

RULES OF THE NEXTGEN PERFORMANCE LEAGUE CUP “(THE RULES)”

INTRODUCTION

- (a) Unless the context otherwise requires, words or expressions contained in the Rules shall bear the same meaning as in the Articles of Association.
- (b) Unless the context otherwise requires, words importing the singular only shall include the plural and vice versa and words importing any gender shall include all genders.
- (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.

1. Name of Cup

The cup shall be called “the Next Gen Performance League Cup”. (“the Cup”) suffixed by Category One or Two as applicable

2. The Cup – Ownership and Presentation

- (a) The Cup, including any replicas, is the property of the Scottish FA.
- (b) The Cup shall be presented to the club which wins the Final Tie. (“the Winner”)
- (c) The Cup shall be returned to the Scottish FA by the Winner before the end of January of the year following presentation, in good order and condition. The cost of repair of any damage to the Cup whilst in the custody or control of the Winner shall be met by the Winner.

3. Awards to Players, Referees and Assistant Referees

The Scottish FA shall present a medal or a souvenir to each of the players, to each of the substitutes as are permitted and to the match officials in the Final Tie.

4. Annual Competition

The Cup Competition (“the Competition”) shall be played annually, in accordance with the Laws of the Game, and as directed by the Scottish FA, to promote, foster, and develop, without discrimination against any organisation or person for reason of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or politics the game of Association football, and to take all such steps as may be deemed necessary or advisable for preventing infringements of the rules of the game, or other improper methods or practices in the game, and for protecting it from abuses.

5. Commencing Date

The Competition shall commence on a date determined by the Scottish FA. Matches in the Competition must take place on the determined date as intimated by the Scottish FA unless the two clubs, the relevant authorities and the Scottish FA are all agreeable that the match be played on an alternative date.

6. Eligible Clubs

Entry to the Competition is available to clubs in the Scottish FA Girls' and Women's Performance programmes, unless debarred in terms of Rule 14, and other clubs approved by the Professional Game Board prior to the commencement of each season's Competition.

7. Compliance with Articles of Association

Without prejudice to any other obligation assumed by them, the clubs eligible to compete in the Competition shall be subject to and shall comply with the Articles of the Association, the Registration Procedures, the Disciplinary Procedures and the Rules, and the Anti-Doping Regulations, as amended from time to time.

8 Sponsorship and Broadcasting Matters

The Scottish FA, in accordance with the Articles of Association, may enter into contracts with commercial sponsors and broadcasters and grant certain rights as the Scottish FA may in its discretion determine ("Scottish FA's Obligations") to such parties in relation to the Competition.

All clubs participating in the competition undertake to provide any rights, facilities and other services as may be necessary for the Scottish FA to perform the Scottish FA's Obligations.

Without prejudice to the terms of the Articles of Association, the Judicial Panel Protocol and the Rules and any other rule and regulation of the Scottish FA, any failure and/or refusal by a club to comply with any of the terms of the Scottish FA's Obligations as intimated may result in the matter being referred to the Scottish FA for investigation.

9. Organisation of the Competition

Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 (Season 2024)

In Round One, clubs shall be arranged in a group section. There will be 5 teams in the U16 & U18 age categories and 4 team in the U14 Age Category. Clubs will play each other once in their respective sections.

The top two teams in each group will qualify for the Cup final of the competition.

The 3rd & 4th placed team in each group will qualify for the Shield final of the competition.

In Round One (Group Stage) of the competition, three points will be awarded for a win, one point will be awarded for a drawn match and zero points will be awarded for a loss. For purpose of clarification, if two or more teams are equal on points in Round One of the competition, the following criteria will apply to determine the final sectional positions;

- 1) Higher number of points obtained in the matches played among the teams in question.
- 2) Superior goal difference from the matches played among the teams in question.
- 3) Higher number of goals scored in the matches played among the teams in question.
- 4) If, after having applied criteria 1) to 3), teams still have an equal ranking criteria, 1) to 3) are reapplied exclusively to the matches between the teams in question to determine their final rankings. If this procedure does not lead to a decision, criteria 5) to 7) apply
- 5) Superior goal difference in all matches.
- 6) Higher number of goals scored in all matches.
- 7) Drawing of lots.

At the Final stage of the competition, in the event of the tie still being level at the end of the 90 minutes, the winner shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the rules laid down by IFAB.

10. Intimation of Ballot to Clubs (if applicable)

After each ballot the Scottish FA shall inform each club of the name of the club against which it is drawn, and in the case of all rounds up to and including the semi-final round, the date by which the tie must be played. The date for the Final Tie shall be fixed by the Scottish FA.

11 Format of Matches

Under 14	11-a-side
Under 16	11-a-side
Under 18	11-a-side

12 (i) Duration of Matches

Under 14

- (a) Each match will consist of three periods, each period of 25 minutes duration.
- (b) The interval between each period shall be of 7 minutes duration or as determined by the referee.

Under 16

- (a) Each match will consist of three periods, each period of 30 minutes duration.
- (b) The interval between each period shall be of 7 minutes duration or as determined by the referee.

Under 18

- (a) Each match will consist of two halves of 45 minutes duration.
- (b) The interval between each period shall be of 15 minutes duration or as determined by the referee.

A match which has started and which for any reason is abandoned, may not be continued as a “friendly” match.

13. Postponed or Re-Scheduled Matches

Participating clubs must submit to the Scottish FA an alternative mutually agreeable date for the playing of ties in the event of a postponement or re-scheduled match. Postponed or re-scheduled ties must be played by the second midweek following the date of the original tie.

14. Refusal or Failure to Play

Any club which refuses or fails to play the club against which it is drawn, without, in the opinion of the Scottish FA, having sufficient reason for so doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the tie and will take no further part in the remainder of that season’s Competition. Such club might be liable to additional sanctions as specified in these Rules.

15. Club Scratching or Withdrawing

A club which intends to scratch or withdraw from the Competition will give notice to the Secretary and to the secretary of the club against which it is drawn, at least four days before the date fixed for playing the tie.

Any such case shall be reported to the Scottish FA, who shall have power to order the said club to reimburse its opponents for any expenditure, loss or damage incurred by such scratching or withdrawal. The Scottish FA may also take such other action as it deems fit including the imposition of sanctions as specified in these Rules.

Any club which fails to give a satisfactory reason for scratching, or which withdraws from the Competition without first obtaining the consent of the Scottish FA, shall not be eligible to take part in the Competition in the following season.

16. Disagreement on Date of Match

If, in any case in which the date is not specified in these Rules or decided by the Scottish FA, the two clubs in any tie are unable to reach agreement on a date on which to play or replay, they shall, except when there are exceptional circumstances which would cause the Scottish FA to decide to the contrary, or unless the tie is to be played or replayed on a neutral ground, play or replay on the date which is agreeable to the host club.

The Scottish FA shall decide in the case of a match to be played or replayed on a neutral

ground and the participating clubs will be bound by the decision of the Scottish FA.

17. Eligibility of Players

- (a) Under 14 – players born on or after 1st January 2010
- (b) Under 16 – players born on or after 1st January 2008
- (c) Under 18 – players born on or after 1st January 2006

Physical Development Exceptions - All Academies U14-U18

Clubs are entitled to nominate (“in total”) a maximum of five (5) registered players whom, for reasons of slower physical development, may be permitted to play at the age level immediately below their designated age category for a period of one season across the whole pathway.

During this period any nominated young person(s) must have their physical development closely monitored in tandem with sports science criteria.

Nominations in this regard must, in the first instance, be directed in writing to the Scottish FA, and may be submitted at any time during the season.

Trial Young People

No more than three trial young people (per team) may be allowed to participate in any Club Academy Scotland League Cup match. Each trial young person may be allowed to participate in a maximum of five matches in the competition.

18. Number of Players and Substitutes

Under 14 and Under 16

Please refer to Next Gen Performance League rules, which states as follows,

“A team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to 7 substitutes. Competitive Season, Rolling Substitutions are permitted in this competition.”

Under 18

Please refer to Next Gen Performance League rules, which states as follows,

“A team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to 7 substitutes. Competitive Season 5 from 7 Subs (3 interventions) are permitted in this competition.

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

19. Team Lines

Under 14, Under 16 & Under 18

The Official Team Line for matches in the competition shall permit the listing of a maximum of 18 players. It is recommended that one of the listed substitutes is a designated goalkeeper. The template of the Official Team Line shall be provided by the Scottish FA. The Official Team Line must be submitted in order to enable a club to participate in a match in the Competition.

- (a) Not later than 60 minutes before the start of a match, each club shall hand to the referee, and to its opponent, a duplicate of the Official Team Line. The Official Team Line shall contain accurate and complete details, including the proper names and dates of birth of the players in its team, and a maximum of six technical personnel.
- (b) It is recommended that a club's Doctor and/or Physiotherapist and/or Sports Therapist are listed on the Official Team Line and accommodated in the technical area.

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 11 starting players listed on the Official Team Line is not able to start the match due to unexpected physical incapacity or other extreme circumstances (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), she may only be replaced by one of the seven substitutes. The substitute(s) in question may then only be replaced by an eligible player(s) not originally listed on the Official Team Line as signed, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced.

If for any reason changes require to be made to the Official Team Line and said changes are accepted by the match official) then the club must notify its opponent immediately thereafter.

- (ii) If any of the seven named substitutes on the Official Team Line is not able at the start of the match to be fielded due to unexpected physical incapacity or other extreme circumstances, (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), she may only be replaced by an eligible player not originally listed on the Official Team Line as signed.
- (iii) If a goalkeeper listed on the Official Team Line is not able to be fielded due to unexpected physical incapacity suffered by her or other extreme circumstances (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), then she may be replaced but only by an eligible player not originally listed on the Official Team Line as signed, and who should be designated as a goalkeeper.

The club concerned must, in addition to the requirements set out above, upon request, provide the Scottish FA with necessary medical certificates and/or a full written explanation of the circumstances that caused the change.

- (iv) Any alteration made to a completed Official Team Line must be formally endorsed in writing by an accredited club official and initialed by the referee.
- (c) The Secretary shall keep a register of the names of all of the players who take part in the Competition. The register shall be open for inspection.

20. Appointment of Match Officials

- (a) Match Officials shall be appointed by the Scottish FA, through a designated Regional Referee Co-ordinator.
- (b) Appointments shall take precedence over all other appointments, except with the permission and consent of the Scottish FA.
- (c) A club may not refuse the services of any match official appointed by, or on behalf of, the Scottish FA.
- (d) The fees and expenses of match officials shall be defrayed by the Home Club.
Replacement of a Match Official

In the event the referee is unable to start or complete the match, the match will be abandoned and replayed at a later date to be determined by the Scottish FA.

21. Club Colours

- (a) In each match, if the colours of the competing clubs are similar, the away club shall change and play in distinctive colours.
- (b) In the case of the Final Ties, if the colours of the competing clubs are similar, the first drawn club at the draw for these ties will be permitted to play in the home strip and the second drawn club will be required to change.
- (c) If there is any dispute as to whether the colours of the teams are the same, or similar, the referee shall decide the issue.
- (d) Goalkeepers shall wear colours which distinguish them from the other players and from the referee. The referee's decision on whether this Rule is met will be final and binding on all parties.
- (e) Every player and substitute of each team shall wear a distinguishing number on her shirt or shorts.

22. Default Days for Next Gen Performance League Cup Matches

The default days for Season 2024 NextGen Performance League Cup competitions will be applied for each competition as detailed below:

Under 14	Saturdays
Under 16	Sundays*
Under 18	Saturdays*

*Consideration to Aberdeen FC and opposing club travel should be applied to arrange for same-day U16/U18 fixtures either side-to-side (upto 10mile radius) or back-back timings. Both clubs should agree fixture days, locations and times and communicate this to the League Administrator no later than 5days prior to the fixture.

23. Grounds Final Tie

In each Cup Final tie, in each competition, the winners of each Group will play at their home ground in the final.

In each Shield Final tie, in each competition, the 3rd Place club of each Group will play at their home ground in the final.

However, the Final Tie may be played at a neutral venue, at the discretion of the Scottish FA.

When a match is postponed or abandoned it shall be played on the same ground, unless the Scottish FA is satisfied that there is valid reason for the match to be played at another venue.

24. Condition of Ground

- (a) When a match is to be played on the ground of one of the two competing clubs, or on a neutral ground whether or not it has been selected by the Scottish FA, and there is reason to believe that it may not be in a condition for play, the Scottish FA shall, at the request of either competing club or the club providing the neutral ground, appoint an official to inspect the ground.

In addition, the Scottish FA has discretion to initiate a pitch inspection. The inspection may be made on the day before the match is to be played. If an inspection is made on the day of the match, it shall be made early enough on the day of the match but not later than four hours before the time set for the kick-off, to warn the visiting club against travelling, if need be.

- (b) The referee's decision shall be final. Fee and expenses shall be defrayed by the Scottish FA.
- (c) A ground which is unfit for cup tie purposes shall not be used on the same day for any other match.

25. Goal Nets and Corner Flags

Goal nets and corner flags shall be used at all matches in the Competition.

26. Provision of New Footballs

A football of first grade quality shall be provided by the ground or host club for each match played in the Competition. The Scottish FA will provide balls for the match played at the final stage in the competition.

27. First Aid Provisions

It is the responsibility of the home or host club to ensure that adequate first aid facilities, requisite equipment and stretcher facilities/carrying chair(s) capable of conveying spectators from seated areas are available for all ties in the Competition and that at least one fully qualified person is present and equipped to administer first aid. The home or host club should take cognisance of the expected attendance and provide additional first aid cover as appropriate for the configuration of the ground.

28. Arrangements for Final Tie

The Final Tie shall be played on a ground of, as approved and decided by the Scottish FA who shall make all of the arrangements therefor.

29. Admission Charges and Match Expenses

- (a) When a match is played on the ground of one of the competing clubs, the host club shall be responsible for all ground expenses. If a charge is made for admission, the host club shall retain all of the sums received.
- (b) Each competing club shall be responsible for its own matches.

30. Disorderly Conduct

The 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 stadium where a tie in the Competition is played as a consequence of misbehaviour by a player, official, member, supporters, or any other person acting on behalf of or associated with a club, then that club shall be responsible for any costs arising in the reparation of same.

The Scottish FA shall have the power to request such reports as may be necessary in determining responsibility for restitution.

The provisions of this Rule 30 are without prejudice to the terms of Article 30, which apply to clubs in the context of their participation in the Competition. Any failure by any

club to adhere to any of the terms of this Rule 28 may result in the matter being referred to the Scottish FA (as for investigation and possible sanction).

31. Infringement of Rules

Any infringement of any of these Rules by a club, official, player or other person may result in the matter being referred to the Scottish FA.

32. Alterations and Additions to Rules

The Scottish FA shall have the power to temporarily suspend, amend or add to these Rules as circumstances may dictate from time to time, as it deems appropriate in its reasonable discretion, to facilitate the smooth running of the Competition, or in order to ensure that the Scottish FA is capable of meeting the commitments put upon it under the terms of its television and sponsorship contracts.