

JUNIOR CUP RULES

Name

- 1) This Cup shall be called the “Irish Football Association Junior Challenge Cup”.

Competition Annual

2) The Competition shall be Annual, and open to Clubs, members of the Irish Football Association Ltd., subject to the approval of the Junior & Youth Cup Committee. Applications will only be considered from clubs in membership of recognised Leagues. Any club which has not competed in the Junior Cup Competition the previous season must have been in membership of a recognised league during the previous season. Only one team from each Club will be admitted to the Competition.

Date for application to play

3) A team’s standing – i.e. Senior, Intermediate or Junior – shall be decided by the Council. Application for permission to compete in this Competition shall be made not later than 15 August as directed by the Association (via Comet FMS), accompanied by an entrance fee of £20.00.

This decision shall affect the Club for one season only.

Eligible Players

4) Notwithstanding the additional restrictions in rules 5 and 6 to be eligible to play in the Competition players must be registered to play for their Club in their respective league competitions (via Comet FMS). No player shall be eligible to play in this Competition for more than one Club in the same season.

Clubs must satisfy themselves as to the eligibility of their players. Any club playing an ineligible player may be removed from the Competition, and may be debarred from competing for up to three seasons, and the Committee shall have power to suspend any offending player or Official, and may impose a fine not exceeding £50.00 for each ineligible player played and may withhold the Cup and Medals if they are satisfied that such Club has violated the rules during the course of the Competition.

Notwithstanding anything in any rule, if the Committee has any doubt at any time and whether arising out of a protest or otherwise as to the qualification of any player taking part in the competition, they shall have power to call upon such player, and/or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is qualified according to the rules, and failing satisfactory proof, they shall disqualify such player and shall remove the club from the competition, and impose such other penalty they may think fit.

In such circumstances the Committee shall have the power to reinstate the defeated team to the competition in the event that the following round has not yet taken place.

Ineligible Players

5) Should a player take part in any Cup Tie Match for the Irish Challenge Cup or Intermediate Cup he may not compete for the Junior Cup in the same season, except in the case of Junior teams, three members of which may play for the Senior or Intermediate teams of the same Club. However, no such player/s shall play in more than two matches collectively in the Irish Challenge Cup or Intermediate Cup.

Any player who has competed in any National Cup Tie Matches under any other National Association shall be ineligible to compete during the same Season in this Competition.

6) In addition the following shall be ineligible to compete for the Junior Cup

- (a) Any players who have played in a Senior International or Senior Inter-League match.

- (b) Any player who in the current or previous season has played in the Final Tie of any Senior Competition.
- (c) Any player who in the current or previous season has played in the final tie of any Intermediate status competition except a player who has played in such final as a member of a Junior Club.
- (d) Any player who has at any time taken part in more than twelve competitive matches for NIFL Senior Clubs during the current and previous season collectively.
- (e) Any player who has taken part in more than four competitive matches for Senior or Intermediate Clubs collectively during the current season.
- (f) A professional shall not be allowed to take part in the Junior Cup Competition

Committee decide Player's standing

- 7) A player's standing shall be decided by the Junior Committee of the Association.
- 8) A player named as a substitute for an Irish Senior or Intermediate Club and not called upon to play shall not be considered as having played.

Annual Returns by Clubs

- 9) In accordance with Article 4 clubs should forward their annual club return not later than 31 July. Each Club must forward to the Association the following particulars:
 - (1) Whether ground is public or private
 - (2) Situation of ground
 - (3) Colours of Club shirts/shorts/socks
 - (4) Name and address of Secretary

In the event of change of Secretary or change of address during the Season, same must be notified to the Secretary of the Association.

Competition Draw

- 10) (a) The lots shall be drawn and Competition matches played as the Committee may determine, and immediately after each drawing the Secretary shall intimate to each of the clubs drawn the name and colours of the Club it is drawn against and the date upon which the tie is to be played.
- (b) 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.
- (c) In the event of a club getting a bye in any of the drawings, the Committee at the subsequent drawing, 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, and the club first out of the box shall have choice of ground, but the Committee may so arrange that four clubs compete in the semi-finals.
- (d) The teams which are in each instance first drawn in the ballot and known as the "Home Team" shall play on the ground registered with the Association. The second drawn team shall be known as the "Away Team".

If the registered ground is available it will not be necessary for the visiting team, or the Secretary of the Association to receive further notification, but if the match is being transferred to another ground it will be the responsibility of the team drawn at home to notify both their opponents and the Secretary of the Association by Special Delivery or email not later than the Friday of the week previous to the date of the match, giving clear direction to location of ground; failing which the team will be dismissed from the Competition. The proof of posting of such Special Delivery shall be the postmark on the Certificate of Posting.

- (e) In the event of a match not taking place on the date arranged owing to the ground being declared unplayable by the referee and/or in the case of public grounds by the Local Authorities (*including their facilities*), the teams shall forthwith arrange to play the following Saturday.
- (f) In the event of the match not taking place on the second Saturday due to circumstances as 10 (e) the clubs will arrange to play the following Saturday 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 Saturday.
- (g) 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 Saturday to alternate weeks at the “Home” and “Away” grounds.
- (h) If necessary the Committee will permit the playing of the match at either club’s registered or alternative ground if agreed in writing and confirmed to the Association Secretary by both clubs at least one day prior to the match.
- (i) In all cases the Secretary of the Team on whose ground a match was to be played must, immediately, advise the Secretary of the Association and their opponents of any postponement. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Junior & Youth Cup Committee who shall have power to compel the offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as they may deem expedient.
- (j) Dressing accommodation, including adequate shower facilities must be provided on-site by the Home club unless otherwise stated by Irish Football Association or Northern Ireland Executive. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Junior & Youth Cup Committee who shall have power to compel the offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as they may deem expedient.
- (k) Matches will be permitted to be played on artificial turf providing that the pitch is at least FIFA 1 star standard. Clubs playing their home matches on artificial turf must notify their opponents and the Association by email.
Any team not adhering to this rule will be dealt with as the Committee consider appropriate.

Notice of Scratching

11) Any Club intending to scratch must give notice to the Secretary of this Association and to the Secretary of the opposing Club, such notice to be received at least four days before the date of the match. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Junior & Youth Cup Committee who shall have power to compel the offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as they may deem expedient.

Matches

12) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by the Junior Committee (except for reasons due to circumstances relating to the COVID 19 Pandemic which are particularly set out in clause 12b below) and without sufficient reasons for so doing shall be adjudged to have lost the match, and shall be otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine, which may include bearing the cost of pitch rental and referee expenses and exclusion from future competitions as the Committee may determine.

12b) If a group of players of a team are placed into mandatory quarantine or required to self-isolate in accordance with the regulations or mandatory guidance issued by the UK Government or Northern Ireland Assembly or other relevant authority arising from the COVID 19 Pandemic, the match involving that team will go ahead as scheduled as long as the team has at least 13 players available (including at least one goalkeeper). If, however, a team is not in a position to field a team, with the above mentioned number of players (13 players including at least one goal-keeper), the match will be re-scheduled to a date to be fixed by the Secretary to the Committee who shall have power to assign and re-schedule the match to a neutral venue if the Secretary to the Junior Cup rules – season 2021/22

Committee deems it appropriate. In the event that the match is re-scheduled the home team will remain responsible for all of the organisation of the re-scheduled fixture and all related costs. In the event that a match cannot be played or completed on the date appointed for the re-scheduled fixture the Junior and Youth Cup Committee will have authority to make a decision on the matter. The team that is responsible for the match not taking place or not being played in full will be declared to have forfeited the match by the Junior and Youth Cup Committee unless the Committee comes to the conclusion that both or neither of the teams are responsible for the match not taking place or not being played in full. In this event the match will not be declared as forfeited and the outcome of the match will be decided by drawing lots carried out by the Secretary to the Committee in the presence of members of the Committee.

The duration of a match

13) The duration of each match shall be 90 minutes. The match must be started at the time appointed by the Committee, but no protest will be upheld for late starting, unless the Committee is satisfied that the result of the match was affected by such delay.

The Referee shall have power to allow additional time for stoppages, his decision thereon to be final.

In the event of any match in the Competition resulting in a draw, extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played. In the event of the score being equal at the end of this period of extra time the Tie will be decided by taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions approved by the International FA Board.

Abandoned match

14) If a match has been stopped by the referee, before the completion of the time specified, for any reason stated in Law 5 of the Laws of the Game, the Committee shall have power to order such match to be replayed in full or, to allow result of the match at the time of such stoppage to stand or to dismiss or debar one or both teams from the competition if considered appropriate.

Completion of Match Sheet

15) The Secretary or other responsible official of each competing team shall enter the full names of players in Comet FMS and must certify the accuracy of the information supplied. Players names must correspond with the number of their shirt. Any Club not completing Comet FMS in the prescribed manner shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £25.00. It shall be at the Committee's discretion whether or not such Club should be allowed to remain in the Competition.

Substitutes

16) A Club may at its discretion, use three 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 is stopped for any reason and the referee has given permission. Only three substitutions by each side will be permitted in any tie and a maximum of five substitute players may be nominated by each side prior to the commencement of the tie.

A fourth substitute may take part exclusively during extra time in all rounds of the competition.

Objection to ground

17) Any objection to ground, dressing accommodation, goal-posts, or ball must be lodged in writing by the Captain for the day with the Referee before the game is started, and the Referee shall have power to have such objections made right before the game starts.

Intimidation by spectators

18) When it can be proven that the partisans of a club systematically interfere with the play of an opposing club, by using improper language or inciting the players to use violence towards their opponents, the Committee shall have the power to order the match to be played or replayed on another ground.

Protests

19) Protests (including full details of protest) must be received by the Secretary of the Association per Special Delivery* bearing post-mark within two days after the cause of the protest, accompanied by a deposit of £50.00.

Protests against ineligible players must give names of players protested against and also the cause of protest, including the reason/s for the player/s being ineligible.

20) A copy of the protest must be sent by Special Delivery* to the Club protested against, bearing post-mark within two days after the cause of the protest.

In case of protested Ties, or replays of same, the Committee shall decide the dates and venues. Should either Club refuse to compete such Club shall be removed from the Competition, and otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine.

Players must wear registered colours

21) The players in each competing team must wear the registered colours, except when opposing teams have similar colours, in which case the team on whose ground the match is played shall change theirs. Failure to comply will result in offending clubs being fined in the sum of £50.00. In all other cases the Committee shall decide which team shall change their colours. The colours of the Club shall be taken to be the colours of the shirt. A goalkeeper must wear a shirt of different colour, and said shirt must be of a colour distinctive from that of his opponents. Referees shall have power to instruct a Club to change any part of their playing kit if he considers the colour not quite distinctive from that of his opponents, and the Referee shall have power to deal with any player refusing to comply with this instruction.

Referees & Assistant Referees

22) The competing Clubs in all but the Semi-Final and Final Ties shall appoint the Assistant Referees, unless otherwise arranged by the Junior & Youth Cup Committee, but in all the matches the IFA Administration shall appoint the Referee, who shall have power to dispense with the services of the Assistant Referees in case he finds one or other giving decisions at variance with the facts and appoint substitutes.

In all but the semi-final or final ties the Club on whose ground the match is played shall pay the Referee's charges. If the Referee fails to turn up, the match must not take place.

** The proof of posting of such Special Delivery shall be the post-mark on the certificate of posting.*

Venues for Semi-finals and Final tie

23) The venue for the semi-final and final ties shall be decided by the Junior & Youth Cup Committee.

Agreement for Cup

24) It shall be the responsibility of the winning Club to return the cup to the Association on or before 1 March or earlier if so requested by the Association. The winning club shall return the cup in good or like condition and shall be liable for any costs in the event that the cup is destroyed by fire, or lost, or damaged by any other accident whilst in the possession of the winning club.

Medals

25) The Association will present medals only to the participants in the final tie. For the avoidance of any doubt this shall include the 16 players, Manager and Secretary of each club.

Division of Receipts

26) In all Competition matches, with the exception of the semi-finals and Final, the Club on whose ground the match is played shall take the receipts and pay all expenses. In case the expenses in semi-finals exceed the receipts, the deficit shall be taken from the final tie receipts, same being considered expenses of match.

Division of Semi-final receipts

27) In the semi-final ties the nett receipts shall be divided as follows: 10% to the Association and the balance divided equally amongst the competing clubs.

Division of Final Tie receipts

28) In the Final Tie, the receipts shall be divided as follows: 10% to the Association and balance divided equally amongst the competing clubs.

Committee may alter rules

29) The Junior & Youth Cup Committee shall have power to alter these Rules, but in no case shall they do so until after the Final Tie in any year shall have been played. Powers of Committee

Powers of Committee

30) All questions of eligibility or qualification of competitors, or of application of these rules, or the laws of the game, shall be referred to the Committee, whose decision will be final (notwithstanding each club's right of appeal in accordance with the Articles of Association) and they shall have the power to withhold the cup and medals or mementoes.

31) The Committee shall have power to deal with offending Club or Clubs, player or players, official or officials, as they may think fit, and to deal with any matter not provided for in these Rules.

Special note – Sundays shall not be reckoned in the computation of time in these rules