

WELSH PREMIER DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION AND RULES

1. Title

This combination of participating Association Football Clubs (each a "Club") shall be called "The Welsh Premier League Development League" and being affiliated in its own right to The Football Association of Wales Limited ("FAW") is for all purposes of interpretation hereinafter referred to as the "League".

2. Constitution and Structure

The FAW will own and control the League. The Clubs will observe these rules ("Rules"). In addition, the Clubs will observe the FAW Rules and Regulations and the Laws of the Game, as amended from time to time. In the event of a conflict between these Rules and the then current FAW Rules and Regulations, the FAW Rules and Regulations will apply.

The League shall comprise a maximum of 24 Clubs, split into a League (North) division and a League (South) division, each comprising a maximum of 12 Clubs for each season, the precise geographical split being decided by the League Management Committee. Participation in the League is mandatory for all Welsh Premier League ("WPL") member clubs. If any additional vacancies become available, participation will be decided by the League Management Committee and priority shall be given as follows:-

- first, FAW Tier 1 License Holders;
- second, FAW Accredited Academies; and
- third, sporting merit in the Welsh Premier Development League.

The Club with the highest number of points at the end of the season in League (South) will be the League (South) Champions. The Club with the highest number of points at the end of the season in League (North) will be the League (North) Champions. In the event of two or more Clubs in the same division having the same number of points, the League (South) or League (North) Champions (as applicable) will be decided by which Club has the highest difference between goals scored and goals against. In the event of more than one Club in the same division having the same goal difference, the Club that has scored the highest number of goals will be the Champions.

A Play-Off match will be arranged between the winners of the League (North) and League (South) in each season. The winning Club will be the overall League Champions for that season.

The League Champions will be nominated by the FAW to represent Wales in the next UEFA Youth League if (a) Wales receives a nomination for participation in the competition (b) that Club plays its domestic league football at senior men's level in the FAW Pyramid League System and (c) that Club meets any other criteria set by UEFA (an "Eligible Club"). If the Play-off winner is not an Eligible Club, the FAW will nominate the Play-Off loser if that Club is an Eligible Club. If neither of the Play-Off finalists is an Eligible Club, the League Management Committee will decide which (if any) Eligible Club the FAW will nominate.

Clubs shall not withdraw from membership of the League for the forthcoming season without due notice of such an intention being given in writing before March 31st. Clubs ignoring this requirement will be liable to a fine of £100. Clubs withdrawing without completing their fixtures will be subject to a fine of £500.

Each Club shall play its full strength in all League matches. The fine for non-observance of this Rule to be at the discretion of the Management Committee.

3. Annual Subscriptions

Each Member Club shall pay an Annual Subscription of One Hundred Pounds (£100). The Subscription to be received by the League Secretary by 1st August each year

The League Secretary shall by 1st July, send a statement to all Members Clubs detailing Annual Subscriptions / Entrance Fees due. All Entrance Fees to be received by the League Secretary by 1st August.

Clubs failing to pay any debt owing to The League by the due date will automatically incur a fine of £10.

4. League Funds

The League Funds shall be banked in the name of The Football Association of Wales.

5. Player Eligibility

A player must be male and must not have attained the age of 19 years before 1st September in the relevant year in order to play in the League for that season, unless he is a designated 'over age' player.

A player must have reached the age of 16 years on the day a match is played.

6. Exemption

In any match day squad of 16 members - up to 5 over age players shall be permitted with 3 over age players allowed on the field of play at the same time.

7. Format

All matches to be played on a home and away principle.

8. Date/Time of Fixtures

The WPL Secretary shall arrange the fixture list annually with matches to be played on Saturdays, Sundays or under floodlights midweek. The season will commence in August each season following consultation with participating clubs.

Where both teams are in agreement, a Sunday fixture may be brought forward to a midweek evening to be played under floodlights, but only during the preceding week of the original fixture.

Clubs failing to keep their engagements without rendering an explanation which is deemed to be satisfactory to the Management Committee shall be liable to a fine and points may also be deducted. The disappointed Club to be awarded such compensation as the Management Committee may deem reasonable. Clubs engaged in Cup Ties, if affecting League engagements, must give the Secretary of the League and the Clubs affected at least seven- days clear notice, and the Home Club must notify the Referee and Linesmen of the postponement.

Any club failing to fulfil a scheduled fixture shall have three points deducted and shall be liable to a

fine of £100.

Any non-Welsh Premier League clubs failing to fulfill their fixtures shall be fined £500 and shall have its playing record expunged.

No Club shall be allowed to postpone a fixture with another Club unless it is to play in The Welsh Cup or FAW Youth Cup. Clubs affected by the selection of two or more players for International Trials or Matches may be permitted by the Management Committee to postpone their League fixture on the days of such matches. Any requests to postpone matches for this reason shall be made to the League Secretary within 48 hours of the squad announcement. Consideration shall be given regarding late call ups to the above mentioned International Trials or Matches. The League reserves the right to arrange matches for those clubs who do not have a scheduled fixture.

No League Match shall be postponed unless the Management Committee shall consent to a mutual arrangement under exceptional circumstances. All postponed matches must be re-arranged within fourteen days and notified to the League Secretary in writing. The Club(s) failing to reach an agreement within 14 days will be fined £25.

The kick-off times for matches shall be 2.00pm.

No kick off times later than the scheduled time will be permitted, unless the Home Club has floodlights.

Applications for an alternative kick off time for a match must be made in writing to the League Secretary no later than 14 days before the date of the match. Midweek and Holiday fixtures may kick off at mutually agreed times subject to League approval.

9. Match Results

Each Club must send to the League Secretary the result of League Matches, together with the names of the players competing therein (on forms provided for same), to reach The League Secretary within five days of each match, failing which, each defaulting Club will be subject to a fine. Where Clubs have players of the same name, the forename / chosen name or initials must always be given on the result sheets.

The result and details of matches must be e-mailed to the Secretary within one hour of the completion of the game. Clubs failing to observe this rule will be subject to a fine of £10.

10. Fines

Scale of fines to be decided by WPL Panel.

11. Suspensions

As per WPL Rules.

12. Protests, Claims and Complaints

All protests, appeals, claims or complaints must be sent to the League Secretary in duplicate and accompanied with a fee of £25, which shall be forfeited in the event of a protest, appeal, claim or complaint not being upheld. All matters relating to a particular match must be lodged with the League Secretary within TWO DAYS of the match in question (excluding Sundays & Bank Holidays).

All questions regarding eligibility, qualification of players or interpretation of the rules of the League shall be decided by the Management Committee, but no objection relative to the dimensions of the ground, goalposts, crossbars or other appurtenances of the game shall be entertained unless a written protest is lodged with the referee prior to the game

Where there is evidence of a breach of the League's rule by a club or player, the League will investigate the matter and when considered appropriate, prefer a charge of an alleged breach of rule against the club or player(s) concerned.

The League will appoint a Panel consisting of THREE persons, one of which will be appointed as Chairman of the Panel, elected from members of the Management Committee (excluding the League Secretary) to consider all protests, appeals, claims or complaints lodged by a club or player(s) as well as charges preferred by the League of an alleged breach of rule.

Where a club or player(s) elect to have a personal hearing as provided for in League Rule 14, the appointed panel will conduct its business in accordance with the provisions as set out in the Football Association of Wales memorandum on Procedure at Personal Hearings.

- (i) In the case of a protest, appeal, claim or complaint, the Panel shall have the power to grant or deny the protest, appeal, claim or complaint (in whole or in part) as well as the power to order any such penalty or sanction as the Panel shall reasonably deem fit.
- (ii) In the case of a charge for an alleged breach of a League rule being found proven, the Panel shall have the power to order any such penalty or sanction as the Panel shall reasonably deem fit.
- (iii) In all matters, the Panel shall have the discretion to impose a costs order against any of the parties involved.

If dissatisfied with any decision given by the Management Committee or a Sub Committee or Panel appointed by the Management Committee, a club or player shall have the right of appeal to the Football Association of Wales.

Any such appeal must be lodged within SEVEN Business Days as of the earlier of (a) the decision being announced at the time of the hearing/meeting or (b) the date of the correspondence containing the decision.

All appeals must be accompanied with the appropriate fee as set out under FAW Rule 43.2.3.2 (plus vat) and be made payable to The Football Association of Wales. Please address the notice of appeal for the attention of the Chief Executive, The Football Association of Wales, 11-12, Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff, CF24 SPJ.

13. Club Colours and Ground

Each Club in The League shall register its ground (alternative ground if required) and colours with the Secretary. In the event of any two Clubs having similar playing colours, the visiting team shall make a change, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon. The colours of the opposing Club must be distinctive. Goalkeepers shall play in colours distinct from other members of the teams. The players of each team must wear individually numbered shirts.

Numbers worn by players must correspond with the team sheet submitted to the referee. The forename / chosen name of each player to be included on the same.

A minimum of 50% home matches to be played on designated first team pitch. The standard of second pitch and venue must be acceptable to WPL administration.

14. Rules - Infringement/Revisions

- (a) Any infringement of The League Rules shall be dealt with in such a manner as the Management Committee may think fit. Any appeal against the decision of the Management Committee shall be to The Football Association of Wales in accordance with its Rules.
- (b) No alteration of or addition to existing Rules shall be made, except at the WPL Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting convened on a requisition signed by not less than two thirds of the Clubs comprising the League, and then only upon such resolution being carried by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting thereon. Notice of alteration or addition must be sent to the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date of such Meeting, the same to be printed and forwarded to the Clubs at least seven days before the Meeting.

Note: Notice of alteration of Rules for the WPL Annual General Meeting must reach the League Secretary by the 31st of March each year.

Any rule changes submitted by a club must be signed by the Club Secretary (as listed in the League Handbook) and also by the chairman or a committee member.

15. Management Committee

The WPL Management Committee shall be the WPDL Panel which shall comprise of members decided by the FAW Council from time to time.

16. Appointment of Secretary

The Secretary shall be appointed by the WPL League Management Committee. Such Official shall be an Officer of the League, and not directly or indirectly, connected with any Club in membership with the League nor shall he/she be allowed to exercise voting power at any meeting held under its jurisdiction. Subscriptions and all other monies accruing to the League shall be properly accounted for to the Management Committee by the Secretary.

17. Jurisdiction

The WPL Management Committee shall have jurisdiction over all matters whether specially provided for in these rules or not. They shall have power to form any Sub-Committee they may consider necessary and may delegate all or any of their powers to any such Sub-Committee.

In the event of the voting at any meeting being equal, the Chairman of such meeting shall have the casting vote, save as before mentioned. The Management Committee shall meet every month, if necessary. No resolution shall be rescinded at the meeting at which it is passed. The expenses of each member of the Management Committee attending shall be paid from The League Funds.

Officials and Members of the Management Committee shall have free access to any part of the

Football Grounds during the progress of all League matches.

A member club, or player, ordered by the League to provide a written response to a charge preferred by the League or a protest, appeal, claim or complaint lodged with the League by a club or player must do so within ten days of the date of the letter from the League requesting the written response.

Such written response must stipulate whether or not the club requires a personal hearing. Should a club or player fail to provide a written response within the stipulated ten days, they will be deemed to have denied the charge of misconduct or allegation contained in the protest, appeal, claim or complaint lodged and the League will take the required steps to convene a hearing at which the club or player will be required to attend.

18. Objectionable Conduct

At the WPL Annual General Meeting, or any Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose, it shall be competent for a majority of the Delegates present and voting thereat to exclude from membership any Club whose conduct has, in their opinion, been objectionable.

19. Regulations Re: Matches

All matches shall be played under the rules of The Football Association of Wales and shall be of 90 minutes duration. Clubs shall not mutually agree to play a match in lieu of a League match.

If a match is played to a conclusion it must be a League match. Any match not completed may be ordered to stand as a completed match or be replayed for the full period of 90 minutes as the Management Committee may direct.

A Club may at its discretion use three substitute players from five nominated substitute players at any time in a match for any reason (injury or otherwise), except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee.

The substitutions can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission.

The substitute players shall be nominated prior to the commencement of the game.

Clubs responsible for a late start, shall be liable to a fine in accordance with Rule 27.

20. Custody of League Trophies

The Championship Cup will be presented to the Club of the said competition.

Upon receiving the said trophy the following agreement will be signed in connection with the safe keeping and eventual return of the trophy to the League.

We the undersigned Officials of the.....Club do on their behalf receive The Welsh Premier League's Development League Cup and acknowledge that same has been delivered into our keeping in good and sound condition.

We agree that the Club will return the said trophy to the League within 28 days of the end of the following season or upon request by the League Secretary.

We further agree to indemnify the League against Loss of or Damage to the trophy while in our possession or otherwise to provide an exact replica of the Cup concerned.

Date:.....

Signed:

Chairman:

Secretary:

Note: No inscription is allowed to be placed on the Cups by any Club.

21. Ground and Dressing Room Criteria

All clubs in membership, and those applying for membership, must have grounds that are acceptable to the WPL Panel.

All matches are to be played on private grounds or grounds deemed suitable by the Management Committee.

The Pitch size must comply with the Laws of the Game.

(a) Dressing Rooms

(i) Players Dressing Rooms

The dressing rooms for both teams must be heated, well ventilated, free of damp, secure and must be situated within the boundaries of the ground.

Separate changing rooms must be provided for both teams, capable of accommodating a minimum of 16 persons.

Clubs must have toilet facilities of at least one W/C and one hand basin with hot and cold running water within the immediate vicinity of the dressing room complex. A separate shower area must be provided for each team with a minimum of four shower heads.

(ii) Match Officials Dressing Room

A separate area must be provided for the exclusive of match officials, which must be capable of accommodating at least four persons.

There must be a separate shower for Match Officials and a W/C and wash basin with hot and cold running water in the immediate vicinity.

(b) Medical

All clubs must have first aid equipment which must include a stretcher. The location of this equipment must be clearly marked in all dressing rooms and ideally a separate First Aid Room should be available.

Clubs should arrange for suitably trained first aid personnel to be provided for players and spectators at all matches.

Emergency vehicles must be able to drive in to the stadium. The access and egress point(s) must not be blocked. A parking space must be identified for an emergency vehicle to park, which must not be occupied by any other vehicle or used for any other purpose.

Unobstructed access leading from a spectator area in the stadium to the playing area must be provided to allow access and egress for a stretcher. It is recommended that this access is located as close as possible to the area designated for the access/egress of the emergency vehicle(s).

(c) **Hospitality**

All clubs must provide a room for club officials and guests as near to the playing area as possible

Hot tea or if appropriate cold drinks must be provided for players and match officials at half time and full time, and at half time for visiting club officials and guests.

Ideally post-match food for Players and Match Officials should be provided at an appropriate location near the ground

(d) **Covered Areas**

Clubs must provide two covered dugouts adjacent to and on the same side of the playing area

They must be capable of accommodating a minimum of six seated persons, and the floor must be of solid foundation.

A technical area must be marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game in front of both dug outs.

The Management Committee will have plenary powers to remove any club from League membership should it fail to meet the accepted ground criteria of the League as published. Clubs must rectify any failures from the published ground criteria within thirty days of being advised in writing by the League. Any club failing to meet the ground criteria and having been advised that its membership is removed will be relegated at the end of that season to the appropriate feeder league.

22. **Registration and Transfer of Players**

In accordance with Section H of FAW Rules.

23. **Ineligible Players**

Any Club playing an ineligible player will have up to three points deducted from its record and be liable to a fine.

24. **Regulations Affecting Referees and Assistant Referees**

No Referee shall take part in the Management of any League Club.

(a) **Referees' List, Fees and Expenses -**

Match Officials Fees will be paid directly by the home club.

Referees fees £ 35

Assistant Referees fees £ 25

No fourth officials.

The Home club shall pay the Referee and Assistant Referees fees and traveling

expenses of 35p per mile in the Match Officials Dressing Room immediately after the game.

Any Club paying a Referee more than his just fee and travelling allowance shall be deemed guilty of misconduct and shall be dealt with by the Management Committee.

(b) *Fitness of Ground*

The Referee shall have the power to decide as to the fitness of grounds in all matches, and each Club must take every precaution to keep its ground in a playing condition, and, if necessary, the Home Club may request the referee to visit the ground two hours before the advertised time of kick-off. No club shall postpone the playing of a league match on account of apparent unfitness of its ground, a League Match Official being the sole person to decide as to the fitness after inspection.

Decisions in respect of ground fitness must be taken as late as possible, however due consideration must be given in respect of the distance being traveled by the visiting team and match officials.

An official asked to carry out a pitch inspection by a home club prior to any match will be reimbursed his/her travelling expenses at the League rate by the club involved. An official asked to carry out a pitch inspection by a League official prior to any match will be reimbursed his/her travelling expenses by the League at the League's current rate.

In the event of a match being called off by the appointed match referee at the normal time, all match officials will be entitled to claim half their match fee plus travelling expenses, to be paid by the home club. If a match is abandoned once the match has commenced, all match officials are entitled to claim their full match fee plus travelling expenses.

(c) *Late Starts and Reports*

Match officials shall be present at their appointed match at least one hour prior to kick off time. If officials are aware of difficulties in adhering to this requirement, they must contact the League Secretary prior to the match. Official team sheets shall be presented to the Referee 45 minutes prior to kick-off. Later presentation of the team sheet shall be liable to a fine of £1 for each minute.

Referees must report all cases where teams commence a game late, or without eleven players on the field, and also in cases of their own or assistant's late arrival in any match and notify those concerned at the time of their intention.

In the event of any misconduct, the officiating Referee, and Assistant Referees, must render his/her report to the appropriate Area Association.

(d) *Postponed Matches*

In the event of a match being unavoidably postponed, the officials – if they have attended the ground – shall receive Half Fee and Travelling Expenses. The home club must receive acknowledgement of any given postponements from the away team as soon as the match in question has been called off. If no response is forthcoming, the home club must contact the League Secretary. Failure to comply will result in a fine of up to £100.

(e) **Match Report Forms**

Referees must post Match Report Forms on day of match. Each club must hand copies of a list of names and players taking part in the game (including 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 thirty minutes before the advertised time of kick off. The players numbers and the colours of the playing strip must be clearly stated. The standard League forms must be used for this purpose.

(f) **Appointments**

Referees and Assistant Referees must take advantage of travelling together when so requested or whenever possible.

Referees and Assistant Referees are requested to send their replies of acceptance or otherwise within four days following receipt of the Appointments List.

25. **Emergency Officials**

Should the appointed referee fail to appear, the most senior appointed referee shall take control.

The senior assistant is the one with the highest grade or if both have similar grades, the one with the longest service as a referee on the League.

In the event of the Referee or Assistant Referees appointed not attending a Match, and the Two Clubs agreeing to one on the ground, such Referee shall be considered to be a League Official for the time being. Referees or Assistant Referees failing to give a satisfactory reason for absence to the Management Committee shall not be appointed to any other Match during the season. No member of the Management Committee shall officiate in the League.

26. **Players Insurance**

Each Club shall be responsible for maintaining or procuring that there is maintained in full force and effect at all times proper and adequate insurance cover with policy limits and provisions for each of its players from time to time in respect of their death, or bodily injury, by accident howsoever caused on the field of play including (but without limitation) loss of earnings and other consequential losses (together with 'Insured Risks') and shall ensure that all players from time to time shall be entitled to the benefit of such insurance and shall submit sufficient evidence of the existence of such insurance to the Secretary of the League no later than 1st August in each year, and each Club shall indemnify and keep the League fully indemnified against all liability of the League in respect of the insured risks.

27. **Matters not provided for by the Rules**

Any infringement of the Rules and any other matter not provided for by the Rules shall be dealt with by the League Management Committee.