

GIBRALTAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

GFA NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEAGUE RULES 2023-2024



SCOPE OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEAGUE RULES

1. General Provisions

- 1.1 The GFA Women's League is made up of one single division consisting of the Clubs listed in Schedule 10 of this GFA Handbook.
- 1.2 The organisation, management and operations of the GFA Women's League 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 Women's League Rules.
- 1.4 The GFA shall have the power and authority to amend these Women's League 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 Women's League or any other additional aspects which may affect the GFA Women's League.
- 1.6 The GFA shall exclusively retain all entitlement and authority to use, assign, sell or otherwise take advantage of all marketing, commercial, broadcasting and audio visual rights associated with the GFA Women's League, inclusive of pursuing such commercial opportunities and/or agreements and partnerships which may be in the best interests of the GFA Women's League.

2. Laws of the Game

- 2.1 All Matches in the GFA Women's League 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 Women's League

- 3.1 A Club shall only be eligible to register one Team to participate in the GFA Women's League.
- 3.2 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 Women's League

- 4.1 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 Women's League.
- 4.2 A Player shall only be eligible to register and apply to play in the GFA Women's League if she was born prior to 2009. A Player may also be eligible to register and apply to play in the GFA Women's League if she was born in 2009 and had been registered with a Team in the GFA Women's League during the 2022/23 season. . Players under the age of eighteen years must provide their Club and the GFA with written parental and/or guardian consent in order to play.
- 4.3 During any point in any given season, the minimum number of Players that may be registered in a Team is eighteen (18), and the maximum number of Players shall be twenty-two (22).
- 4.4 If at any time during the football season, a Club does not have the prescribed minimum number of Players registered, the Club shall receive a written warning from the GFA, and subsequent offences may result in the automatic removal by the GFA of the Club and/or Team from the GFA Women's League. The GFA shall notify the Club of this in writing.
- 4.5 Irrespective of whether a Team consists of eighteen (18) or twenty-two (22) registered Players, a minimum of two (2) Players must be registered as goalkeepers.
- 4.6 A Club must ensure that any Team registered has a at least four (4) Home-Grown Players on the field of play at all times.
- 4.7 No Player may re-register (whether by transfer or release) to play for said Club and/or Team in the course of the same season.

5. Transfers & Registration Period

- 5.1 There will be two transfer windows in each GFA Football League season, namely:
- (a) the Summer Transfer Window; and
 - (b) the Winter Transfer Window.
- 5.2 During the aforementioned transfer and registration period, Clubs shall be permitted to register and transfer Players in accordance with all applicable GFA Statutes, including the Status and Transfer Regulations.
- 5.3 A Club and/or Team shall not be entitled to unreasonably withhold its consent to the transfer of a Player provided always that at the time the transfer request is made, the Player is not undergoing or involved in any Disciplinary Proceedings, or is subject to any Disciplinary Sanctions.

6. **Commencement and Conclusion of GFA Women's League**

- 6.1 The GFA Women's League shall commence in November 2023 and shall conclude by no later than April 2024.
- 6.2 GFA Women's League Match fixtures shall be circulated by the GFA to Clubs by no later than October 2023.

7. **Format and Structure of GFA Women's League**

- 7.1 The GFA Women's League shall consist of three rounds. All Teams shall play each other once per round.

8. **Scoring System and League Table**

- 8.1 The winner of a Women's League Match shall be awarded three points.
- 8.2 To the extent that a Women's League Match concludes in a draw, each Team shall be awarded one point.
- 8.3 No points shall be awarded to the losing team of a Women's League Match.
- 8.4 In the event of a Team being expelled from participating in the GFA Women's League 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 Women's League Matches shall be recorded by the GFA in a table as follows:
 - (a) the number of Women's League Matches played in the GFA Women's League;
 - (b) the number of Women's League Matches won, drawn and/or lost as a home team in the first round of the GFA Women's League;
 - (c) the number of Women's League Matches won, drawn and/or lost as an away team in the first round of the GFA Women's League;
 - (d) the number of goals scored and conceded by each Team in Women's League Matches of the first round of the GFA Women's League; and
 - (e) the number of points earned by each Team during the first round of the GFA Women's League.
- 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 Women's League, 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 Women's League 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 Women's League 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 Women's League 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 Women's League 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 Women's League Matches, namely:
- (a) deduction of 1 point for each Caution (comprising of 1 yellow card) received over the course of all Women's League Matches;
 - (b) deduction of 2 points for each Dismissal (comprising of 2 yellow cards, and 1 red card) received over the course of all Women's League Matches;
 - (c) deduction of 3 points for each Dismissal (comprising of 1 direct red card) receive over the course of all Women's League 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 Women's League 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 Women's Champion**

- 9.1 The Team which ranks first in the GFA Women's League table at the end of the GFA Women's League shall be crowned the GFA Women's League Champions, and as such, shall 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 Women's League Match of the following football season.
- 9.2 Any damage sustained by the trophies presented by the GFA to the GFA Women's League 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 Women's League 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 Women's League Matches being given first priority in order to receive a commemorative medal.

10. **Force Majeure**

- 10.1 In the event that the GFA Women's League 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 League Match**

- 11.1 Regulations on a Club's inability to field a Team as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Women's League Rules.

12. **Team Sheets**

- 12.1 Prior to every Women's League Match played, each competing Club shall accurately insert and complete the details of their Team for that Women's League 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 nine (9) and a maximum of eleven (11) starting Players (with corresponding shirt numbers, and of which at least four (4) must be Home-Grown Players);
 - (b) a maximum of seven (7) substitutes (with corresponding shirt numbers); and
 - (c) a maximum of four (4) Club Officials who fulfil the followings roles:
 - (i) the Club Manager (mandatory);
 - (ii) an assistant manager (mandatory);
 - (iii) physical trainer;

- (iv) doctor, physiotherapist or GFA accredited sports therapist (mandatory); and
 - (v) Welfare Officer (mandatory).
- 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 Women's League Rules, no changes will be allowed to team sheets uploaded on the COMET system within 1 hour of kick-off of the applicable League 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 Women's League Match.
- 12.7 A Team will be allowed to use all substitutes during the course of a Women's League Match.
- 12.8 During the course of the first half of a Women's League Match, a Team may make as many substitutions as desired. During the course of the second half of a Women's League Match, a Team may only make a maximum of five (5) substitutions within a maximum of three (3) substitution opportunities. Any Player substituted in the second half of a Women's League Match may not subsequently re-enter the field of play.
- 12.9 All substitutes shall be carried out with the permission of the Match Official.
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 her 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 a Women's League Match shall rest with the Player and/or Club Official whose identity is being questioned by a Match Official or the GFA.

14. **Club Manager Qualifications**

14.1 In order to be eligible to coach and/or manage a Team in the GFA Women's League, Club Managers must hold one of the following minimum coaching qualifications:

- (a) a valid UEFA recognised level 1 coaching licence;
- (b) a valid UEFA coaching diploma which is equivalent to or higher to (a); 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 Women's League Rules; and
- (d) a valid first aid and safeguarding certificate recognised by the GFA.

15. **Home-Grown Player Rule**

15.1 In any Match, a Team must have a minimum of 4 Home-Grown Players on the field of play at all times except as set out herein.

15.2 If a Team is found not to have complied with regulation 15.1 above, the Match will be declared a forfeit against the Team in breach of this rule, and will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.

15.3 If during a Match, a Team has exhausted its five permitted Match substitutions and is found to be in breach of regulation 15.1 above as a result of injury or illness, then regulation 15.1 will not apply and the Match shall continue notwithstanding the breach of said rule.

15.4 Subject to regulation 15.5 below, if during a Match, a Team has not yet exhausted its five permitted Match substitutions and is in breach of regulation 15.1 as a result of injury or illness, then regulation 15.1 will be temporarily disappplied.

15.5 The exception set out in regulation 15.4 shall only apply for as long as it takes for the applicable Home-Grown Player in question to complete any preparations or warming up exercises prior to their admission on to the field of play. Unless otherwise instructed otherwise by a Match Official, under no circumstances must that Home-Grown Player take more than 5 minutes to enter the field of play.

15.6 In the event that a home-grown player is dismissed during a match, resulting in the team having less than the required number of home-grown players on the field as

specified in 15.1, the team will not be obligated to make a substitution to comply with this requirement. The team will be permitted to continue playing with an equivalent number of fewer home-grown players as home grown players dismissed, for the remainder of the match without facing a breach of the Home-Grown Player Rule.

16. **Safeguarding**

16.1 The GFA is committed to safeguard Participants within the game of football. In light of the foregoing, all Clubs and/or Teams competing in the GFA Women's League shall have a Welfare Officer as part of their staff.

17. **Match Ball Requirements**

17.1 The GFA will provide the Match balls to be used for each Women's League Match.

17.2 On Match day, the Match Officials will provide up to five Match balls for any given Women's League Match.

17.3 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

17.4 In the event that a Match ball is lost and/or destroyed during a Women's League 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.

17.5 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.

18. **Match Officials**

18.1 All Women's League 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.

19. **Advertising**

19.1 Players (including substitutes), Club Officials and anyone sitting in the Technical Area or forming part of the team sheet must not advertise Clothing and Football Boots during the period of a Women's League Match.

19.2 The advertising of tobacco products is strictly prohibited.

- 19.3 The appearance or incorporation of any distasteful, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting, discriminatory, racial, or other ethically or morally offensive message, or any political message on any item of Clothing or Football Boots is prohibited. A Player removing her shirt to reveal slogans, personal statements or for the purposes of advertising will be sanctioned by the GFA in a way that is deemed reasonable and proportionate and in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 19.4 The Club's name and emblem may appear on Football Boots (including initials, nickname or trademark registered by the Club, or any combination of such) without restriction.
- 19.5 The Club's name and emblem (including initials, nickname or trademark registered by the Club, or any combination of such), may appear:
- (a) only once on the front of the shirt, providing it does not exceed an area of one hundred (100) square centimetres;
 - (b) only once anywhere on the shorts, providing it does not exceed an area of fifty (50) square centimetres; and
 - (c) only once on each sock, providing it does not exceed an area of fifty (50) square centimetres.
- 19.6 On Football Boots, the establish mark, logo, name, or model/style of Football Books or their manufacturer, or any combination of the same, may appear without restriction.
- 19.7 On Clothing, the establish mark, logo, name, or model/style of Football Books or their manufacturer, or any combination of the same, may appear once:
- (a) on the shirt and on the shorts provided it is an area no greater than twenty (20) centimetres;
 - (b) on each of the goalkeeper's gloves, and on a goalkeeper's cap, provided such does not exceed an area of twenty (20) centimetres;
 - (c) on each of an outfield Player's gloves provided such does not exceed an area of twenty (20) square centimetres;
 - (d) on the front and back on any shirt or any other item of clothing worn under the shirt provided such does not exceed an area of twenty (20) square centimetres and this is not visible outside the playing shirts during the period of the League Match;
 - (e) on undershorts work under playing shorts provided such does not exceed an area of twenty (20) square centimetres and this is not visible outside the applying shorts during the period in the League Match.
- 19.8 On Football Boots, a Player's shirt number may appear on her boots without restriction.
- 19.9 On Clothing, a Player's shirt number must be clearly legible and positioned in the centre of the back of the shirt. The number should be between twenty (20) and thirty-

five (35) centimetres in heights. The number may also appear on the front of the Player's short which must correspond with the number on the shirt. The number on the shorts should be between ten (10) and fifteen (15) centimetres in height.

- 19.10 The officially designated logo or name of the GFA Women's League or combination of the same may appear once only on each of the Player's shirt numbers providing the logo, name or combination does not exceed an area of twenty (20) square centimetres. No other advertising or other marking is allowed on a Player's shirt number.
- 19.11 On Football Boots, a Player's name, including any appropriate nickname or initials may appear without restriction. Other names, places, appropriate nicknames or numbers of personal significance to that Player may also appear on that Player's Football Boots without restriction.
- 19.12 On Clothing, the name of the Player may appear on the back of shirts or tracksuits. The height of the lettering must not be greater than seven-and-a-half (7.5) centimetres.

20. **Sponsor Designations**

- 20.1 Advertising of sponsors is not permitted and must not appear anywhere on Club and/or Team Clothing or Other Equipment unless the GFA has provided approval in writing.
- 20.2 Once approved by the GFA, the following advertising of sponsorship by Clubs on the field of play is permitted:
- (a) on the Clothing of a Player on the field of play, but subject to the following requirements:
 - (i) one single area not exceeding two hundred (200) centimetres on the front of the shirt;
 - (ii) one single area not exceeding one hundred (100) centimetres on the back of the shirt;
 - (iii) one single area not exceeding one hundred (100) centimetres on the back of the shorts;
 - (iv) one single area not exceeding one hundred (100) centimetres on the left sleeve of the shirt;
 - (v) one badge of the Club on the right side of the shirt.
 - (b) On Clothing in the Technical Area, advertising may appear on items of Clothing other than the Clothing of the Player on the field of play during a Women's League Match in accordance with the size and locations set out in rule 20.2(a) above.
 - (c) The advertising carried on the Clothing worn by Players and Club Officials in the Technical Area can be either:
 - (i) the same sponsor(s) as worn on the playing kit of the Players (applicable to both home and away kits);

- (ii) be additional to the sponsors worn on the play kit of the Players (applicable to both home and away kits); or
 - (iii) a single sponsor that is an official partner of the Club's.
- 20.3 Clubs may conclude sponsorship arrangements with difference sponsors in respect of the advertising permitted by this GFA Handbook for both their home and away kits

21. **Player Identification and Strip**

- 21.1 Before the commencement of each football season, each Club shall allocate a different shirt number to each Player of its Team, and allocate a shirt number to any Player joining the Club and Team during the course of the football season.
- 21.2 Save with prior written consent of the GFA, shirt numbers may only range between numbers one (1) to ninety-nine (99).
- 21.3 Shirt numbers must be clearly legible to the referee team, commentators, spectators and TV viewers, in daylight and under floodlights, from at least 50m away.
- 21.4 Following a Player's departure from a Club, said shirt number shall be surrendered and re-allocated to a new Player.
- 21.5 When playing in Women's League Matches, each Player shall wear a shirt on the back of which shall be prominently displayed her shirt number and (if so desired by the Club or the Player), above said number, the Player's surname or such other name as may be approved in writing by the GFA.
- 21.6 The Player's shirt number may also appear on front on her shorts.
- 21.7 The colour and design of the Club's shirt, shorts and socks shall be submitted by the Club to the GFA by no later than 30 days prior to the commencement of the football season. This shall apply for Club's home and away kits.
- 21.8 The colour and design of the shirt, shorts and sock worn by goalkeepers when playing in Women's League Matches shall be such as to distinguish her from the other Players and Match Officials.
- 21.9 The Team deemed to be playing at home (the Team listed first on the latest available published fixtures) must wear its designated home kit, and the team deemed to be playing away (the Team listed second on the latest available published fixtures) must wear its designated away kit.
- 21.10 Where the kits of two competing Teams are similar, the Team deemed to be playing as the away Team (the Team listed second on the latest available published fixtures) must change its kit unless alternative arrangements are mutually agreed by the two competing Teams in conjunction with the consent of the Match Officials.

21.11 The captain of each Team appearing in a Women's League Match shall wear a captain's armband indicating her status as such.

22. Disputes, Complaints & Special Requests

22.1 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.

22.2 With regards to requests for a one minute silence prior to a Women's League 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.

23. Breach of Women's League Rules

23.1 Any breach of these Women's League 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 10 GFA Women's League Clubs

1. The following list comprises the names of the Clubs eligible to participate and compete in the GFA Women's League 2023/24:

1. Europa FC Women
2. Gibraltar Wave
3. Hercules
4. Lions Gibraltar FC Women
5. Lynx Women