

**RULES OF THE
TOALSBET JUNIOR CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITION
(Gibson & Co.)
2025/26**



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1. Name

- 1.1. This Competition shall be called the “TOALSBET COUNTY ANTRIM and DISTRICT FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION JUNIOR CHALLENGE SHIELD COMPETITION”.

2. Trustees of Shield

- 2.1. 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.

3. Annual Competition

- 3.1. The Competition shall be annual and open to Clubs approved by the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee and affiliated to this Association.
- 3.2. Such Clubs must be in membership of leagues sanctioned by the I.F.A. Ltd., having been members of such Leagues during the previous season.
- 3.3. Only one team from each Club will be admitted to the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield.

4. Entries

- 4.1. Entries must be made on the Official Online Affiliation Form, and must be received by the Secretary of the Association not later than the 15th August of each year, and be accompanied by an entry fee of £10 per Club.
- 4.2. The following must be clearly stated on the Entry Form and recorded on The IFA Comet system's software.
 - 4.2.1. Whether ground is public or private;
 - 4.2.2. Situation of ground giving full name and address;
 - 4.2.3. Colours of Club Jersey or Shirt;
 - 4.2.4. Name and Address of Secretary;
 - 4.2.5. Contact telephone numbers
 - 4.2.6. Email address
- 4.3. In the event of a change of Secretary or any other detail initially recorded on the Official Affiliation Form or IFA Comet system's software the same must be notified immediately in writing to the Association Secretary.

5. Grounds Etc.

- 5.1. Teams entering for the Competition must register a ground on the Official Form and the registered ground of teams drawn at home will be included on the notification of the draw.
- 5.2. A private ground shall be taken to be a ground over which the Club has sole control during the match.
- 5.3. A Club may register a ground at any time during the season but must do so in writing to the Secretary of the Association previous to the drawing of the round in which it is competing. Subsequent registration will annul previous registrations, and such registration shall be submitted to the Association for approval. This information must also be updated on the IFA Comet system's software.
- 5.4. Clubs entered for the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield who have choice of grounds must have it of sufficient length and width, and marked off according to Rule 1 "Laws of the Game"; and, as far as possible, suitable provision should be made to prevent spectators encroaching on the portion of field allotted for play.
- 5.5. Suitable on-site dressing accommodation must be provided by home Club. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Junior Shield Committee who shall have power to compel the offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as they may deem expedient.
- 5.6. Matches may be played on grass or 3rd generation (3G) artificial turf.

6. Intimidation by Spectators

- 6.1. When it can be proven that the partisans of the Club which has choice of ground, systematically interfere with the play of opposing Clubs, by using obscene or filthy language or inciting the home players to use violence to their opponents, on the application of the Club which is to play against such Club, the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have power to order the match to be played on another ground if possible.

7. Limitation of Qualifications

- 7.1. To be eligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield, players must attain the age of 16 years old on or before July 1st following the current playing season and (subject to Section 8) must be eligible to play for their Club in their respective league competitions in the current season.
- 7.2. A player's standing shall be decided by the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee.
- 7.3. Clubs must satisfy themselves as to the eligibility of their players before registration.
- 7.4. Notwithstanding anything in any Rule, if the Junior Challenge Shield Committee in the case of the Junior Challenge Shield Competition; 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.

7.4.1. Failing satisfactory proof, they shall disqualify such player and shall remove the Club from the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition, and the Club may be debarred from competing for a maximum of three seasons.

7.4.2. In such circumstances the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have the power to reinstate the defeated team to the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield competition in the event that the following round has not yet taken place

7.5. A player named as substitute for a Senior or Intermediate Club and not called upon to play, shall not be considered as having played.

8. Ineligible Players

8.1. In addition to the provisions of Section 7 the following shall be ineligible for this Competition:—

- 8.1.1. A player registering, or re-registering, with his club after the 31st December in any season will not be eligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition, with the date of registration that as the date the registration is confirmed by Comet.
- 8.1.2. No player shall be eligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition for more than one Club in the same season.
- 8.1.3. A player having taken part in more than 2 games collectively in the Irish Cup, Senior Challenge Shield, Steel and Sons Cup or Intermediate Cup shall be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield in the same season.
- 8.1.4. A player who has taken part in a Senior International contest in the current or previous 3 (three) seasons will be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.
- 8.1.5. Any player who, in the current or previous season, has played in the Final Tie of any Senior or Intermediate status competition, except a player who has played in such Final as a player of a Junior Club will be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.
- 8.1.6. Any player who has at any time taken part in more than 12 (twelve) competitive matches for NIFL Senior Clubs during the current and previous season collectively, will be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.
- 8.1.7. Any player who has taken part in more than 6 (six) competitive matches for Senior or Intermediate Clubs collectively during the current season will be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.

- 8.1.8. A professional player will be ineligible to play in the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.
- 8.2. Any Club playing an ineligible player will be removed from the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition and the Club may be debarred from competing for a maximum of three seasons.
- 8.2.1. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have power to suspend any offending player or official, may impose a fine of £20.00 for each ineligible player played, and may withhold the Shield and Medals if they are satisfied that such Club has violated the rules during the course of the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition.
- 8.2.2. If a Club is deemed to have misled the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee in giving evidence, in such case the Club will be removed from the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Competition and the Club may be debarred from competing for a maximum of three seasons.

9. Drawing the Ties

- 9.1. The names of the Clubs approved for competition shall be placed in one lot, or lots, as the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee may determine.
- 9.2. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee may draw subsequent round or rounds before the winners of the previous rounds have been declared and the winners according to such draw shall compete against each other as in the first round.
- 9.3. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have power to exempt any number of Clubs from any number of rounds, and byes may be given so that four Clubs shall compete in the Semi-Finals.
- 9.4. If a Club or Clubs get a bye in any round (other than the preliminary round) it must play the next succeeding round.

10. Notification of Draw Etc.

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. The complete draw will be sent to each Club taking part, giving particulars of colours and giving clear direction as to the full name, address and location of the ground.
- 10.3. The Teams which are in each instance first drawn in the ballot shall play on the ground registered with the Association.
- 10.3.1. If the registered ground is available, it will not be necessary for the visiting team to receive any other notification.
- 10.3.2. If the registered pitch is unplayable a Club may change to a 3G playing surface at the same venue.

- 10.3.3. The Secretary of the host club MUST inform the opposing team's Secretary and the Association Secretary by telephone and email immediately.
- 10.4. If the match is being transferred to another ground it will be the responsibility of the team drawn at home to notify both their opponents and the Secretary of the Association by telephone and email immediately. and not later than two days before kick off giving clear directions as to the full name, address and location of the ground.
- 10.5. In the event of a match not taking place on the date arranged owing to the ground being declared unplayable by the Referee, relevant council or groundsman where clubs have a private ground the teams shall forthwith arrange to play on the following Saturday at the same venue.
- 10.5.1. In the event of the match not taking place at the venue of the home team on the second Saturday, the team which was first drawn away will have choice of venue for the next two Saturdays.
- 10.5.2. If the match is not played at the fourth attempt due to the grounds being declared unplayable the tie will revert to the ground of the team first drawn at home and then alternately week by week to the away team's venue.
- 10.6. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have the power to re-arrange any un-played fixtures at their discretion in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- 10.7. Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee and without sufficient reasons for so doing shall be adjudged to have lost the match, and shall be otherwise dealt with as the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee may determine.
- 10.8. Any Club intending to withdraw from the Competition must give notice in writing to the Secretary of this Association and to the Secretary of the opposing Club, such notices to be received at least four days before the date fixed for the kick-off. Any Club failing to conform to this Rule shall be dealt with by the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee, who shall have power to compel the offending Club to pay such expenses or take such action as may be deemed expedient.
- 10.9. 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.
- 10.10. 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.

11. Team Sheet

11.1. The full names of players shall be entered on the IFA Comet software no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. This must be inputted within the IFA Comet software by the designated Club Line-up Manager who will be responsible for its accuracy and validity. A paper team sheet may be used should the match venue not have a data signal.

11.2. The players' shirts must be clearly numbered on the back and must correspond exactly with the instruction input into the IFA Comet system or the team sheet handed to the Match Referee should the match venue not have a data signal.

11.3. Any Club not completing the information on the IFA Comet software or Team Sheet in the prescribed manner shall be liable to a fine of £25.00. It shall be at the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee's discretion whether or not such Club should be allowed to remain in the Competition.

11.4. The Comet system will display a team sheet when both Clubs have confirmed their players or the paper Team Sheet may be inspected by the Secretary or other responsible official of either the competing teams at the conclusion of the match.

11.5. A copy of the Official Team Sheet can be viewed on the IFA Comet software or the paper team sheet may be requested from the Association Secretary by either of the competing Clubs for a fee of £25.00.

12. Substitutes

12.1. 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.

12.2. The substitutions can only be made when play is stopped for any reason and the referee has given permission.

12.3. Only three substitutions by each side will be permitted in any match and the substitute players shall be nominated prior to the commencement of the tie.

12.4. The maximum number of substitutes permitted to be nominated by each side is five.

12.5. Where extra time is played, each team has one additional substitution opportunity* (whether or not the team has used its maximum number of substitution opportunities)

13. Replacement of Players on the Team Sheet

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.

14. Colours

- 14.1 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 team on whose ground the match is played shall change theirs.
- 14.2 In all other cases the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall decide which team shall change their colours.
- 14.3 The colours of the Club shall be taken to be the colours of the shirt or jersey.

15. Duration of Match

- 15.1 The duration of each match, shall be 90 minutes.

- 15.2 The match must be started at the time appointed by the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee, but no protest will be upheld for late starting, unless the Committee is satisfied that the result of the match was affected thereby.

- 15.3 The Referee shall have power to allow extra time for stoppages, their decision thereon to be final.

- 15.4 The match result must be recorded on the IFA Comet software and emailed to the Competitions Manager of the Association directly after the conclusion of the game by the winning Club but not later than 90 minutes following the conclusion of the game or a £10 fine will be issued.

16. Extra Time

- 16.1 In all rounds of the competition, including the Final, should scores be level after 90 minutes, 2 x 10 minute periods of extra time will be played.
- 16.2 If the scores are still level at the end of extra time, 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.

17. Protested Ties

- 17.1 In case of protested ties, or replays of same, the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall decide the dates and venues. Should either Club refuse to compete such Club shall be removed from the Competition, and otherwise dealt with as the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee may determine.

18. Abandoned Game

- 18.1 If a match has been stopped by the Match Referee before the completion of the time specified in the Rules, for any reason stated in Law 5 (Laws of the Game) or in the event of a player receiving a serious injury, the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield 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.
- 18.2 If a match has been stopped by the Match Referee before the completion of the time specified in the Rules, and based on the evidence provided, the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee finds that a Club was responsible for the abandonment then the committee will decide the appropriate outcome of such fixture which may include exclusion from the competition for a period not exceeding 3 years.
- 18.3 A Club proven to have caused the abandonment of a match may be excluded from the competition for a period not exceeding three years.

19. Referees and Assistant Referees

- 19.1 The competing Clubs in all but the Semi-Final and Final Ties shall appoint the Assistant Referees unless otherwise arranged by the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee.
- 19.2 The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall appoint the Official Referee who shall have power to dispense with the services of the Assistant Referees in case he finds one or other giving decisions at variance with the facts.
- 19.3 In all but the Semi-Final and Final Ties, the Club on whose ground the match is played shall pay the Official Referee's fee and travel expenses.

- 19.4 The Official Referee appointed by the Association shall not be a member of either of the competing Clubs and in the Semi-Final and Final neither of the Assistant Referees shall be members of the competing Clubs.
- 19.5 No member of the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall act as a Referee in any match in Competitions of which he is a member, and shall only receive out of pocket expenses as Assistant Referees.
- 19.6 On points of fact connected with the play, over which the Assistant Referees have control, their decision shall be given by flags.
- 19.7 The Match Referee must use a whistle.
- 19.8 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.

19.9 If an Official Referee fails to arrive and both clubs can provide a Club Referee, then the clubs must either agree mutually, or toss a coin for the choice of Match Referee, and the match in such circumstances will be considered a fixture

19.10 If only one club can provide a Club Referee and both teams are in agreement, then he will be deemed the Match Referee, and the match will be considered a fixture.

19.11 In the event of the Referee sustaining an injury and is unable to carry on rules 19.9,19.10 will apply

19.12 Where an Official Referee fails to arrive for a fixture or sustains an injury and is unable to carry on and neither Club can provide a Club Referee, then the game will be played on the following Saturday.

Definitions

Official Referee – A Referee who has been appointed by The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee to take control of a game and who is entitled to a match fee.

Club Referee – A Referee who is a member of a club and has successfully completed a Referees course and who is affiliated to the Irish Football Association with access to the Comet Football Management System.

Match Referee – Either an Official Referee or Club Referee who takes charge of a game.

20. Protests

20.1 Protests and appeals must be received by the Secretary of the Association per SPECIAL DELIVERY bearing post mark within four days after the cause of protest or appeal, accompanied by a deposit of £100.00.

20.2 A copy of the protest or appeal must also be sent by SPECIAL DELIVERY to the Club protested against and the certificate of posting of such registered letter must bear date stamp within two days after the cause of the protest or appeal and shall be the sole proof of posting.

20.3 Protests and appeals are only in order if submitted by the registered Secretary or responsible Official of the Club. Protests against ineligible

players must give the name of the players protested against and also the cause of the protest.

20.4 The onus of proof in any protest will lie with the Club protesting and reinstatement to the competition will only be considered on provision of such proof.

20.5 Clubs may view the Team Sheet on the IFA Comet software or the paper team sheet may be requested from the Association Secretary by either of the competing Clubs for a fee of £25.00 A separate fee will be required for each paper Team Sheet requested.

20.6 The deposit will be returned by the Association only if the protest or appeal has been upheld, or if the protest is not lodged according to Rule, or is not discussed by the Committee.

* The proof of posting of such special delivery letter shall be the postmark on the certificate of posting.

21. Division of Receipts

21.1 In the Semi-Final and Final Ties the net receipts shall be equally divided by the Association amongst the Clubs engaged therein, but in the case of all replayed ties the net receipts shall be divided as follows: – one-fourth to the Association and the remaining three-fourths to be equally divided between the competing Clubs.

21.2 The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee is at liberty to withhold monies from receipts in respect of reported damage or similar costs.

22. Medals or Mementoes

22.1 Medals or other mementoes will be presented 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.

22.2 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 club representatives: -

'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 Junior 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.'

23. Alteration to Rules

23.1 The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have the power to deal with any matter not provided for in these rules.

23.2 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.

23.3 These Rules shall not be altered, annulled, or added to, until after the Final Tie has been played.

24. COVID-19 and other pandemics

24.1. All Clubs must adhere to all guidelines and protocols issued by the Government, the Irish Football Association and County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee.

24.2 . The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee shall have the power to warn any Club not adhering to guidelines and protocols and in addition shall have the power to impose further sanctions including: • A fine • A suspension • Expulsion from a competition.

24.3. Representatives of the County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee may carry out regular COVID-19 audits on games under their remit.

24.4. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee will have the power to decide the outcome of any scheduled games that are not played due to the effects of COVID-19

24.5. The County Antrim Junior Challenge Shield Committee will have the power to deal with all other matters that arise due to COVID-19 or others pandemics not covered above.