

**RULES
OF THE
STEEL AND SONS CUP COMPETITION**

Name

1. This Competition shall be called "THE STEEL & SONS CUP COMPETITION"

Trustees of Cup

2. The President, Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer of the Association shall be, for all intents and purpose, the legal owners of the Cup, in trust, for the Association.

Competition

3. The Competition shall be annual and open to Intermediate Clubs approved and affiliated to this Association. Such Clubs must be in membership of Intermediate Leagues sanctioned by the Irish Football Association Ltd.

Entries

4. Entry for permission to compete in the competition shall be made online via Comet FMS, not later than 30 June and shall be accompanied by an entry fee of £10.00. It shall be the sole responsibility of clubs to enter in order to participate in the competition. This application shall affect a club for one season only.

The following details must be clearly stated on the Form.

i Whether ground is shared and, if so, with whom and who has primacy.

ii Present League

iii Situation of ground (in Full).

iv Colours of Club shirt, shorts & socks.

v Name and Address of Secretary

vi Contact telephone numbers

vii 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 to the Association Secretary.

Grounds

5 (a) Note:- Ground must be that on which the Club play league fixtures and be approved by the IFA Intermediate Committee as being suitable for Intermediate standard football.

(i) The home club shall be responsible at all times for the safety of the players, officials and spectators and the facilities should reflect this obligation.

(ii) The home Club must be able to lift or collect gate receipts.

A club drawn at home, whose ground is unavailable for any reason, shall travel to the ground of the opposition. If the opponents' ground is not available, the tie shall be played at a time and venue to be determined by the Committee. All matches in the competition must be played on the ground of a club affiliated to the County Antrim & District Football Association.

(b) Where a registered ground is available it will not be necessary for the visiting Club to receive any other notification, but if the registered ground is not available then the team drawn at home must notify their opponents and the Association within 24 hours of the draw being received that the match is being transferred to their opponents' ground.

(c) In the event of one of the competing Clubs lodging an objection that the ground of its opponents does not meet the required standard, the Steel & Sons Cup Committee shall investigate and decide the outcome. The objection must be lodged with the Secretary of the Association at least 5 days prior to the date fixed for the match (in drawn games 48 hours) accompanied by a deposit of £100.00 to cover expenses. In the event of the objection not being sustained, the deposit will be forfeited, but should the objection be sustained the Club objected against shall be required to refund same through the Secretary of the Association previous to the Tie being played. No protest will be entertained after a match as to the standard of the ground provided there has been sufficient time to enable Clubs to take advantage of this Rule. Objections, under this Rule, must be sent to the Secretary of the Association by special delivery and must be submitted by the Registered Secretary of the Club.

(d) Goal nets must be used in all cup ties. Any objection to ground, goalposts, or ball, must be lodged in writing by a responsible Club Official with the Referee before the game is started, and the Referee shall have power to have such objections made right before the game starts.

(e) In the event of unfavourable weather conditions, the home club must contact the County Antrim Football Association to organise a referee's inspection not later than four (4) hours before kick-off. The match referee or an alternative referee appointed by the CAFA must inspect the ground at least three (3) hours or more previous to the advertised time of kick-off and shall decide as to the fitness of the ground, his/her decision being final after consultation with the Club Secretary and the County Antrim Football Association.

Only a referee appointed by the County Antrim Football Association shall have the power to postpone a tie having taken due cognizance of local advice and the travelling team and supporters.

In the event of the home club failing to request an early inspection the committee shall be empowered to grant compensation to the other club for actual expenses incurred for such match.

Should the match referee deem the ground unfit for play then he/she shall be paid half the match fee and travelling expenses actually incurred by the home club.

(f) In all rounds up to the Semi-Final, if ground conditions are such that the match does not take place on the scheduled date, or is to be replayed following abandonment, the Clubs shall play on or before the next available Saturday. In such cases, should both clubs agree, the home club may obtain an alternative approved ground of Senior or Intermediate status to enable the match to be played under floodlights.

(g) In the case of exceptional circumstances, the Committee may permit postponement of a tie and will determine the date that the match is to be played

(h) County Antrim FA cannot be held responsible for any damages to third parties resulting from the use of artificial turf.

Qualification of Players

6. Players will be eligible to play in the competition provided that, on the date of the tie, they are eligible to play for their own club in its League competition and have been registered on or before 31 August of that season. No player who is registered by his club after 31 August shall be eligible to participate in this competition in that same season. For the avoidance of doubt any player signed after the 31 August in the current season (including 'Out of Contract Professional') shall not be eligible to participate in the competition.

Limitations of Qualifications

7. (a) A player shall be ineligible to compete in the Steel and Sons Cup Competition if he has:
- I. played in the current or previous 3 seasons in a senior International Match
 - II. played in more than 12 matches in Senior Competitions during the current season (a senior match being a match in one of the recognised 'senior' competitions – ie NIFL Premiership and Championship, Irish Challenge Cup, NIFL League Cup, Co Antrim Shield, Mid Ulster Cup, North West Challenge Cup) during the current season except if player has taken part in such senior match/es as a player for an Intermediate club.
 - III. competed in any National Association Cup Tie (Senior or Intermediate) during the current season (this proviso does not apply to I.F.A. Cup Competitions)
 - IV. played in the winning team in the final Tie of a National Association Senior Cup Competition (including the Irish Cup) during the previous season, but a player who has played in a winning team in the Irish Cup during the previous season whilst playing for a Junior team which took part by virtue of a Qualifying Competition or by invitation shall be permitted to play.

No individual shall be allowed to play for more than one competing Club in any one season. In all cases, a player named as substitute and not called upon to play, shall not be considered as having played.

(b) Notwithstanding anything in any rule if the Steel and Sons Cup Committee have any doubt at any time, whether arising out of a protest or otherwise, as to the qualification of any player taking part in the Competition, they shall have the power to call upon such player, or the Club to which he belongs, or for which he has played, to prove 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 penalty as they may think fit. In such circumstances the Committee shall have the power to reinstate the defeated team to the competition in the event that the following round has not yet taken place.

Notification of Draw Etc.

8. (a) Immediately after each drawing, the Secretary of the Association shall intimate to each of the Clubs drawn, the name of the Clubs and the time within which the Tie is to be played. The complete draw will be sent to each club taking part, giving particulars of colours and registered grounds. (If there is a clash of colours the home team must change).

(b) If a Club or Clubs gets a bye in any round (other than the preliminary round) it must play in the next succeeding round.

(c) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by the Committee and without a sufficient reason for so doing, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine, except in the case of a Club being ordered to play a Cup Tie match of the I.F.A. on such date. The Committee in this instance will fix a date on which the tie must be played.

(d) Any Club intending to scratch must give notice to the Secretary of the Association, also the Secretary of the opposing Club. Such notices must be received at least 4 days before the date of kick-off. Any club failing to conform to this Rule shall be dealt with by the Committee, which shall have power to compel offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as may be deemed expedient.

(e) Clubs in agreement and wishing to play on the Sunday following the specified date must advise the Secretary of the Association not less than six days prior to the agreed date.

(f) In the event of a club having two or more players selected to represent their National or Regional 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 International Duty. Furthermore, a club whose goalkeeper is selected to represent their National or Regional Association representative team(s) shall also be permitted a postponement due to the specialist position.

Referees Team Sheet

9. Each competing team shall enter the full names of the players on the team sheet and confirm the line-up via Comet FMS at least 60 minutes before the scheduled kick off time. Players' names must correspond with the numbers assigned on the official team sheet. The Club Comet user shall be considered to have verified the accuracy of the information provided upon confirming the line up in Comet FMS.

Any club not completing the Team Sheet in the prescribed manner shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £25.00. It shall be at the Committee's discretion whether or not such Club should be allowed to remain in the competition.

Substitutes

10. A Club may, at its discretion, use three substitute players at any time in any match, except to replace a player who has been suspended from the game by the Referee. The substitutions can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the Referee has given permission. Only three substitutions by each side will be permitted in any match. The maximum number of substitutes permitted to be nominated by each side is five and must be nominated prior to the commencement of the match.

Replacement of Players on the Team Sheet

11. After the team sheets have been completed and submitted to the Comet Football Management System, and if the match has not yet kicked off, the following shall apply:

a) If any of the first eleven players named on the team sheet are not able to start the match due to unexpected physical incapacity, they can be replaced only by any of the five (5) substitutes named on the confirmed team sheet. The substitute(s) in question can then be replaced by a player(s) not named on the initial team sheet, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. During the match, three (3) players can still be substituted. The replaced player(s) must be removed from the team sheet and not be available for selection for this fixture.

b) If any of the five (5) substitutes named on the team sheet are not able to be fielded due to unexpected physical incapacity, they can be replaced by any player not named on the confirmed team sheet, so that the quota of substitutes is not reduced. During the match, three (3) players can still be substituted. The replaced player(s) must be removed from the team sheet and not be available for selection for this fixture.

c) Any amendments to the team sheet in accordance with points a) and b) above must be communicated to the opposing team manager in the presence of one of the Match Officials as soon as possible prior to the commencement of the match.

Colours

12. (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 home team must change; in all other* cases the Committee shall decide which team(s) must change. A goalkeeper must wear a shirt or jersey of different colour, provided that such shirt or jersey is a colour distinctive from that of the opponents, and the Referee shall have power to deal with any player refusing to comply with this instruction. * Example: Semi-Finals and Finals.

Numbering of Shirts and Jerseys

(b) The shirt, jersey or shorts of each player must be numbered in accordance with the normal practice.

Duration of Match

13. (a) The duration of each match, unless otherwise mutually arranged, shall be 90 minutes. The match must be started at the time appointed by the Committee, but no protest will be upheld for late starting, unless the Committee is 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. The Committee shall have power to instruct Clubs to play extra time in any match or matches where it may be considered desirable.

(b) 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.

In the case of protested ties the Committee shall decide the dates and venues.

Venues for Semi Finals and Final

14. In the Semi-Finals and Final, the venue shall be chosen by the Committee and shall be neutral unless otherwise determined by the Committee who may, upon request, permit the match or matches to be played at the registered home venue of either of the participating teams.

Abandoned Game

15. 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 to deal with the matter as they may determine. Read Law 5 (Laws of the Game)

Referees and Assistant Referees

16. (a) The competing clubs in all but the Semi-Final and Final Ties shall appoint the Assistant Referees unless otherwise arranged by the Committee. The Committee shall appoint the Referee who shall have power to dispense with the services of the Assistant Referees in case he finds one giving decisions at variance with the facts.

(b) The Referee shall not be a member of either of the competing Clubs and in the case of the Semi-Final and Final Ties neither shall the Assistant Referees nor the Fourth Official.

(c) On points of fact connected with the play, over which the Assistant Referees have control, their decision shall be given by flags. The Referee must use a whistle. On any question as to the

interpretation of the Rules, an appeal may be made to the Committee of the Association, but the Referee's decision must be acted on in the field although under protest.

(d) Travelling expenses are payable in accordance with agreed IFA rates.

Protests

17. (a) Protests and Appeals must be received by the Secretary of the Association per SPECIAL DELIVERY bearing postmark within two days (Sundays not included) after cause of protest or appeal, accompanied by a deposit of £100 which shall be forfeited in the event of protest not being sustained. A copy of the protest or appeal 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 cause of protest or appeal and shall be the sole proof of posting. Protests or appeals are only in order if submitted by the Registered Secretary of the Club.

(b) Any team playing an in-eligible player or players, whether through non registration or otherwise, will be fined £25 for each in-eligible player played. In the case of a protest being upheld against a club which has won a match by any violation of rule then that club will be removed from the competition for the current season. Particulars of protest must include written proof of any allegation of violation of this rule, supported if necessary, by eye witness account. If the protest is upheld then the protesting club, if they lost the match in question, may be reinstated in the current season's competition.

Appeals against Decisions of the Steel & Sons Cup Committee

18. All appeals against a decision of the Steel & Sons Cup Committee must be made to the IFA in accordance with the relevant IFA Articles of the Association.

Division of Receipts

19. (a) In rounds prior to the Semi-Finals the home team shall take the receipts and pay the fees of the match officials. Where a game is reversed to the opposition by the club drawn first, the game will be considered a home game for the host club.

(b) In the Semi-Final Ties the net receipts shall be divided as follows:- 10% to the Association and the balance divided amongst the four Clubs engaged.

(c) In the final Tie, after deduction of expenses the remaining portion shall be divided thus:- 33% to the Association and the balance equally divided between the Clubs engaged.

(d) Committee is at liberty to withhold monies from receipts in respect of reported damage or similar costs.

(e) All money generated from the sale of tickets in respect of semi-final and final ties 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.

Agreement for Cup

20. It shall be the responsibility of the winning club to return the cup to the Association on or before the 1st day of November or earlier if so requested by the Association. The winning club shall return the cup in good or like condition and shall be liable for any costs in the event that the cup is destroyed by fire, or lost, or damaged by any other accident whilst in the possession of the club.

Medals or Badges

21. The Association will present medals or other mementoes to the winners and runners-up in the competition each season. For the avoidance of any doubt this shall include the 16 players, Manager and Secretary of each club.

22. All questions of eligibility, qualifications, competitors and interpretation of the Rules, shall be referred to the Committee of the Association, whose decision shall be final, and the Committee shall have power to withhold the Cup.

Media and Social Media Comments

23. If a player or official makes comments in the media or social media in which they imply bias, question integrity, bring the game into disrepute or are abusive, offensive and/or insulting and are also considered to be football related, the matter will be reported under the Disciplinary Code.

Alterations to Rules

24. (a) The Committee shall have power to deal with any matter not provided for in the Rules.

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

Unforeseen circumstances

25. (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 Steel & Sons Cup 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.