

Scottish Lowlands Development League Rules

A – GENERAL

- A1 The name of the combination of clubs will be called the Scottish Lowlands Football Development League and is thereafter referred to as the 'League' of the 'SLDFL'.
- A2 The objectives of the League shall be to:-
- a.) Foster and develop the game of association football for talented youngsters at under 20 Development level.
 - b.) Establish a development and competitive structure for the best young players in membership of the League.
 - c.) Provide a series of competitive matches at this age level between clubs in membership of the League.
 - d.) Establish a properly co-ordinated training and development structure.
 - e.) Provide a good standard of training and playing facilities.

B - MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEAGUE

- B1 Membership shall be open to the Under-20 Development teams of all the clubs in membership of the Lowland League, and the Scottish Professional Football League.
- B2 Participating clubs will be required to complete a Membership Return Form, obtainable from the Development League Secretary, and this must be completed in full and returned to the Development League Secretary by the required date each season.
- B3 The annual subscription to the League will be £200 plus VAT and any new club must pay a bond of £250 which will be refunded if all fixtures for the season are fulfilled and there has been no disciplinary proceedings against the team throughout the season at the end of the season, both payments must be received by the League Treasurer by 5pm on 15th June in any year.
- B4 In all matters and transactions relating to the League, each Club shall behave towards each other Club and the League with the utmost good faith.

- B5 No Club, either by itself or its Officials, shall by any means whatsoever disparage, belittle, discredit or unfairly criticise any other Club, or the League or in either case any such other Club or the League's officers, employees or agents (which shall, for the avoidance of doubt, exclude supporters).
- B6 Clubs will engage with the League and will be required to respond timeously and effectively to all requests and instructions. Any Club which fails to respond as requested will be reported to the League sub-committee who will consider if any action is appropriate.
- B7 Communications will be by e-mail. E-mails will be considered to have been received when sent unless there is a failure of delivery notice.
- B8 All Clubs will agree to fulfil the fixtures cast by the League, adhere to the League Rules for a period of twelve (12) months from the commencement of each football season and abide by the decisions of the sub-committee, subject to the right of appeal as provided for under the current Judicial Panel protocol of the Scottish FA.
- B9 Any club that fails to complete its fixtures for the season, once the matches have commenced, will be liable for a £250 fine which must be paid within 14 days from the date the Development League secretary has been notified in writing of the club's decision to withdraw. If the club decides to apply to enter the league the following season, or any future season after that, then it will be liable to pay a bond of £500 which will be repaid at the end of that season provided it has completed all its fixtures. No such bond will apply to the club for any season after that provided it completes all its fixtures.
- B10 Clubs that have a poor disciplinary record in any season will be cited to appear before the Development League's sub-committee which has the right to place a sanction or sanctions against said club.
- B11 The League may enter into contracts with commercial sponsors and broadcasters and grant certain rights as the League may in its discretion determine to such parties in relation to the League and any Cup Competitions.
- B12 All clubs participating in the competitions undertake to provide any rights, facilities and other services as may be necessary for the League to perform the League's obligations.

- B13 All clubs must provide services and facilities pursuant to any contract relating to sponsorship, Radio and Television coverage of the League.
- B14 Failure and/or refusal by a club to comply with any of the terms of the League's obligations as intimated shall be deemed to be an infringement of the Rules and such a club shall be liable to a fine, censure, suspension, ejection from the competition or a combination thereof.

C – FINANCE

- C1 All Clubs will, by 5pm on 15th June each year, pay to the League Treasurer an Annual Subscription of £200.00 plus VAT.
- C2 The funds of the League will be controlled through an approved Bank Account standing in the name of the League. Cheques or electronic transactions are to be approved (by signature when appropriate) by the sub-committee.
- C3 A financial statement, duly examined and approved, will be submitted to each Club in membership prior to a General Meeting before the season commences. An Auditor, who may be independent of any club in membership of the League, will be appointed by the sub-committee to audit the League's accounts.
- C4 The League's accounts will be prepared and maintained on a calendar year basis.

D – GOVERNANCE

- D1 The Under 20 Development League shall be governed by The Board of the Scottish Lowland Football League who shall have full powers in all matters relating to the League.
- D2 The Board of the Scottish Lowland Football League shall delegate the administrative affairs of the League to a sub-committee comprising of one Scottish Lowland Football League Board member, League Secretary and 6 other members from any of the Clubs participating in the League. The sub-committee will be chaired by an office bearer of the Scottish Lowland Football League.

- D3 Decisions of the Sub-Committee shall be binding on all participating clubs, subject to the right of appeal in the first instance to The Board of the Scottish Lowland Football League and subsequently under the provisions of the current Appeals procedure of the Scottish Football Association.
- D4 All appeals to The Board must be submitted by Recorded Delivery letter to the Secretary of the Scottish Lowland Football League within seven days of the meeting at which the decision appealed against was taken, if the appellant was present at the meeting, or within seven days of the date on which the decision was intimated to the appellant by Recorded Delivery letter if they were not present at the meeting and must be accompanied by an appeal fee of £25 which may at the discretion of The Board be retained. In any dispute or appeal which affects the progress of a cup competition the decision of The Board will be final and binding. These Terms of Reference and Principles shall be subject to the approval of The Scottish Football Association.
- D5 At least 5 members of the sub-committee are required to be present to form a quorum.
- D6 Members of the sub-committee must be listed on the Board or Committee of the club they represent.
- D7 No Club may have more than one representative on the sub-committee with the exception of the club with which the Chairman is attached but in any event no club may cast more than one vote should any votes be required.
- D8 The Chairman shall have no vote, either deliberative or casting, at meetings of the League sub-committee.
- D9 The sub-committee shall elect from within its membership a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall be responsible for the day-to-day administrative functions required.
- D10 Any matters which require urgent consideration will be referred to the League sub-committee.
- D11 Members of the Board or other Representatives of Member Clubs shall be entitled to re-imbursment of out-of-pocket expenses properly incurred by them in representing the League on official business. In those cases where the expense incurred is for travel the rate paid shall be on the same basis as the rates paid to referees.

- D12 A member of the sub-committee at sub-committee meetings will not be entitled to vote on any issue when the club he represents is involved. At the discretion of the Chairman any member may be asked to leave the meeting once he has stated his club's case and answered any questions from his fellow members. Should such a request be made by the Chairman the member involved must comply.
- D13 The sub-committee will have full executive powers to deal with any Member Club, Club Official, or player as they deem fit, either by expulsion, suspension, fine deduction of points or any such sanction as is deemed appropriate. Appeals against decisions of the sub-committee or League must be lodged with the Scottish FA under the terms of the current Judicial Panel Protocol.
- D14 Any matter not provided herein will be determined by the sub-committee whose decision will be final and binding on all Clubs and parties concerned.
- D15 The sub-committee shall have the power to temporarily suspend, amend or add to the rules as circumstances may dictate from time to time, as it deems appropriate in its reasonable discretion, to facilitate the smooth running of the competition, or to ensure the League can meet any commitments put upon it under the terms of any contracts or agreements with other bodies or sponsors. Any required changes under this rule will be authorised by the Board of the Scottish Lowland Football League.

E – ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

- E1 In order to be eligible to participate in the Under 20 Development League players must be registered for the Club for which they intend to play under the terms of the Registration Procedures as laid down by the Scottish Football Association for Non-Recreational Football with the exception of a player playing as a Trialist in accordance with the terms of Clause 6.3 hereunder.

The transfer of players and transfer deadlines are governed by the relevant rules of the Scottish Lowland Football League, and Scottish Professional Football League

- E2 To be eligible to participate in the Under 20 Development League, the following criteria will apply:-

- Players must be born on or after 1st January 2006

- Up to three over-age players (one of whom must be a goalkeeper and two outfield players) will be allowed to play in the Under 20 Development League or Qualifying League for any club but must be registered in terms of rule E1. Over-age players are not allowed to play in the knock-out stage of any Cup competition.
- No Trialist in terms of rule E3 is eligible to play in the Under 20 Development League as an overage player.

E3 No more than 5 of the players listed on the team sheet of any Club may be trialists in any one Under 20 Development League match or League Cup Section match. Each trialist may be allowed to participate in the Under 20 Development League providing he is otherwise eligible to do so.

Any player who plays for a Club on three or more occasions as a trialist will be deemed to be a registered player of that Club and can only play for another Club in the Scottish Lowland Football League, East of Scotland Football League, South of Scotland Football League and West of Scotland Football League under the terms of the current Scottish Lowland Football League, East of Scotland Football League, South of Scotland Football League and West of Scotland Football League

E4 Any club wishing to play a player registered for a club in membership of The Scottish Youth Football Association as a Trialist in the League must obtain the prior written consent of his club beforehand. These players can play up to a maximum of 12 games in the League or Qualifying League for any club. They cannot, however, play in cup competitions.

E5 All clubs must complete in duplicate the official League teamline containing the list of names and dates of birth of all the players participating and hand to the match referee at least 30 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time.

Any player who is a trialist should be clearly marked with the letter "T" on the teamline and this should also include their full postal address. Overage players should also be clearly shown on the teamline, and the full name, postal address and date of birth also included.

The match referee shall pass one copy of the teamline to the opposing Club prior to the commencement of the match and submit the top copy to the League Secretary within four days of the playing of the match.

F – VENUES, FACILITIES & MATCHES

- F1 All matches in the Under 20 Development League must be played at a ground which has a playing surface and changing accommodation that has been approved and accepted by the Scottish Lowland Football League.
- F2 Clubs must also ensure that there is a barrier between the pitch and spectators, this can be in the form of a permanent barrier or an area for spectators roped off. Failure to comply with this will result in spectators watching the match from outside the playing area if the pitch is caged off.
- F3 Clubs will be required to designate the ground for their home matches, and this cannot be changed without the prior approval of the League.
- F4 In cup ties Clubs may give up their choice of venue to their opponents but in league matches or sectional league cup matches a Club cannot play their home match on their opponent's ground.
- F5 The Fixture Secretary shall have power to arrange matches as deemed necessary. Matches will be scheduled for and will normally be played on a Friday night. However, and with the mutual agreement of both Clubs and the League they may move the date of any match to any date up to the Wednesday of the following week. Any such request should be made to the Fixture Secretary who will then liaise with the sub-committee whose decision will be final and binding.
- F6 Matches will kick-off at a time as intimated by the Fixture Secretary. However, provided both clubs agree it is permissible to change the kick-off time subject to the approval of the Fixture Secretary. The home club will be responsible for confirming match details to their visitors and the referee at least four days before the match is due to take place.
- F7 Referees shall be appointed by The Scottish Football Association. The match fee and travelling expenses for the referee shall be as per the current East of Scotland Football League rates and will be paid by the home Club. Where Assistant referees are appointed, they will be paid the current East of Scotland Football League rate again by the home Club who can then recover half of this from the visitors.

- F8 In the event of the home club not notifying the match referee of any change in the arrangements for a match or its postponement and they travel to the venue they will be entitled to receive half of their match fee plus expenses from the Home Club.
- F9 All Clubs shall be required to appoint an Under 20 Development Co-ordinator who will act as the principal point of contact for all administrative matters relating to the Under 20 Development team. Additionally, Clubs should nominate one person to act as a deputy should the Development Co-ordinator be unavailable.
- F10 All matches shall be played in the terms of the Laws of the Game as recognised by the Scottish Football Association Limited.
- F11 In the event of any match being unfinished owing to fog or other causes over which neither Club has any control, the sub-committee have the discretion to order the match to stand as a completed match or to be replayed for the full ninety (90) minutes.
- F12 A team shall consist of eleven players and is permitted to list up to a maximum of seven (7) substitutes of whom not more than five (5) may take part in the match.
- F13 If any of the players listed to start the match on the Official 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 on the Official Team Line as signed, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. During the match, three players may still be substituted.
- a) If for any reason changes require to be made to the Official Team Line (and the said changes are accepted by the match official) then the Club must notify its opponent and if appropriate the press immediately thereafter.
 - b) If any named substitutes listed on the Official Team Line is not able at 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 Official Team Line as signed.
- F14 The league competition shall be played on a home and away principle, three points for a win and one for a draw. At the end of each season, the Club with the highest points total in each division

(if there is more than one division) will be declared champions of their respective division, 'goal difference' and 'goals for' to decide where necessary.

If two or more Clubs are equal in goal difference the Club scoring the highest number of goals shall be declared the winners. If all three of 'points', 'goal difference' and 'goals for' are exactly the same the respective championships will be decided by the aggregate results of the 'head to head' matches between the Clubs concerned in the league competition during the season and if there is still a tie a play-off will take place between the Clubs concerned at a neutral venue over ninety minutes followed by penalty kicks if necessary to decide a winner.

The cost of Officials, Ground Rent, Catering etc., for the play-off will be met from the gate receipts and any surplus thereafter will accrue to the Under 20 Development League.

F15 Clubs are not allowed to play a Home league match on their opponents ground.

All grounds must comply with the following minimum criteria:

- Registered ground to be available as and when required throughout the season.
- Separate and exclusive changing accommodation for two teams.
- Separate changing accommodation for up to four match officials.
- Spectators must be separated from the field of play by a wall, a rope, a railing or a fence.
- Goal nets and corner flags shall be used at all matches.

F16 Home Clubs will be responsible for deciding on the level of admission charges and will retain all gate receipts.

F17 Any decision to declare a ground unplayable must, where possible, be made by a qualified, practicing Referee.

F18 In all matches Clubs may list up to seven substitutes of whom five can be used and the only team lines acceptable will be as issued by the Secretary.

F19 Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury or due to extenuating circumstances be unable to participate after the submission of the list of players to the referee and prior to the kick-off, permission should be sought from the opposing club in consultation with the referee to replace that player either in the team list or list of substitutes.

- F20 The maximum number of occupants of the Technical Area will be twelve including substitute players. All occupants of the Technical Area (except substitute players who must be clearly indicated in the team section) must be named and their designation shown in a separate section of the team line, and each must have a clearly defined reason for being therein.
- F21 Twenty (20) players and one (1) manager of the conference winning team will be presented with mementoes which shall be of a quality and pattern approved by the Under 20 Development League. Clubs may apply to the Under 20 Development League to purchase additional mementoes if they so desire.
- F22 The conference (s) winning team will be presented with a Trophy to be held for one year. The trophy must be returned at least one month before the last league match of the following season is due to be played, in good order and condition. On no account should any engraving to, or alteration of, the Cup be undertaken by any Club, this will be the responsibility of the Under 20 Development League which will then invoice the winning Club as appropriate.
- F23 The Scottish Football Association will deal with all disciplinary matters in relation to field offences by players and other misconduct reports submitted by referees.
- F24 When a Club intends to lodge a protest they must do so by writing to the Secretary by recorded delivery letter within three days of the playing of the match (Sunday not included) and at the same time send, also by recorded delivery, an exact copy of the protest to the Club protested against.
- The protest to the Secretary should include a deposit of £100 which may be either wholly or partially retained as the sub-committee think fit and the sub-committee shall have the power to order either Club to pay such sum towards defraying the expenses incurred and take such action as they deem fit.
- F25 Any objection to the ground, goal posts, crossbars or other appurtenances of the game must be intimated to the referee and Secretary or other recognised official of the opposing team prior to the start of the match. The Home Club shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with Law 1 of the Laws of the Game – The Field of Play.
- F26 Any Club which refuses or fails to play an allocated fixture will be reported to the sub-committee they make take such action as they deem appropriate.

- F27 In all cases where a match does not take place as allocated by the Fixture Secretary, except where it is not played because of an unplayable pitch, both Clubs are required to submit their comments to the Fixture Secretary, in writing, as to why the match did not take place within three days of the appointed date of the match.
- F28 Any club, official, player or other person, who is found to be in breach of any of these rules shall be liable to disciplinary action.
- F29 The home Club must confirm details of the fixture, colours, travel directions and kick-off time with both the visiting club and the match referee at least four days prior to the date of the match.
- F30 In all matches Clubs shall play in their registered first choice strip unless the first-choice colours of both Clubs are the same or similar in which case the away club shall change and play in distinctive colours.
- F31 By participating in Lowland Under 20 Development League competitions all clubs agree to conform to all of the rules and the specific competition rules in their entirety.