

**IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**Women's Challenge Cup Rules**

- 1. Name**  
The Cup shall be called the 'Irish Football Association Women's Challenge Cup'. The competition for the cup shall be annual and shall be open to women's clubs in membership of the Irish Football Association.
- 2. Control**  
The entire control and management of the Competition shall be vested in the Women's Challenge Cup Committee of the Irish Football Association.
- 3. Date of Application**  
Application for permission to compete in the Competition shall be made not later than the last day in March and accompanied by an entrance fee of £20. This decision shall affect the club for one season only. Each club shall be permitted to submit only one entry to the Competition.
- 4. Substitutes**  
A club may at its discretion, use 3 substitute players at any time in any tie, except to replace players who have been expelled by the referee. The substitutions can only be made when play has stopped for any reason and the referee has given permission. Only 3 substitutions by each side will be permitted in any tie and the maximum of 5 substitute players may be nominated prior to the commencement of the tie.
- 5. Eligible Players**  
To be eligible to play in the Competition, players must be eligible to play for their Club in League Competitions. A player registering with her club after 31 July in any season will not be eligible to play in this Competition. Players shall be permitted to play for one club only in any season in the Women's Challenge Cup.

Clubs must satisfy themselves as to the eligibility of their players before registration. Any club playing an ineligible player shall be removed from the Competition and may be de-barred from competing during the ensuing three seasons. The Women's Challenge Cup Committee may also impose a fine not exceeding £25 for each ineligible player played. Each competing team shall enter the full names of players on the IFA Comet Football Management System. Players' names must correspond with the numbers of their shirt.
- 6. Entry Levels**  
The Women's Challenge Cup Committee may determine the entry levels of teams to the competition at their complete discretion.
- 7. Draw**  
In the event of any match in the Competition resulting in a draw, the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions approved by the International FA Board.
- 8. Draw after bye – Competition draw**  
The lots shall be drawn and the competition matches played as the Committee may determine. Immediately following each draw a schedule of matches will be circulated to all participating clubs.

The clubs which are in each instance first drawn in the ballot shall have choice of ground. Should 2 clubs be drawn against each other, only 1 of which has a ground available, the match shall be played on that ground. In the event of a club getting a bye in any draw, the Committee at the subsequent draw shall first draw a club to play against it from the lot, the two shall again be put in the ballot box and again drawn with the first drawn club having choice of ground. The Committee may draw subsequent round or rounds before the winners of the previous rounds have been declared. The Committee shall have power to exempt any number of Clubs from any number of rounds, and byes may be given so that the required number of clubs is obtained.

**9. Playing Surfaces**

Matches may be played on grass or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (3G) artificial turf pitches providing that the latter is at least FIFA 1 star standard.

**10. Change of Venue**

In the event of a match being transferred to an alternative ground it shall be the responsibility of the team drawn at home to notify in writing, by email, both their opponents and the Irish Football Association not later than 4 days prior to the date of the match giving clear directions to the location of the ground. Failure to notify the Irish Football Association and opponents may result in the team being dismissed from the Competition.

**11. Clubs Failing to Play**

Any club refusing or failing to play against the club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by the Committee, and without sufficient reasons for so-doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and will be otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine. Also, any club leaving the ground before the expiration of the game must be adjudged to have lost the match and shall be liable to be dealt with by the Committee.

**12. Inclement Weather**

In the event of a match not taking place on the date arranged owing to the ground being declared unplayable by the referee or in the case of public grounds by the Local Authorities, up to and including the Preliminary Round and Rounds 1, 2 and 3, the teams shall forthwith arrange to play the following Friday. Matches postponed due to inclement weather from the Quarter-Finals stage, will be rescheduled at the discretion of the Committee.

In the event of the match not taking place on the second Friday due to circumstances as above, the clubs will arrange to play the following Friday on the ground of the "Away team" and if not played on this day due to weather conditions arrangements must be made to play at the same location on the following Friday.

In the event of the match not taking place on the second attempt at the ground of the original "Away team" the tie will revert from the following Friday to alternate weeks at the "Home" and "Away" grounds.

**13. Protests**

Protests must be received by the Chief Executive of the Association by Special Delivery post, bearing post mark within 4 days after the cause of the protest, accompanied by a deposit of £50 which shall be forfeited in all cases where the protest has not been sustained. A copy of the protest must also be sent by Special Delivery post, bearing post mark within 4 days after the cause of the protest, to the club protested against.

**14. Committee's doubts as to qualifications of players**

If the Committee has any doubt as to the qualification of any player competing in the Competition it shall have the power to call upon such player, and / or the club to which she belongs or for which she played, to prove to the satisfaction of the Committee that she is properly qualified according to the Rules. Failing satisfactory proof, the Committee shall have the power to disqualify such player and remove such club from the Competition.

**15. Appointment of Referees, Fees & Expenses**

For the 2021 Competition, the Association shall pay the fees and expenses of the match officials. The Association shall appoint a Referee and two Assistant Referees for the matches up to and including the Quarter-Finals; in addition, the Association shall appoint 4<sup>th</sup> Officials for the Semi-Finals and Final ties.

**16. Players must wear registered colours**

The players in each competing team must wear the registered club colours except when opposing teams have similar colours, in which case the team on whose ground the match is being played shall change. Failure to comply will result in offending clubs being fined £50.

In Semi-Final or Final ties when opposing teams have similar colours both teams shall change unless it is mutually agreed that only one team shall change.

**17. Notice of scratching**

Any club intending to withdraw (scratch) from the Competition must give notice to the Association and to the Secretary of the opposing club. Such notice must be received at least 4 days before the date of the match. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Committee who may compel the offending club to pay the expenses incurred and to take any other action they consider appropriate.

**18. Venues for Semi-Finals and Final**

The venue for the Semi-Finals and Final ties shall be decided by the Committee.

**19. Agreement for Cup**

When the winning club has been declared they shall receive the Women's Challenge Cup and must agree to return same to the Association in like good order and condition on or before 1 August.

**20. Medals / Mementoes**

In addition to the Cup, the Committee shall present suitable mementoes to the winners and runners up. Each club will receive 16 Player medals, 1 Manager medal and 1 Secretary medal.

**21. Division of Semi-Finals Receipts**

In the Semi-Finals ties, the receipts after all expenses are paid, shall be divided as follows: 10% to the Association and the balance divided equally amongst the competing clubs.

**22. Division of Final Receipts**

10% of the net gate receipts to be retained by the Association and the remaining 90% to be divided equally between the 2 finalists with the IFA bearing the cost of all match expenses.

**23. Powers of Committee**

The Committee shall have the power to deal with offending club/s, player/s, official/s, as they consider appropriate and to deal with any matter not otherwise provided for in these rules.