



**HANDBOOK**

**SEASON 2019 -2020**

**SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S & GIRLS' FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

(Affiliated to the South Wales Football Association Ltd) <http://www.swwgl.co.uk/>

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**Welsh Football Trust Development Officer: Vacant**

## Name of the League and Eligible Members

1. This amalgam of clubs to be called the “South Wales Women’s & Girls’ Football League” (hereinafter referred to as the “League”). The boundaries of this league are the boundaries of the South Wales Football Association (hereinafter referred to as “SWFA”) and the Gwent County Football Association (hereinafter referred to as “GCFA”).
2. All clubs must be affiliated to the SWFA and permission must be obtained for clubs outside this Association to participate in the League and its competitions. All players Under 16 years must play for teams in the area in which they reside. A player must play for a club within a travelling distance of five miles from their residence. If there are fewer than three clubs with a team in the appropriate age band within a five mile distance from their residence then this distance will be extended until a player has three clubs available to choose from. The distance to be defined using <http://bit.ly/swwglvenues> from the player’s home postcode to the postcode of the club’s main venue. Exceptions to this rule will only be permitted by the League Management Committee or the SWFA.

## Structure of the League

3. The League shall organise competitions at the following levels:

Division	Aged Over	Aged Under
Under 7 (Mini Football)	5	7
Under 8 (Mini Football)	6	8
Under 9 (Mini Football)	7	9
Under 10 (Mini Football)	8	10
Under 11 (Mini Football)	9	11
Under 12	10	12
Under 13	11	13
Under 14	12	14
Under 15	13	15
Under 16	14	16
Women	16	open age

Football organised for players aged over 5 years and less than 11 years, must be on a non-competitive basis. A player’s age as at midnight on 31 August in any year shall define her eligibility. The League may, at its discretion, organise various competitions within the levels stated above.

## Entrance and Guarantee Fees

4. A club shall only be required to pay one Girls’ guarantee fee regardless of the number of Girls’ teams it enters into the League but for Women, a separate guarantee fee is required. Any team withdrawing from the League after fixtures have been released and before completing its fixtures in any season shall forfeit their guarantee fee. Should a club have fines outstanding that exceed their guarantee fees then their fixtures will be suspended until the fines are paid.

Division	Entry Fee £	Guarantee Fee £
Under 7/8/9/10/11	20	50
Under 12/13/14/15/16	20	50
Women (SWWGL)	50	100

5. Any club seeking membership of this League will not be allowed to register more than three players from any one team that were members of the League at the end of the previous season and are also entered for the forthcoming season. The League may allow more than three in exceptional cases only which shall be solely at the discretion of the League Management Committee.
6. The return of the guarantee fee at the end of season must be requested in writing to the League Secretary or it will be carried on to the next season. In the event of a team withdrawing and the club have other teams that wish to continue to play, a new guarantee fee will be required in order for them to continue with their fixtures. Forfeiture of the guarantee fee shall not apply if, in the opinion of the Management Committee, a club is not at fault in not completing their fixtures. Any monies owing by a club must be paid in full before that club is allowed to play in the following season. All League fees and registration fees must be paid by 1 September with any other registrations (e.g. players) after this date invoiced on 1 October, 1 January and 1 April. A club failing to pay their account by 21 May will forfeit their guarantee fee.
7. All clubs must register sufficient players in order to start the season; sufficient players will be deemed a minimum of six in U7 & U8, eight in U9, ten in U10, twelve in U11, U12 and U13, fourteen in U14, U15, U16 and Women. Clubs failing to play scheduled fixtures because they have insufficient players registered will be dealt with by the League. Each Club is limited to enter only 2 teams in the U14, U15 & U16 and Women's sections with a limit of 3 teams at U12 and U13 whilst there are no restrictions on number of teams in the Minis section. Any late team entries after 31 July in the competitive age groups will be charged an additional late entry fee which will depend on when this is received and the work involved.

## Management Committee

8. The affairs of the League shall be conducted and controlled by a Management Committee and a number of sub-committees for the Senior, Junior and Minis sections as well as for Development and Representative Squad as required. The overall Committee will consist of:
  - League Chairman
  - League Vice Chairman
  - League Secretary
  - League Safeguarding Officer
  - League Treasurer
  - League Registration Secretaries
  - League Fixture Secretaries
  - Welsh Football Trust Development Officer
  - Club Representatives nominated by member clubs (up to three Girls', up to three Women's)
9. No more than two representatives from any club can be on the Management Committee.
10. Nominations may be submitted in writing to the Secretary prior to the AGM, with at least 14 days' notice. In the event of no nominations for committee members at an AGM, it will be opened up to the floor.
11. Any person who has been dismissed or has been asked to resign from the Management Committee or who has deemed to have resigned may not be submitted for re-election without the prior approval of the Management Committee.
12. All Management Committee members once elected will remain in position, if they so choose, for a period of three years. Re-elections will be held at the AGM.
13. At Management Committee meetings, the presence of five members shall be deemed to be sufficient to form a quorum.
14. The League shall appoint a Safeguarding Officer in accordance with instructions laid down by the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and SWFA with their responsibilities as specified by the aforementioned organisations. League and Club Safeguarding Officers to use FAW guidelines <http://www.faw.cymru/en/about-faw/pitch/safeguarding/>.

15. The Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt members onto the committee should vacancies arise and they shall serve until the next AGM.
16. No committee member shall be present on any matter in which his/her club may be deemed to have an interest. They must declare that interest and after presenting their case they need to withdraw from the meeting.
17. Any committee member failing to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse shall be deemed to have resigned.
18. Where necessary, the Chairman may call for a vote to decide a specific issue. Even though it is possible for a Management Committee member to hold more than one position, that person shall only be entitled to one vote on any matter. In the event of any vote being equal, the Chairman shall have a further, casting vote to decide the issue.
19. The Management Committee shall have the power to rule on any other matter not specifically provided for within the rules of this League.
20. The funds of the League shall be deposited with a Bank. The Treasurer shall present a Bank statement and cash book when requested at Management Committee meetings.

## Clubs

21. All Girls' Clubs under the jurisdiction of the League shall satisfy the Management Committee that they are properly accredited clubs and playing football according to the Laws of the FAW. They may be required to provide their FAW Accreditation Certificate or their current position via the relevant Football Development Officer (FDO). If there are players under the age of 18 playing within a Women's team then the club must have a Safeguarding Officer.
22. Each club shall forward annually on a form to the League Secretary, a statement of their distinguishing colours and alternate colours, together with the name and address of their Club Secretary, Safeguarding Officer and Team Coaches/Managers, as well as the location of their home ground and dressing rooms; such form to be returned to the League Secretary by the date of the AGM each year.
23. All Clubs must advise the League when there is a change to any of the details on the Club Affiliation form. Failure to comply with this rule will be subject to a fine of £20.
24. Permission is required from both the League and the SWFA (or GCFA) for all friendly matches and tournaments within Wales. If outside Wales, sanction is also required from the FAW.
25. Any club when requested must respond within 10 days of the date of the relevant correspondence. Any club failing to comply with this rule will be deemed to be guilty of misconduct and will be subject to a fine of £20.
26. All clubs affiliated to this League are responsible for the conduct of their own officials, players and spectators as per the FAW Safeguarding guidelines. Clubs are required to take all precautions necessary to prevent match Officials and officials, and/or players of other clubs being threatened or assaulted during or following the conclusion of matches.
27. The League will only correspond with the Club Secretary in all matters. Correspondence must come on headed paper or via an email address that has already been registered with the League. Note that text messages do not class as official League correspondence.

## Meetings

28. All clubs in membership must attend the AGM each year or they will incur a fine of £50.
29. Each club shall be allowed one vote only regardless of the number of teams they have entered into the League.
30. Members of the Management Committee shall be entitled to one vote each.
31. Clubs failing to send a representative to any of the League's meetings will be fined £50 at the discretion of the Management Committee.
32. No person may represent more than one club at any meeting.
33. Clubs may send a maximum of two representatives to any meeting, further representatives from any club may only be permitted to attend a meeting with prior permission of the Chairman.

34. The presence of representatives from at least half the affiliated member clubs shall be deemed sufficient to form a quorum.
35. A Special General Meeting shall be convened by the Secretary, if requested in writing by at least one third of the clubs in membership of the League, or by a majority of members of the Management Committee.
36. Notice of such meeting shall be sent to all clubs in membership of the League, together with an agenda at least seven days prior to the date set for the meeting and such notice shall also state the objective for which the meeting is convened.
37. General meetings of clubs may be convened in addition to the AGM. Clubs will be given written notice of these meetings and attendance will be compulsory. Clubs not attending will be liable to sanctions as stated in rule 31.
38. No alteration or amendment of these rules shall be permitted except at an AGM or a Special General Meeting convened for this purpose; such alterations or additions must be sanctioned by the SWFA before they can become operative.
39. Any proposed rule changes are to be forwarded in writing to each club at least seven days before the meeting.
40. Any alterations to rules shall not be deemed carried unless supported by two-thirds of the voting members present.
41. Any member club wishing to put forward rule changes to be considered at the AGM, shall do so in writing to the League Secretary by April 1 annually.
42. Voting on general rule changes will be for all clubs, whereas those rules that specifically apply to the Girls' or Women's section will only be voted on by the clubs in that section.

## Player Registration and Transfers

43. All players are to be registered on the FAW COMET system. The following procedures for registering players are to be strictly adhered to:
44. A player may play for only one club in membership of the League at any one time.
45. A player may only play for the team she has been registered with and may not play in more than one age group. No Girls' team may have more than 20 registered players. Players may be de-registered or transferred if exceeding this number.
46. On initial registration, a digital photo or two passport-sized photographs, along with the evidence of a player's age, are to be forwarded to the League along with the appropriate registration form, which must be completed in ink. Both passport-sized photos must have the player's name clearly written on the back, along with the club and the player's date of birth.
47. A player will be eligible to play for a club providing the appropriate FAW COMET registration is completed and she is shown as approved on the electronic team sheet.
48. All team sheets must be available for inspection at every match by the Opposition Manager (and League Officer) prior to the commencement of the game. The team sheet must be handed to the opposition prior to kick-off time. Failure to provide the team sheet for inspection will be recorded on the team sheet, result in a fine of £30 and the points may be awarded to the opposing team.
49. If a club enters more than one team into any age group, a player may only play for one team and cannot be transferred to another team until she has complied with the League's rules for transfer of players.
50. The fee for player registrations will now be paid directly to the FAW.
51. In the event of any club withdrawing from the League during a season, the players become eligible to play for another club and must follow the initial registration procedures.
52. The cost of the League Cup competition is £10 and entry is compulsory. A player may only play for one team in any knock-out cup competition (or section of a League Cup competition) in any season regardless of any other rules concerning registrations and transfers.
53. Should any doubt arise as to the age or eligibility of any player, the League shall give such information as is necessary on payment of £10 for each named player concerned. All applications must be made in writing and accompanied by the fee which will become due by

the offending club if the case is proven. All protests must be submitted within 72 hours of the end of the game.

54. In the event of a club being found guilty of playing an ineligible player(s) the club will be fined £30 for each player and should the offending side have gained points in the game(s), all points may be awarded to their opponents, and goals scored in the game by the offending club may be deducted from their record. Teams committing a subsequent offence in the same season shall be dealt with by the Management Committee as they see fit and may be liable to expulsion from the League.
55. No player may transfer or sign for a club after the last Thursday in March in any season.
56. Players under 16 must obtain permission from their present club and the transfer is to be completed by the club secretaries of her present and proposed new clubs using the FAW COMET system. The player will be eligible to play for her new club when she has been approved by the League and added to the electronic team sheet of her new club. The fee for transferring a player's registration will now be paid directly to the FAW.
57. Players under the age of 16 shall not be permitted to change clubs after 1 January in the same season without the prior permission of the SWFA.
58. Any club guilty of inducing or attempting to induce a bona-fide player or players of another club to join their club, will be deemed guilty of misconduct and liable to expulsion from the League. Any approaches to clubs with regard to the transfer of players must be made in accordance with the FAW rules governing the same.

## Fixtures

59. Fixtures will be arranged by the appropriate League Fixture Secretary. If a pitch is considered unfit to play by the Council or Club prior to match day then the appropriate League Fixture Secretary must be notified immediately so as to consider an alternate venue or fixture before any team postpones the match. There will be a £20 fine for not complying.
60. All fixtures must be played as listed. The Home Club shall be responsible for notifying opponents and match officials of the venue and team colours at least five days before a game. If this is not done the home team may be liable to a fine of £10.
61. Where team colours are similar, the home team shall change to alternative colours - the decision on similarity of colours shall be made by the referee.
62. An away club or referee not receiving confirmation of a fixture must contact the home club for guidance and advise the League of their actions - clubs and officials are expected to travel to all fixtures unless instructed to the contrary.
63. League and League Cup competition fixtures take priority over any other fixture/tournament, with the exception of competitions organised by the FAW and the SWFA.
64. All matches must be played on Sundays unless arranged to the contrary with kick-off times mutually agreed by the clubs. Where kick-off time cannot be mutually agreed upon, the matches for U12 and 13 must start between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm while matches for U14, U15, U16 and Women must start between 12:00 pm and 4:00 pm.
65. Clubs found guilty of delaying a kick-off may be liable to a fine of up to £10.
66. Where games are played at U14 level, these must be played as two equal halves of 30 minutes duration, games at U15 level must be played as two equal halves of 35 minutes, games at U16 level must be played as two equal halves of 40 minutes, while a Women's game must be played as two equal halves of 45 minutes.
67. All fixtures not played to full length will be referred to the Management Committee.
68. In the Mini and U12 Divisions, clubs may play more than one game each day. Where this occurs, individual games may not be of a longer duration than 15 minutes each way.
69. In the U11 Division, teams will be required to match players, at least six and not more than eight per side. A maximum of 13 players may comprise a squad for any one game. At U12 (12'x6' goals) & U13 (16'x7' goals) using the 9v9 format a minimum of 7 players are required to play and teams should play no more than one extra at 9v8 or 8v7. A maximum of 14 players may comprise a squad.

70. Clubs may apply for up to two free dates per team during the season. Free Date Requests using <http://bit.ly/FreeDateRequest> must be received at least 10 days before the date required. Christmas Day is an automatic free date.
71. No free dates shall be granted on FAW & SWFA Cup Conference dates; clubs will be advised on the website of Cup Conference dates as soon as possible at the start of each season.
72. Any club with two or more players in football international squad commitments which clash with League fixtures may apply to the League Secretary for a postponement of fixtures and such postponements shall not be counted as part of a club's entitlement to free dates.
73. Fixtures must be played with 'match' balls and of the sizes specified below:
- | Division               | Ball Size |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Under 7/8/9            | 3         |
| Under 10/11/12/13      | 4         |
| Under 14/15/16 & Women | 5         |
74. The Away team is responsible for communicating the match result using the automated (SMS) results service by 7 pm on Sunday or for matches played midweek by 10 pm. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £10.
75. Team sheets for all matches to be forwarded to the League by email to [teamsheets.swwgl@gmail.com](mailto:teamsheets.swwgl@gmail.com) within two days of the game. At all age groups each team is responsible for completing their team sheet correctly. Failure to comply will incur a fine of £10 rising by £10 for every 10 days the team sheet is not provided.
76. Each team is responsible for the completion of their details on the team sheet, including signatures, and may be liable to fines if details are missing. This will not absolve any defaulting club from having to send in team sheets.
77. In all age groups each team is required to complete details of the games on their own team sheet and it must be signed by the Manager/Coach of both teams.
78. If a pitch is unfit owing to weather conditions, the home team is to notify their opponents to prevent unnecessary travelling. In the event of both teams arriving at the venue, the referee is the sole judge as to the state of ground and conditions.
79. No club shall be allowed to postpone any match once arranged by the League unless it is to play an FAW Cup or SWFA Cup tie. Permission to postpone a fixture may be obtained from the Management Committee or on their behalf from the League Secretary. All postponed matches can be rearranged by the agreement of both clubs with the consent of the appropriate Fixture Secretary.
80. Any team failing to fulfil its League fixtures will be liable to a fine of up to £30. In addition, the game will be declared void and the points awarded to the opposing team. Teams committing a subsequent offence in the same season shall be dealt with by the Management Committee as they see fit and may be liable to expulsion from the League.
81. In the case of any match being postponed for any reason, the Home club must immediately advise the appropriate Fixture Secretary before the scheduled kick-off time. Clubs failing to carry out this instruction will be fined £20. In the event of a team being unable to fulfil a fixture because of excessive illness or injury to players, the club shall supply official medical certification evidence to the League Secretary within three days of the scheduled fixture to substantiate any application for postponement.
82. The Management Committee shall review all abandoned matches which have played two-thirds of playing time and in cases where it is to the advantage of the League and does not do injustice to any member club, shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to be recorded as the match result. If the Management Committee is satisfied that the game has been abandoned because of the conduct of one club or its club members, it shall be empowered, after the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Area Association, to award the points to its opponents or take what other action it deems necessary. When a game is abandoned because of the conduct of either teams or their club members, the Management Committee shall take such action as it considers appropriate.

## Champion Club

83. Three points will be awarded for a win and one for a draw in all matches. At the end of the playing season, the Club obtaining the highest number of points shall be declared champions.
84. In the Girls' section, if two or more clubs are level on points, the following criteria applies:
- most wins;
  - the results between the equal teams (for the purposes of points won only).
- Should the teams still be equal, the Management Committee will arrange for a play-off match between the teams involved or declare them to be equal.
85. In the Women's section if two or more Clubs are level on points, the following criteria applies:
- goal difference;
  - most goals scored;
  - the results between the equally placed teams in terms of points gained;
  - the results between the equally placed teams in terms of goals scored.
- If the teams should still be level, the Management Committee will arrange for a play-off match between the teams to determine the Championship. For other league placing, the teams shall be declared equally placed.
86. The results of all matches involving a disbanded, suspended or withdrawn team in the current season, will be deleted from League records.
87. All trophies are the property of the League and shall be returned to the League Secretary by 31 March each year. Failure to carry this out will incur a fine of £50.
88. Mementoes may be awarded to the winners and runners-up of the League and any League Cup competitions.
89. In all age groups, teams may be divided into several divisions with a maximum of 14 teams.
90. In the Women's section when there are several divisions, at the end of each season two teams will be promoted from and relegated from the respective divisions. A team cannot be promoted or relegated into a division where there is another team from the same club. A team will be considered for the Welsh Women's League (WWL) if they are in the top two places in Division 1. A club will decide if they want to be considered for the Welsh Women's League (WWL).

## Referees

91. All referees must be registered with their local Area Association. The Referee Coordinator will attempt to assign a registered referee for all Junior and Women's matches. If this is not done, no less than three days before the match, then it is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that a registered referee is available for the match. No referee who has a personal connection with a club may be appointed. In the Women's and Girls' sections if no registered referee is available, the following procedure must be followed:
- The away club shall nominate a person (who must have a valid DBS in the Girls' section) to referee the match.
  - If clubs cannot agree, the match **MUST** be played but a written letter of protest may be submitted prior to the match by either team. The letter must be signed by **BOTH** teams and forwarded to the League Secretary within two days of the match and accompanied by a fee of £10.
  - In the U11 Division, where three or more teams are in attendance at the same venue, then the neutral, non-playing team must provide the referee. This person **MUST** have a valid DBS.
  - All referees at all age groups must possess a current DBS clearance.
  - Where a referee is appointed in accordance with points (a) or (c), the referee who starts the fixture must officiate the whole game. Referees cannot be changed during the game unless due to injury.

- f. If a registered referee is assigned to a match, then the cost must be shared equally between both sides. The home club is responsible for payment to the referee on the day and the away club must pay the home club their equal share. Referee fee to be £20 per game for Girls and £25 for Women with travelling expenses of 35p per mile (maximum £15) or standard public transport fare. .
- 92. Should a game not be played when a referee has travelled, the home team shall pay the referee half match fee plus expenses.
- 93. Referees who fail to arrive at appointed fixtures after confirmation has been made with the club must be reported to the Management Committee by the home club.
- 94. Each club must supply one person to the referee to act as an assistant during the match.
- 95. Referees are hereby instructed that all reports must be sent direct to the SWFA or the GCFA, who alone will deal with such reports.

## Misconduct & Protests

- 96. All reports of misconduct by players, officials or spectators must be reported to the SWFA or the GCFA.
- 97. Protests must be lodged with the League Secretary within 48 hours (Sundays excluded) of the game, to which the protest refers ending. All protests must be accompanied by a £25 fee which may be forfeit if the protest is lost. The Management Committee has the power to order the complaining club to pay such expenses of the club they protested against as they deem fit. All protests regarding the ground must also be verbally lodged with the referee prior to the start of the match.
- 98. Any club dissatisfied with a decision of the Management Committee has the right of appeal to the SWFA or the GCFA. Any such appeal must be submitted in accordance with the rules of the Association.
- 99. The Management Committee shall have power to take action against any player, official or club they deem guilty of misconduct. Such action may include (but not be limited to) fines, deductions of points, suspension of player registrations and expulsion from the League. No action may be commenced while the same is outstanding with the SWFA or the GCFA. Any club or person against whom action has been taken has the right of appeal in accordance with Rule 98. For any disciplinary process that has been undertaken by the League, the decision of the Management Committee will include full reasons of why this decision was arrived at and forwarded to the Club Secretary of the club involved.
- 100. By applying to enter the League, all clubs will be deemed to have accepted the League's Code of Conduct (as per the FAW). Clubs, players or officials transgressing this code will be liable to be charged with misconduct. The League and Club's responsibility to child welfare is an essential priority at all times.

## Grounds

- 101. The home club must ensure the field of play is correctly marked and in a safe condition for use. Regulation corner flags must be provided in all cases, together with goal nets. Separate dressing rooms and showering facilities must be provided for players and match officials.

## Substitutes

- 102. In all matches in the Girls' and Women's section, five substitutes per team may be nominated and used. Roll-on roll-off substitutes may be used but must not exceed the amount of substitutes allowed for the game (five), with all players having to enter the pitch when agreed by the referee. All substitute names, whether or not they played in the game, must be entered on the match team sheet.

## League Cup Rules

103. League Cup fixtures to be played in exactly the same way as League fixtures, except that if there is no result at full-time in knock-out fixtures, extra time will be played. This will consist of 15 minutes each way for Women (10 minutes for U14-U16 Girls, 5 minutes for U12-U13 Girls) and then penalties using the standard procedure, if there still is not a result.
104. In the League Cup knockout sections the team drawn first will play at their home venue. If a game is postponed then it will be re-scheduled and it will take precedence over a League fixture. If the rescheduled fixture is not played it may be reversed to the venue of the second drawn team. The League reserves the right to schedule any League Cup fixture at a neutral venue in order to resolve fixture issues.
105. In the Women's section at the Semi-Final and Final stage, there will also be assistant referees appointed by the League. Both teams will share the costs of the match officials (referee and assistants). The fee for assistant referees is £15 plus 35p per mile to a maximum of £15.
106. The League Cup Final and Semi-Finals will be played at a neutral venue.

## Financial Obligations

107. Any club who fails to meet their financial obligations to this League will be deemed guilty of misconduct and dealt with at the discretion of the Management Committee.

## Adopted Rules

108. FAW Rule 91 - Where a Club which plays in a League at National Level also has a team playing in the SWWGL and the Club's team(s) (which plays in a League at National Level) does not have a playing fixture on a given day, then on that given day no more than three (3) players from the Club who played in the last fixture in a league at National Level shall be allowed to play in the SWWGL team fixture on that given day.
109. FAW Rule 88 - A player should play in their actual age group wherever possible according to this rule and associated guidance notes. Possible reasons for playing out of age group will be recorded on the Players database for data analysis purposes:
  - i) Club has no team in that age group so the player is entitled to play one year up due to the 2 year age band
  - ii) Club has a team at risk in the older age group so there is a need to balance out players
  - iii) FAW regional or national squad guidance has been given to play in older age group
  - iv) Played with this team last season