

GIBRALTAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION GFA YOUTH LEAGUE RULES 2023-2024



SCOPE OF YOUTH LEAGUE RULES

1. General Provisions

- 1.1 Save as otherwise set out in this GFA Handbook, matters concerning GFA Youth Competitions shall be dealt with in accordance with these Youth Football Rules and supplemented by Schedule 16 as more particularly set out herein.
- 1.2 These Youth Rules contain the substantive and formal provisions governing the organisation, administration and operations of GFA Youth Competitions.
- 1.3 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 Youth Leagues or any other additional aspects which may affect the GFA Youth Leagues.

2. Control of the GFA Youth Competitions

- 2.1 The organisation, control and management of the Youth Competitions in all its various age groups shall be the responsibility of the GFA acting through the GFA Youth Development Team, which shall include a team comprised of:
 - (a) the GFA's Director of Operations;
 - (b) the GFA's Youth Development Football Co-ordinator;
 - (c) the GFA's EYPD Manager;
 - (d) the GFA's Youth Development Schools and EYPD Officer;
 - (e) the GFA's Women's Football Development Manager;
 - (f) the GFA's Youth Referee Co-ordinator; and
 - (g) the GFA's Operations Manager.
- 2.2 The meetings of the Youth Development Team will be chaired by the GFA's Director of Operations.
- 2.3 The GFA Youth Development Team will in consultation with the GFA Member Clubs, plan, develop, communicate and implement any changes to the formats of the GFA Youth Competitions. The GFA, acting through the GFA Youth Development Team, shall have the power to add, alter and/or remove these Youth Football Rules.
- 2.4 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

Youth Football Rules or any other additional aspects which may affect the GFA Youth Competitions.

- 2.5 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 Youth Competitions, inclusive of pursuing such commercial opportunities and/or agreements and partnerships which may be in the best interests of the GFA Youth Competitions.
- 2.6 In the case of GFA Youth Competitions, the GFA Youth Development Team may, with prior authorisation from the GFA, permit a Team to participate in GFA Youth Competitions even if said Team is not affiliated to a Club, providing always that there is no conflict with any Club.
- 2.7 For the avoidance of doubt, these rules do not cover the Under 17 Youth Championship. The Under 17 Youth Championship has a separate set of rules stipulated in the GFA Handbook.

3. GFA Youth Competitions

- 3.1 Unless otherwise agreed, GFA Youth Football League season shall commence in September 2023 and conclude no later than 3 June 2023 and include the following:
 - (a) 5v5 league format
 - (b) 7v7 league format
 - (c) 9v9 league format
 - (d) 11v11 league format
- 3.2 All matches will only be played between the Friday and Monday of any scheduled weekend and will be outlined on the Youth Football Calendar.
- 3.3 All matters related to the division of the age groups and categories, number of teams in each age group and playing areas which affect the format established and are of relevance for the good governance of the GFA Youth Competitions shall, absent being included in this GFA Handbook, be administered and confirmed by the GFA Youth Development Team at the start of each football season.
- 3.4 Any changes to these Youth Football Rules shall be at the sole discretion of the GFA acting through the GFA Youth Development Team who, will consult the GFA Member Clubs, together with such other interested stakeholders prior to making any changes.
- 3.5 The GFA Member Clubs shall mean the Committee set up by the Clubs to discuss

and provide advice on matters pertaining to youth football on behalf of the clubs involved in Youth Competitions with the GFA Youth Development Team. The Committee shall be composed of representatives elected by the Clubs.

4. Laws of the Game

- 4.1 All GFA Youth Competitions shall be played in conformity with the Laws of the Game promulgated by the IFAB as amended from time to time. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the GFA Youth Development Team reserves the right to add, alter, amend and/or introduce any rule specific to any age group to help and encourage development. The GFA and/or the GFA Youth Development Team, in consultation with the GFA Member Clubs, will authorise such additions, alterations and amendments.

5. Club Participation

- 5.1 A Team may only participate in the GFA Youth Competitions if it is duly registered under an existing Club.
- 5.2 The GFA Youth Development Team may, in exceptional circumstances, accept an independent Team not registered under any Club to participate in a GFA Youth Competition if its participation is considered to be of a developmental nature. The GFA Youth Development Team shall, prior to admitting any independent Team not registered under a Club, seek approval from the GFA.
- 5.3 A Team admitted under rule 5.2 above, shall not be entitled to member rights of the GFA, and its participation shall be limited exclusively to the Youth Development League. Any admittance to the same shall require, consultation with the GFA Member Clubs and to be deliberated and approved by the GFA. The GFA Youth Development Team may, in exceptional circumstances, allow for a team admitted under rule 5.2 above to participate in a Youth Championship.
- 5.4 A Club shall only be permitted to register more than one Team in each age group in the following circumstances:
- (a) if the Team in question is comprised exclusively of female Players; or
 - (b) subject to the discretion of the GFA Youth Development Team, the majority of the Team in question is comprised of a minimum two-thirds majority of female Players;

- (c) in circumstances, where in a multiple year category and the club has enough players from each year to be able to field two teams; or
- (d) in exceptional circumstances, where the team is allowed to play in the subsequent and/or higher age category in order to increase the competitive nature of the subsequent and/or higher age category.

Further to rules 5.4 (c) and (d) decisions will be determined by the GFA Youth Development Team at its sole discretion, with any such decision being taken as final.

- 5.5 A Team may not withdraw and/or resign from a GFA Youth Competition prior to the end of the football season without prior notification in writing to the GFA Youth Development Team, and unless all other avenues have been explored to prevent such withdrawal and/or resignation. The GFA reserves the right to impose sanctions on a Club or other independent team, that withdraws a Team from any GFA Youth Competition.
- 5.6 In the event that a Club is unable to field a team for a Match of a GFA Youth Competition, the Club must notify the GFA Youth Development Team within 24 hours prior to the commencement of the applicable Match in writing, setting out reasons for its inability to field a team and the need for postponement.
- 5.7 To the extent that a Club is unable to field a team, the following rules shall apply, namely:
- (a) In relation to all age categories up to and including the U16 category, the postponement of the Match will only be permitted in the following circumstances, specifically subject to the authorisation of the GFA Youth Development Team:
 - (i) Poor weather conditions
 - (ii) If a team requests a postponement and the opposing team accepts the request and there is an available allocation at a later date within the set dates of the season.
 - If either of these conditions is not met, the match will be forfeited.
- 5.8 To the extent that a Match is postponed or abandoned, the Match will be played as directed by GFA Youth Development Team in its discretion.

- 5.9 If a Club does not field a Team and/or forfeits a total of 3 Matches during the football season, the Team in question may be removed from the respective category, and the corresponding Club may be subject to Disciplinary Sanctions in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 5.10 Players registered with a Club and/or Team that has been removed from the GFA Youth Competitions in accordance with rule 5.9 of these Youth Football Rules, shall be allowed to re-register with another Team, and shall not be required to pay any registration fee.
- 5.11 Clubs must notify the GFA if a player/parent or guardian (if player is under the age of 18) informs them that they do not want photographs and videos to be taken of them/their child.

6. Player Registration

- 6.1 Players must be registered in accordance with all applicable GFA Rules and Regulations, as well as with FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, insofar as the registration and transfer of minors is concerned, before being eligible to be registered to form part of a Club and/or Team registered to compete in the GFA Youth Competitions.
- 6.2 Subject to prior compliance with the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, Players between the age of 10 and 18, who have not previously registered with any Club and/or Team in Gibraltar, or having been registered with a club and/or Team outside of Gibraltar, will be allowed to register with a Club and/or Team providing:
- (a) said registration does not surpass the permitted maximum number of Players in a Club and/or Team at any given time in the football season;
 - (b) has received clearance via the FIFA Transfer Matching System ("TMS");
 - (c) the intended registration is approved by a parent and/or guardian of the Player; and
 - (d) the registration does not displace an existing registered player who has not been relocated.
- 6.4 The registration of Female Players participating in the GFA Youth Competitions will be governed by the GFA's Youth Development Team in the best interests of the development of Female Players. Further to rule 6.2, Female Players may be registered in the subsequent and/or higher or in the previous and/or lower age category subject to the authorisation of the Youth Development Team.

- 6.5 All Players will be required to be registered in the COMET system.
- 6.6 The GFA Youth Development Team will prior to the commencement of the football season confirm to all Clubs and/or Teams the maximum and minimum amount of Players which may be registered at any given time during the football season.
- 6.7 A Club and/or Team must ensure they do not have more than five non-Home-Grown Players registered at any given time.
- 6.8 In relation to the first half of the season and subject to compliance with the following conditions, a Player registered to participate in the GFA Youth Competitions with a Club and/or Team will also be eligible to play for said Club and/or Team in the subsequent and/or higher age category, providing the following is adhered to:
- (a) the Club has presented the GFA Youth Development Team with the written consent of the parents and/or guardians of the Player to do so;
 - (b) Clubs in the 5v 5 and 7 v 7 formats may only recruit a maximum of 3 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 Youth Football Rules;
 - (c) Clubs in the 9 v 9 and 11 v 11 formats 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 Youth Football Rules;
 - (d) Feeder Players should not take precedence over Players registered in their own age categories in match day squads;
 - (e) Players who are eligible may Play up in an unlimited amount of Matches; provided they have played at least 50% of matches in their registered age category on a monthly basis;
 - (f) 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 League and the GFA Intermediate League (subject to name change) (inclusive of corresponding cup Competitions played in connection therewith);
 - (g) Players will not be allowed to feed down from their registered team category.

- 6.9 In relation to the second half of the season and subject to compliance with the

following conditions, a Player registered to participate in the GFA Youth Competitions with a Club and/or Team will also be eligible to play for said Club and/or Team in the subsequent and/or higher league or division, providing the following is adhered to:

- (a) the Club has presented the GFA Youth Development Team with the written consent of the parents and/or guardians of the Player to do so;
- (b) Clubs in the 5v 5 and 7 v 7 formats may only recruit a maximum of 3 Feeder Players registered with the club from the preceding division or league 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 Youth Football Rules;
- (c) Clubs in the 9 v 9 and 11 v 11 format may only recruit a maximum of 4 Feeder Players registered with the club from the preceding division or league 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 Youth Football Rules;
- (d) Feeder Players should not take precedence over Players registered in their own age categories in match day squads;
- (e) Players who are eligible may Play up in an unlimited amount of Matches; provided they have played at least 50% of matches in their registered age category on a monthly basis;
- (f) 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 League and the GFA Intermediate League (subject to name change) (inclusive of corresponding cup Competitions played in connection therewith);
- (g) Players will not be allowed to feed down from the league or division that they have qualified for.

6.10 Any breach of these provisions may constitute Misconduct by the offending Club and/or Team, and said Club and/or Team may be subject to Disciplinary Sanctions under the Disciplinary Regulations (including forfeiting the applicable Match).

7. Transfer of Players

7.1 A Club and/or Team may only transfer its Players in a GFA Youth Competition in accordance with the rules and regulations in these Youth Football Rules, but always in full compliance and adherence with the protection of Minor provisions in the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players in this GFA Handbook.

7.2 There will be two transfer windows in each Youth League season, namely:

- (a) the Summer Transfer Window; and
 - (b) the Winter Transfer Window.
- 7.3 The winter transfer window for the age categories of under 14 and below will be open for a period of 10 calendar days.
 - (a) Clubs will be able to recruit during the first 5 days of the transfer window.
 - (b) Only clubs whose squads have been reduced due to a transfer in the first 5 days, will be able to recruit in the second 5 calendar day period.
 - (c) A further 5 calendar day period will be assigned for administrative purposes only in order to complete any transfers that have been requested in the second 5 calendar day period.
 - (d) Any transfers not completed within these time frames will not be confirmed.
- 7.4 Written requests to the GFA Youth Development Team for their consideration of any issues concerning a transfer may be submitted. Any decision taken by the GFA Youth Development Team will be final and binding.
- 7.5 The transfer of Players in the under 16 age category shall be carried out in full compliance and adherence with the Status and Transfer Regulations in this GFA Handbook.
- 7.6 For the avoidance of doubt, the submission of a transfer form to the GFA Youth Development Team may be attended to via the COMET system.
- 7.7 The GFA Youth Development Team shall have the power at any time to cancel the registration of a Player upon the Player or the Club's request after having heard and considered such requests.
- 7.8 In accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations contained in this GFA Handbook, and as more particularly set out in Schedule 1 (Offences of Misconduct), but which is nonetheless included herein, tampering of any form by any Clubs, Participants or ancillary intermediaries who approach, whether directly or indirectly (including by means of a Player's parents and/or guardians), a Player competing in a GFA Youth Competition during the seasonal year with a view to inducing or assisting them to leave their Club without the knowledge and prior written consent of the Player's current Club shall constitute Misconduct contrary to this GFA Handbook. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include conduct or contact which initiated by a Player. Any complaints on this basis should be supported with evidence and directed at the

Gibraltar FA in writing by the club.

- 7.9 Teams registered with a Club will not be permitted to re-register with a different Club during the same football season. A Team which may be desirous of registering with a different Club in the following football season may, through its coach and/or manager, notify the GFA Youth Development Team to consider the merits of such request.
- 7.10 In circumstances where a coach and/or manager is desirous of moving from one Club and/or Team to another Club and/or Team, said coach and/or manager may not coach or manage Players of the next immediate age group or the same gender, and not serve as an official in that Team until the following season. This rule will however not apply if the coach and/or manager's desired move is borne out of:
- (a) the dissolution of that coach and/or manager's Club; or
 - (b) the Club and/or Teams authorised representative permits in writing for that coach and/or manager to move to a different Club.
- 7.11 If a club team wants to move to another club the following season, only 50% of the players are allowed to register with the new club.
- 7.12 The advertisement of trials for any age category during the defined dates of the season, will not be permitted and will result in disciplinary action/sanctions on the club.

8. Advertising

- 8.1 Rules on Advertising as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Youth Football Rules.

9. Sponsor Designation

- 9.1 Rules on Sponsorship Designation as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Youth Football Rules. Further to these rules, the appearance on or incorporation in any item of clothing, football boots or other equipment of any reference whatsoever to a product, service or other activity which is considered by The GFA as detrimental to the welfare, health or general interest of young persons, or is otherwise considered inappropriate, having regard to the age of the players or Match Officials, is prohibited. Examples of such products, services or related activities would include, but are not limited to, age restricted products, services and related activities such as alcohol and gambling.

10. Player Identification and Strip

- 10.1 Rules on Player Identification and Strips as set out in the Football League Rules shall apply to these Youth Football Rules, save with the addition that in the event of a clash and/or similarity in strips between two opposing Teams, the Match Official may request the team designated as the away team to wear bibs which the GFA shall make available.

11. Coaching Qualifications

- 11.1 In order to be eligible to coach and/or manage a Club and/or Team competing in a GFA Youth Competition, all persons must hold an approved GFA level one award or Football Leaders Award in coaching football (or equivalent minimum coaching qualification), and have a validated first aid and safeguarding certificate.
- 11.2 A coach and/or manager of a Club and/or Team competing in a GFA Youth Competition will only be permitted to be present in the Technical Area and corresponding playing areas if they have completed an approved GFA level one award in coaching football (or equivalent minimum coaching qualification), and have a validated first aid and safeguarding certificate. The GFA Youth Development Team may give consideration to individuals who have enrolled, and are in the process of, procuring their GFA level one coaching qualification.
- 11.3 No access whatsoever will be permitted to any adult who is not registered with any Club and/or Team on COMET.
- 11.4 Parents/guardians will be permitted to go onto the playing area to attend to their child in the event of a major medical emergency after seeking the permission of GFA staff or the Match Official.
- 11.5 A maximum of two coaches and/or managers of a Club and/or Team competing in a GFA Youth Competition will be permitted in the Technical Area, save with the exception of 11v11 formats where a physiotherapist will be permitted and encouraged to attend, but who must be registered with the GFA and hold a GFA identity card.
- 11.6 A welfare officer or youth co-ordinator may also be permitted in the technical area as long as the Club and/or Team do not exceed the maximum of two individuals (three individuals in the 11v11 formats).

12. Trophies

- 12.1 Unless otherwise directed by the GFA at the commencement of the football season, all Clubs and/or Teams registered for a GFA Youth Competition (11v11 formats) (in their respective age categories), shall compete for respective winners' trophies (which for the avoidance of doubt shall not at any time become the property in any given football season of any of the winning Clubs and/or Teams).
- 12.2 The GFA Youth Development Team shall keep a record with respect to the winners of each age category of all GFA Youth Competitions.
- 12.3 On the basis that the 5v5 and 7v7 formats are intended to be non-competitive, all Players from Clubs and/or Teams shall be entitled to receive a participation memento.
- 12.4 On the basis that the 9v9 and 11v11 formats are intended to be competitive, the results and rankings of each of the Youth Championship (in their respective age categories) shall be recorded by the GFA Youth Development Team in a league table or cup bracket, depending on the format of the relevant format.
- 12.5 The winners of each format (in their respective age categories) shall each be presented with a trophy by the GFA. Any damage sustained by the trophies presented by the GFA will need to be paid and remedied by the Club and/or Team responsible for causing said damage.

13. Match Officials

- 13.1 All GFA Youth Competitions will be administered and regulated by Match Officials in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the GFA Referee Regulations as amended from time to time.
- 13.2 Match Officials will always wear purple kits at all matches. Teams must not wear purple kits (which consists of shirts, shorts and socks).
- 13.3 In regard to 5v5 and 7v7 Matches, to the extent that there is no suitably qualified Match Official and/or Referee (in accordance with the GFA Referee Regulations) to officiate said Match, an individual with a Youth Club Manager Qualification may be appointed to officiate in Matches relating to 5v5 and 7v7 Players as directed by the GFA Youth Development Team.

14. Team Sheets

- 14.1 Prior to every, all Clubs and/or Teams shall accurately insert and complete the details of their Team on the COMET system. The particulars and details to be recorded shall include full names (with corresponding shirt numbers) of all starting Players and substitutes, together with the coach and/or manager, and any other Club/Team official, and as more particularly set out in rule 14.3 below.
- 14.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Club and/or Team to ensure that the requisite information is entered into the COMET system by no later than 45 minutes prior to kick-off, following which, no changes or alterations may be made, unless authorised by the GFA Delegate in exceptional circumstances.
- 14.3 All entries in the COMET system must be composed of the following information:
- (a) in the case of 5v5 and 7v7 formats Matches:
 - (i) full names (and corresponding shirt numbers) of Players and substitutes; and
 - (ii) full names of the coach and/or manager, and assistant coach and/or manager (each of whom are qualified in accordance with the provisions of these Youth Football Rules); and
 - (b) in the case of 9v9 and 11v11 Matches:
 - (i) full names (and corresponding shirt numbers) of Players and substitutes;
 - (ii) names of the coach and/or manager, and assistant coach and/or manager (each of whom are qualified in accordance with the provisions of these Youth Football Rules); and
 - (iii) as encouraged by the GFA Youth Development Team, a qualified physiotherapist and/or doctor.
- 14.4 For the avoidance of doubt, only the persons listed in rule 14.3 above named on the team sheet are permitted in the Technical Area.
- 14.5 Match Officials will check each team sheet prior to each GFA Youth Competition Match.
- 14.6 In the event that there may be issues or disruptions with Clubs and/or Teams' use of the COMET system, the GFA Youth Development Team will issue guidance from

time to time on proceeding with hardcopy paper team sheets.

- 14.7 Further, for the avoidance of doubt, Players from younger age categories may be eligible for selection in older age category GFA Youth Competition Matches. It shall be the responsibility of the Club and/or Team to ensure that any selected Players fed into older age categories are eligible to do so, and that this is done in the best interests of the eligible Players and the Club and/or Team. The GFA reserves the right to intervene if the use of feeders is deemed inappropriate for the development of the child in consultation with the parent or guardian.

15. Checking of Identity

- 15.1 Players and Club Officials named in the team sheet are obliged to have with them the GFA identity card.
- 15.2 The GFA identity card of all persons listed on a team sheet may be inspected by a Match Official prior to kick-off.
- 15.3 In the event that a Player is not able to provide their GFA identity card, the Player will not be allowed to play. In the case of a Club Official, they will not be permitted to sit in the Technical Area.
- 15.4 The burden of proof as to the identity of a Player or Club Official participating in a GFA Youth Competition shall rest with the Player and/or Club Official whose identity is being questioned by a Match Official or the GFA.

16. Ancillary Youth Provisions: Cautions, Dismissals, Suspensions and Fines

- 16.1 The following provisions of this rule 16 will apply to Players, Club Managers, Club Officials and Clubs registered in the GFA Youth Competitions.
- 16.2 No Cautions or Dismissals will be shown by Match Officials to Players in the 5v5 and 7v7 formats. Any form of Disciplinary Sanction will be administered by a Match Official (as permitted by the Disciplinary Regulations) and adhered to by the Club Manager. Disciplinary Sanctions imposed during a Match will be considered served unless of such a serious nature which shall require the Match Official to make a report for the matter to be considered further by the GFA Youth Development Team and Disciplinary Officer, who will make a decision on the imposition of any Disciplinary Sanctions.
- (a) Referees may request the substitution of a player if an offense is committed that is deemed non-professional or dangerous by the referee.
- 16.3 In relation to the 9v9 and 11v11, the Disciplinary Regulations will apply but subject to the following provisos, namely:

- (a) Players who may be played by Clubs in Teams in different 9v9 and 11v11 formats will generally serve any Caution, Dismissal or other suspension or Disciplinary Sanction in the Competition in which they are registered in. However, Players may also serve any Caution, Dismissal or other suspension or Disciplinary sanction where any such Disciplinary Sanction was imposed subject to the authorisation from the GFA Youth Development Team;
 - (b) Club Managers will serve any Disciplinary Sanction in the format where the Misconduct was committed, unless the same was of such a serious nature that the GFA Youth Development Team may consider pursuing the imposition of additional Disciplinary Sanctions as prescribed by the Disciplinary Regulations;
 - (c) Noting that the GFA will reserve the right to refer any matter concerning the foregoing provisions to the GFA Integrity Officer for their review.
- 16.4 Fines in 5v5 and 7v7 formats will not be considered for Players' infractions of the Disciplinary Regulations, however the GFA Youth Development Team may consider and determine whether a fine should be imposed in relation to infractions committed by a Club, Club Manager, Club Official or spectator in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 16.5 Fines in the 9v9 and 11v11 formats 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 Club, Club Manager, Club Official or spectator.
- 16.6 Any failure by a Club to ensure that Disciplinary Sanctions are adhered to or served by a Club, Club Manager, Club Official or spectator will result in said Club being made accountable to further disciplinary action and subject to further Disciplinary Sanctions.
- 16.7 In the Under 14 age category only, when a Player is shown a caution for dissent the Player will be sanctioned with a ten-minute temporary dismissal (sin bin). The Player will need to spend the time during the temporary dismissal (sin bin) in the delegates area. For the avoidance of doubt, this rule does apply to any other format and/or age category.

17. Disputes, Complaints and Breach of Rules

- 17.1 Any dispute or complaint by a Team and/or Club regarding another Team and/or

Club must be officially reported to the GFA Youth Development Team 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.

- 17.2 Any dispute or complaint by a Team and/or Club in relation to the Laws of the Game shall be considered and dealt with by the GFA Youth Development Team. To the extent that an independent arbitrator is required, the matter will be referred to the GFA who will make a final decision.
- 17.3 Any dispute or complaint by a Team and/or Club in relation to any matter not considered in these Youth Football Rules shall require the GFA Youth Development Team to consider, review and give a decision, direction and/or ruling on the matter, together with imposing such penalties and procedures to be followed as it considers appropriate.
- 17.4 As may be required, the GFA Youth Development Team shall have the right to refer any dispute or complaint to the GFA Integrity Officer.
- 17.5 Any breach of these Youth Football Rules will be dealt with by the GFA Youth Development Team in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations (noting that the GFA Youth Development Team in consultation with the GFA shall have the power to disqualify a Club and/or Team from any GFA Youth Competition should it be deemed appropriate following said Club and/or Teams being found of serious breach of these Youth Football Rules).

Schedule 16 Youth Football Rules: Ancillary Provisions

1. GFA Youth Competitions

- 1.1 This Schedule 16 shall supplement the Youth Football Rules of this GFA Handbook and shall apply in full to all GFA Youth Competitions, including both league and cup format competitions introduced by the GFA Youth Development Team.

2. Laws of the Game

- 2.1 Under the powers conferred by the Youth Football Rules on the GFA Youth Development Team, the following amendments will be made to the application of the Laws of the Game as they pertain to GFA Youth Competitions, namely:

- (a) in relation to the 5v5 and 7v7 league formats, and in the interests of the promotion of the game, in Matches where a Club and/or Team is winning by an aggregate goal difference of plus 5 goals at any one time during the Match, the opposing Club and/or Team will be permitted to add an additional Player onto the field of play (noting that said additional Player must be removed in the event that the aggregate goal difference between both Clubs and/or Team is less than 5 goals); and
- (b) in relation to the 9v9 and 11v11 league formats, and in the interests of the promotion of the game, in Matches where a Club and/or Team is winning by an aggregate goal difference of plus 10 goals at any one time during the Match, the opposing Club and/or Team will be permitted to add an additional two Players onto the field of play (noting that one additional Player must be removed in the event that the aggregate goal difference between both Clubs and/or Team is less than 10 goals).

- 2.2 In regard to the 5v5 formats, but specifically only in relation to the under 8 age categories, the following rules shall apply:

- (a) no offside rule will apply;
- (b) whenever the ball exits the lateral side of the field of play, throw-ins will apply;
- (c) goalkeepers must pass all goal-kicks along the ground, or when in possession of the Match ball, roll the ball out with their hands, noting that no drop-kicking of the Match ball from a goalkeepers hands will be permitted;
- (d) when a goal kick is awarded, the nearest opposing Team Player must be on the halfway line of the football pitch until such time as the goal-kick is taken along the ground;
- (e) Players' heading of the Match ball is strongly discouraged and persistent

attempts at this by Players will be brought to the attention of the coaches;

- (f) penalty kicks shall be shot from the end of the goalkeeper's area. Save for the Player shooting the penalty kick and the opposing goalkeeper, all Players will position themselves behind the ball and outside of the goalkeepers' area, and shall not cause any interruption to the Player shooting the penalty kick;
- (g) all fouls and free-kicks will be indirect;
- (h) If a player passes the ball back to their goalkeeper, the goalkeeper may pick the ball up with their hands, however, will not be able to pass the ball back to the same player. If this does occur, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.
- (i) all registered Players who are eligible to participate in a Match must play in at least 2 quarters of each match and not more than 3 quarters of each match for a Development League match, except in exceptional circumstances where the team does not have enough players to satisfy this requirement;
- (j) substitutions will be carried out on a 'rolling-on and rolling-off basis';
- (k) recording of minutes played by all Players should be encouraged by all coaches and/or managers;
- (l) feeder players, in accordance with the Youth Football Rules, will be permitted;
- (m) any interference or disruption with the flow of the Match by way of the Match ball impacting the side netting or tensing wires above the field of play will result in a pass-in being awarded to the opposing Club and/or Team (with the pass-in being taken from the location closest to the point of contact of the Match ball with the side netting or tensing wires). The match official responsible for the match may use the option of dropping the ball at his/her discretion; and
- (n) The pass back rule will be allowed. See 2.2h above.

2.3 In regard to the 7v7 format, but specifically only in relation to the under 9 and under 10 age categories, the following rules shall apply:

- (a) the offside rule, together with throw-ins, will apply;
- (b) goalkeepers shall be encouraged to pass all goal-kicks along the ground, and roll the ball out with their hands, noting that no drop-kicking of the Match ball from a goalkeepers hands will be permitted;
- (c) when a goal kick is awarded, the nearest opposing Team Player must be on the halfway line of the football pitch until such time as the goal-kick is taken along the ground;

- (d) Players' heading of the Match ball is strongly discouraged;
- (e) all fouls and free-kicks will be indirect, and all kicks from static play will be below hip- height;
- (f) If a player passes the ball back to their goalkeeper, the goalkeeper may pick the ball up with their hands, however will not be able to pass the ball back to the same player. If this does occur, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.
- (g) all registered Players who are eligible to participate in a Match must play in at least 2 quarters of each match and not more than 3 quarters of each match for a Development League match, except in exceptional circumstances where the team does not have enough players to satisfy this requirement;
- (h) substitutions will be carried out on a 'rolling-on and rolling-off basis';
- (i) feeder players, in accordance with the Youth Football Rules, will be permitted; and
- (j) any interference or disruption with the flow of the Match by way of the Match ball impacting the side netting or tensing wires above the field of play will result in a pass- in being awarded to the opposing Club and/or Team (with the pass-in being taken from the location closest to the point of contact of the Match ball with the side netting or tensing wires).

2.4 In regard to 9v9 format, but specifically only in relation to the under 11 and under 12 age categories, the following rules shall apply:

- (a) the offside rule shall apply;
- (b) heading of the ball by Players shall be permitted;
- (c) substitutions will be carried out on a 'rolling-on and rolling-off basis'; and
- (d) feeder players, in accordance with the Youth Football Rules, will be permitted.

2.5 In regard to 11v11, but specifically only in relation to the under 14 and under 16 age categories, the following rules shall apply:

- (a) all Matches will be played 11-aside;
- (b) in accordance with UEFA development guidelines;
 - (i) each Club and/or Team may use all substitutes during the course of a Match;
 - (ii) a Club and/or Team is permitted to make as many substitutes as it so desires during the first half of a Match;
 - (iii) Players who are substituted during the course of the second half of a Match may return to the field of play if a Club/Team still have a

- remaining substitution opportunity;
- (iv) any number of substitutions may be carried out at half time of a Match;
- (v) during the second half, a Club and/or Team shall only be permitted to stop the game for a maximum of 3 substitution opportunities;
- (vi) all substitutions will be made with the prior permission of the Match Official;
- (c) all eligible Players who are included on the Match team sheet must play at least once in the Match;
- (d) recording of all Players' playing time is to be encouraged; and
- (e) feeder players, in accordance with the Youth Football Rules, will be permitted.

3. Table of Formats

3.1 Under the powers conferred by the Youth Football Rules on the GFA Youth Development Team, the following amendments will be made to the format of the Matches of GFA Youth Competitions, namely:

AGE GROUP	DOB	FORMAT	SQUAD SIZE (MIN & MAX)	FOOTBALL SIZE	PITCH LOCATION	DURATION
U8	2015	5v5	8 & 12	4	Pitch 2	x4 12 mins (48 mins)
U10	2013 – 2014 or 2014 – 2015	7v7	10 & 12	4	Pitch 2	x4 15 mins (60 mins)
U12	2011-2012 or 2012-2013	9v9	12 & 14	4	Pitch 2	x2 35 mins (70 mins)
U14	2009-2010 or 2010-	11v11	14 & 18	5	Pitch 1	x2 40 mins (80 mins)
U16	2007-2008 or 2008-2009	11v11	14 & 18	5	Pitch 1	x2 45 mins (90 mins)

3.2 During all GFA Youth Competition league format Matches, the Football Youth Co-

Ordinator, together with any Match appointed delegates acting on behalf of the GFA Youth Development Team will have full powers to implement all pertinent rules contained in this GFA Handbook.

- 3.3 League tables will be available for 9v9 and 11v11 on the COMET system, with each 9v9 and 11v11 being split as defined at the commencement of the season by the GFA Youth Development Team. The GFA Youth Development Team will make these changes in the best interests of the Players after consulting the GFA Member Clubs.
- 3.4 Results in the 5v5 and 7v7 format leagues will not be made public.

4. Expectations

- 4.1 All recommendations included in these ancillary provisions to the Youth Football Rules will be reviewed by the GFA Youth Development Team from time to time during the football season.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Youth Football Rules, and for the avoidance of any doubt, a maximum number of 5 non-Home-Grown Players will be permitted to be registered by a Club and/or Team in GFA Youth Competitions.
- 4.3 All disciplinary aspects such as, Cautions, Dismissals etc. must be referred to the GFA Youth Development Team for prior resolution.
- 4.4 The GFA's expectations are that the conduct and behaviour of coaches and/or managers, together with our Club and/or Team personnel, should be exemplary. Inappropriate language or behaviour, interference with Players, or excessive celebrations will be deemed a violation of the 'coaches code of conduct' and as such will constitute a form of Misconduct, and subject to the Disciplinary Regulations. Player behaviour must also be controlled at all times.
- 4.5 Club and/or Teams will be responsible for the behaviour of spectators and/or parents/guardians. Any conduct contrary to this, will constitute a form of Misconduct, and subject to the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 4.6 Equal playing time for all Players, especially in 5v5 and 7v7 formats must be encouraged.

5. GFA Youth Cup Competitions

- 5.1 In cup format competitions and/or specific football festivals will be organized by the GFA Youth Development Team as the football season's calendar permits.
- 5.2 As soon as possible after each draw is made, notice shall be given to each Club and/or

Team of its opponent, and the date and hour when the tie shall be played. All ties in each round shall be played at such times and on such days as the GFA Youth Development Team may determine.

- 5.3 Feeder players, in accordance with the Youth Football Rules, will be permitted to play during cup format competitions but may only play in one nominated Team and one nominated cup format competition.
- 5.4 All ties played are on a 1 match basis (knockout system) or in a home and away format. To the extent that at the end of the respective draw, the aggregate score line between both Teams is equal, the Match will proceed to a penalty shootout.

6. Provisions on Qualifications and Eligibility of Players

- 6.1 For the avoidance of doubt, a Player shall not in the same football season play for more than one Club and/or Team in the same cup format competition.
- 6.2 A Player who has been suspended may play in a postponed, drawn or replayed Match after the term of their suspension has expired.
- 6.3 A substitute who is not used in any Match in a cup format competition will be entitled to Play for the Club and/or Team in the same football season provided that Player has adhered to and complied with all transfer and registration requirements set out in this GFA Handbook (particularly the Status and Transfer Regulations and Youth Football Rules.)
- 6.4 In all rounds of cup format competition, a Player must have been a registered Player of his Club and/or Team for at least 7 days prior to the date fixed for the Match for that applicable competition. In the case of a Match which is postponed, drawn or replayed, only those Players which were eligible at the time of the initial Match shall be eligible to play.
- 6.5 In order to be eligible to play in cup format competitions, all Players must have been registered correctly for said competition.