COUNTY CUP COMPETITION RULES - 2026/27

1. Name / Control of Competition

(a) The following rules shall apply to all the Wiltshire FA Cup Competitions, which shall be played annually:

1) Premier Shield
2) Women's Cup (Sunday)
3) Women's Plate (Sunday)
4) Senior Cup
5) Junior Cup (Saturday)
6) Sunday Cup (Sunday)
7) The Frank Peart Veterans Cup (over 35s)
8) Youth Cup (Sunday)
9) Minor Cup (U12) (Sunday)
10) Minor Plate (U12) (Sunday)
11) Minor Cup (U13) (Sunday)
12) Minor Plate (U13) (Sunday)
13) Minor Cup (U14) (Sunday)
14) Minor Plate (U14) (Sunday)
15) Minor Cup (U15) (Sunday)
16) Minor Plate (U15) (Sunday)
17) Minor Cup (U16) (Sunday)
18) Minor Plate (U16) (Sunday)
19) Girls Minor Cup (U12) (Saturday)
20) Girls Minor Cup (U13) (Saturday)
21) Girls Minor Cup (U14) (Saturday)
22) Girls Minor Cup (U15) (Saturday)
23) Girls Minor Cup (U16) (Saturday)
24) Walking Football Women's Over 40s
25) Walking Football Men/Mixed over 50s
26) Walking Football Men/Mixed over 60s

(b) The entire control and management of the Competitions shall be vested in the Football Services team of the Wiltshire FA, who shall have the power to formulate the Rules of the Competitions and to alter or add to the Rules as they, from time to time, deem necessary.

2. Competition Entrance

(a) Competition entry fees shall be in accordance with charges published in the fees and fines tariff.

(b) Teams who have not affiliated by August 14th, 2026, will not be entered into their relevant Competition but will still have to pay the entry fee alongside the withdrawal fee as per the fees and fines tariff

(c) Any team withdrawing from the Competition after entry or affiliation, or failing to fulfil the fixture, including forfeiting, will be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

3. Eligible Clubs

(a) The Competitions are mandatory for all Teams affiliated to the Wiltshire FA (unless the team play within the JPL league)

(1) The Premier Shield is mandatory for all teams that play in Steps 5 and above of the National League System and do not have Reserve noted in their name. All such eligible teams must enter the Competition.

(2) Those teams that have a Reserve noted in their name shall have to request to be put into the Premier Shield & Senior Cup alongside their first team.

(3) The Women's Cup is mandatory for all women's teams that are affiliated to Wiltshire FA. Games to be played on the third Sunday of the month.

(4) The Women's Plate is mandatory for all women's teams that are affiliated to Wiltshire FA and are knocked out in the first round. Games to be played on the third Sunday of the month.

(5) The Senior Cup is mandatory for all teams that play in Steps 6 & a Feeder League (Previously Step 7) of the National League System are eligible. All such eligible teams must enter the competition. For the avoidance of doubt, only the Wiltshire Football League Premier Division, Western Division 1, Wessex Division 1, and Hellenic Division 1 teams are eligible to play in this competition. No two teams from the same club are permitted to enter, except if they adhere to rule 3a(2)

(6) The Junior Cup is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams (below NLS & feeder league (Previously Step 7) open age male Saturday teams) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(7) The Sunday Cup is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league Sunday adult male affiliated teams playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(8) Youth Cup is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams that have a U18 or U17/U18 team(s) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(9) The Minor Cups U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 are mandatory for all Wiltshire FA-affiliated teams who have U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 teams playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league. Teams within the Minor competition will be seeded. Teams that play within the JPL will not be entered.

(10) The Minor Plate U12, U13, U14, U15, and U16 is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA-affiliated league teams who have U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 teams playing in a Wiltshire or other county FA or FA-sanctioned league. Teams within the plate competition will be seeded. Teams that play within the JPL will not be entered.

(11) The Girls Cups U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 are mandatory for all Wiltshire FA-affiliated league teams (one per club) who have U13, U14, U15 and U16 teams playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league. Teams within the cup competition will be seeded. Teams that play within the JPL will not be entered.

(12) The Frank Peart Veterans Cup is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams that have a Veterans team (for players aged 35 or over) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(13) Walking Football Women's Over 40s is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams that have a Walking Football Team (for players aged 40 or over) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(14) Walking Football men/mixed Over 50s is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams that have a Walking Football Team (for players aged 50 or over) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

(15) Walking Football men/mixed Over 60s is mandatory for all Wiltshire FA league-affiliated teams who have a Walking Football Team (for players aged 60 or over) playing in a Wiltshire or other County FA or FA-sanctioned league.

4. Qualification of Players

The qualification of a player shall be a registered playing member of their team. A registered member is either, in the case of a player under a written contract, registered with the Football Association, or, in the case of a player without a written contract, registered with a League or Competition in which their team competes.

(a) No player shall be allowed to play for more than one competing team in any one Competition, and in the case of postponed or replayed matches. A player who was suspended for the original tie may not play in a postponed, or replayed tie even if the term of their suspension has been served.

(b) No player shall be allowed to play the Junior cup who has played in a Senior Competition on more than five occasions during the current season. For the Junior Cup, this refers to regional NLS feeder leagues or above (along with the FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase), which includes the Wiltshire Football League Premier Division (previously step 7)

(c) No player after playing in the Premier Shield may play in the Senior Cup or Junior Cup in the same season.

(d) No player after playing in the Senior cup may play in the Junior Cup in the same season.

(e) A player who has played in the Junior Cup may play in the Senior Cup or Premier Shield, although once played in the respective competition, rule 4c & 4d will then apply.

(f) No contract player shall be permitted to play in either the Junior Cup or the Women's Plate.

(g) For youth and minor matches, the age groups in which individuals are eligible to play are as per the FA Regulations and Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

(h) For the Vets Cup, only players aged 35 or over are eligible to play in this competition.

(i) If a team folds within the playing season, their previous games in any county cup fixture played for the folded team will be counted as null and void therefore they would be eligible to play in the same competition for another team.

(j) For the Vets Cup only - Players who have played for a club at Step 6 (or above) of the National League System in the current playing season are not permitted in this competition.

(k) To qualify to play in the Semifinal or Final of:

i. All County Cup Competitions, excluding the Premier Shield, a player must be registered with the League of the competing team they are named for by the 31st of December (inclusive), or have completed 3 competitive games for their named TEAM in the current playing season, otherwise they will be deemed as not registered.

ii. In the Premier Shield, **ONLY** players registered at the time of the Fixture shall be eligible to play.

iii. In the event of an officially recorded 'walkover' in a County Cup (or League, including League Cup) fixture, then all players registered to the team progressing into the next round may be eligible to record that game as an appearance (unless under suspension at the time of the walkover). This rule does not include an awarded bye. Fixtures must be competitive, and friendly fixtures will not count.

(l) The format for all competitions shall be 11 v 11 except the following:

- All U12 & U13 Competitions shall be 9v9

(m) In the case of a postponed or abandoned match, only those Players who were qualified to play on the original date fixed for the round shall be eligible to play in the re-arranged match.

(n) If named as an unused substitute, this does not count as an appearance.

5. Substitutes

(a) Premier Shield & Senior Cup: A Team may, at its discretion, use up to five substitute players from nine nominated at 3 separate points excluding the half-time opportunity during the match, except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the field of play by the Referee for misconduct after play has commenced. The substitutions are to be made in accordance with the Laws of Association Football (LOTG). The names of the nine substitutes shall be submitted to the Referee before the commencement of the game. When a substitute player has played, their name shall be shown on the match result sheet

(b) Women's Cup & Plate: A Team may at its discretion use up to five substitute players from nine nominated at any time in a match on a repeat basis, This means that a player who has been substituted themselves becomes a substitute and may replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with the LOTG except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the field of play by the Referee for misconduct after play has commenced. The substitutions are to be made in accordance with the Laws of Association Football (LOTG). The names of the Nine substitutes shall be submitted to the Referee before the commencement of the game. When a substitute player has played, their name shall be shown on the match result sheet.

(c) All other competitions: A Team may at its discretion use up to five substitute players from five nominated at any time in a match on a repeat basis, This means that a player who has been substituted themselves becomes a substitute and may replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with the LOTG except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the field of play by the Referee for misconduct after play has commenced. The substitutions are to be made in accordance with the Laws of Association Football (LOTG). The names of the five substitutes shall be submitted to the Referee before the commencement of the game. When a substitute player has played, their name shall be shown on the match result sheet.

6. Provisions concerning protests:

(a) All issues relating to the interpretation of the Competition Rules shall be referred to the Football Services Team, whose decision shall be final and binding. The Football Services Team shall consider any such matter in such manner and following such procedures as it considers appropriate.

(b) Where a Team wishes to protest a decision made by the association, in which there has been a breach of the Competition Rules, such protest must be made in writing and must contain the particulars of the grounds upon which it is made. The protest must be received by Wiltshire County FA, accompanied by a fee of £30 (youth) and £50 (adults), within two days of the match to which it relates (Sundays not included). The fee may be forfeited to Wiltshire County FA in the event of the protest not being sustained. Any appeal submitted outside of these time frames will not be considered.

(c) Grounds of Appeal: (i) The Sub-committee misinterpreted/failed to comply with the procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge. (ii) The Sub-committee decided on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached; or (iii) The Sub-committee imposed an excessive sanction.

(d) The Football Services Team may make such orders as it considers appropriate in relation to any issue or protest referred to it.

(e) Any protest relating to the ground, goal posts, bars or other appurtenances of the game shall not be considered by the Football Services Team unless an objection has been lodged with the Referee and the home club as soon as practicable. The Referee shall require the home club to correct the cause of the objection if this is possible without unduly delaying the progress of the match.

7. Provisions concerning appeals.

(a) A team that is expelled from the Competition may appeal against that decision to an appeal board comprising 3 members of the Football Services Team selected by the Football Services Manager. Any such appeal shall only be permitted on one or more of the following grounds: (i) The Sub-committee misinterpreted/failed to comply with the procedures relevant to the hearing of the charge. (ii) The Sub-committee decided on the facts of the case which no reasonable body could have reached; or (iii) The Sub-committee imposed an excessive sanction.

(b) Any appeal must be made in accordance with such procedures as may be determined by Wiltshire County FA from time to time.

(c) For the avoidance of doubt, a club may not appeal against any penalty imposed other than expulsion from the Competition.

8. The draw and playing of ties

(a) The Team first drawn shall have the choice of grounds in all Rounds preceding the Final. In all finals, the Football Services Team shall fix the ground.

(b) In the Premier Shield & Senior Cup, all home-drawn clubs who have floodlights (in accordance with ground grading) will be required to play the fixture midweek (7:30 pm or 7.45 pm KO). Only those home clubs without lights will be permitted to play on a Saturday (3 pm KO, except Nov, Dec, Jan & Feb 1.30 pm KO).

(c) In all other Competitions, the fixtures will be played on a designated date and time selected by Wiltshire County FA. Any applications for a fixture to be played outside of the designated date and time selected must be sent to the Football Services Manager. Any application where the date or time of play differs from what the competition states as per 1(A) must be mutually agreed upon with the opposition; otherwise, the application will be rejected. Where the date of the fixture is changed, the rearranged date must be before or on the weekend of the scheduled kick-off. The decision from the Football Services Manager will be final and not subject to appeal.

(d) Any team failing to commence a game at the appointed time shall be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff. The home club shall take every precaution to keep its ground in playing condition. In the Premier Shield and Senior Cup, the ground must be properly enclosed. Goal nets MUST be used in all competitions.

(e) In relation to the availability of the home drawn teams' ground/pitch, all Wiltshire FA Cup Competitions take precedence over League and other Affiliated Competitions. Where two or more Wiltshire FA Cup Competitions are scheduled to be played on a ground/pitch on the same date and kick off time, then the order of presence will determine which fixture takes priority. If this applies to two or more teams from the same competition, then the first drawn fixture shall play at the designated competition kick-off time. Where a fixture is unable to take place due to the above, then the home club will be responsible for arranging an alternative kick-off time and/or venue, and then seeking clearance from the Wiltshire FA (Football Services Manager) before informing their opponents of the change in kick-off

time/venue. The Wiltshire FA Football Services Team must be notified of such a change at least 7 days before the date of the match.

(f) Weather-related postponements: The game must always be played at the home drawn teams' venue unless postponed on two occasions or the pitch is deemed unplayable and the opponents pitch is deemed playable. If the Match is postponed on two occasions, then the Wiltshire Football Services Team have the power to reverse the fixture. If Clubs mutually agree, they may reverse the fixture at any time. If a home pitch is unplayable and the opponent's pitch is fit to use, matches should be reversed from game one, excluding Premier Shield, Women's Cup and Senior Cup. If a team refuses to reverse the fixture, they will be deemed as being unable to raise a team, the opponents would be awarded the match, and the home team would be fined for withdrawing from the competition in accordance with the fees and fines tariff. The cost will be split between the two teams.

(g) Premier Shield, Women's Cup and Senior Cup: The game must always be played at the home drawn teams' venue unless postponed on two occasions, then the Wiltshire Football Services Team have the power to reverse the fixture. If Clubs mutually agree, they may reverse the fixture at any time.

(h) The home club shall notify the Match Officials and away club of all match particulars, i.e. ground entrance fee (if applicable), ground address, colours, dressing rooms, time of kick off, at least 7 days before the match. Such details can be communicated in writing, email or text. In the event of the away club not being notified within 3 days of the match, it will be their responsibility to contact the home club and the Wiltshire FA (Football Services Team). Clubs failing to comply with this Rule will be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

(i) All matches shall be played in accordance with the LOTG 2026/27. If a match is not able to be played because of the precedence of another competition (according to the Association's Precedence list), then the following shall apply: within 5 days of the publication of the draw, clubs shall mutually agree a date for the match to be played BEFORE the due date as outlined by the football services manager, and this date shall be notified to the Wiltshire FA (Football Services Team). This date shall then be binding, and the player registration qualification date details in Rule 4 shall apply.

(j) When the match is played at a ground where there are technical areas, the following shall apply:
- The number of players and officials in the technical area must not exceed 11 per team for competitions with 5 substitutes and 15 per team for competitions with 9 substitutes.
- Only named substitute players, managers, coaching, and medical staff shall be permitted in the technical area.

NOTE: In default, a club shall be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff and will be given 14 days to pay any outstanding debt before they are automatically placed under suspension.

(k) All matches except Minor, Veterans' and Girls shall have a duration of 90 minutes. The following shall apply:

- Vets 50 minutes
- U15 & U16 80 minutes
- U13 & U14 70 minutes

- U12 60 Minutes

(l) In all County Cup matches, the half-time interval shall not exceed 15 minutes.

(m) In all matches, excluding those below, the ball size must be size 5.

U12 & U13 – Size 4

(n) In the event of a match being drawn at the expiration of 'normal' time, the game will go straight to penalty kicks (in accordance with the LOTG)

(o) Sin Bins will be used in accordance with LOTG (except in The Premier Shield and Senior Cup)

(p) In the event of a match not being played on the original date through unavoidable circumstances, it shall be played 7 days after the originally agreed date or otherwise at the discretion of the Football Services Team

(q) When a match has been postponed or has been abandoned by the match official due to non-weather-related reasons such as an injury before the completion of full time and neither club has been at fault (subject to Football Services Team review), it must be played on the same ground on a date to be fixed by the Football Services Team. Notice of postponement of any tie must be given by the home club, without delay (by telephone, email, or text) to the Wiltshire FA (Football Services Team), the Secretary of the away club and to the match officials.

(r) In the event of a team withdrawing from a competition, they will be fined in accordance with the fines and fees tariff, unless the game day differs from the normal league day they play. In this instance the fine will not be applied. This only applies to U16, U15, U14, U13 and U12 matches.

The Football Services Team shall review all abandoned matches and, in cases where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to any of the Clubs involved, shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to be recorded as a result. In cases where the Football Services Team are satisfied that a match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of the players, officials or supporters of one team, they shall be empowered to award the match to their opponents and/or take what other action they deem necessary. In cases where a match is abandoned owing to the conduct of the players, officials or Supporters of both teams, the Football Services Team shall take such action as they consider appropriate, which may include removing both teams from the Competition.

6. Where a Competition Match has been abandoned for any reason, both Clubs must, within 24 hours, give notice to the Competition. Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

(s) Artificial grass pitches may be used in County Cup Competitions provided that the pitch is listed on the FA's register of such pitches.

(t) If any team is losing by eight clear goals (so 8-0,9-1,10-2 etc), then they should be given the option to end the match. If they choose to continue with the game and the gap increases, then the losing team will be able to end the match at any time. The referee should check after each additional goal scored. The score at this point is the one to report.

(u) This may happen quickly in some matches and so the managers should consider utilising the remaining playing time to play a development match, the winning team should take actions to even up the game such playing their goalkeeper as an outfield player, not being able to score if there is a 2 goal lead or any other fair option that allows the players to compete in an enjoyable match. Where the option to play a development game is taken up, the Referee will continue to officiate until the end of the normal match duration.

9. Gate Receipts - Allowable Expenses

(a) In all Competitions up to the final, all costs (Pitch Hire and Referee's Fees) will be shared equally between the two competing Teams, and the costs must be paid on the day.

(b) In the Premier Shield and Senior Cup, up to and including the Semifinal, the cost of the away club's travelling expenses (£1.35 per mile for a return journey from the away club's ground) can be added to the match expenses that are divided between the two Clubs.

(c) Where a home team does not need to hire a pitch because they have their own ground, reasonable costs such as groundsman's preparation of the pitch, cleaning of the changing room, floodlights if used, along with Referee's fees can be claimed and divided evenly between the two competing clubs.

(d) Where a home team charges an entrance fee for a fixture, they must submit to the Wiltshire FA within 3 days of the fixture a receipt and payments form outlining the total gate income and any permissible expenditure listed below that they have incurred. The profit or loss made on the fixture will then be split evenly between the two competing clubs. Teams have 14 days in which to settle payment to their opponents.

The home club may deduct the following permissible expenditure:

- Match officials' fee. Where a team/club does not own their home ground, the cost of the hire can be included
- Away club's travel expenses (£1.35 per mile for a journey from the away club's ground)
- Floodlights, if used, not to exceed £75
- Ground expenses up to a maximum of £40
- Stewards £40 - only where Health and Safety Ground Regulations require them, and prior approval is granted by the Wiltshire FA.

(ii) The maximum gate charge shall be no more than the home club's normal league gate charge. They will also be required to issue the away team with 20 players / playing staff with ground passes, along with 5 additional passes for club Committee Members. This only applies to the Premier Shield and Senior Cup.

(e) The Wiltshire FA will be responsible for the running and management of all Finals.

(f) In all matches that take a gate from the Semifinal onwards, the gate after deductions of expenses outlined in rule 9D will be split 40% to the home club, 40% to the away club and 20% to Wiltshire FA (awarded to winners). This is also applicable for all final matches that take gate receipts (excluding youth matches). The winners of the competition will then receive the 20% Wiltshire FA received from the two semi-finals and the respective final.

Semifinal 1 Split
Both teams – 40%
Wiltshire FA – 20% (awarded to the winner)

Semifinal 2 Split
Both teams – 40%
Wiltshire FA – 20% (awarded to the winner)

Final split
Runners up – 40%
Winners - 40% plus 20% from final (plus 2 x 20% across semifinals)

10. Appointment of Match Officials

(a) The Wiltshire FA, with support from League Referee Appointment Officers, shall appoint the Match Officials for all matches. Neutral Assistant Referees may be appointed for all Semi-Finals and Finals, and for any other game as determined by the Wiltshire FA. Fourth Officials may be appointed to all finals and selected semifinals. The fees for these appointments shall be in accordance with the fees and fines tariff, as published on the Wiltshire FA website. Where public transport is used (standard class), only the fare actually paid for shall be reimbursed.

(b) In all matches preceding the Final, it is the responsibility of both teams to pay equal contributions towards the match officials' fee; the home club shall be responsible for paying the Match Officials' fee.

(c) In all Finals, the match officials shall claim their fees through the Wiltshire FA Football Services Team.

(d) Match Officials are required to report to the ground at least 60 minutes before kick-off time for Premier Shield and Senior Cup matches, 45 minutes before kick-off time for all other adult fixtures and 30 minutes before kick-off time for all Youth and Minor matches. If, on their arrival, the game has been postponed, or after a pre-match pitch inspection, the referee postpones the match, then they can claim half their fee. There is no fee for a referee to carry out an early pitch inspection.

(e) In matches where neutral assistants are not appointed, each competing club shall nominate its own club Assistant, and such particulars as may be required shall be given to the Referee at least 15 minutes before kick-off. Clubs failing to comply shall be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

(f) In the event of the non-appearance or non-appointment of a Match Official, the Clubs shall agree upon a referee. This individual shall, for that game, have full powers, status, and authority of a registered Referee. Individuals under the age of 16 must not participate as a referee or assistant referee in open-age competitions. If the clubs cannot agree upon an individual to referee the game, they will be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

(g) All appointed match officials should fully understand the competition rules.

11. Club Colours

(a) In the event of two teams having similar colours, then the AWAY team shall change. The players' shirts shall be clearly and individually numbered. Goalkeepers must wear colours that distinguish them from the other players and the match officials. No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black shirts. Any disputes on kit colours should be made to the Football Services Manager at least 7 days before the fixture.

12. Match Results Forms

(a) The result of each match (including all Finals) must be entered on Full Time by both teams, within 48 hours of the completion of the fixture. Clubs failing to comply shall be fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff. Each team must enter their results and match stats via Fulltime within 48 hours of the completion of the fixture. Failure to comply with any part of this Rule will attract a fine in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

(b) If a club awards a referee a mark of 60 or below, they must give a written explanation within 48 hours of the fixture via Full Time. Failure to do so will result in the offending club being fined in accordance with the fees and fines tariff.

(c) Team sheets should be presented to the match official and opposition 30 minutes before KO.

13. Presentation of Trophies & Souvenirs

(a) A trophy shall be presented to the winning club at the conclusion of the Final game.

(b) Each winning finalist will receive a replica trophy, which they can retain. The original Cup is to be returned to the Wiltshire FA immediately following the final.

(c) Each club will be provided with enough medals for the entirety of the playing team (Starting players & Substitutes) plus 2 additional medals for staff.

14. Trophies

(a) All County Cups shall remain the sole property of the Wiltshire FA and shall be responsible for the cost of engraving each year's winner's name in the style prescribed by the Council.
(b) Each finalist will receive a medal for the nominated squad on the day of the final, including named coaches/managers.

15. Other Matters

In any matter not specifically mentioned in these Rules, the Football Services Team shall have the powers to take such action and impose such penalties necessary, and all such decisions shall be final.