

INTERMEDIATE CUP RULES
SEASON 2021/22

Name

- 1 This competition shall be called the Irish Football Association Intermediate Cup competition and shall be governed by the Intermediate Cup Committee.

Committee approve of clubs

- 2 The Competition shall be annual and open to the Intermediate clubs in membership of the Association subject to the approval of the Committee. Application for permission to compete in the competition shall be made online via Comet FMS, not later than 30 June and shall be accompanied by an entry fee of £30.00. It shall be the sole responsibility of clubs to enter in order to participate in the competition. This application shall affect a club for one season only. The Competition shall be conducted under the Articles of Association, the Laws of the Game and these Rules. The Committee may at its discretion accept sponsorship for the Competition or any part thereof.

Drawing of Ties

- 3 The names of the clubs approved for the competition shall be placed in one lot, or lots, as the Committee may determine. The Committee may draw subsequent round or rounds before the winners of the previous rounds have been declared, and the winners according to such draw shall compete against each other as in the first round.

Byes may be given

The Committee shall have the power to exempt any number of clubs from any number of rounds, and byes may be given so that four clubs shall compete in the Semi Finals.

- 4 There shall be one entry level in the competition.
All Clubs playing intermediate status football shall enter the competition at the first entry level.

Clubs shall be drawn in lots

- 5 The lots shall be drawn and the competition matches played as the Committee may determine, and immediately after each draw the Secretary shall intimate to each of the clubs drawn the name and the colours of the club it is drawn against and the date upon which the tie is to be played.

Matches will be played on or before the date set by the Intermediate Cup Committee. Any alterations to the date or kick-off time must be submitted in writing by both clubs and approved by the Intermediate Cup Committee.

Draw after bye

- 6 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.

Method of drawing

- 7 The clubs which are in each instance first drawn in the ballot shall have the choice of ground subject to the approval of the Committee. The first drawn club may forfeit home advantage (in exceptional circumstances) with the agreement of their opponents and the approval of the Committee. In such circumstances written confirmation of same must be notified to the Secretary by both clubs not later than 5 days prior to the date of the match.
- 8 Only those clubs playing in Intermediate Leagues whose registered ground has been approved by the Intermediate Cup Committee are eligible to participate in the Intermediate Cup.

All Intermediate Cup games must be played on the clubs' registered League ground.

Matches will be permitted to be played on 3rd Generation Artificial Turf pitches which have been approved by the Intermediate Cup Committee.

From Season 2017/18 only clubs playing in Intermediate Leagues whose registered ground has been approved by the Intermediate Cup Committee on or before 31 May will be eligible to participate in the Intermediate Cup.

- 9 Should a club having a registered home ground which, for whatever reason be unavailable (excluding inclement weather conditions) be drawn at home they must travel to the ground of their opponents. If neither team's registered home ground is available, the first drawn team must procure another ground where the facilities comply with Rule 8. Notification of a non-available ground must be received by the Secretary of the Association not later than 5 days prior to the date of the tie.
- 10 A minimum fee of £3 must be charged at all cup ties.
- 11 The match must be started at the time appointed by the Committee but no protest will be upheld for late starting, unless the Committee are satisfied that the result of the match was effected thereby. If a match has been stopped by the referee before the completion of the time specified, for any reason, the Committee shall have the power to deal with the matter as it sees fit.
- 12 In the event of unfavourable weather conditions, the home club must contact the Irish Football Association to organise a referee's inspection not later than four (4) hours before kick-off. The match referee or an alternative referee appointed by the IFA must inspect the ground at least three (3) hours or more previous to the advertised time of kick-off and shall decide as to the fitness of the ground, his/her decision being final after consultation with the Club Secretary and the Irish Football Association.

Only a referee appointed by the Irish Football Association shall have the power to postpone a tie having taken due cognizance of local advice and the travelling team and supporters.

In the event of the home club failing to request an early inspection the committee shall be empowered to grant compensation to the other club for actual expenses incurred for such match.

Should the match referee deem the ground unfit for play then he/she shall be paid half the match fee and travelling expenses actually incurred by the home club. Should another association appointed referee deem the ground unfit for play then he/she shall be paid £5 plus travelling expenses actually incurred.

Ineligible Players

- 13 An ineligible player shall be a player who has
 - i. Played in the current or previous 3 seasons in a senior International Match
 - ii. Played in a Senior Inter League Match during the current season
 - iii. Played more than 12 Senior Matches (a senior match being a match in one of the recognised 'senior' competitions – ie NIFL Premiership and Championship, Irish Challenge Cup, NIFL League Cup, Co Antrim Shield, Mid Ulster Cup, North West Challenge Cup) during the current season except if player has taken part in such senior match/es as a player for an Intermediate club.
 - iv. Competed in a National Association Cup Tie Match for an English, Scottish or Welsh club during the current season

v. Played in the winning team in the final tie of a National Association Senior Cup competition during the current or previous season, except for a player who has played in a winning team which had qualified from an Intermediate Competition

14 The competing teams shall number eleven players each. No individual shall play for more than one Club in the Intermediate Cup in the same season.

Qualification of Players

All players must be registered by their clubs, in accordance with the IFA Professional Game Player Registration Regulations.

For the avoidance of any doubt to be eligible to play in this competition a player must also be eligible to participate for his club in the relevant league competition and must have been registered during one of the two professional game registration periods. The registration periods are:-

First registration period	-	9 June – 31 August
Second registration period	-	1 January – 31 January

Clubs who play in a purely amateur league competition and who are permitted to register players to participate in such purely amateur competition outside the above registration periods shall not be permitted to play any player so registered in this competition until the commencement of the subsequent registration period.

No player who is registered by his club after 31st January shall be eligible to participate in this competition in that same season. For the avoidance of doubt any player signed after the 31st January in the current season (including 'Out of Contract Professional') shall not be eligible to participate in the competition.

- 15 Notwithstanding anything in any rule, if the Intermediate Cup Committee in the case of the Intermediate Cup, have any doubt at any time whether arising out of a protest or otherwise, as to the qualification of any player taking part in a competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player and/or club to which he belongs, or for which he played to prove he is qualified according to the rules. Any club found guilty of fielding an ineligible player in any round of the competition and prior to the next round being played up to and including the semi final may be fined up to a maximum sum of £100.00. Furthermore, the said club will be dismissed from the competition and the club losing the tie in such circumstances shall replace the dismissed club and progress to the next round.

Clubs failing to play

- 16.1. Any club refusing or failing to play the club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by the Committee (except for reasons due to circumstances relating to the COVID 19 Pandemic which are particularly set out in clause 16.2 below) and without sufficient reason for doing so, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and be otherwise dealt with as the Committee see fit. In such circumstances the Committee reserve the right to exclude such club from subsequent competitions.
- 16.2.1 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 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 Intermediate 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 Intermediate IFA 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.
- 16.2.2 If a Club is unable to field a team (13 players including at least one goalkeeper) due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic set out in sub-paragraph 15.2.1 above the Club shall as soon as practicable provide the Intermediate Cup Committee with evidence that the player[s] concerned have been placed into mandatory quarantine or who are

required to self-isolate and the relevant dates of the quarantine/self isolation. The Intermediate Cup Committee will require all relevant evidence from the Club including, if appropriate, the following:

- (i) Details that a player has received positive test results and the notification from the appropriate authority.
- (ii) Evidence that a player has been contacted through "Track and Trace" and asked to isolate (together with the notification from the appropriate body).
- (iii) Evidence that a player has booked a COVID test and/or is waiting for a COVID test result.
- (iv) Evidence that a player is self-isolating due to a family member, colleague or friend having received a positive COVID test result.

The Club shall notify the Intermediate Cup Committee as soon as it becomes aware that it will be unable to field a team. All evidence shall be sent electronically by email to the Intermediate Cup Committee. The Club shall forward the written consent from the Players or persons concerned confirming the Players' and/or persons' agreement to the information/documents being furnished to the Intermediate Cup Committee along with the Club's evidence.

17 The duration of each match shall be 90 minutes. In the event of a drawn match, extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played and should the score be equal at the end of this extra time, the match shall be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions approved by the International FA Board.

18 In the event of a postponed match, due to inclement weather, in any round prior to the semi finals the clubs must forthwith arrange to play on or before the following Saturday. In the event of the match not taking place on or before the second Saturday the club which was first drawn away will have the choice of venue for on or before the subsequent Saturday. If there are any further postponements the Clubs will alternate for choice of venue on a weekly basis.

Players must wear registered colours

19 The players in each competing team must wear the registered colours of the club for which they are playing, except when opposing teams have similar colours in which case the home club shall change.

In a semi-final or final tie, or any other tie played on neutral ground, where opposing teams have similar colours both teams will change unless they are agreed that only one need to do so. The colours of the club shall be taken as the colour of the shirt, shorts and socks. A goalkeeper must wear a shirt of different colour, provided that said shirt is of a distinctive colour from that of his opponents. Referees shall have power to instruct a player to change shirts, and/or shorts and/or socks if he considers the colour not quite distinctive from that of their opponents.

Completion of team sheet

20 Each competing team shall enter the full names of the players on the team sheet and confirm the line-up via Comet FMS. Players' names must correspond with the numbers assigned on the official team sheet. The Club Comet user shall be considered to have verified the accuracy of the information provided upon confirming the line up in Comet FMS.

Substitutes

- 20.1 A club may, at its discretion, use 3 substitute players at any time in any tie, except to replace a player who has been expelled from the game by the referee. The substitutions may only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the referee has given permission. Only 3 substitutions by each team will be permitted in any tie and a maximum of 5 substitute players shall be nominated prior to the commencement of the tie. A fourth substitute may take part exclusively during extra time in all rounds of the competition.

A substitute player shall be construed as taking part in the game for which he was nominated only if he is required to play.

Clubs shall appoint the Assistant Referees

- 21 The competing clubs, in all but the last two rounds of ties, shall appoint the Assistant Referees, unless otherwise arranged by the Referees' Committee, but in all the matches the Referees' Committee shall appoint the referee, who shall have the power to dispense with the Assistant Referees in case he finds one or other giving decisions at variance with the facts, and appoint substitutes.
- 22 On points of fact connected with the play over which the Assistant Referees' have control, their decisions must be given by flags. The referee must use a whistle. In the question of these rules or the laws of the game, an appeal may be made to the Committee, but the referee's decision must be acted on the field.

Protest – objection to ground

- 23 In the event of one of the competing clubs protesting that the ground of their opponents is not private nor fit and proper to be played upon, a pitch inspection sub-committee shall be appointed by the Committee to investigate and decide the question. The protest must be lodged with the Secretary of the Association at least 5 days previous to the date fixed for the match together with a fee of £100 to cover all expenses of the pitch inspection sub-committee. In the event of a protest not being sustained the expenses will be forfeited, but should the protest be sustained, the club protested against shall be required to refund the same, through the Secretary of the Association previous to the tie being played. No protest will be entertained after a match as to the privacy of a ground provided there has been sufficient time to enable the clubs to take advantage of this rule.

Protests

- 25 Protests must be received by the Secretary of the Association by special delivery service bearing the post mark within two days after the cause of the protest, accompanied by a deposit of £100.00 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 to the club protested against bearing postmark within two days after the cause of protest. In no case will the deposit be returned after receipt by the secretary of the Association unless the protest be upheld. Protests against ineligible players must give the names of players protested against and also cause of protest. **The proof of posting of such a special delivery letter shall be the post mark on the certificate of posting.*
- 26 Goal nets must be used in all cup ties. Any objection to ground, goal posts, goal nets or ball must be lodged in writing by a responsible Club official with the referee before the game has started, and the referees shall have the power to have such objections made right before the game starts.

- 27 In all competition matches, with the exception of the semi finals and final, the receipts (including stands) after payment of the referees charges shall be kept by the home club. The home club shall be considered to be the club who host the match.

In case the expenses in the Semi Finals exceed the receipts the deficit shall be taken from the final tie receipts, same being considered expenses of match.

Neutral grounds of Semi Finals and Final

- 28 In the Semi Finals and Final ties the grounds shall be chosen by the Committee, and shall be neutral, but if the clubs agree to play on the ground of either participating club the Committee may allow the match or matches to be played there.
- 29 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. If the Final tie is held at the National Football Stadium, 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. If the Final tie is held at an alternative venue the receipts after all expenses are paid shall be divided as follows: the Association to take 20% and the remaining balance to be equally divided between competing clubs.

Agreement for Cup

- 30 When the winning club shall have been declared, the secretary of the Association shall hand the cup to its representatives on receiving a document to the following effect, subscribed by three persons whose names shall be previously submitted and approved of by the Committee: "We A.B. of the Y club, and C.D. and E.F. members of and representing the said club which has now been declared to have won the Irish Football Association Intermediate Cup, and the said cup having been delivered to us by JX, secretary of said Association, do hereby, on behalf of said club, and individually or collectively, engage to return same to the said JX, Secretary of the Association for the time being, on or before the 1st day of December next, or at an earlier date if requested by the Association in like good order and condition: and providing the said Cup is destroyed by fire, or lost by any other accident whilst in our possession, we agree to refund the Association the amount of its current value".

Medals or Badges

- 31 In addition to the Cup, 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.

Powers of Committee

- 32 All questions of eligibility, qualification of competitors, or of application of these rules or the Laws of the Games shall be referred to the Committee, and they shall have power to withhold the Cup and medals or mementoes. The Committee shall also have the power to deal with any other matter not provided for in these rules.

Committee may alter Rule

- 33 The Committee shall, except as to the returns by clubs, 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.

Special Notes:

- *Sundays shall not be reckoned in the computation of time under these rules*
- *A season will be considered to be the period from 1 August to 31 May*