

LOWER PYRAMID PLAY-OFF COMPETITION RULES

1 Definitions

- 1.1 In these Pyramid Play-Off Competition Rules, the following words and terms shall (unless the context otherwise requires) have the following meanings:
- 1.2 "Membership Criteria" means the membership criteria of the SLFL;
- 1.3 "Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition" means the competition at the end of the season to determine which Club or Clubs, if any, is or are to be relegated from the Scottish Lowland Football League ("SLFL") and which Club, if any is to be promoted to the SLFL;
- 1.4 "Qualifying Leagues" means those Leagues in the pyramid tier immediately below the SLFL and which are party to these rules. As at 1 August 2020, these are East of Scotland Football League [EoSFL] , South of Scotland Football League [SoSFL] and West of Scotland Football League [WoSFL]
- 1.5 "Qualifying Clubs" means the champion club or clubs from within the Qualifying Leagues which are eligible for promotion to the SLFL in terms of the rules of the SLFL.
- 1.6 "Team Lines" means the team lines using the format set out in the annex to these Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules which shall be utilised for all matches played in the Play-Off Competition;
- 1.7 Any amendment to these Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules must be agreed by each of the Scottish FA, SLFL, EoSFL, SoSFL and WoSFL prior to it becoming effective.

2 Team Eligibility and Running of Competition

The Qualifying Clubs of the Qualifying Leagues will at the end of each season take part in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition , organised by the SLFL to determine, subject to these rules , which Club, if any, shall be promoted to the SLFL. In the event that any of the Champion Clubs fail to comply with the Membership Criteria [by 31 March each year] in circumstances where it is required to do so, as a Candidate Club in terms of the SLFL Rules, and the SLFL Board has not granted any waiver, relaxation or period of grace in respect of that Club`s requirement to comply with the Membership Criteria, then that Club will be deemed not to be a Qualifying Club.

2.1 Three Qualifying Clubs

- a) There will be a Play-Off Round Robin organised by the SLFL to determine, subject to these rules, which club shall be promoted to the SLFL. The champions of the EoSFL, SoSFL and WoSFL will contest the round robin.
- b) The round robin shall be played on a home or away principle, with each club playing one home game and one away game, which club plays what opponent at home and what away being decided by a random draw supervised by the SLFL Board. Three points for a win and one point for a draw. Where a match is drawn it will be followed by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark as defined by International FA Board rules, the winner receiving a further one point. At the end of the competition the club with the highest points total will be declared winners of the round robin , and, subject to eligibility, will be promoted to the SLFL.
- c) If two or all three clubs in the round robin are equal on points the deciding criteria will be in turn: (i) goal difference, (ii) goals scored, (iii) the result of the head-to-head match between the clubs concerned, (iv) goals scored away from home.
- d) Where two or all three clubs are still equal on all of these criteria, the final deciding criteria will be whichever had the best record in their respective league divisions, based on a points per game basis.

2.2 Two Qualifying Clubs

- a) There will be a Play-Off Match which shall consist of a home and away two-legged match organised by the SLFL to determine, subject to these rules, which club shall be promoted to the SLFL. A draw supervised by the SLFL Board will determine which club has home advantage in the first match.
- b) The winning club in the Play-Off Match will be the club which scores the greatest number of goals over the relevant two match tie. In the event that the aggregate scores are equal after the second leg of the tie, extra time of thirty minutes (fifteen minutes each way) will take place and thereafter if necessary kicks from the penalty mark will be taken in accordance with the rules laid down by The International Football Association Board, which will determine the winner.
- c) The two legs in each of the Play-Off Match will take place on dates and at times determined by the SLFL Board.

2.3 One Qualifying Club

There will be no Play-Off Match and that Champion Club will automatically be promoted to the SLFL.

2.4 No Qualifying Club

There will be no Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition at the end of the relevant Season and the relevant club in the SLFL will retain its place in the SLFL in the immediately succeeding Season.

3 Competition Rules — General

3.1 Laws of the Game

- 3.1.1 All matches will be played according to the Laws of the Game as recognised by the Scottish Football Association Ltd.

3.2 Appointment of Match Officials

- 3.2.1 Match officials shall be appointed by the Scottish FA from those referees whose names are included in the list of referees maintained by the Scottish FA.
- 3.2.2 A Club may not refuse to accept the services of any match officials appointed by the Scottish FA. If any Club refuses to play a match due to an objection or concern about the identity of any match official, it shall be liable to ejection from the Play-Off Competition together with such other sanctions as are imposed pursuant to the provisions above under the heading of Infringement of Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules.
- 3.2.3 Fees and expenses of match officials shall be paid by the home club in each match at the rates currently applicable to SLFL league matches.

3.3 Clash of Colours

- 3.3.1 When the colours of the two competing clubs in the same match are alike or similar, the visiting club shall change to its second choice colours or a combination of its first and second choice colours (or, if applicable, third choice colours) provided that these do not include any of the basic colours of the home club. Whether or not there is a clash shall be determined by the referee in his sole discretion.
- 3.3.2 The colour of the goalkeeper's kit must, in all cases, be clearly distinguishable from the colours of the kit worn by all outfield players of both participating clubs in any match and from those of the match officials. Whether or not there is a clash shall be determined by the referee in his sole discretion.

3.4 Number of Players and Substitutes

3.4.1 Except for the circumstances described below under Replacement of Players on a Team Line, a team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list a maximum of seven subs, of whom not more than three may take part in the match except in the circumstances described in Rule 3.6.5.

3.5 Eligibility of Players

3.5.1 All players in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition must be eligible to play in the relevant match in terms of the Scottish FA Articles of Association, Registration Procedures, Judicial Panel Protocol and SLFL rules and be registered as Amateur, Non Contract or Contract with the Scottish FA for the team they will be representing in the match. No trialists or unregistered players will be permitted to participate in these matches.

3.6 Team Lines

3.6.1 Team Line for matches in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition shall permit the listing of eleven players, and up to a maximum of seven substitutes and six technical personnel. The Team Line must be submitted in order to enable a Club to participate in a match in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition.

3.6.2 Not later than 60 minutes before the start of a match, each Club will hand to the Referee and to its opponents a duplicate of the Team Lines for that club for the relevant match. The Team Line shall contain accurate and complete details of the numbers and full player names in relation to not more than eighteen players, together with full names of the technical personnel to be seated within the technical area (subject to a maximum of six such technical personnel) and their reason for being therein. The Team Line must be completed in block capitals, and signed by the Club Secretary or other accredited official. Upon such signature, such Team Line shall be deemed to be complete and binding on the Club concerned.

3.6.3 The eleven first named players on the Team Line must commence the match. The other named players are designated as substitutes. The numbers on the players' shirts and/or shorts must correspond to the numbers indicated on the Team Line. The goalkeepers and team captain must be identified.

3.6.4 Only three of the substitutes listed on the Team Line may take part in the match except in the circumstances described in 3.6.5 below. A player who has been substituted may take no further part in the match.

3.6.5 In the event that extra time is required in any of the Lower Pyramid Play-Off matches an additional fourth substitution may be made during the extra time period.

3.6.6 It is recommended that a club's doctor and physiotherapist are listed on the Team Line and accommodated in the technical area within the category of technical personnel.

3.7 Replacement of Players on the Team Line

3.7.1 If any of the first eleven players listed on the Team Line is not able to start the match due to unexpected physical incapacity or other extreme circumstances (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), he may only be replaced by one of the named substitutes. The substitute(s) in question may then only be replaced by an eligible player(s) not originally listed on the Team Line as signed, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. During the match, three players may still be substituted except in the circumstances described in Rule 3.6.5.

3.7.2 If any of the named substitutes listed on the Team Line is not able prior to the start of the match to be fielded due to unexpected physical incapacity or other extreme circumstances (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), he may only be replaced by an eligible player not originally listed on the Team Line as signed. For the avoidance of doubt no changes may be made to the team line after the referee has blown to start the match.

3.7.3 If, prior to the commencement of the match, none of the goalkeepers listed on the Team Line is able to be fielded due to unexpected physical incapacity or other extreme circumstances (which are explained to and accepted by the referee), then one may be replaced but only by an eligible goalkeeper not originally listed on the Team Line as signed.

- 3.7.4 If for any reason changes require to be made to the Team Line pursuant to the above provisions (and said changes are accepted by the referee) then the club must notify its opponent immediately.
- 3.7.5 The club concerned must in addition to the requirements set out above, upon request, provide the SLFL with necessary medical certificates and/or a full written explanation of the circumstances that caused the change.
- 3.7.6 The SLFL Board shall keep a register of the names of all of the players who take part in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition. The register shall be open for inspection by all clubs taking part in said Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition.

3.8 Pitch Protection

- 3.8.1 In order to protect the pitch and unless otherwise agreed between both participating clubs, the following procedures shall be adopted by players and Officials in the periods immediately before and after and at half time during a match in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition:
 - 3.8.2 The pitch shall only be used for warming up or warming down by the players listed in the Team Lines; pre-match warming up by either team shall not commence until at the earliest 60 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time, shall not last for more than 30 minutes, and shall end not later than 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time;
 - 3.8.3 If portable goals are provided they shall be used for all goalkeeping drills other than crossing practice;
 - 3.8.4 The goalmouth area shall be used by goalkeepers only if portable goals are not provided or for crossing practice and then only for not more than 20 minutes;
 - 3.8.5 For the purposes of warming up and warming down each team shall use only part of the pitch between the edge of a penalty area and the half way line or as otherwise directed by the groundsman;
 - 3.8.6 All speed and stamina work shall be undertaken off the pitch parallel to the touchline opposite the side to be patrolled by the assistant referee or, in the absence of sufficient space at that location, in that part of the pitch as directed by the groundsman;
 - 3.8.7 Players using the pitch at half time shall give due consideration to any other activity or entertainment taking place on the pitch at the same time;
 - 3.8.8 The home club may water the pitch provided that it gives reasonable notice to the referee and the other club that it intends to do so and that any such watering is carried out evenly over the entire length and width of the pitch;
 - 3.8.9 Any warming down after the conclusion of a match shall last for no longer than 15 minutes and for that purpose neither penalty area shall be used.

3.9 Admission Charges and Abandoned Matches

- 3.9.1 The Home Club in any Lower Pyramid Play-Off match shall, in its absolute discretion, determine admission charges (subject to these being the same for home and away supporters for broadly comparable facilities).
- 3.9.2 The Home Club in any Lower Pyramid Play-Off match shall be responsible for all match expenses including Match Officials fees and expenses and shall retain the net receipts in relation to said Play-Off match.
- 3.9.3 In the event of a Lower Pyramid Play-Off match being abandoned the SLFL Board shall, in its absolute discretion, determine the requirement and/or arrangements to decide the outcome of said match.

4 Infringement of Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition Rules

- 4.1 Any club, Official, Player, or other person, who infringes any of the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules, shall be reported to the SLFL Board for further examination.

- 4.2 A club which is found to have infringed these Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules, may be ordered to replay the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Match in question, at a time and venue and subject to whatever conditions (including as to allocation and/or indemnification of financial benefits and liabilities) as deemed appropriate by SLFL Board subject to appeal pursuant to the Judicial Panel Protocol.
- 4.3 Where a club is found to have named within Team Lines a player who is not eligible to participate in the relevant match in the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition pursuant to these Lower Pyramid Play-Off Rules and/or the disciplinary procedures of the SLFL and/or the Scottish FA Articles of Association, Registration Procedures or the Judicial Panel Protocol then such Club will be ejected from the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition.
- 4.4 In the event of disorderly conduct by a club in breach of the Articles of Association of the Scottish FA, such club may be ejected from the Lower Pyramid Playoff Competition pursuant to the Judicial Panel Protocol.
- 4.5 For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of this rule does not supersede or override the terms of any other rule which addresses sanctions for infringement thereof.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding the terms above, the SLFL Board has the power to investigate any matter pursuant to the operation of the Lower Pyramid Play-Off Competition