

RULES OF THE SENIOR CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITION

Definitions

In these Rules, unless the context requires otherwise, terms used have the following meanings:

'Association'	County Antrim & District Football Association
'Club'	A team playing Association Football in Northern Ireland.
'Committee'	The Senior Challenge Shield Committee
'Divisional Association'	The associations governed by Article 11 of the Irish Football Association.
'FIFA'	Fédération Internationale de Football Association.
'IFA'	Irish Football Association
'IFAB'	The International Football Association Board.
'IFA FMS System'	IFA Football Management System
'Laws of the Game'	The Laws of Association Football prescribed by IFAB.
'League'	Any league as governed by the IFA.
'NIFL'	Northern Ireland Football League
'Secretary'	Secretary of the County Antrim & District Football Association
'Senior Club(s)'	Football clubs competing in the NIFL Premiership or Championship
'UEFA'	Union des Associations Européenes de Football.

Index

1. Trophy Name
2. Trustees of Shield
3. Annual Competition
4. Entries
5. Objection to Ground
6. Qualification of players
7. Competition format
8. Pitch inspections
9. Team Sheets
10. Substitutes
11. Players kit & identification
12. Official Match Ball & Goal Nets
13. Duration of Match / Extra Time
14. Referee and Assistant Referees
15. Ball tenders
16. Protests
17. Shield holders responsibilities
18. Division of Receipts
19. Medals or Badges
20. Awards
21. Alteration to Rules
22. Appeals
23. Unforeseen circumstances

Trophy Name

1 The Trophy shall be called "The County Antrim and District Football Association Challenge Shield."

Trustees of Shield

2 The President, Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer of the Association shall be, for all intents and purposes, the legal owners of the Shield, in Trust for the Association.

Annual Competition

3 The Competition shall be open to all Senior Clubs affiliated to the Association and such guest clubs as the Senior Shield Committee may invite and which could include the approved Senior Clubs from other Associations.

Entries

4 Entries must be made on the Official Online Affiliation Form and be received by the Secretary of the Association not later than the 30th June of each year and must be accompanied by an entry fee of £20.00 per club.

The following must be clearly stated on the Form:

- i - Whether ground is public or private;
- ii - Situation of ground (in Full);
- iii - Colours of Club shirt, socks & shorts, both their primary colours and their alternative colours;
- iv - Name and Address of Secretary;
- v - Contact telephone number
- vi - email address

In the event of a change of Secretary or any other detail initially recorded on the Official Affiliation Form the same must be notified immediately in writing or by email, to the Association Secretary.

Objection to Field of Play, goal-posts or ball

5 Any objection to the Field of Play, goal-posts or ball must be lodged in with the Referee before the game has started, and the Referee shall have power to have such objections made right before the game starts.

Qualification of Players

6 a. Players will be eligible to play in the Senior Challenge Shield provided that on the date of the tie they are eligible to play for their own club in its League Competition.

b. No individual shall be allowed to play for more than one competing team.

c. Notwithstanding anything in any Rule, if the Senior Challenge Shield Committee in the case of the Senior Challenge Shield, have any doubt at any time, and whether arising out of a protest or otherwise, as to the qualification of any player taking part in the competition, they shall have power to call upon such player and / or Club to which he belongs, or for which he played, to prove that he is qualified according to the rules, and failing satisfactory proof, they shall disqualify such player and shall remove the Club from the Competition, and impose such other penalty as they may think fit.

Competition format

7. a. The competition shall be played on a knockout basis. All ties shall be played to a finish. If at the end of normal playing time the scores are equal then the tie shall be decided by kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions set out in the Laws of the Game.

b. Should the Committee deem necessary, the ballot may be conducted on the basis that clubs may be allocated into two pots. Pot 1 to contain those clubs with adequate floodlights, with Pot 2 containing clubs who do not have adequate floodlighting. In this situation, the ballot will be conducted as follows:

i) A team will be drawn from Pot 1 which will be the home team and a team will be drawn from Pot 2 who will be the away team. The number of draws on this basis will be equivalent to the number of teams initially contained in Pot 2.

ii) Thereafter, teams in Pot 1 will be drawn from that pot, with the first team drawn having home advantage.

iii) Should the Committee determine that it is not necessary to divide competing teams into two pots, then the draw will follow the principle as set out in 7b ii).

c. In principle, the Club that is first drawn in the ballot shall play at their registered home venue in all matches up to and including the semi-finals. However, the first drawn Club may forfeit home advantage with the agreement of their opponents. and in such circumstances written confirmation of same must be notified to the secretary by both clubs in writing or by email not later than three (3) days following the date of the relevant draw.

d. Should a match be postponed twice at the registered ground of the first drawn club the Senior Shield Committee reserve the right to switch the tie to the registered ground of their opponents on a date to be determined by the Committee.

e. In the event of only one of the clubs drawn in any tie having approved floodlights, the match shall be played at that ground. The Senior Shield Committee reserve the right to request such certification on request.

f. The Committee may appoint Match Observers to all or some of the ties in each round as they see fit. Any club objecting to or refusing to accept the appointment of a Match Observer to their tie shall be dealt with as the Committee may determine.

g. The host Club of the host stadium shall have responsibility for all match arrangements in regard to safety and security, including ticketing.

h. In the event of a club having two or more players selected to represent their National Association in matches recognised by the FIFA International Calendar or Divisional Association representative team(s) in a competitive fixture they shall be permitted a postponement of their scheduled fixture during the period of release in respect of such fixtures. Furthermore, a club whose goalkeeper is selected to represent their National or Divisional Association representative team(s) shall also be permitted a postponement due to the specialist position.

(i) In the event of a club competing in a competitive fixture under the auspices of UEFA (either 'home' or 'away') within 48 hours of a scheduled Senior Shield fixture, the club will be permitted to request the postponement of the Senior Shield fixture. A revised date will be determined by the Senior Shield Committee.

(ii) The Co Antrim FA Senior Shield Committee will determine the venue for the Final of the competition.

Pitch Inspections

8 (a) In case of unfavourable weather conditions or concerns regarding the playing surface the Home Club must request the Co Antrim FA by telephone or by email to the Secretary for an early inspection not later than five hours before kick-off. The Match Referee or an alternative Referee appointed by the Co Antrim FA must inspect the ground at least three hours or more previous to the advertised time of kick-off and shall decide as to the fitness of the ground not later than three hours prior to the pre-arranged time of kick-off, his decision being final after consultation with the Club Secretary and the Co Antrim FA.

(b) No game shall be postponed without an inspection by a referee appointed by the Co Antrim FA.

(c) Notwithstanding the above, in the event of extreme weather conditions the Co Antrim FA Secretary, in consultation with the Senior Shield Committee Chairman, may declare any match or matches postponed without a formal pitch inspection.

(d) Where possible the officially appointed Match Referee should carry out the pitch inspection but if he/she should not be available for an inspection then the Co Antrim FA will appoint an alternative official from a panel approved by the Committee, who will decide on the state of the pitch. If obviously 'playable' he will then declare his decision.

(e) The Referee, Assistant Referees and 4th Official shall be paid half match fee and expenses for a postponed match which they have arrived at and inspected.

Team Sheets

9 (a) Each Club shall input their team line up including the names of players and club officials and their functions taking part in each match (including the name of the nominated substitutes) via the IFA Football Management System not later than 75 minutes prior to kick-off.

(b) The home club shall be responsible for distributing copies of the official team sheet (automatically generated by the IFA FMS System) to both clubs and representatives from the media not later than 45 minutes prior to kick off.

(c) Any club failing to provide such documentation by the stipulated deadlines will be fined in the sum of £50 for each offence.

Substitutes

10 (a) A club may at its discretion use three substitute players at any time in any match, except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the game by the Referee. The substitutions can be made in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game.

(b) Only three substitutions by each side will be permitted in any match and clubs may nominate up to a maximum of seven substitute players prior to the commencement of the match.

(c) A substitute player shall be construed as taking part in the game for which he was nominated only if he has actually played in such game.

(d) Should any nominated player or substitute sustain an injury or become otherwise incapacitated after the submission of the team sheet to the referee and before the kick-off he may be replaced provided that the referee and the opposing club are informed prior to kick-off.

Players kit & identification

11 (a) The players in each competing team must wear the registered colours of the Club for which they are playing except when opposing teams have similar colours, in which case the visiting Club shall change theirs. In all other cases the Committee shall decide which team shall change. The colours of the Club shall be taken to be the colours of the shirt or jersey as registered with the Association. A goalkeeper must wear a shirt or jersey of different colour, provided that said shirt or jersey is of a colour distinctive from that of his opponents. Referees shall have power to instruct a player to change a shirt or sweater if he considers the colour not quite distinctive from that of his opponents, and the Referee shall have power to deal with any player refusing to comply with his instructions.

(b) Clubs must confirm their kit colours on IFA FMS System no later than 48 hours before the stated kick off time.

(c) The players shirts must be numbered on the back and must correspond exactly with the instruction input into the IFA FMS system. The team captain shall wear a distinguishing armband to indicate his status. Clubs shall be fined a minimum of £50, for each offence, where they fail to observe this rule.

(d) All clubs must have the availability of a 'blood shirt' which is clearly numbered and is not a number that has been allocated to any squad player.

Match Ball & Goal Nets

12 (a) The match ball to be used in all matches shall be the match ball approved by the NIFL.

(b) Goal nets must be used.

Duration of Match

13 The duration of each match, unless otherwise mutually arranged shall be one-hour and-a-half. The match must be started at the time appointed by the Committee, but no protest will be upheld for late starting unless the Committee are satisfied that the result of the match was affected thereby. The referee shall have power to allow extra time for stoppages, his decision thereon to be final. In all rounds of the competition, including the Final, should scores be level after 90 minutes the tie shall be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the conditions approved by the International F.A. Board. If a match has been stopped by the Referee before the completion of the time specified in the rules, for any reason stated in Law 5, the Committee shall have power, either to order the match to be replayed in full or allow the result of the match at the time of such stoppage to stand.

Match Officials

14 (a) The Committee shall appoint the Referee and Assistant Referees. The Committee may also appoint a 4th Official if deemed necessary.

(b) The Match Officials role and duties are as outlined in the guidelines approved by the International F.A. Board. In the event of the Referee or an Assistant Referee having to retire during the progress of the match, the 4th Official will assume responsibility of the referee or the retired Assistant Referee (retired official) to completion.

(c) In all ties previous to the Final, Referees fees and expenses shall be paid at the appropriate rate by the 'home' club.

Ball Tenders

15 (a) The colours of clothing worn by ball tenders must not clash with the colours of either of the competing clubs.

(b) Clubs may utilise a multiball system to the immediate replacement of a matchball when it has left the field of play. Clubs who adopt this procedure must ensure that the system is used consistently for the duration of the match and for both teams, unless directed otherwise by the Referee.

Protests

16 (a) Protests must be received by the Secretary of the Association per Special Delivery bearing post mark within four days after the cause of protest accompanied by a deposit of £50.00.

(b) A copy of the protest must also be sent by Special Delivery to the Club protested against. The certificate of posting of such Special Delivery must bear date stamp within two days after the cause of the protest or appeal and shall be sole proof of date of posting.

Shield holder responsibilities

17 When the winning Club shall have been declared, the Secretary of the Association shall hand the Shield to its representatives on receiving a document to the following effect, and subscribed by four persons whose names shall be previously submitted to, and approved of by the Executive of the Association: –

We, A.B., President of the Y.Z. Club, and C.D., E.F. and G.H., members of and representing the said Club, which has now been declared to have won the County Antrim and District Association Challenge Shield, and the said Shield having been delivered to us by J.K., Secretary of said Association, do hereby, on behalf of said Club, and individually and collectively engage to return the same to the said J.K., or Secretary of the Association for the time being one month before the final in like good order and condition. No party, other than the Secretary of the Association, is authorised to have engraving or similar works undertaken on the trophy.

Division of Receipts

18 (a) In all Competition matches, with the exception of the Semi-final and Final Ties, the receipts (including Stands), after payment of the costs pertaining to match officials, security & stewarding, turnstiles, ambulance/first aid cover and ticketing, shall be equally divided between the two competing clubs. (The home club shall ensure that copies of the receipts for such costs are furnished to the away team upon request). Payment shall be made to the away team within 7 days following the date on which the match was played, except when the match has been designated as an 'all ticket' match. In such circumstances, all revenue generated from the sale of tickets by the away team shall be paid to the home team within 7 days following the date on which the match was played together with a reconciliation of unsold tickets (the home team shall then make payment to the away team within 7 days of receiving such revenue). It is the responsibility of competing clubs to agree existing stadium damage prior to each fixture and the host club must notify this Association, and the relevant club, within 24 hours of any damage caused.

Division of Receipts: Semi-Finals

(b) In the Semi-Final Ties the net receipts shall be divided as follows: – 10 percent to the Association and the balance divided amongst the two competing Clubs; in the case of replayed ties, the Association shall take 10 percent and the remaining portion shall be divided equally between the competing Clubs.

Payment shall be made to both the Association and the away team within 7 days following the date on which the match was played, except when the match has been designated as an 'all ticket' match. In such circumstances, all revenue generated from the sale of tickets by the away team shall be paid to the home team within 7 days following the date on which the match was played together with a reconciliation of unsold tickets (the home team shall then make payment to the away team and the Association within 7 days of receiving such revenue).

Division of Receipts: Final

(c) In the Final tie, after deducting expenses, the remaining portion shall be divided between the Association and the Clubs as follows: – 25 percent. to the Association and the balance equally divided between the teams engaged.

All money generated from the sale of tickets in respect of the final tie must be submitted by the respective clubs to the Association within 7 days following the date of the match together with a reconciliation of unsold tickets. Non-payment by this deadline will result in penalties described in Association Rule 7(b) being applied.

Medals or Badges

19 The Association will present medals or other mementoes to the winners and runners-up in the competition each season.

Awards

20 Prize money shall be distributed to participating clubs as determined by the Co Antrim FA Finance Committee annually and shall be subject to sponsorship being secured for the Competition.

Alterations to Rules

21 (a) The Committee shall have power to deal with any matter not provided for in these rules.

(b) In all cases under these Rules Sunday shall not be taken into account in computing the time required in any matter arising out of these Rules.

(c) These rules shall not be altered, annulled, or added to, until after the Final Tie has been played.

Appeals

22 All appeals against a decision of the Co Antrim FA Senior Shield Committee must be made to the IFA in accordance with the relevant IFA Articles of the Association.

Unforeseen circumstances

23 (a) In the event that the competition cannot be completed due to any reason which is outside the control of the Co Antrim FA, the Senior Shield Committee will retain the right to determine how the competition is concluded.

(b) All participating clubs in the competition must follow the safety requirements/protocols relating to Covid19 as laid out by the Irish FA & the Northern Ireland Executive. Any club failing to do so will be dealt with by the Committee.