Welsh Schools' Football Association
Cymdeithas Pel-droed Ysgolian Cymru

COMPETITION RULES

2026/2027

RHEOLAU CYSTADLU
2026/2027

WELSH SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Competition General Rules

Introduction

The following rules apply to all WSFA competitions unless otherwise specified under the rules for a specific competition.

1. The Trophies

(i) All trophies remain the property of the Welsh Schools' Football Association.

(ii) The trophy will be presented to the captain of the winning team immediately following the conclusion of the match.

(iii) The winning Area Association will also receive a commemorative plaque to retain as a memento.

(iv) The runners-up will receive a commemorative plaque as a mark of their achievement.

2. Mementoes (i) **11 a-side Competitions**

Eighteen mementoes for players shall be awarded to each Area Association taking part in a final. The finalists subject to the approval of the WSFA may purchase additional identical mementoes. Four mementoes may be awarded to the match officials (referee, two assistant referees and a fourth official), officiating at a final tie.

(ii) **Small –Sided Festivals (U10 & U11s)**

Each Association will be awarded participation medals by the competitions department.

(iii) **Small-Sided Festivals (U12s)**

Each Area Association participating in a final tie shall receive twenty-six mementoes for their players. Subject to approval by the WSFA, finalists may purchase additional identical mementoes.

3. Control

(i) The entire control and management of the competitions shall be vested in Council, or such Departments or Committees that shall be appointed by Council.

(ii) The rules of the competition shall be those decided by Welsh Schools FA.

(iii) All teams must be under the authority of their respective County or Area Schools Association, which must comply with the WSFA User Agreement criteria.

(iv) All coaches must hold an FAW-approved coaching qualification or a recognised teaching qualification and must have undergone a DBS check in accordance with current FAW policy. DBS checks must be kept up to date.

4. The Field of Play (i) **11-a-Side Competitions**
The minimum dimensions for the playing field in 11-a-side matches shall be 90 yards in length by 45 yards in width.

(ii) **Small-Sided Festivals (Please see Appendix 1 for guidance)**
The pitch should be a minimum size of 55 yards x 35 yards and a maximum size of 60 yards x 40 yards

A buffer zone of a minimum of 10 yards between adjacent pitches for coaches and substitutes.

5. The Ball
The ball shall be size 4 or 5 except where stated under a specific rule.

6.Substitutes
Roll on, roll off substitutions are permitted in all competitions. A player who has been substituted may return to the field of play by replacing another player, provided the substitution follows **Law 3 of the Laws of the Game.**

In 11-a-side matches, teams may use up to five substitutes, all of whom must be named on the team sheet submitted to the match official before kick-off.

If a player is substituted due to a suspected serious injury, they should only return to play after careful assessment by the designated team official.

7.Protests
Any protest from an Area Association must be submitted in writing on the official protest form to the Competition Secretary within **seven (7) working days**. It must be accompanied by a **£100 administration fee**, which will be refunded if the protest is upheld. Only protests submitted by the Area Secretary will be accepted.

No protest regarding the condition of the ground, goalposts, or other equipment will be considered unless the Referee was informed in writing before the match began.

A copy of the protest must be sent to all involved parties. The Competitions Department shall have the full authority of the Council in all matters related to the

organisation, control, and management of the competition. Decisions made by the Competitions Department shall be considered final and binding on all participants.

Area Associations retain the right to pursue a further appeals procedure, where applicable.

8.Competition Dates

The Council will set competition dates by which all matches must be played. All Associations are required to begin their fixtures by **October** and must have their **squads of players and coaches registered by 1st October**. Additional registrations may be permitted until the final registration deadline, as specified each season.

Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in **disqualification**. Each team must play **at least one match per month** until all fixtures are completed. Failure to meet this requirement may result in a **£50 fine per team, per month**.

The Competitions Department holds the authority to:

a. Order a match to be played **on or before a specified date**.
b. Grant a **reasonable extension** to competition deadlines.
c. **Expel** any team from the competition for non-compliance.
d. Enforce a requirement that all Associations **must play each opponent by 31st December**. Failure to do so may result in a **one (1) point deduction per unplayed game and/or a fine**.

9.Similar Colours

(a) If two Area Associations have similar team colours, the **home team has the right to retain their colours**. The **visiting team must change** to a kit that provides clear and satisfactory contrast.

(b) **All players' shirts must be numbered**, with **no duplicate numbers** permitted. Failure to comply will result in a **£20 fine**.

10.Players

(a) All players participating in WSFA fixtures **must be registered** in accordance with WSFA registration procedures.

(b) Any Association found to have played, or listed as a substitute, an **unregistered player** may be **disqualified** from the competition or be subject to **any other sanction deemed appropriate** by the WSFA.

(c) If the Competitions Department has doubts about a player’s eligibility, it may **request proof of qualification** from the player’s school or Association.

Failure to provide satisfactory evidence will result in **disqualification** from the competition.

(d) A pupil may only represent the Association in which their school is located. **There will be no exceptions.**

(e) A pupil **may not play for more than one Association** in the same competition during a season, **unless permission is granted** by the Competitions Department.

(f) If a pupil is being educated in a school year group that differs from their **birth year**, they must compete according to their **birth year group** in all WSFA competitions—unless **exceptional circumstances** have been reviewed and approved by Council.

(g) **Home-schooled pupils** must obtain WSFA authorisation before playing representative football. The WSFA will consult the pupil's **previous school** to assess eligibility.

11. Match Arrangements

(a) All 11-a-side matches shall be organised by the Competitions Department, either on a league or knockout basis. The draw for all competitions will be completed by **1st September**. In league or group competitions, the teams advancing to later stages will be determined by criteria set by the Competitions Department.
If a knockout match ends in a draw at full time and a winner is required, the result will be decided by a series of five penalty kicks followed by sudden death penalties if necessary.

(b) All mini football festivals shall be organised and run by the Competitions Department according to the small-sided Festival rules.

(c) Postponed or abandoned matches in the Inter Association Competitions shall be rescheduled as directed by the Competitions Department.

(d) All 11-a-side matches shall have a **ten-minute half-time interval**, which may only be altered with the Referee's consent.

(e) Arrangements for Semi-Finals and Finals must be approved by the Competitions Department.

12. Match Officials

(a) All matches must be officiated by experienced and suitably qualified match officials. For Semi-Finals and Finals, a minimum of **three Level Three or higher officials** should be assigned to each game.

(b) Match Officials shall perform their duties in accordance with the **Laws of the Game**, as sanctioned by the Welsh Schools' Football Association and enforced by the International Football Association Board.

(c) If an appointed official fails to appear, the teams involved must agree to appoint a suitable person at the ground to officiate the game in accordance with the rules. This nominated official will have the same authority as a duly appointed official.

(d) The Competitions Department will arrange Match Officials for National Finals in line with the competition's rules.

13. Match Days in Competitions

Note: Most games will be played mid-week.

(a) Upon receiving a request for a match date, the team must offer three different dates to the opposition within 7 days. These dates should allow reasonable travel time for both teams.

(b) If the teams cannot agree on a mutually suitable date and time, the Competitions Department must be notified immediately. The Competitions Department will then make a decision in accordance with Competition Rule 8.

(c) Teams are encouraged to schedule matches during holiday periods and daytime hours if travel or time constraints affect the ability to play matches.

14. Finance

An entry fee is required to participate in a competition. The amount will be set by the Competitions Department and communicated to all participants in advance.

15. Alteration of Rules

These rules may only be amended at a Rules Revision Meeting of the Association, in accordance with the principles set out in **General Rule 28**.

16. Match permission codes

(a) All matches must use the established **online system** to request permission to play codes and to submit results.

(b) **All Areas** are required to use this permission-to-play system when organising fixtures.

(c) A match will be declared **null and void** if the permission code is **not requested at least 24 hours before kick-off**. Requests are time-stamped, so late submissions will be evident.

(d) Scouts and WSFA staff will attend matches to ensure that this protocol is followed.

(e) When playing **friendly** or **ESFA matches**, a permission code must be obtained, and **international clearance** must be secured from the WSFA.

17. Team Sheets

(a) For all matches, coaches must provide WSFA Team Sheets to the opposition, referee, and any scouts in attendance. Team Sheets must be **exchanged before kick-off**.

(b) All information on the Team Sheets—including **player names, player ID codes, schools, and match codes**—must be **clear and legible**.

(c) Failure to provide Team Sheets will result in a **warning to the Association**. Further breaches will incur an automatic **£50 fine per game**.

(d) Team Sheets are available for download on the **WSFA website**.

18. Staff ID Cards

(a) All coaches and administration staff must **wear their WSFA ID badges** when in the presence of children.

(b) Failure to comply will be considered a breach of the **WSFA Safeguarding Policy**, and serious sanctions will be applied to Areas that do not adhere to this rule.

(c) A first offence will result in a **warning**, followed by an automatic **£50 fine** for any subsequent breaches.

19. Results Submission

(a) All match results must be submitted **online via the results page** within **48 hours** of the match finishing.
For U10, U11, and U12 matches, results should be submitted using the buttons on the **Secretary's Portal** on the WSFA website.

It is the responsibility of both teams to ensure that the result is submitted.

20. Failure to fulfil a fixture.

(a) Once a match has been confirmed via the permission code system, it is **locked in**. Under no circumstances may Associations change match dates or venues without consulting the WSFA Inter-Association Secretary.

(b) If an Association withdraws from a match at short notice (less than **7 days' notice** or at any time when pitch cancellation incurs costs), the WSFA, after consulting the affected team, may:
i. Award a **win** to the affected team, or ii. Require the withdrawing Association to cover the **venue costs**.

(c) Associations must make all reasonable efforts to fulfil fixtures, including using players from the year below if necessary to field a team.

(d) A **Walkover Request Form** must be completed and submitted to WSFA within the specified timeframe.
(e) Walkover requests will be reviewed by a panel of WSFA executives, who will decide whether there is sufficient evidence to grant the request.

21. Insurance

To play matches all Associations must have a current Sports Liability Indemnity Insurance.

22. Pitch Safety

(a) For safeguarding reasons, a **barrier must be used** to keep parents and spectators away from the touchline. Spectators must remain on the side opposite the players and coaches.
(b) Associations are responsible for the **behaviour of their players and spectators** at matches and must ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.
(c) Associations that fail to manage abusive behaviour may face sanctions from WSFA, which could include matches being played **behind closed doors**.

SPECIFIC COMPETITION RULES

Inter Association Competitions

Under 10 Boys(Bernie Steer), Girls(Roger Skyrme), 11 Primary Girls (John Mann) and Boys (Tom Yeoman) Competition (Years 5 & 6 pupils)

Introduction:

- These rules are in addition to the General Competition Rules.
- Girls may play in boys'/mixed competitions, but boys cannot play in girls' competitions.

Format:

- 7v7 players per side

Entry:

- An annual Primary National Festival be offered to Associations in affiliated membership with the WSFA.

Eligible Players:

- Players must be bona fide boys or girls receiving full-time education in a Primary School affiliated with the Association.
- Players must be under 10 years old between midnight on 31st August and 1st September prior to the Festival (U10 Festivals).
- Players must be under 11 years old between midnight on 31st August and 1st September prior to the Festival (U11 Festivals).
- All players must be registered with WSFA according to Competition Rule 10.

The Festival:

Each Association taking part comprises of 2 squads of 11 players each:

- 9 outfield players
- 2 Goalkeepers
- 4 substitutes (roll on-roll off)
- Total players per Association: 22

The Festival comprises 4 matches per Association:

- A vs a
- B vs b
- A vs b
- B vs a

Match Length:

- 15 minutes per half (30 minutes total)
- 3 minutes half-time

Matches should start simultaneously

Match Officials:

- Two qualified officials provided by the home Association to oversee timekeeping and decisions.

Scoring & Format

Banding Points:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a draw
- Total of 12 points available per Festival

The format of the Annual National End of Season Festival will be decided by the Competitions Department.

Pitch Specifications:

- Size: Minimum 55 yards x 35 yards; Maximum 60 yards x 40 yards
- Buffer Zone: Minimum 10 yards between pitches for coaches and substitutes.
- Goal Size: 12 feet wide x 6 feet high.

Goalkeeper Area:

- 2 yards from each goalpost along the touchline.
- 6 yards into the field of play.
- Creating an 8 yards x 6 yards rectangular box.

Ball Size:

- A size 4 ball shall be used.

Rules of Play

The Laws of the game shall apply, with the following exceptions:

- Players cannot swap teams during the festival.
- No offside rule.

- WSFA goalkeeper rules
    - Goalkeepers cannot pick up back passes.
    - Goalkeepers cannot kick the ball out of hand to help reduce heading.
    - Goalkeepers may throw the ball overarm.
- Red Cards: Player must miss the next game; no substitute allowed.
- Free Kicks (direct and indirect) permitted as decided by the referee.
- A 3-yard rule applies for opponents from free kicks and corner kicks.
- If a goal-scoring opportunity is denied by foul play in the penalty area, a penalty is awarded.

WSFA National Tom Yeoman and John Mann Finals' Festivals

- Tom Yeoman Festival: 8 Associations
- John Mann Festival: 6 Associations

Participation is based on seasonal progress and banding results decided by WSFA.

Competition draws and format

- Matches last 10 minutes each way with a 1-minute half-time/water break.
- Boys' teams are split into two groups of four.
- Girls' teams are split into two groups of three.
- Each team plays every other team in their group.

Group Matches:

- Group 1: A vs A (pitch 1), B vs B (pitch 2) – matches kick off simultaneously.
- Group 2: same format as Group 1.

Due to the one-day festival format, schedules and rules will be sent to qualifiers before the event.

Under 12 Boys & Girls Competition (Years 6/7 pupils)

Introduction:

The rules below are additional to the General Competition Rules.

- Girls may participate in boys'/mixed competitions.
- Boys are not permitted to play in girls-only competitions.

Entry:

- The trophy is offered for annual competition to Associations in affiliated membership with the Welsh Schools' FA.

Format:

- 9-a-side.
- Each Association enters two squads: Squad A & Squad B, each consisting of 13 players (including 4 substitutes).
- Roll-on, roll-off substitutions are permitted.
- Player Transfers between squads during the festival are not permitted.

The Festival comprises 4 matches per Association:

- A vs a
- B vs b
- A vs b
- B vs a

Match Length:

- 18 minutes per half (36 minutes total)
- 3 minutes half-time

Matches should start simultaneously

Scoring & Format

Banding Points:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a draw
- Total of 12 points available per Festival

Pitch Specifications:

- Size: Minimum 55 yards x 35 yards; Maximum 60 yards x 40 yards
- Buffer Zone: Minimum 10 yards between pitches for coaches and substitutes.
- Goal Size: 12 feet wide x 6 feet high.

Goalkeeper Area:

- 3 yards from each goalpost along the touchline.
- 9 yards into the field of play.
- Creating an 12 yards x 9 yards rectangular box.

Rules of Play

The Laws of the Game shall apply, with the following exceptions:

- No player swapping between squads once assigned.
- Goalkeepers
  - **Goalkeepers cannot** pick **up back passes.**
  - **Goalkeepers cannot kick the ball out of hand to help reduce heading.**
    Goalkeepers may throw the ball overarm.
- Persistent Foul Play: Referees may remove offending players from the field of play
- Penalty: Awarded for denying a goal-scoring opportunity through foul play within the penalty area.
- There shall be no offside.

Player Eligibility:

- Players must be bona fide pupils receiving full-time education at a school affiliated with the WSFA.
- Players must be under 12 years old at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September (i.e., current Year 6 or 7).
- All players must be registered in accordance with Competition Rule 10.

Competition Format:

- Early Rounds: Played on a league basis.
- Semi-Finals and Final: Determined based on league standings.

Ball Size: A size 4 football should be used.

Semi-Finals & Final: Tie-Break Rules

If teams are level on points:

1. Goal difference from the 4 games.
2. If still level, both squads play simultaneous matches starting with a kick off. (Both Associations will receive a kick off each).
3. Golden Goal format applies:
    - The first goal scored on either pitch decides the winner.

If different teams score goals simultaneously on both pitches, play continues until another goal is scored to decide the winner.

Under 13-16 Boys and Girls Competitions

Introduction:

These competitions follow the General Competition Rules, with the following specific provisions:

Entry:

The trophy is offered as an annual competition to Associations in affiliated membership with the Welsh Schools' Football Association (WSFA).

Eligible Players:

- Only bona fide boys and girls receiving full-time education in accordance with the Education Acts and affiliated to the Association are eligible.
- Players must be attending an education provision appropriate for their age group.
  Example: A U15 player must be under the age of 15 at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September to qualify.
- All players must be registered with WSFA in accordance with the registration procedures outlined in Competition Rule 10.
- Players may play one year up.
  Example: A U14 player may compete in the U15 competition.

The Competition:

- Competitions are organised on a league basis during the early stages, followed by a Semi-Final, and then a Final scheduled on a predetermined date.

Match Duration:

- U13 – 35 minutes each way.
- U14 /15/16 – 40 minutes each way.

Ball Size:

- U13 - size 4.
- U14/15/16 - size 5.

Semi-Finals/Final – Tie-break Procedure

If the match ends in a draw at the end of regular time, a penalty shootout will determine the winner.

Penalty Shootout Guidelines:

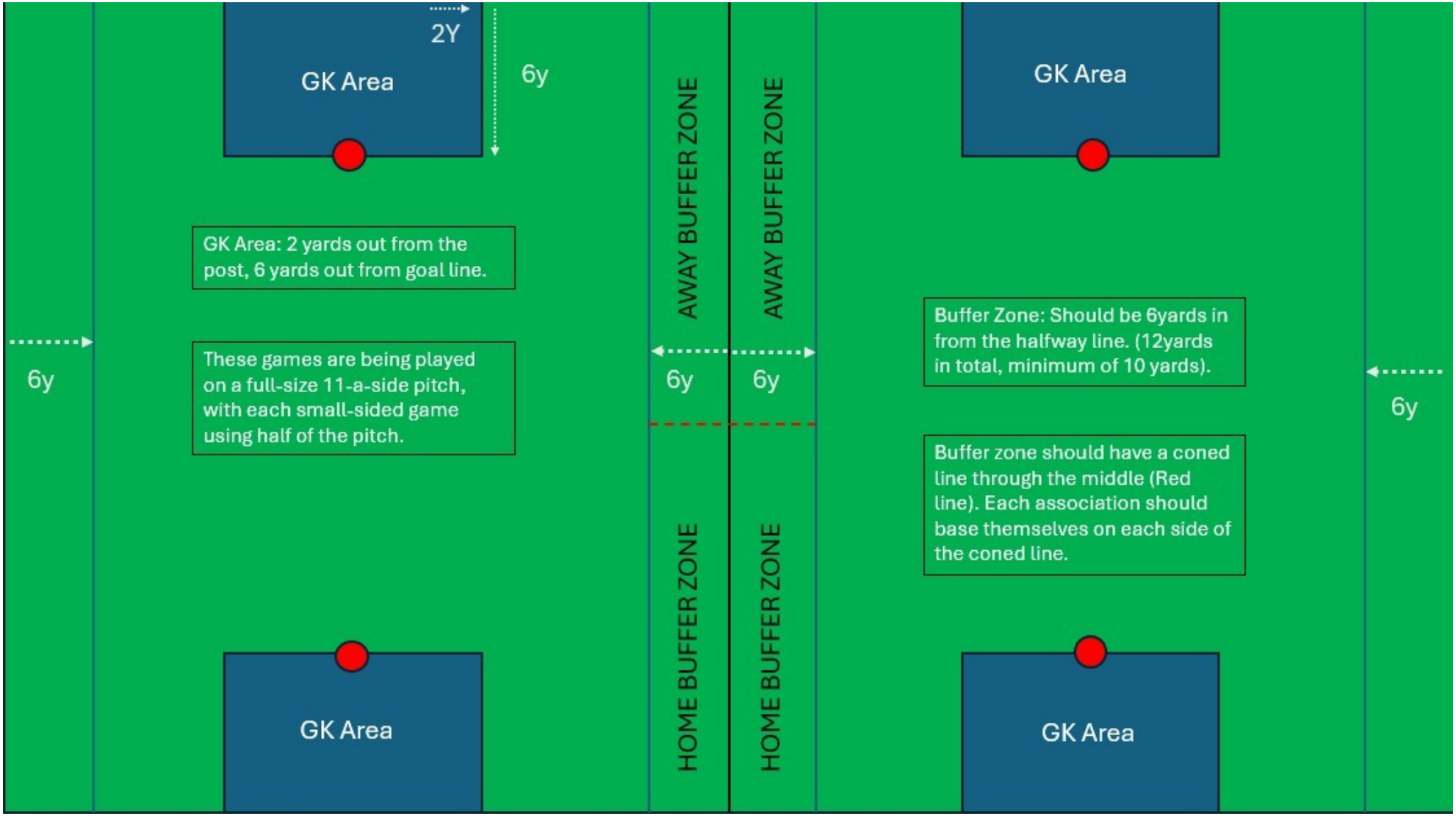
- Any player from the 16 named players may take part in the shootout.
- However, each Association must select only 11 of the 16 players to participate in the shootout.
- If a player received a red card during the match:
    - The opposing team must reduce their number of penalty takers to equal the number of players remaining on the team that received the red card.
    - This ensures parity in the shootout (i.e. the team with the player advantage cannot use more kickers).

WSFA Competitions Department

It is the responsibility of the WSFA Competitions Department to make sure that the finals of all competitions conform to a minimum standard. The criteria will include: -

(i) Suitable venue.
(ii) Match programme.
(iii) Suitable medals or trophies.
(iv) Representative to present trophies.
(v) Qualified Match Officials.

Appendix 1 – Small-Sided Pitch (U10 & U11)



Appendix 2 – Small-Sided Pitch (U12)

