions Committee shall determine the grounds on which Finals shall be played. All Finals must be played to completion on the scheduled date.
- (d) In each Final Tie teamsheets must be exchanged between the two teams, in the presence of the Referee, at least 45 minutes prior to Kick Off. The names on each teamsheet must correspond exactly with the names shown on the match result sheet. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine.
- (e) On the day of the Final Tie each Team shall hand to the Referee at least 45 minutes prior to Kick Off a Technical Area Form detailing the occupants of the Technical Area. Only those persons will be allowed in the Technical Area. Only One PERSON at a time is authorised to stand in the Technical Area from each Team at any time. Substitute players may warm up behind the nearest Assistant Referee and once this is completed must return to the dug out. A maximum of 8 (eight) persons are allowed in the dug out at any one time

## 11. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- (a) Each club playing in a match in the County Competitions shall notify the result, with an assessment of the referee allocating a mark out of 100 on a result sheet provided for the purpose, which must be posted to reach the Association Headquarters, not later than two days (Sunday excluded) after the match. Each team's results sheet must be complete in all aspects and must clearly indicate which substitutes were used. A club awarding a Referee a mark of 50 or less must forward a covering letter giving a valid reason for such low marking.
- (b) All Hertfordshire FA affiliated Youth Leagues must communicate the results of their member Clubs' County Cup match to the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary by 6.00pm on the date of the match. Any League failing to do so may be subject to a fine of no more than £15.00.
- (c) Youth Clubs in Leagues not directly sanctioned by the Hertfordshire FA, all teams playing in the Girls Competitions and all teams competing in the quarter finals and the semi-finals rounds of Boys' Competitions must phone the result of their County Cup game (whether home or away) directly to the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary by 6.00pm on the day of the game. Failure to comply will result in a fine.
- (d) Clubs whose result sheets are received late, incomplete, incorrect or not at all, shall be dealt with as shown in the schedule of Fines and Costs.
- (e) Club/Leagues shall attend satisfactorily to all correspondence. etc. as laid down from time to time in the instructions as attached to the notice of the draw. Clubs/Leagues failing to comply with the rule shall be charged with misconduct and dealt with by the Competitions' Committee.

## 12. NON FULFILLMENT OF CUP TIES

- (a) Any Club withdrawing, or not fulfilling the fixture in any tie in a County Competition shall be deemed to have conceded the tie to its opponents unless exceptional circumstances, as decided by the Competitions' Committee prevail.
- (b) A Club intending to withdraw must give notice of its intention to do so to the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary, the Association Headquarters and to the Secretary of the opposing Club.

A Club that withdraws from a County Cup Competition, but remains a member of the League that it entered at the start of the season, shall be fined a minimum of £50.00. A Club withdrawing with less than 8 days' notice shall be fined a minimum of £50.00. A Club withdrawing with less than 48 hours, but prior to the date of the match, shall be fined a minimum of £60.00. A Club withdrawing on the day of the match, shall be fined a minimum of £70.00, plus the reimbursement of any costs incurred and a Club failing to keep its engagement without notification being given prior to kick off time shall be fined a minimum of £100.00, plus the reimbursement of any costs incurred.

- (c) A Club withdrawing in a semi-final or final of a County Competition shall be deemed guilty of serious misconduct and dealt with in such manner as the Council may direct.

## 13. TROPHIES AND SOUVENIRS

- (a) All Cups and Trophies must be returned to the Association by the 1st February each year. The Hertfordshire Football Association Ltd are the legal owners of all the Youth County Cup Trophies. When the winner of each trophy has been ascertained, it shall be handed to the winners on their subscribing to a document to the following effect:-

"We..... The Chairman and .....Secretary of the .....Club and ..... And ..... Members of, and representing the said .....Club, having been declared the winners of the .....Cup and the same having been delivered to us do hereby on behalf of the said Club, and individually and collectively engage to return the said Trophy to the Honorary Secretary of the Association's Competitions' Committee on or before the first day of February next in good order and condition and if the said Trophy is destroyed, lost or damaged whilst under our care and custody, we agree to refund to the Association the amount of it's insured value or the cost of a thorough repair and agree to have the Trophy suitably engraved."

A fine of £50.00 will be imposed on any Club returning the Trophy after the 1<sup>st</sup> February and any repairs for damage, cleaning or engraving will be charged to the responsible Club.

- (b) In addition to the Trophy, the Association shall present mementoes to the players, substitutes and match officials in the Final Tie. The Competitions' Committee reserves the right to withhold a memento being handed to any player who has been sent off the field by the referee during the match. In such case, the memento will be handed to the player once the teams have left the field of play. No additional Trophies shall be presented by the Association.

## 14. PROTESTS

- (a) Any Club (or League in the Inter-League Competitions) Honorary Assistant Competitions Secretary shall put the subject matter of the protest in writing in triplicate with a deposit of £25.00 to the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary within seven days of the occurrence to which it relates. The grounds of the protest or complaint and the circumstances on which it is based must be clearly stated, otherwise the protest or complaint will not be entertained, the onus of proof being the responsibility of the protestor.
- (b) Any protest concerning the ground or the appurtenances of the game shall not be entertained unless an objection, in writing, is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the game. When such a protest has been lodged with the Referee, a protest must also be lodged with the Hon. Assistant Competitions Secretary in accordance with rule 14(a).
- (c) An Association, Competition or Club may be legally represented only with the written consent of the Association.
- (d) The deposit accompanying a protest shall be forfeited to the Association in the event of protest not being sustained.
- (e) The Competitions' Committee may order any Club/League engaged in a dispute, protest or complaint to pay such sum as may be considered necessary towards defraying the expenses incurred in the hearing and adjudication of the matter.

Problems concerning Referees shall be referred to the Referee Appointments Officer.