24. CUP COMPETITIONS. As defined in SCOR with the following local additions.

A. NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION

The Swindon & District Community Football League will provide knockout competitions throughout the season, with the constitutions formally agreed before the Competitions start. The entire control and management of the knockout Competitions shall be vested by the Swindon & District Community Football League Management (herby known as The SDCFL) and the respective competition Committees, who shall have power to formulate the Rules of the Cup Competition and to alter or add to the Rules from time to time.

The Trophies being the absolute property of the SDCFL and the "official sponsors" and confined for annual competition to clubs/teams who are members of the Swindon and District Community Football League. Trophies will be awarded to the tournament winners on finals day but trophies will, and are to remain in the possession of the Swindon & District Community Football League, with the winning clubs/teams presented with a 'keep' cup for their permanent retention, players from both teams will be awarded a winners or runners up medal as appropriate but the SDCFL award of medals is capped at 17 per team, including one for the Manager. Extra medals can be purchased via the SDCFL

The Cup rules follow the FA Standard Code of Rules for open age competitions, alongside specific local SDCFL cup bylaws

B. KNOCKOUT CUP FORMAT.

The initial competition is a single elimination tournament integrated with the League fixtures, and played throughout the season. For the 2026-27 season, this competition and subsequent award, will be known as the VYGON Challenge Cup

The SDCFL will also offer the George Thomas Knockout Plate Competition, which is also integrated with the League fixtures, played throughout the season and is a further opportunity for those clubs/teams that are unsuccessful in their qualifying game in the VYGON Challenge Cup.

The format of the competitions is intended to deliver a result on the match day, see rule E, sub-section G, Duration of Matches, for how results are determined

C. ENTRY FEES

Entry to the knockout competitions is mandatory for all teams. The entry fee covers all SDCFL knockout competitions, and is in accordance with the published Fees Tariff's, this will be charged at the start of the season, alongside other league entry fees

Refusal to enter will result in a fine in accordance with the Fine's tariff, a withdrawal from the competition will see the entry fee forfeited.

D. ELIGIBLE CLUBS/TEAMS, CUP DRAWS & ELIGIBILITY/QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

The Competitions are open & mandated for all teams (including Development & Reserves) competing in The Swindon & District Community Football League.

All teams will be entered into a random draw; any necessary entry or eligibility criteria are subject to the conditions stipulated and these rules. Pending prevailing circumstances, the SDCFL Management Committee reserves the right to incorporate seeding & byes (for any round to ensure an organised and appropriate competition) into the cup draw, based on an agreed criterion, to allow fairness for all. In the event that a First and Reserve/Development team are drawn as opposition, the SDCFL reserves the right to redo the draw, in its entirety if needed

Where there are an uneven number of teams, byes will be given to ensure all competitions can reach a suitable conclusion, i.e. to give 4 clubs or teams in each semi-final and 2 clubs or teams in each final. However, no teams will be given byes to the semi-final or final of the competitions

A. <u>Eligibility/Qualification of players.</u>

To be eligible to play at each stage of the single elimination tournament a player;

(a) Must be registered via the FA Club Portal for the competing club or team in the SDCFL at least 5 days before the date of the fixture, in keeping with League Rule 18B(3)

(b) Cup Tied Rule Must NOT have played for another Club or Team in any other Cup Competition controlled by the Swindon and District Community Football League during the current season. Playing a cup tied or ineligible player leads to immediate disqualification

(i) Any club with multiple teams in the league competition must be aware that a player registered for all league teams, is only eligible for the first team they play for in the cup competition's Any breach of this rule will lead to the team being fined and expelled from the cup competition.

(ii)* Also note, Rule 18L from the main SDCFL Rule Set in terms of player eligibility, this rule equally applies across all SDCFL Cup Competitions -- *"A Team shall not include more than 2 Players who has/have played in 4 or more senior (see main rules for the definition of Senior) Competition Matches during the current Playing Season"

(c) Semi-Final and Final eligibility is subject to meeting the above conditions, plus a player may compete, as long as he is registered to the club/team before

the 28th February in the current season (noting that this date is the last day for player registrations per se) **AND** has taken part in at least **4 SDCFL knockout competition or League games** for his currently registered club or team during the current season. Please also note Cup Rule A(i)

(iii) If a club has not completed 50 % of its fixtures at the semi-final stage player eligibility criteria may, at the discretion of the Management Committee be modified, to 2 matches only but still for his currently registered club or team.

For clarity, please be aware, in all cases, played a game, means players must have actively taken part in a match. Being named as substitute, but not entering the field of play, therefore being a passive player, does not count towards eligibility or ineligibility

(d) Eligibility for postponed matches or replays

(i) In the case of postponed or replayed matches **only players who were eligible to play on the date originally fixed for the tie** shall be eligible to play, academic of how many games they have subsequently played for their competing teams.

(e) Players who were under suspension by the County FA, through suspension in any competition, when the original tie was due to have taken place are also ineligible.

(f) Any winning teams proven to have fielded ineligible players without prior approval of the SDCFL Management and Cup Committees, shall be eliminated from the Competition and the tie awarded to their opponents, with a fine in accordance with the published Tariff and match day expenses for the replay awarded against the defaulting team.

(g) Where a losing team is awarded a game and is also found guilty of playing an ineligible player, it shall also be eliminated. The SDCFL Management and Cup Committee has the power to confirm replacement teams at any stage of the competition.

(h) Any challenge of player eligibility is between the teams **only and must be made at time of team sheet exchange, BEFORE the start of the game.**

(iv) Noting that The SDCFL Management Committee will take further action on any indiscretion based on reports and submitted team sheets.

(i) The assigned match official(s), be they the Referee or Assistant Referee (even if they are part of the SDCFL Management Committee), has NO jurisdiction over player eligibility. If there is a doubt, please contact another member of the SDCFL Management Committee before the game, if possible, contacts can be found on the league website.

(j) For the avoidance of doubt, if an agreement cannot be reached over player eligibility and a member of the SDCFL Management Committee cannot be reached, the match official has the authority to abandon the game. In this instance, both clubs and the match official should submit a written report to the SDCFL Governance Officer no later than 48hours after the scheduled date of the game, and the SDCFL Management Committee will adjudicate accordingly.

E. PLAYING SEASON, GROUNDS, CONDITION OF PLAY, TIMES KICK OFF, SUBSTITUTES, MATCH DETAIL & EXPENSES

B. Cup Competition Playing Season

The cup competition will be integrated into the SDCFL league programme, and run throughout the active season.

C. MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

As per SDCFL Rule 20C, an Officer of the first drawn, therefore the home Club or team must give notice of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the Ground, time of kick-off and kit colours (including goalkeeper) to the Match Officials and an Officer of the opposing Club at least 3 days prior to the playing of the Competition Match.

The opposing Club must confirm receipt and give notice of its kit colours (including goalkeeper) at least 2 days prior to the playing of the Competition Match. If either is not provided, the relevant Club shall seek such details and report the circumstances to the Competition.

Failure to comply with this Rule will result in a fine in accordance with the Fines Tariff.

Any change to the kick off time or venue must be approved by the SDCFL Fixture Secretary before the game commences.

D. CLUB COLOURS

(i) As per SDCFL overall rules, 19 F & G, and in the opinion of the match officials, the two competing clubs/teams have the same or clearly indistinguishable kit colours, the AWAY club or team will be requested to make the kit change if possible (recognising that not all teams have an alternate kit, a mutual agreement can be reached between the clubs to avoid the clash).

(ii) In all events, the match officials decision shall be binding.

E. Substitutes

(i) Substitutes can be named on the team sheet, and used during the game,

(ii) Teams can name and use up to 5 substitutes, making the match day squad up to a maximum of 16 eligible players, and please be aware that as per SDCFL rule 20F, the use of rolling or returning substitutes is allowed in all Knockout competition matches

F. Condition of Play

(iii) All matches must be played on the date fixed unless otherwise arranged by the SDCFL Fixture and Cups Secretary on behalf of the SDCFL Management Committee.

(iv) If a club is unable, without valid reason, as submitted in writing to the SDCFL Management Committee BEFORE the game, to play a Cup fixture on the date stated it will result in the game being awarded to their opponents and a fine will be charged in accordance with the current Fines & Fees tariff's

G. Ground.

(i) Where necessary or applicable, the club first drawn shall be deemed to be the home team but allowed have the choice of ground up to the Finals, at the discretion of the Management Committee.

(ii) The SDCFL shall designate a neutral ground at any point but it is mandated for the finals of the competitions.

H. Duration & Completion of matches

(i) All cup competition matches shall be a 90-minute duration, made up of 2x45 minute halves

(ii) In all rounds, including the Semi-Final and Final, **IF THE MATCH IS TIED AT THE END OF 90 MINUTES THE MATCH WILL BE DECIDED BY PENALTY KICKS, in accordance with the IFAB & FIFA regulations**

a. Note: as per those regulations, only players on the field of play at the end of the 90 minutes are eligible to take a deciding penalty kick, the 'rolling subs' opportunity ends at the final whistle.

I. Match Expenses for all Knockout Competition Games, bar the Final

(i) The cost of staging each tie up to the Final will be borne equally by both competing Clubs, unless otherwise directed by the Management Committee, and must be settled on or before the day of the match. This includes equally sharing ground and match officials' costs, as per SDCFL rules.

a. the responsibility for paying for the ground and match officials resides with the home (or first drawn) club, and they should be reimbursed accordingly.

(ii) Any club found guilty of failing to reimburse its opponents with its share of the cost of staging the match, on or before the day of the match, will be fined in accordance with the published Tariff.

(iii) Where the Management Committee directs that the League will pay all or part of the expenses for staging any match, up to the Final, the competing clubs must submit an application to the League, together

with legitimate proof of expenditure incurred, within a time limit specified by the Management Committee.

F. THE FINALS

The Finals shall be played on a ground chosen by the SDCFL Management Committee and competing clubs/teams shall bear their own travelling expenses.

a. All match expenses for grounds & officials shall be borne by the SDCFL
b. All 4 competing clubs or teams shall provide two regulation size (5) footballs suitable for competitive match play.
c. Failure to do so, or if the match official deems one or more unsuitable, the defaulting club(s) will be fined in accordance with the published Tariff.

(ii)) All 4 competing clubs/teams are required to submit a club and short player biography to the SDCFL at least 14 days before the final, for inclusion in the matchday programme, defaulting club(s) will be fined in accordance with the published Tariff.

G. APPENDIX A – CUP FEES, ADDITIONAL TO GENERAL SDCFL FEES & FINES

FEES TARIFF		
RULE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM FEE
Cup Rule Clause C	SWINDON & DISTRICT COMMUNITY LEAGUE SINGLE ELIMINATION competition ENTRY FEE	£25.00
Cup Rule Clause C	PLATE ENTRANCE FEE	£00**.00**

FINES TARIFF		
RULE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM FINE
Cup Rule Clause C	REFUSAL TO ENTER CUP COMPETITION	£25.00
Cup Rule Clause D(a)	FIELDING INELIGIBLE PLAYERS	£25.00 and elimination from the competition
Cup Rule Clause F (ii)	FAILURE TO SUPPLY FOOTBALLS	£25.00

Cup Rule Clause F (iii)	FAILURE TO SUPPLY CLUB/TEAM BIOGRAPHY FOR CUP FINALS PROGRAMME	£25.00