

## **RULES OF THE TOALSBET.COM WOMEN'S CHALLENGE CUP**

### **1. Name**

This competition shall be called the ToalsBet.Com Women's Challenge Cup.

### **2. Trustees of the Cup**

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

### **3. Annual Competition**

The competition shall be annual and open to Clubs approved by this Committee and affiliated to this Association. Such Clubs must be in membership of leagues sanctioned by the IFA Ltd., having been members of such Leagues during the previous season. Only one team from each Club will be admitted to the Competition.

### **4. Entries**

Entries must be made via the Comet Football Management System "Comet", not later than the last day of February of each year, and be accompanied by an entry fee of £10 per Club.

### **5. Substitutes**

5.1 A club may at its discretion, use 5 substitute players at any time in any tie, 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. Only 5 substitutions by each side will be permitted in any tie and the maximum of 7 substitute players may be nominated prior to the commencement of the tie.

Substitutions may only be made on at most 3 occasions during the game (Excluding half time).

#### **5.2 Completion of team line up**

A.) Each club shall complete their official team sheet by including the names of players and Team officials and their functions taking part in each match (including the name of the nominated substitutes) and confirm the lineup via Comet FMS 60 minutes prior to kick-off.

B.) Players' names must correspond with the numbers assigned on the official team sheet. The Club Comet user shall be considered to verify the accuracy of the information provided on the team sheet via Comet FMS.

C.) Any club failing to provide such documentation by the stipulated deadlines will be fined in the sum of £25 for each offence.

#### **5.3 Replacement of Players on the Team Sheet**

A.) 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 seven (7) 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, five (5) 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 seven (7) 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, five (5) 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 by one of the Match Officials as soon as possible prior to the commencement of the match.

## **6. Eligible Players**

A.) The competing teams shall number eleven players each. No individual shall play for more than one Club in the Women's Challenge Cup in the same season.

B.) A player shall be construed as taking part in the game for which they were nominated only if they have actually played in such game.

C.) To be eligible to play in the Women's Challenge Cup all players must be registered by their clubs, in accordance with the IFA Professional Game Player Registration Regulations.

D.) For the avoidance of doubt to be eligible to play in this competition a player must also be eligible to participate for their club in the relevant league competition.

E.) Clubs who play in a purely amateur league competition and who are permitted to register players to participate in such purely amateur competition outside the following registration periods shall not be permitted to play any player so registered in this competition until the commencement of the subsequent registration period. The registration periods are:

### **FIRST REGISTRATION PERIOD**

10 February 2025 – 30 April 2025 (5pm)

### **SECOND REGISTRATION PERIOD**

1 July 2025 – 31 July 2025 (5pm)

F.) Any Amateur or Professional player registered by their club after 5pm on 31 July in the current season (including an 'Out of Contract Professional') will not be eligible to participate in the competition.

Any club playing an ineligible player shall be removed from the Competition and may be debarred from competing for up to a maximum of three seasons. The County Antrim FA Women's Cup Committee may also impose a fine not exceeding £25 for each ineligible player played. The Secretary or other responsible official of each competing team shall enter the full names of players on the official Team Sheet on Comet FMS and must certify the accuracy of the

information supplied. An individual who is proven to have inserted a false name on the official Team Sheet may receive a suspension and/or the club may be fined. Player's names must correspond with the numbers of their shirt. Any club not completing the official Team Sheet in the prescribed manner may be liable to a fine not exceeding £10 and it shall be at the Committee's discretion whether or not such club should be allowed to remain in the Competition.

### **7. Entry Levels**

The CAFA Women's Challenge Cup Committee may determine the entry levels of teams to the competition at their complete discretion.

### **8. Duration of Match**

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, their 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.

### **9. Drawing of ties (up to and including the Semi-Final)**

The lots shall be drawn and the competition matches played as the Committee may determine. Immediately following each draw a schedule of matches will be circulated to all participating clubs. The clubs which are in each instance first drawn in the ballot shall have choice of ground. Should 2 clubs be drawn against each other, only 1 of which has a ground available, the match shall be played on that ground. In the event of only one of the clubs drawn in any tie having floodlights, the match shall be played at that venue. In the event of a club getting a bye in any draw, the Committee at the subsequent draw shall first draw a club to play against it from the lot, the two shall again be put in the ballot box and again drawn with the first drawn club having choice of ground.

### **10. Playing Surfaces**

Matches may be played on grass or 3rd generation (3G) artificial turf.

### **11. Change of Venue**

In the event of a match being transferred to an alternative ground it shall be the responsibility of the team drawn at home to notify in writing, by email to both their opponents and the Competitions Manager of the County Antrim & District Football Association not later than 7 days previous to the date of the match giving clear directions to the location of the ground. Failure to notify the County Antrim & District Football Association and opponents may result in the team being dismissed from the Competition. If necessary the Committee will permit the playing of the match at either clubs registered or alternative ground if agreed in writing and confirmed to the

Competitions Manager by both clubs not later than 5pm on the Friday previous to the date of the match.

### **12. Clubs Failing to Play**

Any club refusing or failing to play against the club against which it has been drawn on the date fixed by the Committee, and without sufficient reasons for so-doing, shall be adjudged to have forfeited the match and will be otherwise dealt with as the Committee may determine. Also, any club leaving the ground before the expiration of the game must be adjudged to have forfeited the match and shall be liable to be dealt with by the Committee.

### **13. International Duty**

- a) In normal circumstances International Duty applies only to Full International and Under 19 International call up.
- b) A club whose goalkeeper is selected for International Under 17 duty and has made first team debut for their Club may also be considered.
- c) In the event of a club having two (2) or more players selected and/or on standby to represent their National Association representative team(s), they shall be permitted to request a postponement of their scheduled fixture during the period of release in respect of such International Duty. Furthermore, a club whose goalkeeper is selected for such International Duty shall also be permitted to request a postponement due to the specialist position.
- d) The County Antrim FA Women's Cup Committee shall consider all such requests and determine whether or not such requests are approved or rejected.

### **14. Pitch Inspections**

- a) In case of unfavourable weather conditions or concerns regarding the playing surface the Home Club must request the Co Antrim FA 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, their 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, who shall take due cognizance of local advice and the travelling supporters.
- c) Notwithstanding the above, in the event of extreme weather conditions and forecasts the Co Antrim FA Competition Manager, in consultation with the Co Antrim FA Women's

Committee Chair, 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' they will then declare their decision.
- e) It is agreed that in addition to the £10 fee, an allowance of £10 per hour be paid up until 1 hour before kick off, when the referee would be due to arrive at the ground in normal circumstances. This will only apply when the match referee has had to travel 30 miles or more (single journey/one way). Any distances shorter than this would result in the match referee returning home following the inspection and travel back to the ground at the normal time and he would of course be entitled to add this extra travel and £5 inspection fee onto his expenses for the game.
- f) The Referee, Assistant Referees and 4<sup>th</sup> Official shall be paid half match fee and expenses for a postponed match which they have arrived at and inspected.

#### **15. Postponed or Abandoned Matches**

- a) In the case of matches where it is found necessary to stop play owing to weather conditions the referee must wait for a period of 15 minutes before deciding upon abandonment.
- b) If through any cause a match has been abandoned before the completion of the full playing time, the Co Antrim FA Women's Cup Committee shall have power at its discretion to award a win according to the goals scored at the time of such abandonment, or order the unfinished time to be played, or to order the match to be re-played in its entirety, on a subsequent date to be fixed by the Co Antrim FA Women's Cup Committee under such terms and conditions as it may impose.
- c) Postponed or abandoned matches shall be played on a date to be determined by the Co Antrim FA Women's Cup Committee.

#### **16. Protests**

Protests by all clubs must be sent by email to [secretary@countyantrimfa.org](mailto:secretary@countyantrimfa.org) within four days after the cause of the protest, accompanied by a deposit of £50 which shall be forfeited in all

cases where the Protest has not been sustained. A copy of the Protest must also be sent by the appellant club by email to the secretary of the club protested against within four days after the cause of the Protest. Clubs must also transfer the £50 deposit via bank transfer. Any club submitting a protest must retain proof of delivery that the protest was lodged within the required timescale.

### **17. Appeals against Decisions of the Women's Cup Committee**

All appeals against a decision of the Women's Cup Committee must be made to the IFA in accordance with the relevant IFA Articles of the Association.

### **18. Committee's doubts as to qualifications of players**

If the Committee has any doubt as to the qualification of any player competing in the Competition it shall have the power to call upon such player, and/or the club to which she belongs or for which she played, to prove to the satisfaction of the Committee that she is properly qualified according to the Rules. Failing satisfactory proof the Committee shall have the power to disqualify such player, remove such club from the Competition and impose such other 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.

### **19. Clubs to appoint Assistant Referees**

The competing clubs shall appoint the Assistant Referees to matches unless otherwise directed by the Women's Cup Committee.

### **20. Appointment of Referees**

In all matches the Association shall appoint the Referee, who shall have the power to dispense with the services of the Assistant Referees of the clubs in the event that he/she finds one or other giving decisions at variance with the facts. The Association shall also appoint Assistant Referees and 4th Officials to the Semi-Final and Final ties.

### **21. Referees Fees & Expenses**

Where there is no appointed referee or where the appointed referee does not appear, the game may be refereed by a club referee (that is a qualified referee who is a member of a club) who is registered and who has paid their subscription.

In the event that both teams have a qualified club referee, there shall be a coin toss and the winner shall referee the game. The qualified club referee shall be responsible for completing the match report on the Association's Comet Football Management System. Should there be no Association appointed Referee or qualified club referee available, the fixture will be recorded as postponed. Prior to the Semi-Finals, the club on whose ground a match is played shall pay the referees' fees and expenses. In the Semi Final and Final ties the Association shall pay the Referees' fees and expenses.

## **22. Players must wear registered colours**

- a.) The players in each competing team must wear the registered club colours except when opposing teams have similar colours, in which case the team on whose ground the match is being played shall change. Failure to comply will result in offending clubs being fined £50. In all other cases the Committee shall decide which team shall change their colours.
- b.) In a Semi-Final or Final tie, or any other tie played on neutral ground, where opposing teams have similar colours both teams shall change unless it is mutually agreed that only one team need to do so.
- c.) The colours of the club shall be taken as the colour of the shirt, shorts and socks. A goalkeeper must wear a shirt of different colour and said shirt must be of a colour distinctive from that of her opponents.
- d.) Referees shall have power to instruct a Club to change any part of their playing kit if they consider the colour not quite distinctive from that of their opponents, and the Referee shall have power to deal with any club or player refusing to comply with this instruction.

## **23. Notice of scratching**

Any club intending to withdraw (scratch) from the Competition must give notice to the Association and to the Secretary of the opposing club. Such notice must be received at least 4 days before the date of the match. Any club failing to conform to this rule shall be dealt with by the Committee who may compel the offending club to pay the expenses incurred and to take any other action they consider appropriate.

## **24. Venue for Final**

The venue for the Final tie shall be decided by the Committee and shall be neutral. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may permit a match to be played on the ground of either club concerned if both clubs are in agreement.

## **25. Agreement for Cup**

It shall be the responsibility of the winning club to return the Cup to the Association on or before the 1st day of June 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.

## **26. Medals / Mementoes**

In addition to the Cup, the Committee shall present suitable mementoes to the winners and runners up. Each club will receive 18 Player medals, 1 Manager medal and 1 Secretary medal.

## **27. Division of Receipts**

In all Competition Matches, with the exception of the Semi-Final and Final ties, the club on whose ground the match is played shall take the receipts and pay all expenses.

Semi Final:

In the Semi Final ties, net receipts shall be divided equally amongst the two 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.

Final:

In the Final tie, the net receipts shall be equally divided amongst the two Clubs.

**28. Committee Powers**

The Committee shall have the power to deal with offending club/s, player/s, official/s, as they consider appropriate and to deal with any matter not otherwise provided for in these rules. 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. These Rules shall not be altered, annulled, or added to, until after the Final Tie has been played.