

NEXTGEN PERFORMANCE LEAGUE RULES 2024

Scottish FA Girls and Women's Performance Games Programme (Age level 18s Dual Age-Band) Category One

INTRODUCTION

- (a) Unless the context otherwise requires, words or expressions contained in the League System Rules shall bear the same meaning as in the Articles of Association of the Scottish FA ("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.
- (e) Disciplinary matters relating to field offences and club officials misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Disciplinary Procedures of the NextGen Programme.

1. Name of Competition

The League shall be called "NextGen Performance League" unless title sponsorship is achieved.

The Scottish FA shall organise and administer the League in accordance with the Rules and the Laws of the Game, and as directed by the PGB and the administration.

2. Eligible Clubs

The clubs (or regional academies) competing in the League must be admitted to the NextGen Games Programme, unless otherwise agreed by the administration.

3. Compliance with Articles and League Rules

The clubs eligible to compete in the League shall be subject to the Articles of Association, the NextGen Regulations and the Rules, as amended from time to time.

4. Season

The League shall commence on a date to be determined in each season by the administration.

5. League Fixtures

- (a) The League shall consist of each club playing each of the other clubs, home and away, in the League, unless otherwise directed by the administration.

The fixtures shall be arranged in the manner directed by the administration and shall be played on the dates arranged. Three points shall be awarded to a team for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a loss.

The League Administrator shall issue to the clubs in the League the fixtures not later than 4 weeks prior to the commencement of each stage of the season. Receipt of fixtures shall be acknowledged in writing by each club.

The home club shall, at least five working days prior to a fixture date, confirm the venue (including travel directions), kick-off time and the colour(s) they are intending to play in, in writing to the opposing club, the League Administrator, the Regional Referee Co-ordinator and the appointed match officials. The away club shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such notification.

League fixtures shall be scheduled to take place on a Saturday, unless otherwise agreed by the administration.

- (b) Any dispute, between two or more clubs, as to the arrangement of fixtures shall be referred to, and decided by, the League Administrator.
- (c) If a club wishes to apply for a postponement of a fixture date such notification must be made to the League Administrator at least 5 working days prior to the date of the originally scheduled fixture.

Applications will only be considered where a club has three or more players unavailable through international selection or injuries. In circumstances where a club's team is playing abroad in an International tournament, the NextGen Performance League fixture will require to be played prior to the originally scheduled fixture.

Such application must be made in writing, containing the reason for the application, the opposing club's approval and the newly agreed fixture date.

If, for unforeseen reasons, the home club is forced to change ground, the club must notify the League Administrator, the visiting club and the appointed match officials immediately.

Where a club's ground (or standby ground) is unplayable or unavailable on the day set for the playing of the match, both clubs can agree to reverse the venue subject to the permission of the League Administrator.

No alterations of fixtures, dates, kick-off times, grounds can be made without the prior confirmation of the League Administrator.

- (d) Notice of the postponement of any match due to an unplayable ground, or other causes over which neither club has control, must be given immediately by the home club to the visiting club, the appointed match officials and the League Administrator.

The home club should, upon request, be able to provide the League Administrator with written confirmation of a decision to postpone a match due to an unplayable ground signed by the ground owner.

It is the responsibility of both competing clubs to agree upon a re-scheduled fixture date and advise the League Administrator, in writing, within 7 working days from the original fixture date. Failing such agreement and notification to the League Administrator, the administration shall have power to determine the re-scheduled fixture date.

- (e) The postponement or abandonment of League fixtures requires to be immediately reported in writing to the League Administrator by the club(s) concerned.
- (f) Any match not completed may be ordered to stand as a played match, or may be replayed in its entirety, as the administration may determine.
- (g) In extenuating circumstances, the administration shall have the power to re-schedule matches, other than those prescribed in this Rule, to facilitate the smooth running of the Competition.
- (h) Any club without just cause failing to fulfil its fixture obligations in respect of any such match in the League on the appointed date or dates shall be liable to such sanctions as the administration may determine, but not limited to including the deduction of points, fine or expulsion.
- (i) In the event of a club withdrawing during the course of the playing season, all points gained by clubs winning or drawing against the club withdrawing from a League shall be deducted. Similarly, goals for and against shall be declared null and void.
- (j) It is the responsibility of the home club to notify the match result and related information to the League Administrator.
- (k) The home club must ensure that the visiting club and the match officials have access to the changing facilities a minimum of 75 minutes prior to a League match.

6. League Positions

If two or more teams are equal on points upon completion of the League, the following criteria are applied to determine the final League positions:-

- (i) superior goal difference in all matches played.
- (ii) higher number of goals scored in all matches played.
- (iii) higher number of points obtained in the matches played among the teams in question.
- (iiii) higher number of goals scored away from home in the matches played among the teams in question.

If, following the application of the criteria aforesaid, the teams are still level, the determination of a League Championship, shall be determined by the teams playing a deciding game, or games, in such manner and under such conditions as the administration may decide.

7. Grounds for League Fixtures

- (a) Venues for matches played in the NextGen Performance League Category One Level must be strictly in accordance with the terms of applicable Category One grading criteria.
- (b) Clubs are required to formally notify, in writing, the Scottish FA of the venues at which their matches will be played and must officially register (by means of a match facilities pro-forma) their list of proposed playing facilities prior to the commencement of the season. The home club must provide a facility which provides private changing facilities (non-public access) and suitable facilities for our players and staff.
- (c) Provision for team warm-ups should be 30mins on the playing pitch. Should the potential for this to not be the provision the home club must communicate this to both the League Administrator and the opposing club no later than 72hours before the fixture.

8. Number of Players, Substitutes and Club Officials

A team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to 7 substitutes.

Competitive Season: 5 substitutions from 7 available substitutes may be made during the game, through 3 interventions of play, as well as a half-time substitution (which is not an intervention of play) are permitted in this competition.

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

9. Dimensions of the Field of Play

- (a) The length of the field of play shall not be more than 130 yards (120 metres) and not less than 100 yards (90 metres). The breadth shall not be more than 80 yards (75 metres) and not less than 55 yards (50 metres).
- (b) Spectators must be separated from the field of play by a wall, a rope, a railing or a fence.
- (c) Technical areas, on the same side of the field of play, marked by lines/markers etc., shall be provided at each ground.

10. Playing Field

All matches shall be played on a natural grass surface or on an artificial turf surface. Artificial turf surfaces must comply with quality standards set for football by FIFA (and in accordance with the terms of applicable Category One grading criteria).

11. Goals, Goal Nets, Corner Flags

Full size goals with goal nets and corner flags shall be used at all matches.

12. Provision of Footballs

Five footballs of first grade quality shall be provided by the home club for each match played in the League.

13. Medical Provisions

Medical provision at matches played in the NextGen Performance League must be strictly in accordance with the terms of applicable Category One grading criteria.

14. Player Registration and Eligibility

- (a) To be eligible to participate in the League, players must be registered with the Scottish FA's Affiliated National Association: Scottish Women's Football, in accordance with the terms of the Scottish Women's Football Registration Procedures.

To be eligible to participate in the League, players must be born on or after 1st January 2006.

- (i) A maximum of three players (two outfield players plus one goalkeeper), born on or after 1st January 2005 and no older than 31st December 2005 may be permitted to play at the age level immediately below their designated age category for a period of one season.

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.

- (ii) Consideration for the proposed older players participation request should be communicated to the Scottish FA League administration no later than **5 days prior** to the proposed fixture for review and approval. Approval is required from the NextGen Administrator, in consultation with Scottish FA Girls' and Women's Performance Manager and Scottish FA Performance Director.
- (iii) Any player born on or after January 1st 2008 may be permitted to play at the age level immediately above their designated age category for a period of one season or any selected game at the clubs discretion.

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

Scottish FA reserves the right to do spot checks to ensure wellbeing processes are being followed.

- (iv) Any player born on or after January 1st 2009 considered by their club to play at the age level immediately above their designated age category for any selected game, must apply to the Scottish FA for Player Exception.
 - (v) Clubs should demonstrate they have taken the appropriate wellbeing checks if playing a player up an age group level, this should also involve the input of parents/carers where practical. Scottish FA reserves the right to do spot checks to ensure wellbeing processes are being followed.
 - (vi) Consideration for the proposed younger players participation request should be communicated to the Scottish FA League administration no later than **5days prior** to the proposed fixture for review and approval. Approval is required from the NextGen Administrator, in consultation with Scottish FA Girls' and Women's Performance Manager and Scottish FA Performance Director.
 - (vii) Upon approval the inclusion of any overage or underage players should be communicated to the opposing club no less than **72hrs prior** to the scheduled fixture.
- (b) To play up two age-groups approval is required from the NextGen Administrator, in consultation with Scottish FA Girls' and Women's Performance Manager and Scottish FA Performance Director. Clubs should demonstrate they have taken the appropriate wellbeing checks if playing a player up two age groups, this should also involve the input of parents/carers where practical. Scottish FA reserves the right to do spot checks to ensure wellbeing processes are being followed.
 - (c) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that its players are eligible to play in League matches.
 - (d) Any team fielding an ineligible player in a League fixture may have points deducted from its points total in the League, or the result being awarded 3-0 in favour of the opposing team, and/or be liable to other such penalties as the Administration may decide.
 - (e) If a player participates in a League fixture whilst being ineligible to play in the match as a result of a suspension imposed by the Scottish FA, the team for which the player has participated may have points deducted from its points total in the League, or the result being awarded 3-0 in favour of the opposing team, and/or be liable to other such penalties as the administration may decide.
 - (f) Pending suspensions can only be served by registered players.

15. Playing of Players without Registration (Trialists)

- (a) No more than three unregistered players ("trialists") may be allowed to play, or be listed as a substitute, for a club in any League match.

- (b) Each trialist may be allowed to play in, or be listed as a substitute for, a maximum of five games (this does not include any matches as a listed and unused substitute) for any one club, provided she is otherwise eligible to do so. Clubs playing a player in these circumstances must indicate the fact by adding the letter “T” after the player’s name and date of birth on the official Team Line.
- (c) No “overseas” trialists are permitted to play in the competition.

16. Team Lines

- (a) Not later than 60 minutes before the start of a League match, each club shall hand to the referee, a list, and to its opponent, a duplicate, both of which shall be signed by the Secretary or other accredited club official, of the proper names of the players in its team, of such substitutes as are permitted, and of the club officials on forms provided by the Scottish FA.

Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury or due to extenuating circumstances be unable to participate after the submission of the list of players to the referee and prior to kick-off, the following provisions shall apply:-

- (i) If any of the first 11 players listed on the Team Line is not able to start the match for any reason, they may be replaced by any of the 7 substitutes.
- (ii) If any of the 7 substitutes listed on the Team Line is not able to be fielded for any reason, they may not be replaced, which means that the quota of substitute players will be reduced accordingly.
- (iii) If a goalkeeper listed on the Team Line cannot be fielded for any reason, she may be replaced by another goalkeeper not previously listed on the Team Line.
- (b) Within three working days thereafter the referee shall send to the League Administrator, the lists which were handed to them, which they shall also sign, and on which they shall intimate the result, the goal scorers, time of goals and which substitute or substitutes played in the match.
- (c) The League Administrator shall keep a register of the names of all of the players who take part in the League. The register shall be open for inspection.
- (d) A copy of the Team Line should be available at request for Scottish FA Talent ID Scout & Club Observer and our Scottish FA National Team Staff, should they attend the game

17. Registered Colours

- (a) When the first choice colours of two competing clubs are the same, or similar, the away club shall change and play in distinctive colours.
- (b) A club may play in its second colours provided that this does not prevent its opponent from observing the terms of paragraph (a) or from playing in its first-choice registered colours if it chooses to do so.

- (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 match officials.
- (e) Every player and substitute of each team shall wear a distinguishing number on her shirt or shorts. Such number shall be clearly distinct from the colours of the shirt and shorts in order that it is clearly visible. Numbers on shirts shall be a minimum of 25 cm and maximum of 35 cm in height, and those on shorts a minimum of 10 cm and a maximum of 15 cm.

18. Duration of League Match

- (a) A match will consist of two halves each of 45 minutes in duration.
- (b) A match which has started and which for any reason is abandoned, may not be continued as a “friendly” or “development” match.
- (c) The half time interval shall be of 15 minutes duration, or as otherwise determined by the referee.

19. Appointment of Match Officials

- (a) Match Officials shall be appointed by the Scottish FA, through a designated Regional Referee Co-ordinator.

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

- (b) A club may not refuse the services of any match official appointed by, or on behalf of, the Scottish FA.
- (c) The fees and expenses of match officials shall be defrayed by the Home Club.

20. Protests

- (a) When a club intends to lodge a protest in connection with events during a match, the Secretary of the club or other accredited official shall inform a match official and a club official of the opposing team within 30 minutes of the end of the match, and shall, at the same time, inform them of the grounds of protest.

The Secretary or other accredited club official shall be required to confirm the protest in writing by recorded delivery letter, to the League Administrator by the end of the third day, following completion of the match.

The League Administrator will confirm receipt of the protest to both clubs and the match officials and the nature of the protest(s).

- (b) The administration shall determine the outcome of a protest, properly constituted in accordance with the terms of paragraph (a) above, and shall have the power to order either club to pay such sum towards defraying the expenses incurred as may be considered desirable and to take such action as it deems fit.
- (c) Any objection to the ground, goal posts, crossbars, or other appurtenances of the game shall be intimated to the referee before the start of the match. The club on whose ground the match is played shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with Rule 9, and Law I of the Laws of the Game - The Field of Play.
- (d) Any club, on discovering an ineligible player has been listed on a team line should bring this to the immediate attention of the League Administrator, who shall conduct an investigation, in conjunction with the administration, and take any required action.

Should the League Administrator, during the course of checking the weekly team lines, find a club to have listed an ineligible player, they should immediately conduct an investigation, in conjunction with the administration, and take any required action.

21. Disorderly Conduct

Clubs are responsible for the behaviour of their players, officials, members, supporters and any person carrying out a function at a match on their behalf. In the event of damage being sustained to a ground where a League match is played as a consequence of misbehaviour by a player, official, member, supporters, or any other person acting on behalf of or associated with a club, then that club shall be responsible for any costs arising in the reparation of same.

The administration shall have the power to request such reports as may be necessary in determining responsibility for restitution and may additionally impose upon any club a censure, fine, expulsion from the competition or suspension if, in the opinion of the administration, a ground is the subject of damage by that club's representatives or those associated with it.

22. Infringement of Rules

- (a) Any club, official, player, or other person, who infringes any of these Rules, shall be liable to a fine or suspension, or both or such other sanction(s) as specified within these Rules. The administration has the power to investigate, consider and determine any allegations relative to the infringement of these Rules and to impose such sanction(s), as specified within these Rules, as it considers appropriate in order to deal justly with the case in question.
- (b) A club which is found to have infringed these Rules, may be liable to replay a specific match in question, at a time, venue and other conditions as deemed appropriate by the administration in its absolute discretion.