



GIBRALTAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

GFA UNDER 17 CHAMPIONSHIP RULES 2023-24

SCOPE OF UNDER 17 CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

1. General Provisions

- 1.1 The GFA Youth Football League ("GYFL") Under 17 Championship is made up of one single division consisting of the Clubs listed in Schedule 17 of this GFA Handbook.
- 1.2 The organisation, management and operations of the GFA Under 17 Championship shall be the responsibility of the GFA.
- 1.3 Clubs (inclusive of all Players, Club Officials and Club Personnel) must comply and shall be bound by these Under 17 Championship Rules.
- 1.4 The GFA shall have the power and authority to amend these Under 17 Championship Rules from time to time.
- 1.5 The GFA shall exclusively retain the power to approve and implement such ancillary rules and policies, together with clarifying matters of ambiguity concerning the GFA Under 17 Championship or any other additional aspects which may affect the GFA Under 17 Championship.
- 1.6 The GFA shall exclusively retain all entitlement and authority to use, assign, sell or otherwise take advantage of all marketing and commercial rights associated with the GFA Under 17 Championship, inclusive of pursuing such commercial opportunities and/or agreements and partnerships which may be in the best interests of the GFA Under 17 Championship.

2. Laws of the Game

- 2.1 All Matches in the GFA Under 17 Championship will be played in conformity with the Laws of the Game promulgated by the IFAB as the same may be amended from time to time.

3. Club Participation in the GFA Under 17 Championship

- 3.1 A Club shall only be eligible to participate in the GFA Under 17 Championship if the Club has complied with all requirements of the GFA Domestic Club Licensing Regulations, and continues to comply with the requirements set out in those regulations during the entirety of the football season.
- 3.2 A Club shall only be eligible to register one Team to participate in the GFA Under 17 Championship.

3.3 A Club may only acquire and transfer Players in accordance with the Status and Transfer Regulations contained in this GFA Handbook.

4. Player Registration for the GFA Under 17 Championship

4.1 A Player shall only be eligible to register and apply to play in the GFA Under 17 Championship if he was born in 2006 or 2007.

4.2 Players must be registered in accordance with all applicable GFA Statutes and the Status and Transfer Regulations before being eligible to be registered to form part of a Team registered by a Club to compete in the GFA Under 17 Championship.

4.3 During any point in any given season, the minimum number of Players that may be registered in a Team is 14, and the maximum number of Players shall be 18.

4.4 A Club may register a maximum of three players born in 2005 in the GFA Under 17 Championship.

4.5 A Club must ensure they do not have more than five non-Home-Grown Players registered at any given time.

5. Transfers & Registration Window

5.1 There will be two transfer windows in each GFA Under 17 Championship season, namely:

- (a) the Summer Transfer Window; and
- (b) the Winter Transfer Window.

5.2 During each Transfer Window, Clubs shall be permitted to register and transfer Players in accordance with all applicable GFA Statutes, including the Status and Transfer Regulations.

5.3 Players may be registered with a maximum of three Clubs during one football season. During this period, a Player is only eligible to play in Under 17 Championship Matches for a maximum of two Clubs in one football season.

6. Commencement and Conclusion of GFA Under 17 Championship

6.1 The GFA Under 17 Championship shall commence in September 2023 and shall conclude by no later than May 2024.

6.2 GFA Under 17 Championship Match fixtures shall be circulated to Clubs by no later than September 2023.

7. Format and Structure of GFA Under 17 Championship

7.1 The GFA Under 17 Championship shall consist of a maximum of three (3) rounds. All Teams shall play each other once per round.

8. Scoring System and Championship Table

8.1 The winner of an Under 17 Championship Match shall be awarded three points.

8.2 To the extent that an Under 17 Championship Match concludes in a draw, each Team shall be awarded one point.

8.3 No points shall be awarded to the losing team of an Under 17 Championship Match.

8.4 In the event of a Team resigning its Membership from the GFA or being expelled from participating in the GFA Under 17 Championship during the active football season, all points acquired and goals scored and/or conceded by the other Team against the expelled Team will be removed.

8.5 The results of the Under 17 Championship Matches shall be recorded by the GFA in a table as follows:

- (a) the number of Under 17 Championship Matches played in the GFA Under 17 Championship;
- (b) the number of Under 17 Championship Matches won, drawn and/or lost as a home team of the GFA Under 17 Championship;
- (c) the number of Under 17 Championship Matches won, drawn and/or lost as an away team in the GFA Under 17 Championship;
- (d) the number of goals scored and conceded by each Team in Under 17 Championship Matches of GFA Under 17 Championship; and
- (e) the number of points earned by each Team of the GFA Under 17 Championship.

8.6 The ranking of Teams in the table shall be determined by the aggregate number of points awarded during the course of the GFA Under 17 Championship, with the Team having tallied the highest number of points being ranked first, and the Team having tallied the lowest number of points being ranked last.

8.7 If any two or more Teams have accumulated an equal number of points, the requisite tie-breaker will be decided by determining which of the Teams had the best head-to-head record. This means that their ranking will be determined by the aggregate number of points accumulated by each Team in all Under 17 Championship Matches played against each other. The highest ranking Team shall be the Team with the highest amount of points.

- 8.8 If any two or more Teams have accumulated an equal number of points, and have further accumulated an equal amount of points in their respective head-to-head records, the requisite tie-breaker will be decided by determining which of Teams had the best goal difference between each of them. This means that their ranking will be determined by the difference between the aggregate amount of goals scored and conceded by each Team in all Under 17 Championship Matches played against each other. The highest ranking Team shall be the Team with the highest positive goal difference.
- 8.9 When determining Teams' goal differences in accordance with rule 8.8 above, if there are three or more Teams in consideration, and more than one of those Teams have an identical head-to-head goal difference, their ranking in the GFA Under 17 Championship table will be determined on a head-to-head goal difference basis until either:
- (a) the Team with the highest positive goal difference can be determined; or
 - (b) there are only two Teams remaining for consideration with an identical head-to-head goal difference, in which case their ranking will be determined in accordance with rule 8.10.
- 8.10 If notwithstanding any of the foregoing tie-breakers in rules 8.6, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9, two or more Teams' records remain equal, the Teams' rankings in the GFA Under 17 Championship table will be determined in accordance with the scales of fair play, and by reference and consideration to the aggregate amount of Cautions, Dismissals and suspensions received by each Team over all Under 17 Championship Matches, namely:
- (a) deduction of 1 point for each Caution (comprising of 1 yellow card) received over the course of all Under 17 Championship Matches;
 - (b) deduction of 2 points for each Dismissal (comprising of 2 yellow cards, and 1 red card) received over the course of all Under 17 Championship Matches;
 - (c) deduction of 3 points for each Dismissal (comprising of 1 direct red card) receive over the course of all Under 17 Championship Matches; and
 - (d) deduction of 4 points for any Dismissal (comprising of either: (i) 2 yellow cards, and 1 red card; (ii) a direct red card; or (iii) a form of suspension) received by a Club Manager over the course of all Under 17 Championship Matches.
- 8.11 If notwithstanding any of the foregoing tie-breakers in rules 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10, two or more Teams' records remain equal, all applicable Teams shall compete for the highest ranking in a separate round-robin tournament (in the case of more than two Teams), or in an additional Match (in the case of two Teams), the particulars and details of which shall be determined by the GFA.

9. **GFA Under 17 Championship**

9.1 The Team which ranks first in the GFA Under 17 Championship table at the end of the GFA Under 17 Championship shall be crowned the GFA Under 17 Championship Champions, and shall:

- (a) receive a trophy from the GFA, but which shall be returned in the same order and condition as received by no later than three weeks prior to the final Under 17 Championship Match of the following football season.
- (b) be eligible to compete in the UEFA Youth League for the following football season as the winners of the top domestic youth championship (and also receive the corresponding UEFA remuneration and corresponding GFA assistance in relation to the same).

9.2 Any damage sustained by the trophies presented by the GFA to the GFA Under 17 Championship Champions will need to be paid and remedied by the Team responsible for causing said damage. Any failure or omission to remedy any damage to said trophy will result in the GFA automatically deducting any amounts payable for the damage from any funds payable to the applicable Team by the GFA.

9.3 The GFA Under 17 Champions shall receive a maximum of thirty commemorative medals. The commemorative medals shall be presented to the Team, the Club Manager and to any Players and Club Officials the Club think fit, subject always to all Players who have entered the field of play for a minimum of five Under 17 Championship Matches being given first priority in order to receive a commemorative medal.

10. **Force Majeure**

10.1 In the event that the GFA Under 17 Championship cannot be completed and must be concluded prematurely, it shall be declared null and void unless a Team has already mathematically won the competition.

11. **Inability to Field a Team for a Championship Match**

11.1 In the event that a Club is unable to field a team for an Under 17 Championship Match, the following procedure will be adhered to:

- (a) The Club must notify the GFA in writing via electronic mail no later than 72 hours prior to the applicable Under 17 Championship Match explaining the reasons for its inability to field a team and formally requesting a postponement (to be accompanied with such applicable documentary evidence).
- (b) The GFA will, in its sole discretion, proceed to decide whether or not there are exceptional circumstances present which warrant rescheduling of the Under 17 Championship Match in question and communicate the decision to the Club by electronic mail within 24 hours of receiving the Club's initial request.

- (c) The GFA will also communicate its decision to the Gibraltar Football Championship Association by email within 24 hours of such decision being taken.
- 11.2 In the event that the GFA determines that the applicable Under 17 Championship Match should be postponed, the GFA will provide a new date for the postponed Under 17 Championship Match and shall inform the relevant Clubs within 24 hours of such decision being taken.
- 11.3 In the event that the GFA determines that the applicable Under 17 Championship Match should not be postponed and the Club remains unable to field a team, 3 points will be awarded to the opposing Club in the Under 17 Championship Match in question. Disciplinary Sanctions may follow thereafter to the Club that does not field a team in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 11.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the foregoing provisions of this rule 11 shall not be applicable to a Club's inability to field a team as a result of a Covid-19 related issue. Such scenario shall be dealt with in accordance with the GFA Covid-19 Protocol as amended from time to time.

12. **Team Sheets**

- 12.1 Prior to every Under 17 Championship Match played, each competing Club shall accurately insert and complete the details of their Team for that Under 17 Championship Match on the COMET system. The particulars to be provided shall be uploaded onto the COMET system by no later than 1 hour prior to kick-off, and shall include:
 - (a) a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of eleven (11) starting Players (with corresponding shirt numbers);
 - (b) a maximum of seven (7) substitutes (with corresponding shirt numbers); and
 - (c) a maximum of seven (7) Club Officials who fulfil the following roles:
 - (i) the Club Manager (mandatory);
 - (ii) an assistant manager (mandatory);
 - (iii) physical trainer;
 - (iv) physiotherapist or GFA accredited sports therapist;
 - (v) doctor;
 - (vi) team delegate; and
 - (vii) applicable coaching staff.
- 12.2 For the avoidance of doubt, only the personnel listed in rule 12.1 above named on the team sheet are permitted in the Technical Area. A breach of this rule shall result in a fine in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.

- 12.3 Unless otherwise permitted by these Under 17 Championship Rules, no changes will be allowed to team sheets uploaded on the COMET system within 1 hour of kick-off of the applicable Under 17 Championship Match.
- 12.4 To the extent that there is an injury to one of the starting Players, a named substitute may replace the injured Player in the starting line-up only. Said named substitute may not in turn also be replaced by an additional Player.
- 12.5 The GFA shall use its best endeavours to ensure that the information provided for COMET is correct, accurate and up to date at all times. In the event of any human error and/or data processing, Clubs are nevertheless reminded that it is the sole responsibility of each Club to keep a record of any active Cautions, Dismissals and other applicable Disciplinary Sanctions imposed on the Club (including the Team, Players, Club Officials and Club Personnel), and ensure that the necessary information provided in each team sheet is correct and accurate and that the listed Players and Club Officials are eligible to participate in accordance with the rules and regulation of this GFA Handbook and the GFA Statutes.
- 12.6 Match Officials will check each team sheet prior to each Under 17 Championship Match.
- 12.7 A Team will be allowed to substitute up to seven (7) Players in an Under 17 Championship Match, but said substitutions must be effected within three (3) substitution opportunities (excluding half-time).
- 12.8 Teams may only recruit a maximum of 4 Feeder Players registered with the club from the preceding age category per match providing such recruitment does not exceed the maximum number of registered Players for that team for the football season or the amount of non-Home-Grown Players permitted under these Rules.
13. **Checking of Identity**
- 13.1 Players and Club Officials named in the team sheet are obliged to have with them the GFA identity card.
- 13.2 The GFA identity card of all persons listed on a team sheet may be inspected by a Match Official prior to kick-off.
- 13.3 In the event that a Player is not able to provide his GFA identity card, the Player will not be allowed to play or sit in the Technical Area. In the case of a Club Official, they will not be permitted to sit in the Technical Area.
- 13.4 The burden of proof as to the identity of a Player or Club Official participating in an Under 17 Championship Match shall rest with the Player and/or Club Official whose identity is being questioned by a Match Official or the GFA.

14. Under 17 Championship Feeder Player Rule

- 14.1 A Player who has attained the age of 16 may be eligible to, without a restriction on the number of Matches, play for the Club in the GFA Football Championship, and/or GFA Intermediate Championship (subject to name change) (inclusive of corresponding cup Competitions played in connection therewith), so long as the applicable competition rules are adhered to.

15. Head Coach Qualifications

- 15.1 In order to be eligible to coach and/or manage a Team in the GFA Under 17 Championship, Head Coaches must hold one of the following minimum coaching qualifications:
- (a) a valid UEFA C coaching licence;
 - (b) Valid UEFA recognition of competence equivalent to the licence required under a) above; or
 - (c) have commenced an education course in pursuance of obtaining either of the diplomas in (a) or (b) above. Simple registration required for either diploma is not sufficient for the purposes of these Under 17 Championship Rules.

16. Under 17 Championship Match Ball Requirements

- 16.1 The GFA will provide the Match balls to be used for each Under 17 Championship Match.
- 16.2 On Match day, the Match Officials will provide up to five Match balls for any given Under 17 Championship Match.
- 16.3 Club Officials from both Teams shall confirm the number of Match balls provided prior to kick-off, and shall ensure that these are returned to the Match Officials or relevant GFA Personnel at the end of the game
- 16.4 In the event that a Match ball is lost and/or destroyed during an Under 17 Championship Match, both Teams shall agree to evenly pay the costs associated with the replacement of the lost and/or destroyed Match ball within 7 days.
- 16.5 To the extent that the loss and/or destruction of a Match ball arises from a deliberate act by one Player, Team and/or Club, the Player, Team and/or Club responsible for such an act will pay the cost in full. The GFA will in its sole discretion determine whether an act is to be construed as deliberate.

17. Match Officials

- 17.1 All Under 17 Championship Matches will be administered and policed by Match Officials in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the GFA Referee Regulations as amended from time to time.

17.2 Match Officials will always wear purple kits at all matches. Teams must not wear purple kits (which consists of shirts, shorts and socks).

18. **Advertising**

18.1 Regulations on Advertising as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Under 17 Championship Rules.

19. **Sponsor Designations**

19.1 Regulations on Sponsorship Designations as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Under 17 Championship Rules.

20. **Player Identification and Strip**

20.1 Regulations on Player Identification and Strips as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Under 17 Championship Rules.

21. **Disputes, Complaints & Special Requests**

21.1 Any dispute or complaint by a Team and/or Club regarding another Team and/or Club must be officially reported to the GFA within 48 hours from the date of such facts or events giving rise to said dispute or complaint, and shall be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations in this GFA Handbook.

21.2 Any special request made by a Club and/or Team in relation to an Under 17 Championship Match in must be made in writing to the GFA within 24 hours of the commencement of the Under 17 Championship Match in question, save for in the case of Covid-19 related matters which must follow the GFA Covid-19 Protocol.

21.3 With regards to requests for a one minute silence prior to an Under 17 Championship Match, this shall only be permitted under the following circumstances:

- (a) a national or international tragic event;
- (b) a national event;
- (c) a demonstration of respect for the death of individuals who have contributed to the game of football in Gibraltar or internationally; or
- (d) the death of a Player or Club Official.

22. **Ancillary Under 17 Championship Provisions: Fines, Cautions, Dismissals and Suspensions**

22.1 The following provisions of this rule will apply to Players, Club Managers, Club Officials and Clubs registered in the Under 17 Championship.

22.2 Fines in the Under 17 Championship shall, in the first instance, be 50% of the amounts set for the GFA Football League in the Disciplinary Regulations in this GFA Handbook, and will be served by a Player, Club, Club Manager, Club Official or spectator.

22.3 In relation to the Under 17 Championship, the Disciplinary Regulations will apply except that sanctions for dismissals will be served as a one match suspension or 10 days (whichever is the shortest duration) unless the misconduct is so severe that it warrants a more severe sanction.

23. **Breach of Under 17 Championship Rules**

23.1 Any breach of these Under 17 Championship Rules will be dealt with by the GFA's Disciplinary Control Unit in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulation in this GFA Handbook.

23.2 The GFA may also take any action necessary to address any breaches which may not be adequately addressed under the Disciplinary Regulations providing that such actions are reasonable and proportionate.

Schedule 17 GFA Under 17 Championship Clubs

1. The following list comprises the names of the Clubs eligible to participate and compete in the GFA Under 17 Championship 2023/24:

1. College 1975 FC
2. Lincoln Red Imps FC
3. Manchester 62 FC
4. Mons Calpe FC
5. St Joseph's FC