

NORTHERN IRELAND BOYS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association

Est. 1976 – Constitution 2018

www.nibfa.org

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AFFILIATED TO
IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

SECTION 1
NIBFA CONSTITUTION 2018

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME – The Association shall be called “The Northern Ireland Boys Football Association” (herein after called “NIBFA”)

2. OBJECTS – The objects of NIBFA shall be to legislate for, foster, develop and improve the game of Association Football among all classes of youth football clubs, leagues or associations of such clubs in Northern Ireland and to conduct annually such competitions and events as aid the development and promotion of association football in Northern Ireland.

3. **NIBFA COMMITTEE**

(a) The management of NIBFA shall be vested in the NIBFA Committee, consisting of the following office bearers: - a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and elected and/or co-opted representatives not exceeding 9 persons from Clubs and or Leagues in Membership of NIBFA.

(b) The NIBFA committee members and office bearers shall be elected bi-annually (Commencing 2015). All retiring office bearers shall be eligible for re-election.

(c) Nomination of any candidate for any office shall be submitted in writing to the NIBFA Administration Officer not later than 14 days prior to the notified date of the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting called for the purpose. The NIBFA Committee may at any time fill a vacancy amongst the Office Bearers and any Office Bearer so chosen shall hold office for the unexpired period of his predecessor’s term of office.

(d) Five (5) members of the NIBFA Committee shall form a quorum. In the event of a vacancy occurring at any time, the NIBFA Committee shall have the power to fill such vacancy.

4. **MEMBERSHIP**

(a) All youth football clubs, leagues and associations shall be granted membership, subject as required to completion of the necessary annual registration form, the approval of the NIBFA Committee and payment of Annual Membership Subscription and the required insurance premium.

(b) All Clubs in membership must be controlled and managed by a committee registered to NIBFA.

(c) All Leagues in membership must be controlled and managed by a committee registered to NIBFA and adopt the model league constitution and Rules as issued by NIBFA.

5. **MEETINGS**

- (a) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – The Annual General Meeting of the NIBFA shall be held each year, not later than the 30th June.

The order of business at the Annual General Meetings shall be as follows: - (a) Adoption of previous AGM minutes, (b) Secretary's Report, (c) Treasurer's Report, (d) Proposed alterations to the constitution (e) Proposed alterations to the Cup Competition Rules, (f) Election of Office Bearers, (g) Any other competent business.

- (b) EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING –

(b1) The NIBFA shall convene an EGM upon receipt of a requisition, signed by a registered official of a least 25% of all Clubs or 50% of Leagues in membership, within 28 days of receipt of such a requisition.

(b2) The requisition shall state the business to be considered and shall be accompanied by a deposit in the sum of £500.

(b3) The member Clubs or Leagues signing the requisition may forfeit their deposit and/or may be liable for the reasonable expenses of the EGM should the requisition be deemed frivolous.

(b4) The NIBFA may call an EGM by a simple majority vote of the NIBFA committee and shall convene an EGM within 28 days of such a vote.

- (c) NIBFA COMMITTEE MEETINGS – Meetings of the NIBFA Committee shall be held at a venue and date notified by the NIBFA Administration Officer.

- (d) A quorum for AGM or EGM meetings will be 10 persons excluding office bearers.

- (e) At the AGM or any EGM All motions other than those relating to the alteration of the Constitution & Rules of NIBFA shall be carried by at least a Two Thirds majority vote of those present at the meeting and entitled to vote. Each Club or League shall be entitled to send a representative to an AGM or EGM, representatives in attendance will have one vote. Clubs and Leagues in default of their financial obligations more than 30 days to NIBFA will not be entitled to a vote.

6. **ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION**

The NIBFA Constitution and or Rules may be added to or altered by a Resolution passed at an Annual General Meeting, or at an Extraordinary General Meeting duly convened for the purpose, and for the passing of which resolution at least 75% majority of those present entitled to vote.

Notice from a member of any proposed addition or alteration to the Constitution to be put forward for consideration at the Annual General Meeting must be sent by Special Delivery signed by the proposer and seconder, signed by the respective secretary of the member club or league proposing and seconding, to the NIBFA Administration Officer 14 days before the notified date of the Annual General Meeting in the then current year. Notice from a member of any other Resolution to be

brought before an Annual General Meeting must be sent in like manner 14 days before the notified date of the Annual General Meeting.

The NIBFA Committee shall have the power to propose additions or alterations to the Constitution and or Rules for consideration at the Annual General Meeting, excepting in exceptional circumstances and to assist with the continued smooth operation of the NIBFA, the NIBFA Committee reserve the right to temporarily amend any rule or article in the constitution. Such alteration or amendment should subsequently be submitted to the membership at an AGM or EGM called for the purpose for the permanent inclusion or deletion from the constitution and or rules.

Seven days at least before any Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting a notice of such meeting, and the business to be transacted thereat, shall be sent to the secretary of each club or league in membership and to each member of the NIBFA Committee. Only business contained on the notice of such meeting will be considered competent. An admission card for voting purposes will be issued on registration at all meetings.

Any alteration to the Constitution or rules shall be advised to the Secretary of the Irish Football Association.

7. **LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

Past Chairpersons, on retiring from office shall be granted life membership of the NIBFA. In addition, the office bearers may recommend at the A.G.M. that life membership be granted to any person whom it is considered has rendered valuable service to NIBFA or in the cause of youth football. Persons granted membership in such fashion will not be eligible to sit on committees.

8. **CHAIR**

The appointed Chairperson of NIBFA shall preside over all meetings. In the event of his/her absence the chair shall be taken by either the Vice Chairperson or an agreed office bearer of NIBFA. The Chairperson shall have both a deliberative and casting vote at all meetings, and his/her rule shall be final.

9. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Any member of NIBFA Committee who has a vested interest in any discussion or decision under consideration MUST declare such interest. A member with such interest shall be required to retire from the meeting during the discussion or consideration or while a decision is being taken in respect of any case involving his/her Club or Officials or players connected with his/her Club.

10. **FINANCE**

The Treasurer shall be responsible for all money transactions and at the Annual General Meeting submit a detailed statement of accounts. The Audited accounts of NIBFA will be available for inspection upon completion. The Bank account will be in the name of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association, the signatories being a minimum of three nominated officials. Two signatures are required for all financial transactions.

11. **ADMINISTRATION**

The NIBFA in conjunction with the Irish Football Association shall appoint and/or employ an Administration/Development Officer and other such persons as they see fit.

12. **APPEALS**

A club, player or club representative may appeal to an NIBFA Appeals Committee against a decision of a club, league or association only after exhausting all other appeals procedures as available within the relevant League or Association and appeal directly against a decision of NIBFA affecting such club, player or club representative. Such appeals shall be dispatched to the NIBFA Administration Officer by special delivery within seven days of receipt of written notice of the decision of the league, association or club concerned. A Deposit shall be lodged with each appeal. In the case of a player this shall be £50, and in the case of any other appellant it shall be £100.

This deposit may be forfeited if the Appeals Committee so decides. The grounds of appeal must be specifically stated and if the Appeals Committee considers the appeal frivolous or trivial, the appellant may be liable to a financial penalty.

The decision against which any appeal is made will only be set aside when the appeal is received by the NIBFA Administration Officer and found to be in order and confirmation of such from NIBFA is received in writing by the parties concerned.

All clubs, leagues and associations must incorporate in their rules, a clause, specifying the right of their members to appeal to the NIBFA after exhausting all appropriate procedures within the relevant league or association and stating that the decision of the Appeals Committee must be given effect to by such club, league or association, subject to the right of appeal to the Irish Football Association.

13. **DISSOLUTION**

If upon the winding up or dissolution of NIBFA there remains, after the satisfaction of all its liabilities, any assets whatsoever including cash and physical assets shall be given and their ownership transferred to The Irish Football Association.

14. **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Reference will be made to the location of this information on the relevant website.

15. **INTERPRETATION**

The NIBFA shall be the final authority of the interpretation of the Constitution and Rules, decisions upon questions of interpretation and on matters affecting NIBFA not provided for by the Constitution or Rules shall be final and binding on all members.

SECTION 2
NIBFA COMPETITION RULES

1. REGISTRATION OF LEAGUES & CLUBS

All Clubs/Teams must submit their competition entries on the online club affiliation system or on a completed affiliation form by 31st August annually, accompanied by subscription fees as detailed on the form. Any changes to the original details supplied must be notified to NIBFA in writing or by email within two working days of such change.

2. COMPETITIONS

(a) The competitions shall be called The Northern Ireland Boys F.A. Cups and reflect the relevant age groups U11 to U18. A Plate competition may be offered in 9 a side competition to teams eliminated in the first round of the Cup. A sponsor's name may be added to one or all titles, as and when such sponsorship is attracted. The competitions shall be open to all affiliated teams of the NIBFA who have paid the appropriate entry fee and NIBFA Insurance premium for the season by the 31st August

(b) The competitions for the Cups/Plates shall be played annually and shall be conducted within the Laws of the Game as settled by FIFA, and as directed by NIBFA including the 9 a side competition

(c) NIBFA committee will determine the format of competitions on an annual basis.

(d) NIBFA reserves the right to appoint the venue for all fixtures.

(e) The team listed first will be designated the home team.

3. AGE QUALIFICATIONS OF PLAYERS

All competitions will be open to players who meet the qualifying dates as stated on the NIBFA affiliation form. Teams wishing to play female players (will be granted a concession of playing a female player in an age group 1 year below her date of birth across all age groups)

4. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

A. Players registered within a league who hold a valid ID card for a participating team will be deemed eligible to play subject to not having played for any other club in the competition. Players may only play for one team in their own age group for a club but may play for one other team in each older age group within the approved age bands (please refer to the conditions in Paragraph B)

B. Teams may include players from an age group below. (However, players playing in the 9-a-Side competitions may not play in the 11-a-Side format and similarly players who have played at 11 a side may not take part in the 9 a side format) Players are restricted to playing for those age groups either immediately 1 year or 2 years above the age group for which he or she qualifies. For the sake of clarity under 12 players will also be permitted to play at U13 & U14, an U13 player will also be permitted to play at U14 & U15 etc. In all cases

it is the responsibility of coaches and parents to assess the player is physically capable of meeting the demands of an older age group.

C. Clubs may play any additional player recruited before 1st February of any season's competition if that player has been registered with the club in their league prior to that date but must not have played in the competition with any other club at any age group. The transfer of players will be subject to the transferring player having all payments / kit returns up to date with their current club, outstanding dues/kit returns will delay this registration being processed.

D. NIBFA may permit a registered Goalkeeper to be replaced after the 1st February in any season of a competition on production of certified medical evidence that the original registered goalkeeper is incapable of further participation in the competition. Subject to the replacement not having played for any other Club in the competition.

E. Anyone who, in football related activities, forges a document, falsifies an authentic document or uses a forged or falsified document to deceive in legal relations will be sanctioned within the disciplinary rules as are in place at the time of the offence. Disciplinary Rule 13.2, 13.3 & 13.4

5. **MATCH SCHEDULING**

(5.1) Notification of cup-ties shall be sent to the leagues and to both clubs. The league to which the home club is affiliated will be responsible for appointing a referee to the tie. The draws will also be posted on the association's website www.nibfa.org as soon as practically possible after the draw.

(5.2) All cup-ties must be played on or before the date specified on the match notification. Fixtures can only be postponed from their scheduled date if the league of the "Home" team or NIBFA are unable to provide a venue to host the fixture, teams that use a "Home" venue will be allocated a venue by their league in the event of their "Home" venue being unavailable or unplayable or in exceptional circumstances if a date has been pre-booked with their league for a bye by the team/s involved in any individual fixture. Teams who fail to meet this criterion will forfeit the cup tie in the event of not fielding on a scheduled date.

NIBFA will not sanction any team organising two games on the same day to facilitate the playing of an NIBFA Cup tie.

(5.3) Any club refusing to play the club against which it has been drawn shall be reported to NIBFA, which shall take any action deemed appropriate.

(5.4) It is the duty of the home club to inform their opponents of the location and direction to the match venue making direct contact with the opposition manager at least (3) days prior to the date of the tie, in addition, in the event of a cancellation due to unplayable pitch or other emergency postponement, to inform the opposing team as early as practically possible to avoid unnecessary travel. Apart from unforeseen change any potential

cancellations should be confirmed by pitch inspection on the day prior to the date of the match.

(5.5) For any late cancellation of matches, the away club may submit a claim for travel expenses against a home club. Only travel expenses incurred and receipted will be considered. Where negligence is proven against the home club the relevant committee may apportion all or part of the travel costs against the home club.

6. **POSTPONEMENTS**

Any tie that is postponed should take place 14 days after the original date unless the competition is being held up, in which case NIBFA will ask the relevant leagues to permit arrangement of the tie to take place earlier. Where a postponement occurs, the team drawn at home initially will have the opportunity to arrange the game on **one** further occasion thereafter the away team will, in conjunction with their league, facilitate the tie. Each switch of responsibility will permit teams two opportunities to host the game.

7. **REFEREES**

(7.1) The league to which the home team is affiliated is responsible for appointing a referee to the tie other than for the semi-finals and finals when NIBFA will appoint all officials.

(7.2) In the event of a referee not turning up the clubs may mutually agree on a referee but failing same the referee will be decided by toss of a coin (or otherwise). The same referee should referee all the game unless he is injured.

(7.3) The referee's fee shall be paid by the home team up until the semi-final and final when same will be paid by NIBFA.

(7.4) Protests about the ground, goalposts, crossbar or other appurtenances of the game must be made in writing to the referee and to the secretary or official in charge of the opposing team prior to kick off whereupon the referee will decide if the game will proceed on the day.

(7.5) When a referee has travelled and the match does not proceed for any reason he shall be paid half of the referee's fee which will be met by the home team.

8. **MATCH DAYS**

(8.1) 11 a side matches played in NIBFA Cup competitions will be of the following duration;

U13	30 minutes each way
U14 U15 U16 U17	35 minutes each way

If these ties are still undecided after normal time then a further 10 minutes each way extra time will apply. If the tie is still undecided, the result of the tie shall be decided by the taking of penalty kicks in accordance with the rules of the game as set down by FIFA.

9 a side matches played in NIBFA Cup/Plate competitions will be of the following duration;

U11 U12 25 minutes each way

In 9 a side all ties up to Semi-Final and Final matches that end in a draw will go straight to penalties in accordance with the rules of the game as set down by FIFA. In Semi- Final and Final ties only for the 9 side competitions extra time of 5 minutes each way will apply. If the tie is still undecided, the result of the tie shall be decided by the taking of penalty kicks in accordance with the rules of the game as set down by FIFA.

(8.2) NIBFA cup/plate-ties, up to the semi-final stage, will kick off at 11.00 am on a Saturday unless by agreement between the teams. Arrangements about alternative kick off times or dates must be agreed by NIBFA. Any dispute about kick off times or dates will be resolved by NIBFA. NIBFA will determine the kick off times, dates and venues for semi-finals and finals.

Where local teams are drawn against each other, the league facilitating the fixture may set the day and kick off time subject to pitch availability.

(8.3) Any protests about player eligibility or the match venue should be made in writing to the referee prior to kick off whereupon the referee will decide if the game will proceed on the day.

(8.4) When clubs have the same or similar colours the visiting team will have the choice of colours. In the semi-final and final the decision will be made by the toss of a coin. Clubs must not use kit branded with any form of Alcohol, Tobacco or gambling promotion logo.

- (8.5) (a) In all matches the Team manager must print clearly the full name of the player on the match card against the shirt number to be worn and submit it to the referee prior to the commencement of the match.
- (b) Match Cards must be signed by an official of each Club. The date of the match, the age group and the match result must be noted on the match card.
- (c) All dismissals and cautions must be noted on the match card by the referee. In addition, all dismissals must be reported by an official of the dismissed players/officials Team via the appropriate contact number listed on the match card within 24 hours of the match. Contact by telephone, email or text must include full detail of the offence, name of player/official and if player the shirt number. The information should also include the date, time, age group, venue and opposition. ALL dismissals must be reported even in cases where the referee later indicates he may have made an error.
- (d) All match cards will be subject to scrutiny by NIBFA.
- (e) A Team official of the WINNING TEAM must forward the match card to the address notified on the card.
- (f) A Team official of the WINNING TEAM must report the result immediately after the match to the number noted on the match.

(8.6) In 11-a-side games 16 players can be named on the Match Card and up to 5 substitutes can be used. In 9-a-side games (15) players can be named and up to (6) substitutes can be used. Rolling substitutions will be permitted in the following manner:

Any player, who has been substituted, himself becomes a substitute and may replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

Law 3—The Number of Players

Other than small sided games where each team consists of 9 players one of whom is a goalkeeper, A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated; for all 11 a side matches organised under the jurisdiction of the NIBFA (Five) 5 substitutes may be used. For all small sided 9 a side matches 6 substitutes may be used.

All Matches—In all matches, the names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the start of the match. Substitutes not named on the match card may not take part in the match.

Substitution Procedure—To replace a player by substitution, the following conditions must be observed:

- The referee is informed before any proposed substitution is made
- A substitute only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left and after receiving a signal from the referee
- A substitute only enters the field of play at the halfway line and during a stoppage in the match

- A substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play. From that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player he has replaced is now a substitute.
- All substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not.

Changing the Goalkeeper— any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that:

- The referee is informed before the change is made
- The change is made during a stoppage in the match.

Infringements/Sanctions—If a substitute enters the field of play without the referee's permission:

- Play is stopped
- The substitute is cautioned, shown the yellow card and required to leave the field of play

- Play is restarted with an indirect free kick at the place the ball was located when play was stopped.

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission before the change is made:

- Play continues
- The players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card when the ball is next out of play.

For any other infringements of this Law:

- The players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card

Restart of Play:

- If play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:
- the match is restarted by an indirect free kick, to be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.

Players and Substitutes Sent Off—A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes. A named substitute, who has been sent off, either before the kick-off or after play has started, may not be replaced.

(8.7) Substitutes must be listed on the Match Card before the match commences. Any substitute not used will not be cup tied.

(8.8) All teams MUST produce ID Cards across all age groups in the competitions

Any team failing to produce ID cards to the opposition on match day will forfeit the match. This rule applies to all teams. The status of such matches must be verified by the referee.

Teams whose leagues do not issue ID cards can apply to NIBFA to obtain same, subject to presentation of the necessary identity documentation.

No protest will be entertained from teams who subsequently claim to NIBFA they were not shown ID cards prior to the match.

(8.9) Ties at U11, 12 & 13 size 4 footballs will be used. U14 – U18 level a size 5 Football will be used. The HOME Team shall provide (2) match standard footballs. The Away team shall carry (2) match standard footballs to each game as back up.

(8.10) Teams are responsible for the behaviour of their players and officials and for the behaviour of spectators who are deemed to be attached to that club. Any reported misbehaviour on the part of any of the above will be dealt with by NIBFA by whatever penalties it thinks fit up to and including expulsion from the competition.

(8.11) Matches involving male and female players may be played provided all the participating players comply with the Registration Procedures of the NIBFA. The following conditions are recommended:

- a) The League/Association of which the club is in membership be informed of a club's wish to involve male and female players in the same team.
- b) Clubs wishing to play male and female players in the same team have both male and female committee members and appropriate parent /guardian present as good practice.
- c) The club secretary of any club wishing to play male and female players in the same team will be responsible for informing their opponents and checking that separate changing facilities are available when arranging any match. On arrival at the match venue it is the club's responsibility to check that the facilities are suitable before players can change.

If no suitable facilities are available it is the responsibility of the club wishing to play male and female players in the same team to make alternative arrangements.

Officials and players of opposite gender are not permitted to be in the dressing room or immediate surrounds, when players or officials of the opposite gender are in the process of changing.

Club members, who receive injuries during any club activity, should only be treated by a qualified First Aider or a medically qualified person. It is the responsibility of any club with members of the opposite gender to aim to have the following in place:

1. A first aider of each gender
2. A medically qualified person who is registered with the UK Central Council of the GMC or similar authorised medical body. This person to identify himself or herself to the match official before the match commences.
3. Any such person must prior to commencement of the match identify to the match referee any personal relationship with any player/s and exceptionally would then be allowed to treat any such injured player.
4. If points 1, 2 and 3 are not met and if the first aider is of the opposite gender to the club member being treated, they must be accompanied when the first aid is administered, by a club official of the same gender as the club member being treated.

The above conditions are recommended to be in place for the duration of all club activities.

9. **MONITORS**

NIBFA reserve the right to appoint monitors to any game who will have the power to check player and official IDs and to report on any misconduct or matters affecting NIBFA games.

10. **UNFINISHED GAMES**

- (a) Results for matches that are abandoned because of inclement weather having played a minimum of 80% of the scheduled time of the match will stand.

- (b) The status of matches that are abandoned because of inclement weather having played less than 80% of the scheduled time will be decided by NIBFA.
- (c) The status of all other matches that are abandoned or unfinished shall be determined by NIBFA with reference to Disciplinary Code Rule 19

11. **MATCH POSTPONEMENTS**

- (a) Where venues have been appointed by a League in conjunction with a local authority it will be the final decision of the local authority as to the fitness of the ground for play.
- (b) In cases where the Home Team has a registered venue not owned or controlled by local authority it will be the decision of the Home Team grounds man or other club appointee responsible for grounds maintenance in the first instance to decide on the fitness of the ground for play or failing such then the decision of the referee will be final.
- (c) The home Club must immediately inform their league, referee, visiting club and NIBFA if a postponement is necessary, in default of which the Home Club may at the discretion of NIBFA be required to pay half of the referee's match fee and the travelling expenses, in whole or part of the Visiting Club.
- (d) The reason for the non-fulfilment of any fixture shall be investigated by NIBFA

12. **MATCH PRIORITY**

Competitions of the NIBFA shall have precedence over member League competitions.

13. **REPRESENTATIVE GAMES**

- (a) NIBFA shall have the power to select player/s from any Team, to represent the association. Such representation shall be on a voluntary basis and no penalty for non-participation shall ensue.
- (b) A team may apply for a postponement of a league fixture should two or more players including a goalkeeper be selected to play for any NIBFA or IFA Representative team.

14. **TROPHIES**

Trophies for NIBFA Competitions shall be presented to the respective winners. The maximum number of medals that will be issued to any teams in any 11 a side competition will be limited to 20 unless the actual number of players registered is less than twenty (20). In 9 a side competition the maximum number of medals will be limited to fifteen (15)

15. **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

- (a) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against which it is drawn within the time notified to it, and without sufficient reason for doing so, shall be liable for disqualification.
- (b) Any Club intending to forfeit a game must give notice to the Secretary of the opposing Club and NIBFA prior to the date of the tie. NIBFA will impose whatever penalties it thinks fit up to and including disqualification from the competition for the following year.
- (c) NIBFA shall fix the venue for the semi-final and final tie and have direct control of games, receipts and donations from funds raised in connection therewith.
- (d) No player shall play for more than one Club in a cup or plate competition during any one season and this rule shall also apply irrespective of any transfer made in season.
- (e) All cup-ties will be played to a finish at the first time of asking.
- (f) Players who wear glasses will only be permitted on the field of play if approved prescription safety glasses are in place for the duration of the match.

16 **BREACH OF NIBFA RULES**

Any breach of NIBFA rules may render the player, official or Club liable to censure, fine or suspension or a combination of such penalties as NIBFA deem fit to impose.

SECTION 3

NIBFA CUP & PLATE - DISCIPLINARY RULES

RULE 1: ADOPTION & ENFORCEMENT

- 1.1. The NORTHERN IRELAND BOYS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (NIBFA) adopted this disciplinary code on (26.06.2018).
- 1.2. This code is effective from (01.07.2018).

RULE 2: DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Player: A person whose name appears on the match card for the relevant match.
- 2.2. Official: Any person aged 18 years or over who, whether registered with a member Club or not, acts on behalf of a member Club or is in the dressing room or enters the field of play on behalf of a member Club or acts as a match official or is in a member Club's technical area or assists in the running of the member Club.
- 2.3. Match Official: The referee, assistant referees, 4th Official or any other person appointed by the NIBFA regarding the administration of a match.

RULE 3: GENDER & NUMBER

- 3.1. Terms within the NIBFA Disciplinary Code referring to the players, officials or match officials are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa.

RULE 4: CULPABILITY

- 4.1. Unless otherwise specified, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed deliberately, recklessly or negligently.

RULE 5: ACTS AMOUNTING TO ATTEMPT

- 5.1. Acts amounting to attempt are also punishable.
- 5.2. In the case of acts amounting to attempt, NIBFA may reduce the penalty for the infringement accordingly. It will determine the extent of the mitigation as it sees fit.

RULE 6: BREACH OF NIBFA RULES

- 6.1. Any breach of NIBFA rules may render the player, official or Club liable to censure, fine or suspension, or a combination of such penalties as NIBFA deem fit to impose.
- 6.2. NIBFA reserves the right to carry out investigations, make appropriate enquiries and invite comments from players, officials or clubs as it sees fit in relation to any disciplinary matter.
- 6.3. Players, Officials or Clubs will have the right to be heard before any decision is passed on a disciplinary matter other than those relating to cautions and dismissals, except in the case of alleged mistaken identity for a player who is cautioned or dismissed in a match.

RULE 7: FAILURE TO REPLY TO CORRESPONDENCE

- 7.1. Any failure to reply to NIBFA correspondence which requests a response, within the period stated in such correspondence may render the player, official or Club liable to censure, fine or suspension, or a combination of such penalties as NIBFA deem fit to impose.

RULE 8: CAUTIONS & DISMISSALS

- 8.1. All dismissals and cautions must be noted on the match card.

RULE 9: CAUTIONS

- 9.1. A caution is a warning from the referee to a player or an official during a match to sanction minor infringements (See Law 12 of the Laws of the Game).
- 9.2. A player who receives 2 cautions during the same match will be dismissed and, consequently, an automatic suspension from the next match.
- 9.3. Cautions received during one season are cancelled at the conclusion of that season and are not carried over to the next season.

RULE 10: DISMISSALS

- 10.1. A dismissal is the order given by the referee to someone to leave the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitute's bench.

- 10.2. A player who is dismissed from the field of play for 2 yellow cards in an NIBFA Competition will be automatically suspended with immediate effect for 1 match in that competition even if he was dismissed in a match that is later abandoned. Any player who accumulates 2 yellow cards will be automatically suspended from the next match in the competition should the team progress.
- 10.3. A player who is dismissed from the field of play for a straight Red Card offence in an NIBFA Competition will be automatically suspended with immediate effect for 2 matches in that competition even if he was dismissed in a match that is later abandoned. Additional suspensions may be imposed by NIBFA on receipt of the match officials report
- 10.4. A player who is cautioned or dismissed after the final whistle or outside the field of play will be dealt with as a field offence.
- 10.5 Any unserved suspension after a team is eliminated from an NIBFA Competition will be served in the league in which that player is registered.

RULE 11: SUSPENSION

- 11.1. A suspended player may not play for any team in an NIBFA competition until the suspension is served. League matches are exempt from the suspension until the team to which the player is registered has been eliminated from the competition. (See Rule 10.5 above)

Suspensions issued by a member league will be given effect in NIBFA Competitions until the suspension has been served.

A suspended official may not participate with any team in an NIBFA competition until the suspension is served. League matches are exempt from the suspension until the team to which the official is registered has been eliminated from the competition. (See Rule 10.5 above)

- 11.2. NIBFA reserves the right to designate a venue for any match under the jurisdiction of NIBFA and or impose a venue ban in the event of incidents of a sufficiently serious nature.
- 11.3. In the event of a suspension being imposed the player's or official's Club will be advised of the details of the suspension. It is each Club's responsibility to ensure the eligibility of their players for any match.

RULE 12: DISCIPLINARY MATTERS ARISING BY WAY OF REFEREE'S REPORT OR OTHERWISE

- 12.1. Disciplinary matters affecting NIBFA will be dealt with in the first instance by a person or persons nominated by NIBFA. Any appeal relating to that decision/s will be heard by a Disciplinary Appeals Panel which will consist of at least three persons nominated by NIBFA.

The person or persons involved in making the original decision which is the subject of the appeal, will not be eligible to hear the appeal.

- 12.2. NIBFA may consider or investigate any incident of misconduct, misbehaviour or any act likely to bring the game or NIBFA into disrepute by any player, official or Club it becomes aware of through any source.
- 12.3. Upon consideration or investigation of any such incident or act NIBFA may impose whatever penalty it deems fit using this disciplinary code as a guide.
- 12.4. A player, official or Club which is penalised for misconduct, misbehaviour or actions likely to bring NIBFA into disrepute may appeal against such penalty to the disciplinary appeals panel.

RULE 13: MISCONDUCT BY PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

- 13.1. Misconduct by players or officials will be dealt with by NIBFA as they deem fit.
- 13.2. Forgery and falsification, if the perpetrator is a player, that player in addition to any other sanction imposed by the committee, will be suspended for a minimum of 6 matches.
- 13.3. If the perpetrator is an official, a player's agent or an intermediary, that official, player's agent or intermediary will in addition to any other sanction imposed by the committee be subject to a ban on taking part in any football related activity for a period of at least 12 months.
- 13.4. If the perpetrator is an association or a club, that association or club will in addition to any other sanction imposed by the committee, be subject to an expulsion from a competition and or a fine.

RULE 14: MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS

- 14.1. If a player or official makes comments by email, fax, text or telephone or in the media or social media regarding NIBFA or games or matters involving NIBFA which imply bias, question integrity, bring the game into disrepute or are abusive, offensive and/or insulting will be dealt with by NIBFA as they deem fit.

RULE 15: UNIDENTIFIED AGGRESSORS

- 15.1. If, in the case of violence by players, officials or supporters it is not possible to identify the perpetrator(s), NIBFA may penalise the Club to which the aggressors are deemed to belong.

RULE 16: INCITING HATRED & VIOLENCE

- 16.1. A player or official who carries out an act of incitement to hatred or violence or who incites others to hatred or violence will be penalised with a suspension for not less than twelve months and a minimum fine of £100 will be imposed on their Club.
- 16.2. In serious cases, in particular when the infringement is committed using the mass media (such as the press, radio or television) or if it takes place on a match day in or around a venue, a minimum fine of £250 will be imposed on their Club.

RULE 17: PROVOKING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- 17.1. A player or official who provokes the public during a match will be penalised with a suspension for two matches.

Rule 18: INELIGIBILITY THROUGH SUSPENSION

- 18.1. Any player or official who participates in a match whilst being suspended or breaches the terms of his suspension will be dealt with by NIBFA as they deem fit.

RULE 19: ABANDONMENT

- 19.1. If a team is found to have caused the abandonment of a match it will be penalised and a minimum fine of £250 and whatever other penalties NIBFA deem fit. NIBFA will then decide on the outcome of the match. The matter will be reported to the league of the offending team/s
- 19.2. Where several persons (officials and/or players) from the same Club simultaneously breach Article 19.1 or there are other aggravating circumstances, the fines and penalties may be increased and the team concerned may be disqualified from the competition.
- 19.3. Where supporters of a team breach Rule 19.1 at a match, a minimum fine of £200 shall be imposed on the Club concerned and whatever other penalties NIBFA deem fit.

RULE 20: DISCRIMINATION

- 20.1. A player or official who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning Race, Religious Belief and/or Political Opinion, Age, Sex, Disability and Sexual Orientation and a minimum fine of £100 will be imposed on their Club. If the perpetrator is an official, the fine shall be at least £200 and will also be imposed on their Club.
- 20.2. NIBFA may in more serious offences of discrimination impose additional penalties, including an order to play a match at a neutral/controlled venue, the forfeit of a match or disqualification from the competition.

RULE 21: THREATS

- 21.1. A player or official who intimidates a match or NIBFA official with serious threats will be penalised and a minimum fine of £50 will be imposed on their Club and whatever other penalties NIBFA deem fit.

RULE 22: COERCION

- 22.1. A player or official who uses violence or threats to pressurise a match or NIBFA official into taking certain action or to hinder him in any other way from acting freely will be penalised and a minimum fine of £50 will be imposed on their Club and whatever other penalties NIBFA deem fit.

RULE 23: LIABILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- 23.1. Clubs are liable for any improper conduct among spectators, and may be penalised by NIBFA for same.

RULE 24: REPEATED INFRINGEMENTS

- 24.1. In any case NIBFA may increase the penalty to be pronounced as deemed appropriate if an infringement has been repeated within the current or previous (2) seasons.

RULE 25: REFEREE

- 25.1. During matches, disciplinary decisions are taken by the referee.
- 25.2. These decisions are final.
- 25.3. Facts contained in match officials' reports are presumed to be accurate.
- 25.4. Reports may be made individually by match officials or collectively agreed by match officials and supplied through the referee. A collectively agreed report must be signed by the relevant match officials.
- 25.5. Evidence of the inaccuracy of the contents of these reports may be provided.
- 25.6. If there is any discrepancy in the reports from the various match officials and there are no means of resolving the different versions of the facts, the referee's report is considered authoritative regarding incidents that occurred on the field of play.
- 25.7. Where appointed, an NIBFA monitor's report is considered authoritative regarding incidents that occurred outside the field of play.

RULE 26: DISCIPLINARY APPEALS

- 26.1. Disciplinary appeals shall be heard by a disciplinary appeals panel. Each disciplinary appeal panel will be appointed by NIBFA.
- 26.2. Clubs in default of their financial obligations to NIBFA more than 30 days from when they fall due shall forfeit the right to submit a disciplinary appeal.
- 26.3. A player, official or Club shall have no right of appeal against cautions or dismissals except in the case of alleged mistaken identity for a player who is cautioned or dismissed in a match.
- 26.4. Subject to Rule 26.2 & Rule 26.3, a player, official or Club may submit a Disciplinary Appeal to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel in the case of any penalty issued by NIBFA.
- 26.5. Any Disciplinary Appeal by a player official or Club as per Rule 26.4 must be lodged by that Club's Registered Secretary and will only be accepted for consideration by the Disciplinary Appeals panel if lodged by that official or Club's Registered Secretary on official Club headed paper.

RULE 27: DISCIPLINARY APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 27.1. A Disciplinary Appeal must be made in writing on official Club headed paper and sent by Special Delivery Post within five days of the date on which notification of the decision or penalty being appealed against was sent by NIBFA.
- 27.2. Disciplinary Appeals must be addressed to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel and sent c/o NIBFA, National Football Stadium, Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 6LU or other address as determined by NIBFA.
- 27.3. The Disciplinary Appeal being lodged must include the following payment and documentation:
 - (a) A payment in the sum of £50 for a player or £100 in the case of an official or Club, which is refundable in the case of a successful appeal.
 - (b) A copy of the decision or penalty being appealed against.
 - (c) Confirmation of the date upon which notification of such decision or penalty was received by the appellant.
 - (d) All additional documentation, submissions and details of evidence upon which the appellant intends to rely at the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.
- 27.4. It will be at the discretion of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel as to whether any further documentation or evidence, not so lodged as per clause 27.3, shall be considered at the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.
- 27.5. All Disciplinary Appeal Hearings shall commence within a reasonable period from receipt of the Disciplinary Appeal. NIBFA shall inform all parties to the Disciplinary Appeal of the venue, date and time of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.
- 27.6. NIBFA can issue directions to the parties in respect of the hearing prior to proceedings commencing.
- 27.7. All parties involved in the Disciplinary Appeal must, at least three days before the hearing, confirm in writing, by post, fax or email to NIBFA the name and relationship to the party, of all persons who will be attending the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing on their behalf, or at their request. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall have discretion to permit the attendance of any persons not confirmed within the stated deadlines.
- 27.8. Any party involved in the Disciplinary Appeal, which fails to attend a Disciplinary Appeal Hearing if requested to do so by NIBFA may be subject to disciplinary action. The case may be heard in their absence.
- 27.9. In cases of urgency, NIBFA may amend the time limits indicated above to facilitate an expedited Disciplinary Appeals process.
- 27.10. Upon receipt of a Disciplinary Appeal, the decision or penalty being appealed shall be set aside pending the outcome of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.
- 27.11. Should the Disciplinary Appeals Panel consider a Disciplinary Appeal to be of a frivolous nature or merely to release a player or official from suspension to enable them to

participate in a match, they shall have the power to penalise the player, official and or Club as it deems appropriate.

RULE 28: EVIDENCE

- 28.1. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel will have absolute discretion regarding evidence.
- 28.2. The following are admissible:
 - 28.2.1 Reports from Match Officials,
 - 28.2.2 Reports from Match Monitors and referee observers,
 - 28.2.3 Declarations from the parties and witnesses, material evidence, expert opinions and unedited audio or video recordings.
- 28.3. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall hear evidence from all witnesses it considers relevant to the case. It is a matter for the Disciplinary Appeals Panel to deem if a witness is relevant to the case in hand. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may refuse to hear a witness or to take evidence that is not considered relevant or which would otherwise unnecessarily delay the proceedings.
- 28.4. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall make decisions based on the rules and the evidence before them.
- 28.5. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may request a party or any other body to submit information or documentation.
- 28.6. Facts contained in Match Officials' or Match Monitors reports are presumed to be accurate.
- 28.7. Evidence of the inaccuracy of the contents of Match Officials' or Match Monitors reports may be submitted for consideration by the Disciplinary Appeals Panel.

RULE 29: PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCT OF DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

- 29.1. A member of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel is obliged to retire from the consideration of any case if it involves their Club.
- 29.2. The Appellant player, official or Club may be represented by a club official who shall be admitted to the hearing.
- 29.3. At the commencement of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing, the Chairman of the Appeals Panel shall confirm the identities of the persons admitted to the hearing and introduce the Disciplinary Appeals Panel members. The Appellant player, official or Club will be required to give good reason for any objection to the composition of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel.
- 29.4. The Appellant player, official or Club and/or their representative shall be given the opportunity to comment upon and supplement his written submission to the Appeals Panel.
- 29.5. At any time, the Chairman, and through him, members of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel may ask questions of any of the parties. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may draw such inferences as it considers appropriate from the failure of the person charged to give evidence or answer a question put to him.

- 29.6. Evidence from any witness called by the Appellant player, official, Club or the Disciplinary Appeals Committee may be heard at the discretion of the panel.

RULE 30: NOTIFICATION OF DECISION RELATING TO DISCIPLINARY APPEAL HEARING

- 30.1. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may issue an oral decision after the hearing and shall provide written notification of its decision to the Appellant player, official or Club within a reasonable period of time from the date of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.
- 30.2. Decisions and other documents intended for players or officials will be addressed to the listed Secretary of the Club concerned.
- 30.3. Decisions shall be formally communicated by way of ordinary letter post, fax and/or electronic mail.

RULE 31: FORM & CONTENT OF THE DECISION RELATING TO DISCIPLINARY APPEAL HEARING

- 31.1. The decision shall be in writing and contain:
- (a) The composition of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel;
 - (b) The names of the parties;
 - (c) The terms of the decision, including the date of coming into force;
 - (d) Notice of the channels for appeal;

RULE 32: APPEAL TO IFA

- 32.1. Disciplinary Appeals Panel decisions may be appealed to the Irish Football Association Appeals Committee in accordance with the IFA Disciplinary Code.

RULE 33: INTERPRETATION

NIBFA shall be the final authority of the interpretation of the Rules, decisions upon questions of interpretation and on matters affecting NIBFA not provided for by the Rules shall be final and binding on all members.