1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 In these Rules:

"Acquisition Debt" means the aggregate amount of all obligations incurred by the Proposed Acquiror (to the extent they are or will be secured over the assets of the target Club) and incurred by the target Club in connection with or following the acquisition of Control of the target Club for or in respect of borrowings of any nature.

"Affiliated Association" means an Association accorded the status of an affiliated Association under the Rules of The FA.

"Agent" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.

"AGM" shall mean the annual general meeting held in accordance with the Articles of the Competition.

"Appointing Authority" means The FA or the Competition.

"Articles" means the Articles of Association of the Company and reference to a number of following the word "Article" is a reference to an Article so numbered in the "Articles".

"Board" means the Board of Directors of the Company appointed in accordance with the Articles or, in the case of a Competition which is an unincorporated association, the management committee elected to manage the running of the Competition.

"Board Directive" means an order or instruction issued by the Board.

"Bond" means a sum of money deposited with the Competition as part of the requirements of membership of the Competition.

"Club" means a Club for the time being in membership of the Company (including a Club which has had a transfer of membership approved under Rule 2.9 below).

"Commercial Agreements" means all or any Agreement or Agreements with any third party including but not limited to broadcasting, media, sponsorship, marketing, merchandising, licensing and advertising, for the general promotion of each or any of the Clubs in the Competition and the Company, and which have the object of promoting the welfare and general commercial interest and increasing the financial resources of each of the Clubs, the Company and the Competition.

"Company" means the Northern Counties East Football League which administers the Competition and shall, where the Competition is an unincorporated entity, include that entity.

"Competition" means the Northern Counties East Football League.

"Competition Match" means any match played or to be played under the jurisdiction of the Company.

"Competition Office" means the registered Offices or addresses where League business is transacted.

"Competition Secretary" means such person or persons appointed or elected to carry out the administration of the Competition.

"Contract Player" means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play under a written contract of employment with a Club.

"Contractual Disputes Tribunal" shall be as defined in Rules of The FA.

"Control" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.

"Criteria Document" means the document entitled "National Stadium Accreditation Criteria Document" issued by The FA from time to time and shall, unless stated to the

contrary, mean the latest edition of the document.

"Creditor Compromise" shall mean an agreement reached by a Club under a Company Voluntary Arrangement (under the Insolvency Act 1986) or a Scheme of Arrangement (under the Companies Act 1985 or Companies Act 2006) or a restructuring plan (under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006).

"Day" means any day on which the Competition Office is open for normal business but excluding, unless the Board determines otherwise, a Saturday, a Sunday or a Bank or Public Holiday.

"Embargo" means a ban placed by the Board on a Club in respect of player registrations, as more fully defined in Appendix H.

"Embargoed Club" means any Club subject to an Embargo.

"Event Doctor" means an individual qualified in accordance with the requirements set out in 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' (known as the 'Green Guide'), as in force from time to time (formerly known as a crowd doctor).

"Fees Tariff" means a list of fees approved by the Company for any matters for which fees are payable under the Rules.

"FIFA Quality Concept" means the:

(a) FIFA Quality Concept Handbook of Requirements for Football Turf Surfaces (January 2012 Edition); and

(b) FIFA Quality Concept – Handbook of Test Methods for Football Turf (January 2012 Edition), and any amendment or modification thereof.

"FIFA Recommended One / IATS or Two Star Certificate" means the certificate of that name awarded by FIFA following compliance with the applicable requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept.

"Fines Tariff" means a list of fines approved by the Company for any breach of the Rules.

"First Aider" means a person who holds a valid 'Emergency Medical First Aid in Football' or 'Emergency First Aid in Football' accreditation (or such equivalent qualification deemed acceptable by The FA from time to time).

"Football Creditor" means any one of the following:

- The Football Association Limited.
- Any Club affiliated with an Affiliated Association.
- Any League sanctioned by The Association or an Affiliated Association.
- Any full time or part time employee of a Club, or former full time or part time employee of a Club, in respect of sums due to such person by way of arrears of remuneration or expenses. This excludes for these purposes all and any claims for redundancy, unfair or wrongful dismissal or other claims arising out of the termination of the contract or in respect of any period after the actual date of termination.
- The Professional Footballers' Association Limited.
- The Football Foundation.
- The Premier League Stadium Fund.
- Any Affiliated Association.
- Any pension scheme or plan administered by or on behalf of the Competition.

"Football Turf (3G) Pitch (FTP)" means a field of play (as that term is defined in the Laws of the Game) that has, following installation and prior to the commencement of each subsequent Playing Season, been awarded the relevant FIFA Performance requirement

(FIFA Two and One Star or Pro and Quality) and which otherwise conforms to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

"Grass Pitch" means a field of play (as that term is defined in the Laws of the Game) that is natural grass, predominantly natural grass or intended to be predominantly natural grass and which conforms to the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

"Ground" means the ground on which the Club's first team plays its Competition fixtures.

"Group" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.

"Insolvency Event" means any one of the following:

(a) entering into a Company Voluntary Arrangement pursuant to Part 1 of the Insolvency Act 1986 ("the 1986 Act") or a compromise or arrangement with its creditors under Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 or a restructuring plan under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006 or any compromise agreement with its creditors as a whole; or

(b) lodging a Notice of Intention to Appoint an Administrator or Notice of Appointment of an Administrator at the Court in accordance with paragraph 26 or paragraph 29 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act, an application to the Court for an Administration Order under paragraph 12 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act (other than paragraph 12 (1)(c)) or where an Administrator is appointed or an Administration Order is made in respect of it ("'Administrator" and "Administration Order" having the meanings attributed to them respectively by paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule B1 to the 1986 Act); or

(c) an Administrative Receiver (as defined by section 251 of the 1986 Act), a Law of Property Act Receiver (appointed under section 109 of the Law of Property Act 1925) or any Receiver appointed by the Court under the Supreme Court Act 1981 or any other Receiver is appointed over any assets which, in the opinion of the Board, are material to the Club's ability to fulfil its obligations as a member of the League; or

(d) the coming into force of a moratorium pursuant to Part A1 of the Insolvency Act 1986; or

(e) shareholders passing a resolution pursuant to section 84(1) of the 1986 Act to voluntarily wind up; or

(f) a meeting of creditors is convened pursuant to section 95 or section 98 of the 1986 Act; or

(g) a winding up order is made by the Court under section 122 of the 1986 Act or a provisional liquidator is appointed under section 135 of the 1986 Act; or

(h) ceasing or forming an intention to cease wholly or substantially to carry on business save for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation or otherwise in accordance with a scheme of proposals which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Board; or

(i) being subject to any insolvency regime in any jurisdiction outside England and Wales which is analogous with the insolvency regimes detailed in (a) to (g) above; and/or

(j) have any proceeding or step taken or any court order in any jurisdiction made which has a substantially similar effect to any of the foregoing.

"Intermediary" means any natural or legal person who carries out or seeks to carry out Intermediary Activity and has registered with The Association in accordance with The FA

Intermediaries Regulations.

"Intermediary/Agent Activity" means acting in any way and at any time, either directly or indirectly, for or on behalf of a Player or a Club in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction. This includes, but is not limited to, entering into a Representation Contract with a Player or a Club. For the avoidance of doubt, a Club Official is not acting as an Intermediary or Agent when they carry out any Intermediary/Agent Activity in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction for or on behalf of that Club. Similarly, a Lawyer is not acting as an Intermediary or Agent when they solely and exclusively undertake or provide Permitted Legal Advice in relation to any matter relating to a Transaction.

"Long Term Loan" means a loan transfer of a Player who is a qualifying Player within the terms of the Rules from either (a) any date during the first Registration Period to any date during the second Registration Period, or (b) any date during the first or second Registration Period to the end of that Playing Season. For the purposes of this definition only, a "Registration Period" shall mean one of the periods determined by The FA during which players may be registered for a professional men's club.

"Match Officials" means the referee, the assistant referees and any fourth official appointed to a Competition Match.

"Membership Year" means the period in each calendar year from the holding of one annual general meeting of the Company to the holding of the next annual general meeting.

"National League System" means the system of competitions controlled by the FA where promotion and relegation links exist between participating Leagues.

"Non Contract Player" means any Player (other than a Player on a Scholarship) who is eligible to play for a Club but has not entered into a written contract of employment.

"Officer" means an individual who is required to make an Owners' and Directors' Declaration by The FA.

"Online Player Registration System" means the relevant online player registration system as determined by The FA from time to time.

"Option" shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

"Owners' and Directors' Declaration" means a declaration to The FA required from an Officer from time to time.

"Paid in Full" shall mean when a Club has either:

- paid (in cleared funds) to the supervisor of its Creditor Compromise or its administrator, sufficient funds to pay all its creditors in full (100p in the £) and to cover the costs of the Creditor Compromise or the administration and confirmation of this fact has been received in writing from the supervisor/administrator; or
- paid (in cleared funds) sufficient to settle in full (100p in the £) any debts owed to creditors outside a Creditor Compromise.

"Parent Undertaking" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.

"Participant" shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

"Person" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.

"Pitch" means a Grass Pitch or Football Turf Pitch.

"Pitch Test" means the test(s) conducted by a FIFA accredited field test institute or UKAS accredited test institute in accordance with the requirements of the FIFA Quality Concept or IATS.

"Player" means any Contract Player, Non Contract Player or other Player who plays or who is eligible to play for a Club or is subject to any suspension from playing.

"Playing Season" means the period between the date on which the first league fixture in the Competition is played each year until the date on which the last league fixture in the Competition is played. For Clubs participating in play off matches this does include the period when play off matches are played.

"Player Status Rules" shall be as defined in the Rules of The FA.

"Play Off Position" means the position of a Club in the table at the end of each Playing Season which is provided for in Rule 12 as qualifying the Club to take part in a play off match to qualify for promotion to the next step of football for the next Playing Season.

"Proposed Acquirer" shall have the meaning given to it in Rule 2.16.

"Qualified Medical Practitioner" means a graduate health care professional e.g., a doctor, physiotherapist, paramedic, nurse, sport therapist or sports rehabilitator, having the appropriate valid medical insurance, and being registered with a recognised professional body, (e.g., the General Medical Council, Health Care Professions Council, Royal College of Nursing, Society of Sports Therapists, Sports Therapy Association, Sports Therapy Organisation or Federation of Holistic Therapists Directory Service).

"Rules" means these rules under which the Competition is administered.

"Satisfied" shall mean that a creditor has consented, and provided evidence of such, to accept a sum in full and final settlement of its debt from a Club. For the avoidance of doubt, a vote to approve a Company Voluntary Arrangement ('CVA') by the creditors of a Club, held in accordance with Insolvency Law in operation from time to time, shall deem those debts admitted to the CVA as being Satisfied. The Board shall determine at its absolute discretion whether an amount is satisfied under the Rules.

"Scholar" means a player that has entered into a Scholarship Agreement.

"Scholarship Agreement" means an agreement entered into between a Club and a player pursuant to the Player Status Rules.

"Secured" shall mean that one of the following legally recognised undertakings has been provided for the payment of the specified sum in full by the AGM at the end of the Playing Season in which the transfer of membership takes place:

(i) A solicitor's undertaking for the full amount outstanding;

(ii) A bank guarantee is held for the full amount outstanding;

In each case to be paid and satisfied in full by no later than the AGM at the end of the Playing Season in which the transfer took place.

The Board shall determine at its absolute discretion whether an amount is Secured or Satisfied under the Rules.

"Short Term Loan" means a loan transfer for a period of no fewer than 28 days in any one season.

"Significant Interest" means the holding and/or possession of the legal or beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, shares or other securities in the Club which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof ten (10) per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable in respect of the Shares of any class of Shares of the Club. All or part of any such interest may be held directly or indirectly or by contract including, but not limited to, by way of membership of any group that in the opinion of the Board are acting in concert, and any rights or powers held by an Associate (as defined in the Rules of The FA Challenge Cup) shall be included for the purposes of

determining whether an interest or interests amounts to a "Significant Interest".
"SSAP" means a sporting sanctions appeal panel to be appointed to determine an appeal against a deduction of points under Rule 13.
"Stadium Accreditation" means the accreditation programme through which a Club's stadium is assessed against the relevant requirements set out in the Criteria Document.
"Team Sheet" means a form provided by the Competition referred to in Rule 8.20.
"Subsidiary Undertaking" shall be as defined in the Rules of the FA.
"The FA" means The Football Association Limited.
"Transaction" means any negotiation or other related activity, including any communication relating or preparatory to the same, the intention or effect of which is to create, terminate or vary the terms of a player's contract of employment with a Club, to facilitate or effect the registration of a player with a Club, or the transfer of the registration of a player from a club to a Club (whether on a temporary or permanent basis). A completed Transaction is one that has so achieved the creation, termination or variation of the terms of the player's contract of employment with a Club, the registration of the player with a Club or the transfer of the registration from a club to a Club.
"Transmission-Free Period" means the period determined by The FA from time to time pursuant to Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes and the Regulations Governing the Implementation of Article 48 of the UEFA Statutes.
"WGS" means the Whole Game System and the procedures for the operation thereof as determined by The FA from time to time.
"Work Experience Player" means a Player whose registration is held by a competition other than the Competition and is registered under a Scholarship. The Club taking the Player on work experience will register the Player Non Contract with a league in which they take part to fulfil the football element of the Scholarship, not the educational part.
"written" or "in writing" means the representation or reproduction of words or symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise.
"Youth Loan" means a loan transfer for a period of no fewer than 28 days of a Player who is a qualifying Player within the terms of the Rules.

1.2 The Rules are taken from the Standardised Rules determined by The FA from time to time. In the event of any omissions from the Standardised Rules then the requirements of the Standardised Rules shall be deemed to apply to the Competition.

1.3 Words or expressions used in these Rules shall, if not inconsistent with the subject or context, bear the same meanings as in the Articles.

1.4 All Clubs shall adhere to the Rules. Every Club shall be deemed, as a member of the Company to have accepted the Rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Board in relation thereto, subject to the provisions of Rule 16.

1.5 The Competition will be known as "The Northern Counties East Football League" (or such other name as the Company may adopt). The Clubs participating in the Competition must be members of the Company. A Club which ceases to exist or which ceases to be entitled to play in the Competition for any reason whatsoever shall thereupon automatically cease to be a member of the Company.

1.6 The administration of the Competition under these Rules will be carried out by the Company acting (save where otherwise specifically mentioned herein) through the Board

in accordance with the Rules Regulations and Practices of The FA.

1.7 The Company shall be part of the National League System established by The FA and shall sign such documents as are required from time to time to confirm such membership.

2. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Each Club shall register its Ground, and its pitch dimensions, with the Competition prior to the start of each Playing Season. It will be misconduct on the part of a Club to alter its pitch dimensions during a season unless with prior written consent of the Board. The Board may at any time require a Club, at its own cost, to submit a report from a qualified independent source certifying the pitch dimensions.

Dimensions of the field of play for all Competition matches shall be:-

Length: Maximum 120 yards (110 metres) – Minimum 110 yards (100 metres)

Width: Maximum 80 yards (75 metres) – Minimum 70 yards (64 metres)

No Club shall move to another Ground without first obtaining written consent of the Board; such consent not to be withheld unreasonably. In consideration whether to give such consent the Board shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and shall not grant consent unless it is reasonably satisfied that such consent:-

- would be consistent with the objectives of the Competition as set out in the Memorandum of Association;
- would be appropriate having in mind the relationship (if any) between the locality with which by its name or otherwise the applicant Club is traditionally associated and that in which such Club proposes to establish its Ground;
- would not adversely affect such Club's Officials, Players, supporters, shareholders, sponsors and others having an interest in its activities;
- would not have an adverse effect on visiting Clubs;
- would not adversely affect Clubs having their registered Grounds in the immediate vicinity of the proposed location, and
- would enhance the reputation of the Competition and promote the game of association football generally.

The Club must disclose, as soon as practicable, plans and details of any proposed move to a new stadium. The location of the proposed new stadium must meet with the approval of the Board.

Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 4.12 a Club shall forthwith notify the Competition of any proposed change in its circumstances relating to the occupation of its Ground. By way of example, and without limitation, a proposed change may include a sale of any freehold interest (with or without subsequent leaseback) or any surrender or variation or a lease or licence.

2.2 All Clubs shall have Grounds and headquarters situated in England, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man if applicable or Wales and the Competition Secretary shall send their names and particulars to The FA annually by the date appointed by, and in the format required by, The FA. Clubs playing in England shall be duly affiliated at all times to a recognised County Football Association. Welsh Clubs shall be affiliated to The FA of Wales. Each Club shall return to the Competition Secretary a fully completed questionnaire relating to Form "D" required by The FA by the date given in the circular letter accompanying the

questionnaire issued by the Competition Secretary.

2.3 A Club's Ground may be shared with another Club or any other club (including a club engaged in another sport) providing, where sharing with a football club the Club or club playing in the most senior competition has priority of fixtures at all times and, where sharing with a club engaged in another sport, the Club has priority of fixtures unless agreed otherwise by the Competition at its sole discretion, applicable only to that Competition, and valid only for one season at a time but open to annual renewal. A Club will not be permitted to ground share to gain promotion or to avoid relegation. Ground sharing may not be permitted when one of the sharers retains the use of another ground unless that club can show by means of a refused planning permission or similar that it cannot meet the requirements of the Criteria Document at that ground. Any Club wishing to share a Ground or intending to move to a new Ground must obtain the written consent of the Board. Any Ground sharing for a period exceeding thirteen (13) weeks must be in writing and a written agreement must first be approved by the Board before being entered into and (except in an emergency) must be completed by 31 March in any year to be effective for the following Playing Season. A copy of the completed signed and dated agreement must be received by the Competition within fourteen days of the approval being sent to the Club.

2.4 The Club as at 31 March in any year shall either:

(i) Own the freehold of the Ground, or

(ii) Have a lease for the Ground that extends uninterrupted for a minimum of the current and following Playing Season, or

(iii) Possess an agreement for the use of the Ground that is acceptable to The Football Association following consultation with the relevant Competition.

Guidance: *From the 2025/26 Season, Clubs at Step 1 with a lease for their Ground shall be required to have a lease that extends uninterrupted for a minimum of that season and the following five Playing Seasons.*

In each case the Club must provide to the Competition of which it is a member and to The Football Association:

If the Ground is freehold either currently dated Official Copies of the freehold title at the Land Registry in the name of the entity in membership of the Competition or, if unregistered, a Certificate of Title from the Club's solicitor showing that the Ground is owned by the entity in membership of the Competition, or

If the Ground is held leasehold a copy of the signed and dated lease in the name of the entity in membership of the Competition; if the expiry date of the lease has already passed or is dated before the end of the next full Playing Season, a certificate from the Club's solicitor as to whether or not a notice has been given by the landlord to terminate the lease. In addition the Club must provide evidence of registration at the Land Registry, or explain why the Lease is not registered.

If the Ground is subject to an acceptable agreement a copy of the signed and dated agreement for the use of the Ground together with confirmation from The Football Association, following consultation with the relevant Competition, that the agreement is acceptable.

The Club must disclose whether the Club's occupation of the Ground is subject to any third party option, whether the ground is charged by way of security and whether or not any break clauses in the lease or agreement have been exercised either by the landlord

or the tenant.

In all cases The Football Association and the Competition of which it is a member have the right to call for further information.

2.5 A Club's Ground must comply with the Criteria Document for the step in the National League System at which the Club is playing. Each Club that is required to hold a safety certificate issued in accordance with safety legislation must lodge a current copy with the Competition. If a Clubs' ground is subject to any reduction in capacity by a public authority it must immediately inform the Competition.

2.6 No club which is a "nursery" club or a reserve side of a football club shall be eligible for membership of the Company.

A club shall be deemed to be a "nursery" club if it is under obligation, written or otherwise, to a football club by reason of which it has not the sole and entire control of its own management, finance and Players.

2.7 Clubs seeking membership or applying to retain membership of the Company must comply with the requirements provided for in the Criteria Document for the step at which the Club is seeking to play or the step at which the Club is playing. Only clubs which meet these criteria in full will be eligible for membership. All Clubs visited by representatives of the Stadium Accreditation Programme in pursuance of the Criteria Document will pay a non-returnable fee. In the absence of a procedure for application for membership being established by The FA, the Board shall establish such procedure. The FA shall establish a procedure for inspecting Clubs' grounds from time to time to ensure that the grade attained by that ground is maintained.

2.8 The Competition and the FA shall determine a time scale whereby all Clubs in membership must attain the grade provided for in the Criteria Document. The grade applicable for each Club for the commencement of a Playing Season shall be that existing at the previous 31st July (or by a later date which was agreed at the sole discretion of The FA's Alliance Leagues Committee (Steps 1 to 4) or Leagues Committee (Steps 5 & 6), such grading to be ascertained by an inspection carried out on or before 31st March or as soon as practicable thereafter. Any Club not maintaining the grade set for the Competition may be relegated at the end of the Playing Season to a step determined by The FA.

Any delay in inspection shall in no way release a Club from its obligation to have its ground ready for inspection. If for any reason a Club's existing ground, or any new ground in which it proposes to play its home matches in the season following inspection, is not available for grading by 31st March prior to commencement of the relevant season then the Club must, by the 31st March, submit to the Board in writing its proposals for a venue for its home matches in the following season ("alternative proposal"), such alternative proposal to be considered (and if appropriate) approved at the next Board Meeting after 31st March. The alternative proposal must, inter alia, contain documentary evidence in support of any ground sharing arrangements and evidence that the proposed ground is demonstrably suitable at a level which the relevant club will be competing. The alternative proposal may not be for a continuation of any ground share arrangement if the Club has had a ground sharing arrangement for the previous 2 seasons, or any part thereof, even if those arrangements have related to more than one ground.

Any approval of the alternative proposal will be subject to the issue of a grading

certificate. The Board will use all reasonable endeavours to inspect the ground after receiving the alternative proposal and prior to the Board meeting, but if it is unable to do so then any approval of the alternative proposal will be subject to the issue of a satisfactory grading certificate. In the event of a Club not having received a grading certificate by 31st March and not having had its alternative proposal approved at the relevant Board Meeting, it shall be relegated forthwith at the end of the playing season to a level determined by The Football Association.

2.9 Any Club which is incorporated must be incorporated in England and Wales. Any Club wishing to incorporate shall notify The FA, its Affiliated Association and the Company Secretary before it makes any resolutions in this regard and Rule 2.16 shall also apply where the Club participates at Step 2 of the National League System. Any person wishing to be appointed as an Officer to a Club at Step 2 and below must comply with the requirements of The FA Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations and send to the Competition Secretary a copy of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration within 5 days of sending the same to The FA (save where Rule 2,16 applies).

2.10 **AT STEPS 3 TO 6 ONLY**

In the event that any Club which is an unincorporated association incorporates itself it shall notify the Competition Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution to take this action and shall with such notice provide the Competition Secretary with a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company. Any amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of a Club must be notified to the Competition Secretary in writing within 14 days of the passing of the resolution with a copy of the change(s).

Transfer of Membership

Transfer as a Going Concern

2.11.1 In the event that any Club which resolves to transfer its membership of the Competition from one legal entity to a different legal entity, other than in the circumstances shown at 2.9.2 below, the Board will use the following minimum criteria in deciding whether to approve that transfer:

(a) The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree to the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity.

(b) All Football Creditors in the Club must be paid in full or transferred in full (with each creditor's consent) to the new entity, and evidenced as such.

(c) All other creditors in the Club must be paid in full or Secured or transferred in full (with each creditor's consent) to the new entity and evidenced as such.

(d) The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts to The FA and the Competition showing its ability to fund the Club for the next twelve (12) months or to the end of the Playing Season following transfer (whichever is the longer) and that evidence of funding sources has been provided.

(e) The FA must have given approval for the transfer to take place.

Transfer from Insolvency

2.11.2 In the event that any Club that is subject to an Insolvency Event resolves to transfer its membership of the Competition to a new entity, the Board will use the following minimum

criteria in deciding whether or not to approve that transfer:

(a) The shareholders or members of the Club have voted to agree to the transfer of the Club's membership to the new entity and/or a licensed insolvency practitioner(s) appointed to the Club has agreed to sell or transfer some or all of the Club's assets to the new entity;

(b) All Football Creditors in the Club must be Paid in Full and evidenced as such;

(c) The proposed new entity has provided financial forecasts to The FA and the Competition showing its ability to fund the Club for the next twelve (12) months or to the end of the Playing Season following transfer (whichever is the longer) and that evidence of funding sources has been provided;

(d) The FA must have given approval for the transfer to take place; and

(e) All other creditors in the Club must be satisfied and evidenced as such (This provision to be read in conjunction with 2.9.3 below.)

In the event that requirement (a) and/or (e) is not fully complied with, and only where the Board, at its absolute discretion, deems there to have been exceptional circumstances surrounding the application for the transfer, it may approve the transfer (subject to compliance with all other provisions above) and may apply such conditions as it deems appropriate including, without limitation, the deduction of points.

2.11.3 Nothing in Rule 2.9.2 above shall limit in any way the application of Rule 13B of these Rules.

2.11.4 *[Rule applies to National League only]*

2.12 The Competition shall allow for up to 44 member Clubs. There will be two divisions of 22 Clubs in each division where possible. The divisions will be called Premier Division and Division One. The Clubs competing in each division each season will be confirmed by the Annual General Meeting of the Company each year. A Club entered into membership at the Annual General Meeting shall be subject to the application of the Rules until the date of the following Annual General Meeting. It shall be allowed for these numbers to be increased to accommodate any anomaly in the National League System.

2.13 Any Club or Club representative found guilty of serious irregularities regarding Players Contract payments under The FA Rules may be expelled from the Company in accordance with these Rules and, in addition, may be fined such sum as the Board shall determine.

2.14 The Company will hold a membership register of the full name of the company/unincorporated entity constituting each Club. If the Club is an incorporated entity, it must provide the Company with its company name and registration number. If the Club is an unincorporated entity, it must provide the Company with the name of an individual in whose name the membership of the Company will be vested. A Club must notify the Company of all proposed changes to the information held by the League in the membership register in respect of the Club including any proposed change of company name or the name of an individual in whose name the membership of the Company is vested. Clubs are required to submit a fully completed membership form prior to the Annual General Meeting each Season.

The Company will provide a copy of its membership register to The FA annually.

Ownership and Change of Control

2.15 Each Club shall publish its legal name, form (e.g. unincorporated association, company

limited by shares or guarantee etc) and any identifier (e.g. company number). In addition for those Clubs that are owned, then the Club shall also publish the identities of the ultimate owner (i.e. the name of an individual) of each Significant Interest in the Club. Such information shall as a minimum be published on the Club's official website on a page accessible directly from the home page of that official club website and within the Club's official matchday programme.

2.16 - 2.20 *[Rules apply to National League Step 2 only]*

2.21 In the event that an Insolvency Event occurs in relation to any Club, that Club must inform and keep informed the Competition Secretary and The FA immediately.

The Board shall have the power to suspend a Club on notification of it having entered an Insolvency Event.

At the discretion of the Board, a suspension may take effect from the giving of the notice or it may be postponed subject to any conditions as the Board may think fit to impose.

In the event that a Club is suspended or its suspension is postponed, the Board shall have power to make such payments as it may think fit to the Club's Football Creditors out of any monies due to that club from the Company.

2.22 An Officer must submit an Owners' and Directors' Declaration to The FA in accordance with the Reporting Requirements set out in The FA's Owners' and Directors' Regulations that apply from time to time. The Club must provide a copy of any such Owners' and Directors' Declaration to the Competition at the time it is submitted to The FA.

No individual will be permitted to act as an Officer if they fail to meet any of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration, as set out in the Rules of The FA.

In the event that an individual/entity is found to have either:

- Completed false or misleading statements on their Owners' and Directors' Declaration;
- acted as an Officer when in breach of the requirements of the Owners' and Directors' Declaration;
- Acted as an Officer without The FA having given written confirmation to the Club in accordance with The FA's Owners' and Directors' Regulations that the individual may so act; then the individual/entity or Club shall be subject to such fine or other sanction as may be determined by The FA.

In the event that the Competition receive a Notice from The FA issued in accordance with The FA's Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations for the suspension of that Club's Competition membership, then that Club shall be suspended from the Competition with effect from 14 days from the date of the Notice. An appeal of the effect of the Notice is to The FA and can only be made by the affected Club and in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in the FA Owners' and Directors' Test Regulations. The effect of the Notice shall be suspended pending the outcome of an appeal.

The FA shall advise the Competition and the Club in writing where it becomes satisfied that a Disqualifying Condition as defined in the FA Owners' and Directors' Test no longer applies. Upon receipt of this written notification from The FA, the Competition may remove the suspension of the Club's Competition membership.

Where a Club is suspended and that causes a match in the Competition not to be played, the Board shall determine how the outcome of that match shall be treated.

2.23 Within fourteen days of a change in a Significant Interest at a Club or the appointment or removal of any director of a Club, written notice thereof, together with such details as are

required to be filed with the Registrar of Companies, shall be deposited at the Competition Office.

2.24 If during the course of a season the Board decide that the organisation and management or finances of a particular Club fall below the standards appropriate to membership of the Competition, the Competition Secretary shall be instructed to warn the Club at once that it may be excluded from membership of the Competition at the end of that playing season. Such a Club shall have the right to appeal to The FA within 14 days of the date of notification of the Board's decision.

2.25 The Competition, through the Board shall be empowered from time to time by subscription, levy or otherwise to require Clubs to contribute such sum or sums of money to the funds of the League as may be necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the League. Such contributions by Clubs may be collected by deduction from sums due to Clubs under any promotion agreement or from sponsorship money due or by whatever means the Board shall think fit. There shall be added to any sums to be contributed from Clubs, if applicable, Value Added Tax at the then prevailing rate.

2.26 Any Club failing to be represented throughout an Annual General Meeting or any other general meeting called in accordance with the Rules without satisfactory reason being given shall be fined in accordance with the Fines Tariff. Whenever required to do so all Clubs shall ensure that their Manager, or an Assistant Manager, attend in person any Meeting of Clubs called by the Board. Failure to do so without just cause shall be a breach of these Rules and be dealt with in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

2.27 The Competition and each Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

2.28 The Competition and each Club does not and must not by its rules or regulations or in any manner whatsoever unlawfully discriminate against any person within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination (whether by way of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise).

2.29 The Competition and each Club shall make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, or otherwise.

2.30 Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning Association for investigation.

2.31 *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

3. MEMBERSHIP – ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

3.1 Any Club allocated for membership of the Company shall submit to the Company a fully completed Membership application form and the application fee and non-refundable ground inspection fee.

3.2 Clubs which have qualified for membership of the Company must confirm their acceptance of membership on the appropriate Competition form to be received by the

Company at least 14 days prior to the next Annual General Meeting of the Company accompanied where appropriate by the membership fee.

The annual subscription shall be paid by each Club to the Company no later than 7 days before the Annual General Meeting of the Company in each year.

4. POWER OF THE BOARD

4.1 The Board shall have power to deal with all matters of management of the Competition covered by the Rules. The Board shall conduct the business of the Competition and shall meet as often as is necessary for this purpose.

The Board may appoint such committees as it deems appropriate which shall be fully empowered to act on the Board's behalf subject to ratification by the Board. The Board shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of the Football Association or affiliated Association.

4.2 Save where specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, the Board shall have power to apply, act upon and enforce these Rules and shall have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Company or the Competition including any not provided for in these Rules. The Board shall also have the power to issue an order or instruction, by way of a Board Directive, in the best interest of the Competition, on any matter not provided for in these Rules, with which Clubs must comply or be subject to sanction under Rule 4.6, save where any such Directive is inconsistent with a Rule or Regulation of The FA, in which event the Directive will not create a binding obligation on Clubs.

4.3 All decisions of the Board shall be binding, subject to a right of appeal to The FA pursuant to Rule 16. Decisions of the Board must be notified, in writing, to all concerned within fourteen days of the making of such decision.

Upon becoming aware of any breaches of these Rules the Board shall write to the entity suspected of a breach formally charging the party giving at least 7 days' notice of the time, date and venue of the meeting at which the charge shall be considered.

The party charged will respond in writing to the Board within 7 days stating whether or not the charge is admitted and in default the Competition will deal with the case on the evidence it has at the time. If the charge is disputed or if the party admitting the charge wishes to present a plea in mitigation, it shall have the right to a personal hearing. The party charged also has the right to waive the 7 day requirement and allow the charge to be considered in less than 7 days after the party has been charged.

If the party charged disputes the charge or wishes to have a personal hearing to present a plea in mitigation then it shall submit its case in writing to be received by the Competition Secretary at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting set to consider the charge and in default the Board will be at liberty to proceed to hear the charge without the benefit of written submissions from the party charged.

4.4 Where the Rules provide for the imposition of a financial penalty under the Fines Tariff then the Notice of Charge given by the Board under Rule 4.3 above shall refer to the penalty provided for in the Fines Tariff.

If the Rule provides that the penalty for such a breach is in the discretion of the Board then the notice shall also state as such. If the penalty set by Rules is not a financial penalty then such penalty must still be referred to in the Notice of Charge.

All breaches of the Laws of the Game Rules and Regulations of the Football Association shall be dealt with in accordance with FA Rules by the appropriate Association prior to any action by the Competition in accordance with FA Regulations.

4.5 All fines and charges imposed by the Board shall be received by the Company within twenty-eight days of the date of notification of imposition (unless otherwise ordered). Any Club or person breaking this Rule shall be liable to such penalties as the Board may impose.

4.6 If a Club fails to comply with a Board Directive within the timescale set out in the notification of such order or instruction, it may not be allowed to play or take part in the business of the Company until the expiry of 7 days from the day the order or instruction is complied with.

4.7 Except where otherwise mentioned, all communications shall be addressed to the Competition Secretary, who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.

4.8 A Club must at all times attend satisfactorily to the business of the Competition and/or the correspondence of the Competition or Company.

4.9 If a Club is asked to submit a report in relation to any alleged violation of these Rules it may have a personal hearing, providing it notifies its intention of such within fourteen days of the date of notification from the Company, or the case will be dealt with in its absence.

4.10 The Board shall have the power to arrange representative matches at their discretion.

4.11 A match (or matches) may be played each season between two Clubs nominated by the Board and it shall be a requirement for such match (or matches) to be played on the date(s) nominated by the Board. All matters concerning the match (or matches) will be decided by the Board.

4.12 In the event of any issue concerning the membership of any Club with the Competition the Board may require a Bond to be paid by or on behalf of the Club on such terms and for such period as it may in its entire discretion think fit.

5. INTERESTS IN MORE THAN ONE CLUB

Except with the prior written consent of the Board no person, company or business institution (including insolvency practitioners) may at any time be interested in more than one Club or in a Club and any other club playing in a Competition sanctioned by The FA. The definition of “interested” shall be the same as provided for by the Rules of the FA Challenge Cup Competition in force from time to time.

6. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

6.1 A QUALIFYING PLAYER REGISTRATION

The FA’s rules will apply in respect of all matters concerning players.

6.1.1 A Player is one who has been registered via the relevant Online Player Registration System and such registration has been: (a) approved by the Competition, and (b) in the case of a:

(i) Contract Player – approved by the league the player is transferring from and

The FA.

(ii) Loan player (if loaned from a club participating in the Premier League or the EFL) – approved by the league the player is transferring from and The FA.

(iii) Loan player (if loaned from a club participating in the NLS) – approved by The FA.

6.1.2 At Steps 1 to 4, a Player's registration with a Club as a Contract Player shall continue until the earlier of the date upon which: (a) the contract between the Contract Player and the Club expires, (b) the Contract Player's registration is transferred to another club, or (c) the contract is cancelled in accordance with Rule 6.5.

It is the responsibility of all Clubs to ensure any player signing a registration form has, where necessary, the required International Transfer Certificate and in the case of Contract Players, including those on loan, must have approval from The FA.

Any relevant registration/transfer/loan forms must be uploaded onto the Online Player Registration System within five (5) days of the Player signing the forms.

The Registration of Players are subject to fees in accordance with the fees tariff.

The status of a player must be clearly stated on the registration information submitted.

Hard copies of the registration form are not required to be submitted to the Competition. However, these must be completed, signed and retained by Clubs in case of dispute or in case requested by The FA and/or the Competition. The registration of a Player will be valid from the date of registration to the end of that Playing Season only save for (a) a Contract or Loan Player whose contract or loan expires before the end of the Playing Season, or (b) a Contract Player registered with a club participating at Steps 1 to 4), where in each case the registration shall be valid for the term of the applicable contract or loan.

There must be a minimum gap of 14 days between the commencement date of a Player's registration with one Club and the commencement date of a Player's registration with any subsequent Club (save where that Player is to register and play as a goalkeeper).

6.1.3 A Player may only play under his correct status. Any change of a Player's status during the currency of a registration must be notified to the Competition within five (5) days of the change of registration being affected.

In the event of a Player changing his status with the same Club either from Contract to Non-Contract or from Non-Contract to Contract then that Player must sign a new registration form (which is to be retained by the Club), complete a new registration process via the Online Player Registration System, and be re-registered. In default the Player re-registering will be ineligible to play in a match under the jurisdiction of the Competition and Rule 6.9 will be applied in such circumstances where a Club is found guilty of playing a Player who has changed status without re-registering.

A Player whose registration under Contract is cancelled by mutual consent and immediately re-registered by the same Club or a different Club on a non-contract basis shall not subsequently be registered as a Contract player with the Club for which his Contract was cancelled, within three months of the date of the cancellation except with the consent of the Board and The FA.

6.1.4 The Board shall have the power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any Player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct subject to the right of Appeal to the FA or the relevant County Football Association. Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated conduct, which may deter a Participant from being involved

in this Competition. Application should be made to the parent County of the Club the Player is registered with.
(Note:- action under this clause shall not be taken against a Player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Association, and then only in cases of the Player bringing the Competition into disrepute and will in any case be subject to an Appeal to the Football Association. For the purposes of this Rule, bringing the Competition into disrepute can only be considered where the Player has received in excess of 112 days suspension, or 10 matches in match based discipline, in a period of two years or less from the date of the first offence.)

6.1.5 The Board shall also have the power to place an Embargo on the registration, transfer or loan transfer of Players by any Club deemed to be in breach of these Rules. Where a Club has been subject to an Embargo that is ongoing (if applied by the Competition or another) then the Embargo shall continue to apply until the Club can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that the circumstances that resulted in the Embargo no longer apply.

6.2 REGISTRATION PERIOD

6.2.1 The Registration Period shall commence at midnight and end at 5.00pm on the following dates:

STEP	COMMENCES	ENDS
1&2	On the day after a Club's final Match of the Playing Season	Fourth Thursday in March
3&4	On the day immediately following the AGM of the Competition	Fourth Thursday in March
5&6	On the day when the online registration process opens	31st March

After 5.00pm on the 31st March new registrations, new loans, and transfer of registrations will be declined or will be approved subject to such limitations and restrictions as the Board may determine and, if so determined, the Player shall only be eligible to play in the matches for which permission is granted by the Board.

6.3 PLAYER STATUS

The status of a player may be:-

- Contract Player
- Non-Contract
- Work Experience
- Scholar
- Short Term Loan
- Long Term Loan
- Youth Loan

6.4 REGISTRATIONS AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

6.4.1 **Registration Deadlines / Player Eligibility**

STEPS 1 TO 4 ONLY

A Player will only be eligible to play in a Competition Match if the appropriate information

is provided via the Online Player Registration System and received by the Company by either: (a) 5pm on the last normal business Day before the day of the Competition Match when it is scheduled to be played on a Saturday, Sunday or a Bank or Public Holiday, or (b) at least four (4) hours before the scheduled kick-off time when a Competition Match is scheduled to be played on a midweek Day (each a "Registration Deadline"). No Player whose registration, including Loan registrations, is received after the applicable Registration Deadlines will be eligible to play. Any loan registration must also be approved by The FA, and in the case of a loan player whose registration is being transferred from a Premier League or EFL club the relevant releasing league, before that Player can be considered eligible to play.

ALL STEP 5 & 6 COMPETITIONS

A Player will only be eligible to play in a match organised by the Company under these Rules if the appropriate information is provided via the Online Player Registration System and received by the Company at least four (4) hours before the scheduled kick-off time of such match. No Player whose registration, including Loan registrations, is received by the Company less than four (4) hours before the match organised by the Company in which he is required to play will be eligible. Any loan registration must also be approved by The FA and relevant league before that Player can be considered eligible to play.
The registration of a Player is not automatically valid and it is the responsibility of the Club to ensure the player is NOT registered with any other Club. When the Player involved was previously registered with another Club it is necessary for that Club to complete a transfer form via the Online Player Registration System or for the player's original registration to have been cancelled prior to or at the same time as the registration to the new Club.

ALL COMPETITIONS

Clubs are responsible for all players being validly registered before fielding any player in a Competition Match. Any Club found to have been in breach of any part of Rule 6.4.1 will be deemed to have played an ineligible player and will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.9.

6.4.2 Each Club must have at least sixteen (16) Players registered fourteen (14) days before the start of each Playing Season.

6.4.3 *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

6.4.4 In the event of a Player signing registration forms for more than one Club, priority of registration shall decide for which Club he is entitled to play. The Club submitting the latter form shall be notified of the prior registration of the Player, and the circumstances under which the registration forms were signed shall be investigated by the Board. Any Player found to have signed registration forms for more than one Club, or any Club found to have knowingly induced a registered Player of another Club to sign a registration form, shall be dealt with by the Board in such a manner as it shall think fit.

6.4.5 Except where mutually agreed between the Clubs in writing, and specific approval has been given by the Board a Club cannot register more than one Contract or Non-Contract Player registered to another Club or club at any one time unless a period of 28 days has elapsed between the first and second notice of approach or acknowledgement.

6.4.6 If a non-contract Player also registers for a club not in membership of the Competition, his registration for the Competition may be retained by the Club.

Loan and Work Experience Thresholds

Number and Type of Registrations Permitted

6.4.7 Subject to Rule 6.4.8, the following numbers and types of registrations are permitted during the Playing Season.

TYPE OF REGISTRATION	WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?	LENGTH	RIGHT OF RECALL	NUMBER PERMITTED DURING A PLAYING SEASON	NUMBER PERMITTED TO/FROM ONE CLUB
SHORT TERM LOAN **(Also See Rule 6.6.2)**	Any Contract Player	Minimum: 28 days, Maximum: 93 days ^1	Cannot be recalled within first 28 days (except Goalkeepers or where player is being permanently transferred to another club)	12	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time
LONG TERM LOAN **(Also See Rule 6.6.3)**	Any Contract Player	(a) Full Playing Season; or (b) Any date during First professional game registration period to any date during second professional game registration period; or (c) Any date during second professional game registration period to the	Within the first or second registration period during which players may be registered for a professional men's club (except where the Player is a goalkeeper or where the Player is being transferred permanently)	6	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time

		end of Playing Season			
YOUTH LOAN **(Also see Rule 6.6.4)**	Contract Players aged 20 or below on 1 July immediately preceding the Playing Season	Minimum: 28 days Permitted at any time of the Playing Season Cannot extend beyond the date immediately preceding the date of the Player's 21st birthday or the date the Player's contract with their parent club expires	Player may continue to train and play for their parent club (in non-first team matches)	Unlimited (to or from clubs at Steps 1-4)	2 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time
WORK EXPERIENCE **(Also see Rule 6.6.5)**	Work Experience Player	No minimum or maximum limits	No specific restrictions on ability to recall player Player may continue to play for their parent club (in non-first team matches)	Unlimited	3 permitted to or from any one Club or club at any one time

^1 Note: there are additional Short Term Loan restrictions for players registering from EFL clubs. These can be found in the EFL's Regulations.

6.4.8 No more than a combination of four (4) Short Term, Long Term or Youth Loans from any one club during a single Playing Season are permitted. One additional Youth Loan may be added to this figure.

6.4.9 **Team Sheets**

A Club may name up to a maximum of five (5) players on a Team Sheet who are registered as either a Short Term Loan, Long Term Loan, Youth Loan or Work Experience. A breach of this Rule by a Club which results in more than 5 of such players entering the field of play during the course of a Competition Match shall be treated as that Club having played an ineligible player(s) and will be dealt with in accordance with Rule 6.9.

6.4.10 **Registration Embargo / Clubs in Default of Payment Obligations**

The Company may, at its discretion, refuse any further registration of players, i.e. place under a registration embargo, any Club which has not completed payment of a transfer or loan arrangement made with another Club (or club) or arranged for the payment to be adequately secured. The Club (or club) which holds the Player's Contract will continue to pay the Player in accordance with his Contract.

6.4.11 **Additional Goalkeeper Registrations**

The Company at its discretion may approve at any time the registration of an additional goalkeeper on a short-term basis if none of the Clubs' registered goalkeepers are available ahead of a Competition Match.

Subject to the approval of the EFL, this may include the registration of a goalkeeper on a temporary transfer from a club in membership of the EFL for a minimum of 7 days. Any such registration shall count as a Short Term Loan for the purposes of the thresholds set out at Rule 6.4.7 and 6.6.2.

6.5 TRANSFERS

6.5.1 The transfer of a Contract Player's registration from one Club to another must be in writing, on a completed transfer agreement that is signed by the Contract Player and the two Clubs, and accompanied by the Player's contract and registration form. The forms must be submitted via the relevant Online Player Registration System.

Such Contract Player does not become a registered Player of the Club seeking his transfer until the forms have been approved by The FA and the Competition(s).

Cancellations

Where a Club cancels the registration of a Contract Player, for any reason whatsoever, the Club must submit a notification via the relevant Online Player Registration System or on the relevant Competition/FA form and such cancellation must be approved by the relevant parties. To be valid such notification must be signed by an authorised signatory of that Club and the Player.

Where a Club cancels the registration of a Non-Contract Player for any reason whatsoever, the Club must submit via the relevant Online Player Registration System and/or the relevant Competition form. To be valid, such notification must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Club.

Terminations

Where the registration of a Contract Player has been terminated by either the Club or the Player, this must be in accordance with the provisions of the Player Status Rules.

6.5.2 The transfer of a Non-Contract Player's registration from one Club to another must be: (a) in writing, on the relevant Competition transfer form, signed by the Non-Contract Player and the two Clubs (as required by the Competition), and (b) submitted via the

relevant Online Player Registration System for approval and registration. Such Non-Contract Player does not become a registered Player of the Club seeking his transfer until the transfer has been approved by the Competition. A Non-Contract Player whose registration for a Club is cancelled or transferred for any reason whatsoever cannot, without the consent of the Board, return to his original Club until a minimum of fourteen (14) days has elapsed from the date of the cancellation or transfer.

6.5.3 A Club shall submit to the Board any contract it proposes to enter into which gives the Club or any other party to the proposed contract any rights relating to the transfer of the registration of a Player at a date in the future from or to the Club or any rights relating to the employment for the Player by the Club. Any such proposed contract shall be subject to the approval of the Board.

6.6 TEMPORARY TRANSFERS (LOANS)

6.6.1 Where the Rules of the relevant League permit, Short Term Loans, Youth Loans and Long Term Loans of Contract players shall be allowed to or from Clubs in membership of:-

- The Premier League
- The EFL
- Any Leagues operating at Step 1 to 6 of the National League System

on such terms and conditions as shall be mutually agreed by the two clubs and the player. For Loan Transfers between Clubs in the same Competition the transfer must be completed via the Online Player Registration System, with a Competition Temporary Transfer Form completed and retained by the Club. For Loan Transfers between Clubs in different Competitions the transfer must be completed via the Online Player Registration System, to include any applicable loan form (as communicated by The FA from time to time).

The player being taken on loan, including Youth Loan, must sign a Competition contract registration form which will be valid for the full period of the loan, including any extension to the loan period.

If the original Loan agreement contains a pre-agreed recall clause, a Player may be recalled by the loaning Club submitting written confirmation to the borrowing Club, the Competition and The FA.

Where no pre-agreed recall clause exists, the cancellation must be agreed between the loaning Club, the borrowing Club and the Player. The loaning Club must submit written confirmation to the borrowing Club, the Competition and The FA.

The Competition's standard cancellation form must be used to prematurely end the Temporary Transfer period. The temporary registration for the borrowing Club will automatically be deemed to be cancelled upon maturity of the temporary transfer period.

Where a Short Term Loan, or Youth Loan expires, and is not renewed so as to run continuously, any subsequent Short Term Loan, or Youth Loan of that Player to the same Club will be subject to a minimum duration of 28 days and will be considered a new loan (including for the purposes of Rule 6.4.7).

Guidance

A continuous renewal of a Short Term Loan (or Youth Loan) means that the start date of the renewal must commence from the date immediately following the date of the expiry of the last loan period. For example, if a loan expires on a Saturday, in order for it to be considered continuous, the extension must commence on the next day (i.e. the Sunday).

Any such loan continuation will not be accepted if the registering Club does not submit the relevant documents within 5 days of signature, or if the registering Club has played a fixture in the period between the date of expiry of the last loan and the time the relevant documents are submitted.

Where a Short Term Loan, Youth Loan or Long Term Loan (or period of Work Experience) expires on or after the last match of the season and the Club finishes in a Play-Off Position, and both Clubs agree, the Loans shall be extend to include the Club's remaining Play-Off Matches. Any such extension is not subject to any time limits that would otherwise apply, and must be agreed in writing by the player's parent Club and be registered with the Competition in accordance with these Rules and registered with The FA in accordance with the Player Status Rules.

6.6.2 **Short Term Loan Transfers –** A Club can have up to a maximum of twelve (12) Short Term Loans during a Playing Season. The minimum period of a Short Term Loan transfer must be twenty-eight (28) days with a maximum of ninety-three (93) days in any one Playing Season. Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Short-Term Loan from clubs in the EFL.

The Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Short Term Loan transfers to or from any club, including EFL Clubs, at any one time (subject to the overall limit of four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).

On completing the Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary Transfers involving two competitions), a Club must retain copies in case of dispute or if called in case requested by the Competition or The FA. Clubs must also take the appropriate action on the Online Player Registration System.

To extend the period of any Short Term Loan transfer a further Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary Transfers involving two competitions) must be completed and copies retained as directed above. If the Short Term Loan transfer is extended only the Club for whom the Player was originally registered will be allowed to cancel the agreement at any time within the extension period, i.e. after 28 days. In the case of a goalkeeper Clubs may mutually agree, if they so wish, to include a recall clause in the agreement to enable the Club for who the Player was originally registered to recall the Player at any time during the loan period. Players other than goalkeepers may not be recalled within the first month, i.e. 28 days, of any loan except where the Player is to be permanently transferred to another club by their parent club (subject to the agreement of the loaning club, the borrowing Club and the Player, which may be set out in the original loan agreement).

Any Short Term Loan transfer which may terminate after the last day for registrations may be extended for a further period provided the maximum period of 93 days is not exceeded.

Short Terms Loan Transfers which become permanent before their expiry date shall not count against a Club's quota of days or Players.

6.6.3 **Long Term Loan Transfers –** Clubs may have up to a maximum of six (6) Long Term Loan Transfers of any age during a Playing Season.

Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System may register players on a Long-Term Loan from other clubs playing in Competitions at Steps

1 to 6 of the National League System.
Only Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Long-Term Loan from clubs in Premier League or the EFL.
A Player on Long Term Loan may be recalled on any date from the beginning of the Loan until the agreed summer transfer window deadline, provided that the initial 28 days have elapsed, except in the case of a goalkeeper, and within the agreed winter transfer window, except for a goalkeeper or where the Player is to be transferred permanently by the Club (or club) holding his registered contract in each case, subject to the agreement of the loaning Club, the borrowing Club and the Player which may be pre-agreed in a recall clause in the original Loan agreement.
To extend the period of any long term loan transfer a further Competition Temporary Transfer Form (for internal Temporary Transfers) or FA form H3 (for Temporary Transfers involving two competitions) must be completed and copies retained as directed above.
The Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Long Term Loan transfers to or from any one club, including Premier League and EFL clubs, at any one time (subject to the overall limit of four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).
A Player registered on a Long Term Loan from a club participating in the Premier League or the EFL may, provided it is agreed between the two clubs and the Player, continue to train with and/or play for his loaning club in any match other than matches played as part of the Premier League Competition, EFL Competition, EFL Cup, FA Cup or, where the parent club is in the EFL, the EFL Trophy (i.e. First Team matches.) Participation by the Player in First Team matches for the borrowing Club shall take precedence.

6.6.4 **Youth Loan Transfers**

Subject to any further restrictions set out below, Youth Loan Transfers apply to:-

- Contract Players aged 20 or under on 1 July immediately preceding the Playing Season in question.

At Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System, Youth Loans are permitted at any time during the Registration Period, subject to the below provisions.
Unlimited Youth Loan Transfers shall be allowed to or from Clubs in membership of the Competitions at Steps 1-4 of the National League System, save that the Competition shall not approve more than two (2) Youth Loan transfers to or from any one club at any one time (subject to the overall limit of four (4) Players joining a Club from another club in any Playing Season as set out at Rule 6.6.1).
Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System may register players on a Youth Loan from other clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.
Only Clubs playing in Competitions at Steps 1 to 4 of the National League System may register players on a Youth Loan from clubs in the Premier League and the EFL.
It shall be a condition of any Youth Loan involving a Contract Player to whom Premier League Rules or EFL Regulations apply that for the duration of the period of the Youth Loan the Player continues to fully comply with any programme of education in place for that Player.
A Player registered on a Youth Loan from a club participating in the Premier League of the EFL may, provided it is agreed between the two clubs and the Player, continue to train with and/or play for his loaning Club (or club) in any match other than matches

played as part of the Premier League Competition, EFL Competition, Football League Cup, FA Cup or, where the parent club is in the EFL, the EFL Trophy (i.e. First Team matches.) Participation by the Player in First Team matches for the borrowing Club shall take precedence.

Any days on which the Player participates in a Reserve Team match and/or attends any training sessions for the loaning Club (or club) shall still count towards the period of the Youth Loan.

The minimum period of a Youth Loan shall be 28 days, thereafter a break clause may be included. In the case of a goalkeeper, the clubs may mutually agree to include a recall clause in the agreement to enable the parent club to recall the Player at any time during the loan period. Players other than goalkeepers may not be recalled within the first 28 days of any loan except where the Player is to be permanently transferred to another club by their parent club (subject to the agreement of the loaning club, the borrowing Club and the Player, which may set out in the original loan agreement).

Youth Loans cannot extend beyond date immediately preceding the date of the Player's 21st birthday and/or the Player's contract period with their parent club.

6.6.5 **Work Experience Players –** A Scholar may register as a Work Experience Player with a club at Steps 1 to 6 of the National League System.

Work Experience Players can be registered for any period of time, but can be recalled by their parent club at any time during that period.

A Work Experience Player may continue to train and play for either the parent club or the work experience club in any age-restricted or reserve team match or in any match in the football pyramid below the EFL, but not in any first team match played as part of the Premier League Competition, EFL Competitions, EFL Cup or EFL Trophy.

6.7 CLUB LIST OF PLAYERS AND TRANSFER LIST

Clubs shall furnish the Competition Secretary by 1st June with the following details:

6.7.1 a list of Contract Players whose agreements do not terminate at the end of the current season;

6.7.2 a list of contract Players in respect of whom the Club has exercised an Option in accordance with the Player Status Rules;

6.7.3 a list of Contract Players in respect of whom the existing agreements do not include an Option but which the Club is desirous of offering further engagements, in accordance with the Player Status Rules;

6.74 a list of Contract Players in respect of whom the Club has exercised an Option in accordance with the Player Status Rules but whose registration the Club is prepared to transfer;

6.7.5 a list of Contract Players the Club has released;

6.7.6 a list of all Players whose registration the Club wishes to be cancelled;

Clubs shall also complete the standard Competition forms and return these by this date.

A Club relegated from the EFL shall advise the Competition Secretary by 30th June the names of Players retained by that Club for the season, taking into consideration the contents of the EFL Regulations.

6.8 SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

A Club at its discretion may use five substitute Players at any time in a match, provided this is in accordance with the Laws of the Game. A substitution can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. When a Club is making a substitution it shall use a board to show the number of the Player to be substituted and the number of the substitute Player. The substitution board used shall be branded as determined by the Competition.

At Steps 3 to 6, a maximum of five substitutes may be nominated.

All nominated substitutes may be nominated and they must be included on the official Team Sheet handed to the Referee before the match in accordance with Rule 8.20. A substitute may not be used to replace a Player who has been suspended from the match by the Match Officials.

If a Player does not take part in the match for which he is a nominated substitute he shall be deemed as not having played for the Club in that match.

6.9 PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER

Any Club found to have played an ineligible Player in a match or matches shall have any points gained from that match or matches deducted from its record, up to a maximum of 12 points (save for in relation to a knock-out match or matches – e.g. the Play-Offs - in which case the Club shall be disqualified from the relevant knock-out competition(s)), and have levied upon it a fine.

The Board may also order that such match or matches be replayed on such terms as are decided by the Board which may also levy penalty points against the Club in default.

The Board may vary its decision in respect of the points gained (or disqualification) in circumstances where;

(a) the ineligibility is due to the failure to obtain an International Transfer Certificate or

(b) where the ineligibility is related to a change in the Player's status with the Club for whom he is registered or

(c) where the Board determined that exceptional circumstances exist

6.10 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

6.10.1 Subject to clauses 6.10.2 to 6.10.7 and to the Rules and Regulations of The FA, a Club may negotiate a financial arrangement with its Players.

6.10.2 All Players under a written contract must be registered with the Competition and The FA.

6.10.3 All payments and benefits due and/or made to the Player must be shown in the contract.

6.10.4 All payments made to Players must be made by the Club and fully recorded in the accounting records of the Club.

6.10.5 All salaried payments (whether to Contract or Non-Contract Players) must be subject to PAYE and National Insurance.

6.10.6 All salary payments due on written Contracts must be stated gross, before PAYE and National Insurance deductions.

6.10.7 Any Players paid expenses should be reimbursed via an expense claim form. The club should retain all expense records in a format acceptable to the HM

Revenue and Customs.

7. CLUB COLOURS

7.1 On or before a date specified by the Company each year, every Club shall notify the Competition Secretary, in writing, of details of their first choice colours for outfield players and their goalkeeper (shirts, shorts and socks) and such details shall be published in the Competition Handbook and/or on the Competition's website for the ensuing Playing Season.

The colours registered by each Club shall be worn during the following season when playing at home. Shirts must be numbered 1 to 25 in accordance with the Competition squad numbering provision such that the numbers can be clearly identified by officials and spectators. Striped, hooped or otherwise patterned shirts shall have numbers affixed to contrasting patches or numbers in a contrasting colour with bold outline. No changes to the first choice colours or combination of colours shall be permitted without the consent of the Board. Subject to the consent of the Board, each Club is authorised on one occasion per Playing Season to wear an alternative strip in a home match.

7.2 When playing away from home, clubs must play in colours (shirts, shorts and socks) which are clearly distinguishable from those of their opponents and the Match Officials, in particular the goalkeeper must play in kit clearly distinguishable from the colours of the shirts worn by all other Players in the match and the Match Officials.

Neck and cuff rim colours on shirts are not regarded as basic colours for the purpose of this Rule. Subject to the foregoing a Club may, if it wishes, wear colours not registered with the Competition for away matches. It is the responsibility of the visiting Club to check that their colours will not clash.

The goalkeeper may wear tracksuit trousers acceptable to the Match Referee.

7.3 No Club shall be permitted to register or play in shirts the colour of which is likely to cause confusion with the outfits worn by the Match Officials (i.e. black or dark blue).

7.4 The Players' shirts must be clearly numbered in accordance with the Team Sheet handed to the match referee before a match and there must be no change of numbers during the match except for a change of goalkeeper or if permitted by the match referee because of a blood injury.

7.5 A Club may apply to the Board for permission to print on the reverse of each Player's shirt the surname of that Player, provided the printed surname is the same as that which is registered on the Online Player Registration System and the printing complies with The FA's Kit and Advertising Regulations. Any such application must be submitted to the Board at least 14 days prior to the start of the Playing Season.

7.6 Both sleeves of the shirts of all Players in matches played under the jurisdiction of the Company shall carry a Competition logo as supplied by the Competition on an annual basis if so decided by the Board. When playing in other competitions the shirts of all Players must include the Competition logo.

7.7 A Club may apply to the Board for permission to use either (a) a variation of the Competition logo referred to in Rule 7.6 (for example, a variation in size or colour) or (b) in relation to one sleeve of the shirt only, an alternative in place of the Competition logo referred to in Rule 7.6 (for example, advertising). The cost of producing any variation or alternative shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant Club.

Advertising must comply with The FA's Kit and Advertising Regulations.

7.8 The colours of clothing worn by ballboys/girls must not clash with the colours of either competing Club and the Match Officials.

8. PLAYING OF MATCHES

ARRANGEMENT OF FIXTURES

8.1 The Board shall fix the date on which the Playing Season shall commence.

8.2 All matches shall be played under the Rules and Regulations of The FA and in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

8.3 All Competition matches shall be arranged as soon as practicable. The copyright in all lists of arrangements of such fixtures shall be vested in the Company.

8.4 All matches shall be played on the home and away principle and the Board shall determine how the fixtures shall be arranged.

Saturday fixtures in the Competition shall take precedence over all other competitions in which a Club may engage with the exception of:

- The FA Challenge Cup/Welsh Cup
- The FA Challenge Vase Competition
- The Nominated Cup Competition for which the club is eligible, of the Affiliated Association to which it was first affiliated.

Scheduled Saturday fixtures in the Competition must not be re-arranged without permission of the Competition Secretary. Clubs may be ordered to re-arrange outstanding matches, at the discretion of the Board, and where necessary their prospective opponents instructed accordingly. Clubs with open dates on Saturdays may be instructed to play any outstanding Competition fixture on such date. A minimum of six days' notice will be given in respect of any such arrangement.

Midweek fixtures in the Competition shall not take precedence over fixtures in the Nominated Cup Competition of the Affiliated Association to which it was first affiliated.

8.5 In the event of any Club being required to play an FA Cup, FA Trophy or FA Vase match within 72 hours before and/or after a scheduled Competition fixture (or fixtures) it shall have the right to apply in writing as soon as practically possible (but in any event no later than 48 hours after becoming aware of the relevant Cup fixture) to have its Competition fixture(s) postponed with or without the consent of its opponent. At the same time as it makes the application a copy shall be sent to its opponent(s) who shall raise any objection within a further 24 hours of notification. Thereafter the Competition shall decide in its absolute discretion as soon as reasonably possible as to whether or not the application is approved. The Competition may, in its absolute discretion, consider an application to postpone a Competition fixture(s) made by an applicant Club more than 48 hours after it became aware of the relevant Cup fixture.

8.6 The standard kick-off times shall be as follows:

Saturday matches - 3.00 pm

Midweek matches - 7.45 pm.

All agreed changes to time of kick-off to be notified to the Board immediately for confirmation.

Clubs with ground sharing agreements must arrange for home matches to be played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If a clash of fixtures occurs with the sharing Club and for any

reason a match is unable to be played on a Saturday, the match must be played on either the day before ie on Friday, or the day after ie on Sunday. If Clubs are unable to agree on the date then it will be played on the Sunday unless the Board decides otherwise. The decision of the Board shall be final and binding.

Official bank holidays and Sundays - 3.00pm unless agreed otherwise by the two Clubs and the Board; application shall be made to the Competition Secretary by both Clubs at least 21 days before the relevant date.

To re-schedule a midweek fixture for an evening other than a Club's usual midweek night will require written agreement of both Clubs and the Competition Secretary.

8.7.1 The Board may change any Competition fixtures, including the kick off time, during the season to suit the overall interests of the Competition (including for broadcasting or live streaming purposes). The Competition Secretary shall notify both participating Clubs in writing about any change to a Competition fixture.

Any decision made pursuant to this Rule 8.7.1 is made at the absolute discretion of the Board and cannot be appealed by either of the participating Clubs pursuant to Rule 16.1 or 16.4.

8.7.2 The Board shall have the power to decide whether a ground is suitable for Competition matches and to order a Club whose ground is deemed unsuitable to play its home matches at an alternative suitable ground.

8.8 Three weeks' notice is required from both participating Clubs wishing to re-arrange a Saturday match to Friday evening or Sunday. A request made in less than this period of time will only be considered by the Board in exceptional circumstances and granted at their sole discretion.

8.9 A Club may not enter its first team in any outside competition, other than those listed in Rule 8.4, without the prior permission of the Board. The Competition Secretary must be informed in writing of all fixtures, postponements, abandonments and results of all matches played in any other competition.

8.10 When a Club obtains the consent of the Board to postpone a fixture due to the non-availability of its Players, that Club shall be liable to pay any expenses directly attributable to such postponement which have been incurred by the opposing Club. Any claim by the opposing Club must be submitted to the Competition Secretary within three working days of such postponement, with a copy to the Club that obtained the postponement. If the reason for the postponement is the illness of the Club's Players, medical certificates for those Players must be submitted to the Competition Secretary within three working days of such postponement together with a list of all Players registered by that Club with the Competition at the date of postponement with full details of each Player's inability to play entered against each name on the list.

The amount of claim will be at the discretion of the Board.

PRE-MATCH ARRANGEMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

8.11 Each Club must take every precaution to keep its ground in good playing condition and amenities (including floodlights) in good working order and complying with the Criteria Document throughout the Playing Season.

8.12 All Clubs must have a mobile telephone and an email address operational at all times. These will be published in the Competition Handbook and/or on the Competition's website unless a Club requests otherwise.

8.13 The home Club shall advise the visiting Club and the Match Officials of the date and time of kick-off of each match and the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing, to be received at least five days prior to the match and the visiting Club and the Match Officials must acknowledge receipt to be received at least three days before the match.

Where the home Club has a Football Turf Pitch, it shall advise the visiting Club and Match Officials of any footwear requirements issued by the Football Turf Pitch manufacturer that will apply to players, medical staff and Match Officials (and any other individuals permitted to enter the field of play) at least five days prior to the match. The visiting Club must disseminate this information to its players and club officials. Failure by the visiting Club to ensure its players or club officials comply with any footwear requirements communicated by the home Club in accordance with this Rule may result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

The visiting Club must include in its acknowledgement the team colours, including the colour of the goalkeeper's jersey, it will be wearing.

8.14 The home Club is responsible for publishing a full match programme acceptable to the Board for each of its Competition matches. A full match programme available electronically only shall be acceptable providing that each Club has approval from the Board before the commencement of the Playing Season and must be continuous for the whole of that Playing Season. A Team Sheet will not be considered sufficient to comply with this Rule.

The visiting Club must send in writing to the home Club details of their matchday squad and management team together with any supplementary information required by the Competition from time to time (this may include their Club crest, Club history, up-to-date pen pictures of their current Players registered with the Competition for the season, and/or kit colours) at least five days before the scheduled date of the match between the two Clubs.

The home Club programme must include the details sent by the visiting Club in the match day programme and a copy of each match day programme shall be sent by the home Club to the Competition Secretary within 3 days of the match with the relevant match report form unless advised of an alternative arrangement by the Competition Secretary.

Clubs will be responsible for all comments in their match day programme in respect of the Competition, the Company or other member Clubs, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary. No part of a Club's programme issued for a match in any competition shall, in the opinion of the Board, bring the Competition or the Company into disrepute.

All Clubs will be responsible for their official website or similar computer related information system, which is within the public domain. Nothing shall be included on the website which in the opinion of the Board brings the Competition or the Company into disrepute.

8.15 The postponement of matches due to ground conditions must be carried out in accordance with Rule 14.2.

8.16 Where a match is re-arranged or cancelled after the officials have been appointed, it is the duty of the home Club to notify the officials of the cancellation of their appointments immediately. Clubs in default of this Rule may be subject to any action decided by the Board.

8.17 The Board shall determine the policy of the Competition for the issuing of match day passes. A home Club cannot refuse the admission into the ground of an away Club Official, as defined in the Rules of the Association, save for that individual being subject to a suspension or banning order from the Association or Competition.

8.18 All Clubs at Steps 1 to 6 are required to have a working and serviced defibrillator available at all home matches.

MATCH MANAGEMENT

8.19 Clubs shall be permitted access to the field of play at least sixty (60) minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off time, such access to include the use of fully working floodlights where necessary.

Players and Club officials accessing a Football Turf Pitch must adhere to any applicable footwear requirements.

8.20 All matches shall be of ninety minutes duration (subject to any allowance for time lost). The half time interval in all matches shall not exceed fifteen minutes. Save where a match is abandoned, any match which is less than ninety minutes duration may be ordered by the Board to stand as a completed match or replayed for the full period of ninety minutes.

8.21 Each Club must hand the Team Sheet containing name(s) of Players taking part in a match (including the name(s) and number(s) of the nominated substitute(s) to the Referee and a representative of their opponents in the presence of the Referee at least forty five minutes before the scheduled time of kick-off. The Players' numbers (in accordance with Rule 7) and the colours of the playing strip must be clearly stated. Any Clubs in breach may be fined.

8.22 Any Club altering its team selection or numbering after Team Sheets have been exchanged may be fined. A Player who is named on the Team Sheet may be replaced without fine if he is injured warming up after exchange of the Team Sheet. Any subsequent changes must be notified to the referee and to a representative of the opponents before the actual kick-off.

8.23 Clubs taking the field of play – For all matches under the jurisdiction of the Competition, Clubs shall be required to enter the field of play together, preceded by the Match Officials, not less than 5 (five) minutes before the advertised time of kick-off.

8.24 Each Club shall be prepared to kick-off at the scheduled time unless a satisfactory explanation is offered. Any Club commencing a Competition match with less than 11 Players may be subject to a fine. Each team participating in a match shall represent the full available strength of each competing Club.

8.25 In all Competition Matches, the number of Players and officials of a Club seated on the team benches, in the designated technical area, must not exceed 11 unless the team bench facility provides more than 11 individual seats. Additional seating near or around the team benches in the designated technical area is not permitted.

8.26 Only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to the Players during the match from within the technical area.

8.27 All team officials and substitutes seated on the bench shall be listed on the official Team Sheet when it is submitted to the Match Officials. Only those persons listed on the official Team Sheet shall be permitted in the technical area.

8.28 The occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible manner at all times.

Misconduct by occupants of this area will be reported by the Referee to The FA, who shall have the power to impose sanctions as deemed fit. Any occupant dismissed from the technical area shall immediately go to a location within the ground from which they cannot view the remainder of the game.

8.29 With the exception of the team manager, the team coach and any substitutes who are warming up or warming down, all other personnel are to remain seated on the trainer's bench. The team manager or team coach is allowed to move to the edge of the technical area to issue instructions to his team.

8.30 All occupants of the technical area must wear corporate bench kit as directed by the Competition. The only exception would be the Team manager who will be allowed to wear suits and overcoats not displaying any sponsorship logos. Corporate bench kit must also be worn by the players and staff in warm-ups and warm-downs, and where possible in media interviews on match days. Failure to wear the bench kit will result in a fine.

8.31 Match Videos - *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

8.32 **MATCH STREAMING BY A CLUB**

Unless determined otherwise by The FA, a Club participating in a Competition Match may offer a live stream of that match online subject to compliance with the following conditions:

8.32.1 consent of the Board to the live stream taking place must be obtained;

8.32.2 the two competing Clubs must consent to the live stream taking place and agree any associated live streaming arrangements (including the costs associated with those arrangements, if applicable);

8.32.3 subject to Rule 8.31.4, the live stream cannot take place during the Transmission-Free Period;

8.32.4 where the live stream is to take place during the Transmission-Free Period, it must be geo-blocked so that it is not accessible in the UK (or any Crown Dependency of the UK); and

8.32.5 a copy of the live stream footage must be provided to The FA, the Board or the opposing Club upon request following the Competition Match.

8.33 A Club must provide evidence of compliance with the conditions set out in Rule 8.31 upon request by The FA or the Board.

8.34 The FA or the Board may take action against any Club for a failure to comply with any of the conditions set out in Rule 8.32 or any failure to comply with a request made pursuant to Rule 8.33.

POST MATCH MANAGEMENT

8.35 Each Club shall enter information from the match result form by the method instructed by the Competition and shall submit the fully completed copy of the appropriate match result forms by first class post, or facsimile, or email to the Appointing Authority and the Competition within 3 days of the match. When a Club considers that the Referee has discharged his duties incompetently and awards a mark of sixty or less, a detailed report must be sent to the Appointing Authority within three days of the match by the method instructed by the Appointing Authority. Clubs in default of any provision of the Rule will be subject to a fine for each offence.

8.36 In the event that a match is either: (a) abandoned before half time, or (b) postponed

after spectators have been permitted to enter the ground, the Club playing at home will issue a voucher to each spectator valid for free admission if the match is ordered to be replayed or is rescheduled. In the event that the match is abandoned during or after the half time interval the Club playing at home is not obliged to issue such a voucher.
In the event that a match is postponed before kick-off, then the Club playing at home will inform spectators who have already paid for admission, how they can make an application for reimbursement of that admission cost.

8.37 In the event that a match is abandoned for reasons over which neither Club has control, the Club playing at home shall retain the gate receipts for such uncompleted match and the Board has the power to order that either: (a) the original match stands as a completed match, or (b) the match shall be replayed (and the terms upon which the match is to be replayed).

8.38 In the event of a match being abandoned due to the conduct of one Club or its members or supporters, the Board has the power to order that either: (a) the original match stands as a completed match, (b) the match is replayed (and the terms upon which the match is replayed), or (c) the match is not replayed, and to award either one or three points to the Club not at fault. Subject to Rule 8.40, the Board cannot levy a financial penalty due to the conduct of a Club.

8.39 In the event of the match being abandoned due to the conduct of both Clubs or their members or supporters, no financial penalty can be applied by the Board to either Club and the Board has the power to order that either: (a) the original match stands as a completed match, or (b) the match shall be replayed (and the terms upon which the match is to be replayed).

8.40 In the event of a match having to be postponed or abandoned and one Club is found to be at fault then opponents for that match shall be compensated by the Club at fault. In the case of a visiting Club where it has undertaken all or part of its journey then travelling expenses and meal allowances may be claimed based on the total mileage involved in the whole journey. In exceptional circumstances, expenses for overnight accommodation up to a maximum of 18 persons may be claimed. In some instances compensation may also be claimed when neither of the Clubs is at fault. The Board will determine the amount of compensation payments to be made, if any.
All claims for compensation by either Club in the case of either an abandoned match or a postponed match must be received by the Competition Secretary within 14 days of the date of the match to which the claim relates.

POST MATCH ADMINISTRATION

8.41 The home Club shall be responsible for notifying the Competition immediately following the conclusion of each home Competition match the result of that match together with the attendance, the times of all goals scored in the match and the scorer of each goal. In any FA or AFFILIATED ASSOCIATION Competition the home Club if two Clubs are playing the tie, or the Club if the match involves a team outside of the Competition, must also follow this procedure.

8.42 In the event of the match being postponed, not completed or abandoned, the home Club must immediately notify the following by telephone (or by any other means as communicated by the Competition from time to time): the Competition results service, the Competition Secretary and, in the case of a match postponement, the Appointing

Authority, the visiting Club and the Match Officials. When a postponement occurs in any FA or County Cup competition, the home Club, if two Clubs are playing the tie, or the Club if the match involves a team outside of the Competition, must also follow this procedure.

8.43 Where a match has been postponed for any reason, the Competition Secretary shall determine the new date.

Any Club without just cause failing to fulfil an engagement to play a Competition match on the appointed date shall for each offence be liable to expulsion from the Competition and/ or such other disciplinary action the Board may determine, including the deduction of up to a maximum of three points from the offending Club's record, any expenses incurred by their opponents, and a fine.

In the event of a Club being in breach of the previous paragraph of this Rule then the Board may award points to the Club not at fault as if the match had been played and the League table shall reflect the position as if the match had been played with the result awarded by the Board.

9. REGISTERED INTERMEDIARIES/AGENTS

9.1 An Intermediary/Agent cannot have an involvement in any Club in an official capacity (as defined by the Board) nor may he hold office with the Competition.

9.2 All Clubs must comply with The FA Regulations concerning Intermediaries/Agents.

10. FINANCIAL RECORDS

10.1 All Clubs shall keep their accounting records for recording the fact and nature of all receipts and payments so as to disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position including the assets and liabilities of the Club.

10.2 The home Club shall retain all gate receipts.

The Away Club shall be entitled to 15% of the Ground's maximum capacity (or a minimum of 600 at Steps 1 to 2, whichever is the greater), subject to any stipulation by the relevant safety authority affecting these figures. A reasonable allocation of the total disabled spectator accommodation where appropriate shall be made available to disabled supporters of the Away Club.

At Step 1, the Away Club's allocation entitlement shall include a minimum of 90 covered seat tickets.

At Step 2, the Away Club's allocation entitlement shall include a reasonable number of covered seat tickets.

Clubs must ensure that all gate receipts are fully and properly recorded and accounted for in the accounting records of the club.

Clubs should have a system in operation for home games that enables them to accurately report on the following;

- A record of all tickets sold in advance
- A reconciliation of cash received by category of entrant through each turnstile
- The number of entrants through each turnstile
- A schedule of the numbers admitted to parts of the stadium that do not pass through a turnstile

- A list of complimentary tickets authorised

This documentation should be reconciled to the overall takings and declared attendance for each home game.

10.3 *[Rule for National League only]*

10.4 For Competition league matches only, the travelling expenses of match officials shall be pooled, each Club rendering on the match report details of all payments made.
The Company shall, at the conclusion of the season, divide the total cost of officials in each division by the total number of Clubs in that division and where the total payment made by the Club is less than the equal share of the pool, the Club shall pay the difference within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification to the Club.
Where the sum paid by the Club is more than the equal share of the pool, the Club will be reimbursed from the pool of monies received from all the other Clubs.

10.5 In the event of a transfer of a player where a consideration is agreed, the consideration can only be paid between the two clubs (the transferor and transferee clubs).
The full name of each contracting club should be stated in the transfer agreement. The full consideration involved must be recorded in the accounting records of both clubs.

10.6 Any Club temporarily transferring a player's registration to another club should invoice the receiving club in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement. The player concerned should remain on the payroll of the Club holding his permanent registration for the period of the loan.

10.7 All loans extended to a Club must be documented in full in the accounting records of the Club. Documentation supporting each loan must be retained and should include the following information:-

- The value of the loan.
- The length of the loan.
- The interest rate charged, and whether this is fixed or variable.
- Repayment terms.
- The full names of the individual or corporate body extending the loan.
- The terms in the event of a default on the loan.

The document should be signed by two directors, Officers or Executive Committee Members who are independent of the party extending the loan.

10.8 Within nine months of its accounting reference date, each Club shall submit to the Company a copy of its full annual financial statements as approved by the Club's board or committee and confirmation that the annual financial statements have been circulated to its members/shareholders.

10.9 All Clubs must comply with The FA's Third Party Interest in Players Regulations.

11. FOOTBALL CREDITORS

Where a Club defaults in making any payments to any Football Creditor, the Club shall be subject to such penalty as the Board may decide, including, but not limited to, an Embargo; a points deduction; a Bond; a suspension; or any combination thereof.

12. CHAMPION, RELEGATION

12.1 Three points will be awarded for a win at home or away and one point for a drawn match

at home or away.

12.2 At the end of the Playing Season of each competition a table will be compiled showing the playing record of each Club in each division of the Competition. The playing record of each Club must include any points deduction made by the Competition or by the FA and in any situation where points per game are calculated the calculation will be made after taking into account the deduction of any such points.

The position of each Club in the table so compiled shall be determined in order with the Club being awarded the highest number of points being first and the Club being awarded the second highest number of points being placed second and so on. In the event of two or more clubs being awarded the same number of points the highest placed Club shall be decided as follows:

12.2.1 Goal difference – If any two or more Clubs have scored the same number of points their position in the division shall be determined on goal difference, that is to say, the difference between the total number of goals scored by and against a Club in League Matches in that Season, and the higher or highest placed Club shall be the Club with the higher or highest goal difference.

12.2.2 In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has scored the most goals;

12.2.3 In the event that two or more Clubs have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals then the highest placed Club shall be the Club which has won the most matches.

12.2.4 In the event of the two Clubs still being equal the Club which has the better playing record against the other Club in their head to head Competition matches during the Season will be the highest placed Club.

12.2.5 If the records of two or more Clubs are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the Clubs concerned shall play off a deciding match or matches on a neutral ground or grounds with the net gate money after deducting the usual matches expenses being divided equally between the two competing Clubs.

12.3 Promotion, relegation and lateral movement of Clubs shall be in accordance with the principles established by the Leagues Committee of The FA.

12.4 If no Clubs are eligible or wish promotion, the number of Clubs to be relegated will be reduced.

12.5 In the event of a Club, not being placed in a relegation position at the end of the season, wishing to resign from the Competition at the end of the season, or having been removed from membership under the Articles the number of Clubs to be relegated shall be reduced accordingly.

12.6 In the event of a Club opting to be relegated or being removed from membership under the Articles such Club or Clubs will replace the Club or Clubs otherwise due for relegation in accordance with Regulation 5.4 in the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System.

12.7 If any Club ceases to operate between the annual general meeting of the Company and the commencement of the following Playing Season, no adjustments to the number of Clubs participating in the Competition will be made. The remaining Clubs will participate in the Competition for that season.

13. INSOLVENCY PROVISIONS

13.A. SPORTING SANCTIONS

13.A.1 If an Insolvency Event shall occur in relation to any Club that Club shall be deducted 10 (ten) points.

13.A.2 Where a Club takes or suffers an Insolvency Event:-

13.A.2.1 during the Playing Season but prior to 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March, the points deduction shall apply immediately;

13.A.2.2 during the Playing Season but after 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday in March then Rule 13.3 shall apply; and

13.A.2.3 outside the Playing Season, the points deduction shall apply in respect of the following Playing Season such that the Club starts that Playing Season on minus 10 points (including a Club or Clubs Relegated from the League, where such Club shall be subject to Rule 13 of the League Rules or where it has been necessary under the National League System Regulations for a Club or Clubs to be moved from one league to another and such Club would have been subject to Rule 13).

13.A.3 Where the circumstances set out in Rule 13.2.2 apply and at the end of that Playing Season, having regard to the number of Competition points awarded (ignoring any potential deduction):-

a) the Club would be relegated in accordance with The League Rules, the points deduction will apply in the next following Season; or

b) the Club would not be relegated as aforesaid, the points deduction will apply in that Playing Season and League Rules will then apply (if appropriate) following the imposition of the points deduction.

13.A.4 For the purposes of this Rule 13

a) where any Insolvency Event is taken or suffered other than on a Business Day (as defined by the Insolvency Rules 1986 as amended from time to time) then for the purposes of determining the timing of any points deduction only the action taken or suffered will be deemed to have been taken or suffered on the immediately preceding Business Day; and

b) if a Company Voluntary Arrangement is approved, then approval of that Company Voluntary Arrangement shall be deemed to have been given at the date of the first meeting of creditors called to consider that Company Voluntary Arrangement, and not the date of any adjourned meeting of the creditors or the meeting of shareholders.

13.A.5 For the avoidance of doubt, where a Club is subject to more than one Insolvency Event (for example Administration followed by a Company Voluntary Arrangement), the Club shall only be deducted one set of 10 points, such deduction to apply with effect from the first Insolvency Event.

13.A.6 The Competition shall serve the Club with written notice of the points deduction (the 'Notice').

13.A.7 A Club may appeal against such a points deduction. Any such appeal will be conducted in accordance with Part C: Appeals: Non-Fast Track of the Disciplinary Regulations, save that the following paragraphs of those Regulations will not apply – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 21, 23 and 24. In place of those Regulations, the following Rules 13.A.8 to 13.A.12 will apply.

13.A.8 The Notice of Appeal shall be lodged with the FA within 7 days of the date of the Notice.

13.A.9 A Club may appeal against an automatic deduction of points solely on the ground that the insolvency proceedings arose solely as a result of a Force Majeure event (the 'Appeal'). For the purposes of this Rule 13, a 'Force Majeure' event shall be an event that, having regard to all of the circumstances, is reasonably considered to have been unforeseeable and unavoidable.

13.A.10 The Appeal Board shall have the power to:-

13.A.10.1 Confirm the deduction of ten points; or

13.A.10.2 Set aside the deduction of ten points and substitute a deduction of such lower number of points as it shall deem appropriate; or

13.A.10.3 Order that there shall be no sanction at all.

13.A11 The decision of the Appeal Board shall be final and binding. Any costs incurred by any party in appeal proceedings brought before the Appeal Board shall be met by the Club in any event and shall be considered as a sum due to the Company.

13.A.12 Any sanctions imposed pursuant to these provisions shall not be taken into account in respect of any other sanctions, penalties or fines that may be imposed by the Competition in respect of any breaches of its Rules, Regulations or Articles of Association by the Club.

13.B. GENERAL INSOLVENCY

13.B.1 In the event of a Club entering an Insolvency Event between the end of the AGM and start of the AGM immediately following thereafter ('the next AGM') then it shall automatically be relegated by one Step at the next AGM, unless one of the following requirements has been met, namely:

(i) Prior to the next AGM it has Paid in Full all its creditors (including but not limited to Football Creditors); or

(ii) Prior to the next AGM it has Paid in Full its Football Creditors and entered a compliant Creditor Compromise.

For the purposes of this Rule, a Creditor Compromise shall be considered compliant if it provides for the following:

- That all Creditors will be paid in Full;
- The first payment under the terms of the Creditor Compromise shall be made within 28 days of the approval of the Creditor Compromise and shall constitute a minimum of 10% of the total sum payable;
- The balance shall be paid in equal amounts over the remaining period of the Creditor Compromise;
- The period of the Creditor Compromise shall not extend beyond three years from the date of approval.

Notwithstanding the above, in the event of a Club being subject to an Insolvency Event at the date of the AGM, then the Club may be subject to such sanction as the Board may determine, (including expulsion from membership of the Competition) unless the Board is satisfied that by no later than 5pm on 31 July (or, if the 31 July falls on a weekend, 5pm on the immediately preceding Business Day) that the Club (or any new entity to which its membership is subsequently transferred under 2.9.2 above) is in a financial position to complete all of its fixtures for the immediate following Playing Season.
This sanction shall apply in addition to any Club being relegated pursuant to its playing record in the same period namely that in the event of the Club having already been

relegated by one Step it shall be relegated two Steps.
This provision is subject to Rule 2.9.1 in respect of Clubs which have transferred their membership pursuant to an Insolvency Event and in that case where there is any conflict between any provision of Clause 14 and Rule 2.9.1 then this Clause 14 shall prevail.

13.B.2 A Club shall not be eligible for promotion or to compete in the Play Offs at the end of a Playing Season if at 5pm on the date on which the last scheduled League fixture is due to be played that Club:

(i) has entered an Insolvency Event between the date of the AGM and 5pm on the date on which the last scheduled League fixture is played and has not Paid in Full all its creditors to which the Insolvency Event applies (including but not limited to Football Creditors) or Paid in Full all its Football Creditors and entered a Creditor Compromise to have Paid in Full all other creditors over an agreed period not extending more than three years following the date of approval of the Creditor Compromise: or

(ii) has not complied with the terms of a Creditor Compromise by which it is bound or is to seek to extend the period of the Creditor Compromise.

13.B.3 The sanctions contained herein shall be in addition to and not in substitution for any other sanctions contained within the Rules and, in particular, the sanctions set out in rule 13.A. For the avoidance of doubt, where a Club is subject to more than one connected Insolvency Event, for example Administration followed by a Company Voluntary Arrangement, any sanction applied to it in accordance with Rule 13.B.1 shall be applied in one Playing Season only except as provided for in Rule 13.B.1

COMPLIANCE WITH/EXTENSION OF CREDITOR COMPROMISES

13.B.4 Any Club must inform the Competition in writing (and provide supporting evidence) within seven (7) days of the Club:

(i) making a payment under the terms of a Creditor Compromise and provide evidence of that payment;

(ii) becoming aware of any failure to comply with the terms of any Creditor Compromise entered into by it (including the failure to make a payment by the due date);

(iii) making an application to extend or vary the terms of the Creditor Compromise entered into by it and provide a copy of the application,

(iv) completing all its obligations under an Insolvency Event and receiving confirmation of such from the relevant Insolvency Practitioner, or

(v) becoming aware of any consent by creditors to compromise the whole or part of the debt admitted into the Creditor Compromise.

13.B.5 Following the approval of a Creditor Compromise, if creditors subsequently consent to compromise the whole or part of the debt admitted to the Creditor Compromise or if any Club makes a successful application to vary the terms of its Creditor Compromise so that the Creditor Compromise is not compliant as provided for in Rule 13.B.1 then that Club shall be automatically relegated by one Step at the end of the Playing Season in which the event takes place. If the Club has already been relegated due to its position in the final table of the Division in which it is competing then it shall be relegated two Steps.

13.B.6 In the event of any Club

(i) Failing to comply with the terms of any Creditor Compromise entered into by it

(whether securing Payment in Full of all of its creditors or not) including the failure to make a payment by the due date; and/or

(ii) Breaching any of the provisions of Rule 13.B.4 or failing to notify the Competition of any consent by creditors to compromise the whole or part of the debt admitted thereby rendering the Creditor Compromise as non-compliant as required in Rule 13.B.1.

Then the Board shall have the power to impose such sanction as it deems appropriate, including, but without limitation to expulsion of that Club, the relegation of that Club, the deduction of points and an Embargo.

13.B.7 Where a Club has transferred its membership under Rule 2.9.2 the provisions of Rule 13.B in relation to a Creditor Compromise shall be applied to the former entity that was subject to the Insolvency Event and/or the new entity

13.B.8 *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

13.B.9 In the case of a Club or Clubs relegated from a league in the National League System or subject to lateral movement under the National League System Regulations, Rule 13.B.1 shall apply from the date of the AGM of the League of which the Club or Clubs were a member in the immediately preceding Playing Season where the AGM of the Company is later.

14. MATCH OFFICIALS

14.1 Match Officials for all Competition matches shall be appointed by the Appointing Authority.

14.2 No Club shall postpone a Competition match on account of the apparent state of the ground. In the event that such circumstances prevail, Clubs should comply with procedures provided for in the document published by The FA "Recommended procedure for the guidance of Clubs and Referees in determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions". Should the ground be declared unfit it is the responsibility of the home Club to immediately advise the Competition, the Appointing Authority, the visiting Club and the Match Officials.

14.3 In the event of any of the Match Officials appointed for a match not being in attendance at the match or becoming unable to complete the match it shall be completed under the control of the remaining Match Officials unless the competing Clubs are able to agree upon a substitute who is acceptable to the Match Referee; should the appointed Match Referee fail to appear then the senior Assistant Referee must take charge. Any substitute agreed for a match shall be considered a Match Official for the purposes of that match. In the event that a Club causes a match to be abandoned in relation to the operation of this Rule then that Club shall be charged with failing to fulfil a fixture (Rule 8.38 refers).

14.4 Match Officials should be present at the appointment at least sixty minutes prior to the scheduled time of kick-off. The appointed Referee may be required to visit the ground earlier if requested to do so by the home Club.

14.5 In cases where it is found necessary to stop play owing to the weather or other cause, the Referee must wait a reasonable length of time before deciding on abandonment.

14.6 Referees must report on the relevant form all cases where teams commence a match late or without eleven Players on the field of play. Referees must also report their own or any assistant referees' late arrival in any matches, and notify those concerned at the time of

their intention. Assistant referees must also send an explanation of their late arrival to the Appointing Authority in writing by the method instructed by the Appointing Authority within 3 days of the match.

14.7 At Steps 2 to 6, the home Club will be responsible for paying the Match Officials the fees and match expenses set by the Appointing Authority either (a) on the day of the match in their dressing room, within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the match (including matches abandoned for any reason), or (b) by BACS payment if this is actioned within 24 hours of the kick off time. In the case of a postponed match, whether or not gate money is taken, any Match Official who has travelled to the match will be entitled to claim travelling expenses and half their match fee from the home Club. Where provided by the home Club, each Match Official must complete and submit a claim form for expenses.

14.8 The home Club shall be responsible for providing Assistant Referees with distinctive flags of a suitable size in an acceptable condition.

14.9 Three match balls proposed to be used in the match and, if applicable, supplied by the Company under a ball sponsorship agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Referee before the commencement of the match in his/her dressing room.
It is the responsibility of the Club playing at home in each match played under the jurisdiction of the Competition to provide match balls in accordance with any match ball agreement signed by the Company. The official Competition match ball must be used in all Competition matches and pre-match warm-ups.

14.10 The away Club is responsible for the provision of its own practice balls for use prior to the start of each match, as supplied by the Competition under a ball sponsorship agreement.

14.11 Match Officials officiating in Competitions using the reporting functionality in The FA's Match Official Administration System (MOAS) must report all breached of Rule via MOAS within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match.
Match Officials officiating in Competitions not using the reporting functionality in MOAS must report all breaches of Rule to the Competition Secretary in writing within three days of the match on the appropriate form by first class post or electronically.

15. WITHDRAWAL OF CLUBS

15.1 A Club must notify the Company not later than 31st March each year of its intention to withdraw from the Competition at the end of that Playing Season. Failure to do so will make a Club liable to a fine.
This Rule shall not operate so as to preclude promotion, relegation or lateral movement of any Club to another competition in accordance with Rule 12.

15.2 If, between the holding of the Company annual general meeting and the commencement of the next Playing Season, any Club either:

(i) ceases to operate for any reason; or

(ii) gives notice to the Company that it does not intend to compete in the Competition during the next Playing Season

then no adjustment shall be made to the number of Clubs participating in the Competition for that Playing Season and the remaining Clubs will form the Competition for that Playing Season.

15.3 If, after the commencement of a Playing Season, any Club either:

(i) ceases to operate for any reason; or

(ii) gives notice to the Company that it does not intend to continue competing in the Competition for any reason

then the Company will expunge the playing record of that Club and any monies due to that Club from the Company shall be forfeited. The Company shall have the discretion to issue charges against that Club and to issue fines against that Club in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

15.4 From the operative date in Rule 15.2 or 15.3, the Club concerned shall no longer be a member of the Company and shall not be entitled to any further payment from the Company but may be required to make payment to the Company.

16. PROTESTS, APPEALS, DISPUTES ARISING FROM PLAYER CONTRACTS

Protests, claims or complaints relating to the Rules

16.1 Subject to Rules 16.5 to 16.10 below, all protests, claims or complaints relating to these Rules shall be heard and determined by the Board (or a sub-committee duly appointed by the Board), which shall have the power to regulate its own procedure. The Clubs or Players protesting, claiming or complaining must email such protest, claim or complaint to the Competition Secretary and deposit a fee which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld, and the unsuccessful party (or parties) may, in addition, be ordered to pay the costs at the direction of the Board.

16.2 All such protests, claims and complaints must be received in writing by the Competition Secretary within fourteen days of the event or decision to which the protest, claim or complaint relates.

16.3 The Board may compel any party to the protest, claim or complaint to pay such expenses as the Board shall direct.

16.4 An intention to appeal against a decision of the Board must be lodged with The FA within seven days of the Board providing written notification of its decision.

A notice of appeal against a decision of the Board must be lodged with The FA within fourteen days of the Board providing written notification of its decision, accompanied by the relevant fee which may be forfeited in the event of the appeal not being upheld. A copy of the notice of appeal must also be sent to the Competition Secretary.

All appeals to The FA must be lodged in accordance with Part C: Appeals: Non-Fast Track of The FA's Disciplinary Regulations.

Disputes arising from a Player's Contract

Disciplinary Matters

16.5 Within seven days of receipt of any notice of a fine or suspension imposed by a Club under the Player's contract, the Player may appeal that decision to the Board by giving notice of appeal to the Club and the Board. The Board shall have the power to regulate its own procedure and shall hear the appeal within fourteen days of receipt of the notice of appeal. The grounds of appeal available to the Player shall not be limited and the Board shall have full power to review the facts and any evidence (including hearing from any relevant witnesses).

16.6 Within seven days of receipt of the Board's decision, either the Club or the Player may appeal against the decision of the Board to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal in

accordance with the Player Status Rules. An appeal to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal shall be heard within 14 days of receipt of the notice of further appeal or, if exceptional circumstances exist which means that the appeal cannot be heard in that timeframe, it shall be heard as soon as practicable. Any reference to the 'League Appeals Committee' in the Player's contract shall be deemed as a reference to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal.

Termination

16.7 A Club, on giving fourteen days' notice to a Player to terminate his Player's contract, must state in the notice his right of appeal to the Board and also the address of the Competition Secretary to whom he must appeal. The notice must advise the Player of the necessity of forwarding two copies of his appeal with the deposit fee specified in the Fees Tariff, to the Competition Secretary within seven days of the receipt of the notice from the Club. A copy of such notice must be received by the Competition Secretary within seven days of the sending of the notice in order to be valid.

16.8 A Player on giving fourteen days' notice to his Club to terminate his Player's contract must also notify the Company and The FA of the reasons for the termination of the agreement. A copy of such notice must be received by the Competition Secretary within seven days of the sending of the notice in order to be valid.

16.9 If the recipient of a notice referred to in Rules 16.7 and 16.8 above wishes to do so, they may appeal against the relevant notice to the Board within seven days of the date of receipt of the notice in writing by email to the Competition Secretary with the relevant appeal fee as set out in Schedule A to these Rules. The Board shall have the power to regulate its own procedure. The grounds of appeal available to the appellant shall not be limited and the Board shall have full power to review the facts and any evidence (including hearing from any relevant witnesses).

16.10 Within seven days of receipt of the Board's decision, either the Club or the Player may appeal against the decision of the Board to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal in accordance with the Player Status Rules. An appeal to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal shall be heard within 14 days of receipt of the notice of further appeal or, if exceptional circumstances exist which means that the appeal cannot be heard in that timeframe, it shall be heard as soon as practicable. Any reference to the 'League Appeals Committee' in the Player's contract shall be deemed as a reference to the Contractual Disputes Tribunal.

17. MISCONDUCT OF CLUBS, OFFICERS, PLAYERS

(a) Undertakings to be given by Club Employees

All Clubs must incorporate in any contracts of employment with their employees, including Player, an undertaking on the part of the employee not to bring The Competition or any Club into disrepute and an undertaking on the part of the employee not knowingly to do anything or omit to do anything which will cause the Club to be in breach of the Laws of the Game, the Rules of The Football Association or the Rules of the Competition.

Without prejudice to the generality of this rule, all Clubs at Step 2 and below must ensure they, and where appropriate any Officers of the Club, comply with the obligations of The Football Association's Owners' and Directors' Test.

(b) Misconduct in pre-arranging the result of matches

Any Club, Official or Player offering or receiving a payment or any form of inducement to or from any Club or the Official or Player of any Club; or any Club, Official or Player receiving or seeking to receive any payment or other form of inducement from any other person or organisation to win, lose, or draw a Match under the jurisdiction of the Competition or in which the Club participates by reason of membership of the Competition shall be deemed guilty of misconduct.

(c) Any person charged and found guilty of bringing the Competition into disrepute and any Club, Officer or Member charged and found guilty of misconduct as defined by the Board or of inducing or attempting to induce a player of another Club to join his own Club shall be liable to such penalty as the Board shall deem appropriate.

18. TROPHY

The Company shall present to the Winners and Runners Up of all divisions in the Competition twenty souvenirs. Additional souvenirs cannot be presented except by consent of the Board, and then at the expense of the requesting Club.

In addition, a Competition championship trophy will be presented as and when the Board determine.

The Clubs concerned will also receive a permanent souvenir.

The trophies are the property of the Company and may never be won outright. A runners' up trophy and medals may also be awarded at the discretion of the Company.

The recipient Club shall be responsible for engraving their details on the trophy before returning same.

The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the trophies:

"We, A.B. the of Football Club, C.D. and E.F members of and representing the said Club, having been declared winners of the Northern Counties East League Trophy and the same having been delivered to us by the said Competition, do hereby on behalf of the said Club, jointly and severally agree to return the same to the Competition Secretary, on or before 1st March next in good order and condition, suitably inscribed, in accordance with the Rules of the Competition and if the said Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care, we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair."

Any Club not returning the Competition trophy by the due date, returning them in poor condition or without being engraved will be fined.

19. ALTERATIONS TO RULES

No alteration to the Rules shall be made until they have been approved by The FA.

Alterations to Rules shall be approved at a general meeting of the Company.

Proposals for alterations to Rules, together with the name of their proposers and seconders, shall be received by the Competition Secretary not later than 31st October prior to the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting of the Company in each year or not later than eight weeks before the holding of an Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose of amending the Rules.

20. ADMISSION CHARGES

The minimum charge for admission to all matches shall be determined from time to time by the Board.

Admission charges must be the same for home and visiting supporters at Competition matches for equivalent accommodation. If there is no equivalent accommodation, the Board may in its absolute discretion consider the charges set by the home Club and determined a reasonable equivalent admission charge for visiting supporters, which shall be implement by the home Club until the end of the current Playing Season.

Clubs may, with the prior written permission of the Board, may vary general admission charges for adults to an amount below the minimum charge from time to time determined by the Board (including allowing free admission). Any such variation must be applied to both home and visiting (or neutral) supporters.

Concessionary admission charges or pricing policies for disabled people and their carers/helpers, senior citizens, students, children, unemployed, armed forces etc, if available for home supporters, must be offered on a similar basis to visiting supporters.

The minimum charge shall apply pro-rata to any Season Ticket albeit with a discount of up to 15%. A Club may provide its Sponsors with complimentary tickets at any time but the value of the said complimentary tickets shall not exceed 10% of the value of the relevant sponsorship per season.

21. LONG SERVICE

21.1 The Board shall be empowered to grant a long service award for 21 years' service with a member Club, providing such an award has not already been made by any other competition.

22. CENTENARY AWARDS

A Club celebrating its centenary whilst in membership of the Competition shall be presented with a commemorative award by the Board.

23. PLAYING SURFACES

23.1 The Pitch

With effect from the commencement of Season 2016/17 Competition Matches may be played on:

(a) Grass Pitch; or

(b) Football Turf Pitch in Steps 1 to 6

23.2 Ground Maintenance

The Club is to be responsible for the maintenance of the Pitch and for the general maintenance of the ground. The Club must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to maintain its Pitch in good order, as required under these Rules.

23.3 Pitch Standards

All Pitches must be flat and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations. The maximum slopes allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1:41 in any direction.

The Competition may require a Club to take such steps as the Board shall specify if not satisfied that an adequate standard of the Pitch is being maintained, including but not limited to the Board commissioning an independent report (including a Pitch Test) on the state of the Pitch, the cost of such independent report to be borne by the Club concerned.

23.4 **Football Turf Pitches**

New Installations

Where a Club proposes to install a Football Turf Pitch (or replace an existing Football Turf Pitch) the following shall apply:

For matches played under the auspices of The National League at Step 1& 2 of the National League System:-

(a) the Club shall disclose to the Competition, as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event not later than 7 days following the Club's final match of the Playing Season preceding the scheduled commencement of installation, full details of the proposed contractor installing the Football Turf Pitch and the timescales for installation. The proposed Football Turf Pitch must have a design and specification that is capable of attaining the FIFA Recommended Two Star Certificate following installation

(b) no installation works shall commence until such time as the Competition has given written approval for the proposed installation and the timetable thereof. Installation may only take place outside the Playing Season;

(c) installation must be scheduled to be completed in sufficient time to enable the completion of a Pitch Test and for confirmation of the results thereof to be supplied to the Competition no later than 14 days prior to the commencement of the following Playing Season;

(d) the Club shall procure that:

(i) a Pitch Test is carried out on the newly installed Football Turf Pitch; and

(ii) the FIFA accredited field test institute provides the Competition with a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and

(e) the Club shall provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate within 7 days of receipt to the Competition.

For matches played at Step 3 and below of the National League System:-

(f) the Club shall disclose to the Competition, as soon as reasonably practicable full details of the proposed contractor installing the Football Turf Pitch and the timescales for installation. The proposed Football Turf Pitch must have a design and specification that is capable of attaining the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate following installation. Clubs must be awarded the FIFA Quality Pro Certificate by 31 May in the season before promotion to Step 2, save for those pitches installed on or prior to 31 July 2016 as set out in Rule 23.5 below;

(g) no installation works shall commence until such time as the Competition has given written approval for the proposed installation and the timetable thereof. The Competition will not grant approval unless the Club is able to evidence that:

- Installation works are scheduled to take place before 15 July in any year with a confirmed end date.
- Any necessary funding for the installation works is in place.
- A fully executed groundshare agreement (in a form acceptable to the Competition) is in place for the period of the installation.
- Where required pursuant to a lease, permission for the installation works has been obtained.

  If approval is granted but installation works do not commence by 15 July in the relevant year, the Competition may withdraw its approval and order that the works cannot commence until the end of the Playing Season.

(h) the Club shall procure that:

(i) a Pitch Test is carried out on the newly installed Football Turf Pitch; and

(ii) the FIFA accredited field test institute provides the Competition with a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test; and

(i) the Club shall provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate within 7 days of receipt to the Competition in which it is in membership.

23.5 Only Clubs with FIFA Quality Pro certified Football Turf Pitches will be eligible to take part in matches under the auspices of The National League at Step 1 & 2 of the National League System SAVE THAT:

(a) a Club which has a ground with the recommended FIFA Quality Certificate installed by 31 July 2016 can be promoted to Step 2 of the National league System providing that it undertakes that upon renewal of the Pitch the Club will install a Pitch that is awarded a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate or be relegated to the appropriate Step; or

(b) a Club can be promoted to Step 2 provided that:

(i) By 31 May in the season prior to promotion, the Club undertakes that its Pitch will be awarded a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate by no later than the following 31 May (i.e. 31 May in the Club's first season participating at Step 2),

The Club's undertaking must include at least the following information:

- Details about how any necessary works will be completed (including any relevant planning permissions required and a plan for those to be obtained).
- Details of the costs involved in completing the works and evidence to demonstrate how those costs will be funded.

; and

(ii) By 31 March in the Club's first season participating at Step 2, the Club provides an update to the Board detailing the progress made with reference to the undertaking, an updated funding position and such other information as the Board considers necessary.

Failure by the Club to obtain a FIFA Quality Pro Certificate for its Pitch by 31 May in the Club's first season participating at Step 2 will lead to the Club being relegated to the

appropriate Step.

23.6 **Annual Requirements**

Without prejudice to the obligations set out in Paragraph 23.3 above, Clubs that have a Football Turf Pitch shall:-

(a) take such steps and/or refrain from such actions as are necessary to ensure that the Football Turf Pitch continues to meet the requirements for a FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable) at all times during each Playing Season including, without limitation, complying with all requirements of the FIFA Quality Standard;

(b) where required to undertake Pitch Tests:

(i) conduct an initial Pitch Test between 1 January and 31 May in the relevant Playing Season (in addition to any Pitch Test carried out in accordance with Rule 23.4(d) or Rule 23.4(h));

(ii) where the initial Pitch Test is failed, conduct a further Pitch Test by 31 July following the relevant Playing Season;

(iii) procure that the FIFA accredited field test institute undertaking any Pitch Test provides to The Competition a copy of their official reports to FIFA immediately following completion of the Pitch Test;

(iv) provide a copy of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate to the Competition and Football Foundation by 31st July following the relevant Playing Season; and

(c) co-operate with all reasonable requests made by the Competition, the Association or FIFA for the performance of the Football Turf Pitch to be measured.

Where either (i) a Club fails to undertake a Pitch Test where required to do so, or (ii) the Pitch Test is failed, that Club shall not be permitted to use its ground for Competition Matches and the Club must enter a groundshare with another Club or club which is acceptable to the Competition, including but not limited to that Club or club's ground meeting the relevant Stadium Accreditation Programme requirements.

23.7 Where the Board is aware, by whatever reason, a Football Turf Pitch fails to meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable), including following any Pitch Test, the Club shall forthwith, at its cost, take such steps as the Board shall specify to ensure the Football Turf Pitch is restored to the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable).

23.8 The Competition shall have the right to order the postponement of a match where the Football Turf Pitch fails to meet the requirements of the FIFA Quality Certificate or Quality Pro Certificate (as applicable).

23.9 Where a Club has a Football Turf Pitch, any visiting Club is allowed to train, at no cost to that Club, on the Football Turf Pitch on the day before the relevant match or at a mutually agreed time. The length of this training session may not exceed one hour, unless agreed otherwise with the home Club. The visiting Club must notify the home Club of its intention to exercise this right no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled match (or within 48 hours of the arrangement of the fixture, if later).

23.10 A breach of any of the requirements of Rule 23 which results in the postponement or abandonment of a match shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule 8.38.

23.11 Pitch Protection

In order to protect any Pitch, unless otherwise mutually agreed between both participating Clubs, the following procedures shall be adopted by Players and Officials in the periods immediately before and after a Match and at half time:

(a) the Pitch shall only be used for warming up or warming down by Players named on the Team Sheet;

(b) pre-match warming up by either team shall not commence until 45 minutes before the kick-off time at the earliest, shall not last for more than 30 minutes, and shall end no later than 10 minutes before the kick-off time;

(c) if portable goals are provided they shall be used for all goalkeeping drills other than crossing practice;

(d) the goalmouth area shall be used by goalkeepers only if portable goals are not provided or for crossing practice and then only for not more than 20 minutes;

(e) for the purposes of warming up and warming down each team shall use only part of the Pitch between the edge of a penalty area and the half way line or as otherwise directed by the groundsman;

(f) all speed and stamina work shall be undertaken off the Pitch parallel to the touchline opposite the side to be patrolled by the assistant referee or, in the absence of sufficient space, in that part of the Pitch described in paragraph (e) above or as otherwise directed by the groundsman;

(g) Players using the Pitch at half time as aforesaid shall give due consideration to any other activity or entertainment taking place on the Pitch at the same time;

(h) the Home Club may water the Pitch at half time provided it gives reasonable notice to the referee and the other Club that it intends to do so and that any such watering is carried out evenly over the entire length and width of the Pitch; and

(i) any warming down after the conclusion of the Match shall last for no longer than 15 minutes and for that purpose neither penalty area shall be used.

23.12 *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

24. INSURANCE

24.1 PLAYERS

All Clubs shall be members of a Players personal accident insurance scheme. The policy cover shall be at least equal to the minimum recommended cover determined from time to time by The Football Association.

Each Club shall submit to the Board a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt fourteen days prior to the start of the Playing Season.

24.2 PUBLIC LIABILITY

All Clubs must have Public Liability cover of at least ten million pounds (£10,000,000).

Each Club shall submit to the Board a copy of the insurance policy document together with the last premium payment receipt fourteen days prior to the start of the Playing Season.

25. QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

The safety of Players (and, where applicable, others) is of paramount importance. These Rules and set out the medical requirements for Clubs participating within the National League System. Nothing in these Rules:

- prevents any Club from arranging medical provisions that exceed any minimum medical requirements prescribed by these Rules; or
- replaces, reduces, or affects in any way the obligations imposed on Clubs or any other persons by statute or common law in the fields of medicine, occupational health and/or health and safety (or any other area).

While not forming part of these Rules, from time to time The FA issues guidance in respect of medical matters, which is published on The FA's website and distributed to Participants as appropriate.

25.1 Subject to Rule 25.2, the following table sets out the designated Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider which each Club, operating at its respective Step of the National League System, shall have in attendance throughout all Competition Matches:-

Step 1 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner having a valid Advance Trauma Medical Management in Football (ATMMiF) qualification.
Step 2 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner, having a valid Intermediate Trauma Medical Management in Football (ITMMiF) qualification.
Step 3 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one Qualified Medical Practitioner, having a valid Emergency Medical First Aid in Football (EMFAiF) qualification.
Step 4 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider, or Qualified Medical Practitioner having a valid Emergency Medical First Aid in Football (EMFAiF) qualification.
Steps 5 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider having a valid Emergency First Aid in Football (EFAiF) qualification.
Steps 6 Clubs	Each Club shall have at least one First Aider who has a valid Emergency First Aid in Football (EFAiF) qualification.

25.1.1 At Steps 1 to 3 only, the Qualified Medical Practitioner shall visit both the home and away teams' dressing rooms before leaving the ground. The name of the practitioner present at the Competition Match must be entered on the team sheet.

25.2 In exceptional circumstances, where the home Club is unable to ensure that Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider shall be present at a Competition Match, the home Club shall;

25.2.1 Make alternative arrangements appropriate for the level of Competition Match.

25.2.2 Liaise with the away Club in advance of the Competition Match to ensure that each Club is aware of the medical provision that will be available at the Competition Match.

25.2.3 Fully document any alternative arrangements within the home Club's Emergency Medical Emergency Action Plan and share the updated plan with the away Club, prior to the Competition Match taking place.

25.3 Clubs shall ensure their Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider keeps detailed up-to-date medical records for all Players in the form and in accordance with the requirements and guidelines published by The FA from time to time.

25.4 When a Player's registration is about to be transferred, the Club that Player is registered

to must make such records as referred to in Rule 25.3 available to the Qualified Medical Practitioner or First Aider of the Club that the Player is being transferred to. This procedure shall also apply to all Players whose registrations are temporarily transferred under the provisions for Long, Short and Youth Loans.

25.5 All Clubs are required to have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) in place. A copy of which must be submitted to the Competition on the standard form provided by no later than 1st August in each year and placed clearly in the home, away and match officials dressing rooms.

Event Doctors

25.6 Any persons employed as an Event Doctor shall comply with any relevant health and safety legislation.

26. PLAYER TRANSFERS BETWEEN CLUBS

When Players are transferred (Contract, Non-Contract, Scholars or loan on temporary transfer) between member Clubs (or between member Clubs and clubs) it is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that the Competition receives copies of all relevant documents pertaining to the transfer including full details of any payment schedules agreed in writing or otherwise between the two Clubs. Should a Club fail to meet the payment schedules lodged with the Competition on receipt of notification an embargo on further Players registrations will be placed upon the defaulting Club together with a 1% levy per day on the outstanding payments as detailed in the Contract.

27. *[Rule does not apply to NCEL]*

28. PROVISION FOR FULL & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

See Articles of Association.

29. PROMOTION AGREEMENTS

See Articles of Association.

30. GENERAL MEETINGS

See Articles of Association.

31. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

See Articles of Association.

32. COMPETITION OFFICERS

See Articles of Association.

33. Each Club shall at all times comply with all reasonable requests by the Competition to ensure due compliance by the Competition with its Commercial Agreements and shall not enter into any new agreements with any direct competitor to the Competition's title sponsor or any third party with whom the Competition has entered into a commercial agreement.

34. Each Club must utilise any match boards provided by the Competition's sponsor and must procure that any corporate bench kit shall be worn during competitive and first team matches, as directed by the Competition. In the event that a Competition does not have a bench kit sponsor, a Club may enter into its own bench kit sponsor agreement providing any such agreement is in writing and the Club obtains the consent of the Competition in writing before entering into such agreement which must include a break clause which facilitates ending the agreement if the Club is promoted, relegated or laterally moved to another competition, or the Competition negotiates a new agreement in the future. A full copy of such agreement must be provided to the Competition Secretary within five (5) days of the sending of such request by the Competition.
In the event of any Club having an existing agreement with a competitor to any of the Competition's sponsors in respect of match boards and/or other commercial or advertising obligations, the Club is permitted to honour that agreement on an on-going basis, with the consent of the Competition provided the Club's agreement was signed before that of the Competition and a full copy of any such agreement must be provided to the Competition Secretary within five (5) days of the sending of such request by the Competition. For the avoidance of doubt, the Club would not be permitted to extend said agreement beyond the existing term.

35. Each Club shall permit photography, filming and audio and web broadcasting at their home ground to enable the Competition to comply with the terms of any Commercial Contract (as defined in the Articles), which may be entered into by the Company and will provide all necessary facilities as may reasonably be requested by the Competition or any broadcaster as may be nominated by the Competition.

36. Any distribution of any income received by the Company from any source whatsoever shall be entirely at the discretion of the Board.

37. The Company shall be entitled either directly or through its duly appointed agents to inspect the books, accounts and financial records of any Club and that Club shall make available to the Company all information as may be required from time to time in that respect.

38-40 *[Rules do not apply to NCEL]*