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**WOMEN'S PREMIERSHIP ACADEMY LEAGUE  
RULES & REGULATIONS  
SEASON 2022**

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## **WOMENS ACADEMY LEAGUE**

### **1. TITLE**

- (a) For the purposes of the football competitions the NIFL Women's Academy League shall be comprised of no more than 8 clubs from the NIFL Women's Premiership
- (b) Membership shall constitute an agreement between the NIFL and each club to be bound by and comply with:
  - i. FIFA Regulations
  - ii. The NIFL Articles of Association
  - iii. The Rules of the NIFL Women's Academy League
  - iv. The Rules and Articles of the Irish Football Association
  - v. The Laws of the Game
  - vi. The Rules and Regulations of any body of which the NIFL Academy League is a member

### **2. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) The Women's Academy League shall consist of representative teams of the clubs in the NIFL Women's Premiership in the current season
- (b) Newly promoted clubs may request an exception to competing in the Academy League in their first season only
- (c) All clubs must be affiliated through their respective divisional association for up-and-coming season by the required deadline.

### **3. LEAGUE COMPETITION**

- (a) The Development League will consist of no more than 8 teams
  - i. Each team will play each other on two occasions (1 'home' and 1 'away')
- (b) Development days may be schedule for all teams to compete. Failure to attend may result in a sanction set by the Premiership Management Committee

### **4. RANKING OF TEAMS**

- (a) Teams shall be awarded 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a defeat. In the case of equality of points teams shall be ranked in accordance with the following criteria:
  - Records in the head-to-head matches in the following order;
    - i. Most points in the head-to-head duels between the sides

- ii. Goal Difference (Goals scored less goals conceded in all head-to-head matches)
- iii. Goals scored in all head-to-head matches
- iv. Most goals scored away from home in the head-to-head matches  
Only if the clubs remain level in the table after this will a playoff be arranged, at a neutral ground, with the format, timing and venue being determined by NIFL Chief Operating Officer.

## **U-19 WOMEN'S ACADEMY LEAGUE COMMITTEE**

### **5. NIFL WOMEN'S ACADEMY LEAGUE COMMITTEE**

- (a) The control and management of the Academy League shall be vested in a Women's Premiership Management Committee which shall have full power to act as it thinks fit, including power to fine any club, club official or player guilty of a criminal offence, misconduct, infringing or failing to observe the rules of the NIFL Women's Premiership or acting in a manner which could be construed as bringing the game into disrepute and contrary to the best interests of the league as a whole. The Committee shall also have power to deal with any other matters not provided for in the rules.

*Note - This rule will not apply to any field offences or any other matter which would normally be dealt with by the Irish Football Association.*

- (b) The Chair shall have a casting vote in cases of equality of voting. The Committee may make rules or alterations thereto, as to all business duties, management or otherwise which may be required and same shall become operative seven days after posting to members and shall remain operative until the end of the season or until adopted or annulled.
- (c) The Committee shall cause minutes to be made and sent electronically to member clubs:
  - i. of all appointments of officials made by the Academy Committee
  - ii. of all the names of members of the Academy Committee present at each meeting thereof and of any Committee appointed by the Academy Committee, and
  - iii. of all resolutions and proceedings at all meetings of the Academy Committee and of any Committee appointed by the Academy Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall organise and arrange competitions as it thinks fit and shall have power to organise and provide rules for any additional competitions, either on a knockout or on a league basis, as it considers appropriate.

## **6. MATCHES**

- (a) Matches may be played on natural turf or artificial turf, provided that such artificial turf meets a FIFA approved standard or equivalent. The owner of the artificial turf and the home club must be in receipt of a valid approved standard certificate. The NIFL cannot be held responsible for any damages to third parties resulting from the use of artificial turf.
- (b) All matches shall be played under the Laws of the Game as approved by the International Football Association Board and in accordance with the Articles and Rules of the IFA and of the NIFL Women's Academy League. All NIFL Academy League matches shall be played on the dates scheduled at the commencement of the season, except:
  - i. When otherwise directed by the NIFL Women's Premiership Management Committee; or when
  - ii. A club requests in writing a postponement of a fixture for exceptional circumstances.
  - iii. National Cup and/or Divisional Association Cup ties take precedence.
- (c) Matches shall not be played out of sequence unless with the prior approval of the NIFL Women's Premiership Management Committee.
- (d) The Academy League will be designated as a Friday evening league. In the event of clubs wishing to change from a Friday, the written agreement of both clubs must be served in writing by both clubs to the NIFL Chief Operating Officer five (5) working days prior to the scheduled date of the tie;
- (e) Clubs failing to comply with this rule shall be fined in a sum of £150 and shall forfeit three points, such points shall be accredited to the opposing team and a score line of 3 goals to nil awarded to their opponents. Also, in the event of a club failing to fulfil an arranged fixture the appropriate Committee shall be empowered to grant compensation to the other club for actual expenses incurred for such a match. A club failing to fulfil an arranged match for a second time in the current season shall be dismissed from membership of the Academy League.
- (f) Any match not completed may be ordered to stand as a completed fixture, or the unfinished time may be ordered to be played, or the fixture ordered to be replayed in its entirety.
- (g) Postponed or abandoned matches shall be played on a date to be determined by the NIFL Chief Operating Officer.

## **7. MATCH POSTPONEMENTS**

- (a) Where venues have been appointed by NIFL in conjunction with a local authority or private body it will be the final decision of the local authority/private body as to the fitness of the ground for play.
- (b) In cases where the Home Team has a registered venue not owned or controlled by local authority it will be the decision of the Home Team grounds man or other club appointee responsible for grounds maintenance in the first instance to decide on the fitness of the ground for play or failing such then the decision of the referee will be final.
- (c) The home Club must immediately inform NIFL and the visiting club if postponement is necessary, in default of which the Home Club may at the discretion of NIFL be required to

pay half of the referee's match fee and the travelling expenses, in whole or part of the Visiting Club.

- (d) The reason for the non-fulfilment of any fixture shall be investigated by NIFL

## **8. INTERNATIONAL DUTY**

- (a) In the event of a club having two or more players selected to represent their National Association representative team(s), in matches recognised by the FIFA International Calendar, they shall be permitted to request a postponement of their scheduled fixture during the period of release in respect of such International Duty. Furthermore, a club whose goalkeeper is selected for such International Duty shall also be permitted to request a postponement due to the specialist position.
- (b) In the event of a club having three or more players selected and/or on standby to represent their National Association representative team(s) in matches not recognised on the FIFA International Calendar or Development and Schools FA squads, they shall be permitted to request a postponement of their scheduled fixture during the period of release in respect of such International Duty. Furthermore, a club whose goalkeeper is selected for such International Duty shall also be permitted to request a postponement due to the specialist position.

## **9. SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS**

- (a) In all Academy League games a club may at its discretion use five substitute players at any time in any match, except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the game by the Referee. The substitutions can be made in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game.
- (b) Rolling substitutes are permissible
- (c) A substitute player shall be construed as taking part in the game for which he was nominated only if he has played in such game.
- (d) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury or become otherwise incapacitated after the submission of the team sheet to the referee and before the kick-off he may be replaced provided that the referee and the opposing club are informed prior to kick-off.

## **10. PLAYER IDENTIFICATION**

The players shirts must be clearly numbered on the back and must correspond exactly with the team sheet handed to referee before any match under the jurisdiction of the League, and the team captain shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate this.

## **11. COMPLETION OF TEAM SHEET**

- (a) Each club shall input their Team Line Up including the names of players and club officials and their functions taking part in each match (including the names of the nominated substitutes) via the IFA Football Management System not later than 30 minutes prior to kick off

## **12. KIT APPROVAL**

- (a) Details of club playing kit(s), including goalkeeper's kit(s), colours shall be notified by clubs to the NIFL on the official club information questionnaire which shall be completed annually and returned not later than 1<sup>st</sup> May.
- (b) In addition, each club shall deliver to the referee's dressing room a sample of their playing kit (shirts, shorts, and socks) including goalkeeper kit not later than 30 minutes prior to kick off. In the case of a clash of colours the referee shall have the right to request clubs to change any item of their presented kit. In such cases the home team shall change as directed by the referee although clubs should be in communication with each other in advance if clashes are expected.

## **13. RESULTS**

- (a) The home club shall be responsible for the communication of the match result to the Results Co-ordinator.
- (b) Any club who does not provide match results to the Results Co-ordinator or does not meet required deadline will be fined in the sum of £25.
- (c) All results must be communicated to results co-ordinator within 1hr of the match in question.

## **FINANCES**

### **15. EXPENSES**

In all fixtures the home club shall be responsible for all expenses including, pitch hire, the referee's fee, and their travelling expenses.

## **REGISTRATIONS**

### **16. REGISTRATIONS**

#### **NIFL Player Registration/Eligibility Guidelines**

- (a) All players must be registered in accordance with the IFA Amateur Game Player Registration Regulations and the NIFL Player Registration Regulations
- (b) To be eligible players must be registered between 1<sup>st</sup> March and noon 30 September
- (c) To be eligible players must be under the age of 19 as at the 1st January in which the Season concerned commences
- (d) Any player shall not be eligible to play in the Academy League or associated cup competitions until they reach the age of 14
- (e) Clubs may nominate a maximum of three Players over the age of 19 in each matchday squad.

### **17. INELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS**

Failure to comply with any of the conditions relating to a registration will render the player ineligible to play for the club concerned as not being a bona-fide player.

### **18. PENALTY FOR PLAYING UNREGISTERED OR ELIGIBLE PLAYERS**

- (a) Any club playing an ineligible player or players in any match under the jurisdiction of the Academy League shall be fined in a sum of £50 per player for the first offence and £10 per player for subsequent offences.
- (b) Should the match(es) in question result in a defeat for the offending team a score line of 3-0 shall be recorded in the favour of their opponents. Notwithstanding the above the winning team shall not be disadvantaged if the original score line was of greater benefit to that team's goal difference.
- (c) Should both clubs play an ineligible player or players in any match under the auspices of the Academy League then both clubs will be fined, in a sum of £50 per player for the first offence and £10 for subsequent offences involving the same player. In addition, neither club will be awarded any points for the fixture and both clubs shall have a minus three (-3) goal difference recorded against them.
- (d) Nothing in these Regulations shall entitle the NIFL Premiership to deduct points or impose fines for registration committed by any club during any previous season. (For the purpose of all NIFL Premiership regulations a season will be deemed to end on 31<sup>st</sup> May in each year).



## MISC

### 19. REGISTRATION OF GROUND

- (a) Where possible clubs will register venues
- (b) In the event of the league appointing a match venue the notification of the venue will be received via email. If a Club makes a venue booking, then the NIFL and travelling Club MUST be notified as soon as possible before the scheduled date for the fixture to enable the website notices to be verified or updated.
- (c) The NIFL will have the power to decide whether facilities are suitable for matches in the competition, and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground. The NIFL reserves the right to move any game to a neutral venue. Match kick-off times will be fixed by agreement of the home Team and the NIFL. Times for kick-offs shall be determined by the league and the availability of facilities.
- (d) In all matches played under the jurisdiction of the NIFL the accommodating authority or home team will try to ensure that suitable changing accommodation facilities are available for all teams.
- (e) Technical areas should be clearly marked out and if grounds being used do not have fencing clubs must rope areas for spectators

### 20. ALTERATIONS TO THESE RULES

Alterations to these rules shall only be considered during the closed season. Any club wishing to have a proposal considered, must forward same in writing to the NIFL Chief Operating Officer no later than 31 Jan.

It shall be entirely at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer to consider all such requests and determine whether such requests are approved or rejected.