

# The National League Trust Under 11s Cup 2024

## INFORMATION for CLUBS and CLUB COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



It's time to start planning your entry into this season's competition. This Tournament gives you a unique way to build relationships with your local primary schools. The League's aim is that all member clubs try to take part in the tournament. These notes are to help you understand how to find your champion schools who will represent the club in the regional and final stages of the tournament and perhaps win their way to play at Wembley before the promotion play off in May 2024.

### **Who can enter?**

The competition is open to all clubs who are members of the National League in the 2023/24 season. This can be via the club or its community organisation, whether you receive funding from the NLT or not. It is most likely that the Tournament to find your representative schools will be run by the charity or CIC who manages the club's community programme, but if there is no organisation of this type at your club then the club can run this instead.

There are two tournaments – one for girls and one for mixed teams, both are for the Under 11 age group. You can enter one or both competitions.

Played in a six-a-side format, primary schools who win your tournament will go on to represent your club, playing under your name and in club kit. We expect each club to provide a set of kit for the children to play in at no cost to the children or the school.

Please remember that it is a competition for primary schools, and **NOT** for an age group team from a club's academy or centre of excellence.

### **How does the tournament work?**

If you decide to enter the competition, you will need to organise a tournament for local primary schools – either ones you have a connection with or those in your area you would like to invite. There may be a school sports coordinator working with the education authority who can help you by passing information about your event to your local schools and help recruit entrants. You can include as many schools as you like.

If you are planning to enter one or both competitions, please tell us by **5pm on Friday 15 September 2023**. This is so we have an idea of the number of entrants we can expect. This is not a commitment – if things go wrong and you are not able to run your local tournament, we will understand. You can do this now by completing a brief online form. Just click [here](#).

Your schools tournament should take place in the autumn term: ideally as early as possible. You can play your tournaments on grass or an artificial surface, especially as the latter will give better playing conditions. Indoor facilities could also be used.

You then need to confirm the name and contact details of your winning school or schools (if you are entering both competitions) by **Friday 1 December 2023**.

Your winning schools will then be invited to a regional tournament which will be held between **15 January and 9 February 2024**. Each of these will be hosted by a National League club. The number of regional events will depend on the number of entrants but will be between six and eight depending on the geographical spread of entrants.

The winners and runners up of each regional tournament will be invited to take part in either the **North** or **South Final**. These will be held in the week beginning **18 March 2024**.



The winners of these Finals will then meet each other to contest the Under 11s Cup Finals at Wembley on **Saturday 4 May 2024**. The two finals usually take place about two hours before the kick-off of the Promotion Play-Off Final. We are usually able to provide reduced priced tickets for family and friends of the teams, so that they can support the children on the day, and then watch the main match.

We appreciate that this event will involve some significant travel distances during the regional and finals stages, and if this is the case, we can help subsidise these costs. Details of this will be available once you confirm your champion schools.

## **PRIMARY SCHOOL TOURNAMENTS**

Many of you have run events of this type in the past and are experienced enough to be able to stage a tournament without any help. If you do need help and advice on how to plan your competition, please let us know.

The number of schools you invite is up to you: ideally you need at least four schools to make it a meaningful event. Please keep a list of the school names and details of the number of children who take part, as we will ask you for this later.

### Types of primary schools to include:

- Community schools
- Foundation schools
- Academies
- Faith schools
- Free schools

- Special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Hospital schools
- Service Children's Education (SCE) schools
- Middle deemed primary schools.



Here are some key things to remember:

- It's great if you can hold the tournament at your club. If this is not possible, then perhaps one of the schools has facilities you can use. Alternately, you could use a local sports club or hire a commercial or council run facility and some of these offer reduced rates for daytime use for community activities.
- For any venue, make sure you carry out both health and safety and safeguarding risk assessments well before the event and let your schools know about particular arrangements. For example, it may be easier for children to arrive in kit and not need to use changing facilities.
- You may wish to charge schools a small entry fee to cover your costs.
- It's important to give this opportunity to
- You can hold your tournament on grass or artificial surfaces, or indoors if the weather is poor. Please make sure the schools know in advance what footwear the children should be wearing. Shin pads should be worn at all times.
- You must have insurance in place that covers your event, and that everyone (particularly school staff) is aware of your safeguarding procedures.
- First aid cover is also important. You should have a first aid kit available but make sure school staff know that they should treat any accident or injury to their children, as they will be responsible for their team squad.
- We try to encourage as many girls as possible to have the opportunity to play, but if a school does not have enough girls to create a squad, then girls can play in the mixed team.

- Make sure your communications to your schools are clear, particularly about tournament rules. It's a good idea to hold a meeting on the day with the school leaders before the first game starts to go through the rules.
- The first part of your tournament should be a round-robin basis, so all teams get to play the same number of games. The aim is for children to enjoy playing, so you should aim for them to play at least three matches.
- A knockout stage can be introduced to determine the winner or finalists.
- Make sure you have coloured bibs handy in case you end up with a kit clash.
- You can always have the top two teams play each other at a separate final, staging this on the pitch before a first team home game.
- Make sure you use competent and experienced referees. The County FA can provide details of local officials if you need help with this.
- Good conduct and behaviour are very important. Please ensure all schools understand that all players and supporters should respect the decisions of the referees.
- Spectators should be accommodated at the side of the pitch, and not behind the goals. If a penalty-shoot out is needed at any stage, ask spectators to move away from the penalty area.
- Look at the FA's Respect resources, and you may want to appoint someone as Respect monitor to look after spectators.

### **What should you say to schools who enter?**

It is important that schools are aware of the proposed timetable when they make a commitment to enter. You will want to know that your winning school or schools will be able to take part in the next stage of the competition. In particular, please let them know the dates for the regional tournaments, North and South Finals and the Wembley Finals in case they impact on school plans for sports days or trips.



such as asthma or allergies, in their group of pupils at all events.

Clubs and schools will need to ensure they are able to support their squads at each stage of the tournament with a sufficient number of adults. Clubs are expected to send a representative with their team/s to all stages of the competition.

You should also make sure schools understand that they are responsible for managing any known health issues,

## Information updates

We will send you regular updates about the progress of the competition and hold online briefings before the final stages. Please make sure that you let us know if your main contact person changes.

## Don't forget publicity...

This is a great opportunity for some local publicity. So, remember to give your tournament lots of coverage in club programmes, on websites and through social media feeds. You could invite someone special to present medals to the winners at your tournament – and the children will enjoy it if your club mascot is there. Remember to take lots of photos and send us the best ones.

You Retweeted

 **AFC Fylde Foundation** @afcft · Apr 11

🏆 On 25th March, the Foundation were proud to host 10 local schools who took part in the National League Trust Schools Cup!

⚽ We would like to thank @AFCFyldeAcademy for refereeing all of the matches and helping to ensure the day ran smoothly!

📺 Stay tuned for more!



You Retweeted

 **Curzon Ashton Community Foundation** @CurzonAshtonCF · Mar 24

We're all ready to welcome Schools participating in our @TheNLTrust U11s Girls Cup @CurzonAshton this morning, playing for a place in the Regional Finals, good luck everyone 🌟🏆⚽ #letgirlsplay



You Retweeted

 **Bromley FC Community Sports Trust** @BromleyFCTrust · Mar 21

We're really looking forward to hosting over 250 kids tomorrow for the National League Trust Under 11 Cup

@TheNLTrust | @Bromleyschgames

#WeAreBromley



# TOURNAMENT RULES

**These will be used throughout the competition.** Please use these for your tournament:

## ORGANISATION

- The rules of the Club's tournament should be available in writing and sent to those involved at least one week before the event – this should include the lead teachers for each school and referees.
- If you are planning to video or take photographs of the event, then get the written consent of each school taking part.
- There are a number of similar events being run by the Premier League Charitable Fund and the EFL Trust. We have agreed that different schools represent a club in each competition. If you are aware that any school in your area is representing a Premier League or EFL club in another event, do not invite them to your tournament.
- Similarly, if you are invited to enter the EFL Kids Cup or a PL Primary Stars tournament, then please make sure different schools represent you in each event.

## THE TEAMS

- All players to be born on or after 1 September 2012 (School Years 5 and 6 and below). For safety reasons no one outside this age bracket is eligible to play.
- All players must be in full time education and current pupils at the school they represent.
- Each team must be under the control of a practising teacher, recognised as such by the Department of Education and the school the team represents. The details of the teacher must be given to the tournament organisers in advance and they must be present throughout the event. Any other person helping, assisting or coaching the team must do this in the presence of the teacher.
- All adults responsible for the team should have undergone an enhanced DBS check.
- Each team can have a squad with a maximum of eight players.
- The squad of players should remain the same throughout all stages of the NLT Cup, with the exception of replacements as a result of illness or injury.
- The girls' competition is for girls only. The mixed competition is for boys or mixed squads.

## EQUIPMENT

- Pitch dimensions should be 40- 45 metres long x 25-32 metres wide, with a halfway line marked.
- The penalty area should be a semi-circle of 7.5metres radius, from the centre of the goal. The penalty mark should be 6 metres from the goal line.
- Goals should be 12ft x 6ft (3m 66cms x 1m 83cm) or standard size for small-sided games.
- Size 4 footballs to be used.
- Shin guards and the correct footwear for the surface **must** be worn for all games.

## COMPETITION FORMAT

- Play a league format with one or more groups, depending on the number of entrants.
- Each game should last for at least 10 minutes. You may play a longer game if you wish but no longer than 12 minutes. Games should be played straight through without half time.

- Six players will be on the pitch for each team at any time, unless the 'Power-Play' rule is active.
- 'Power-Play' rule - Should a team find themselves at a 3-goal deficit at any point during the game, this team can field an additional player, making the game 7 vs 6. Should the same team find themselves at a 6-goal deficit, again they have the opportunity to field a second additional player, making the game 8 vs 6. Should this team score, reducing the deficit to 2 or 5 goals, they would then have to remove a player in accordance with the 'Power Play' ruling goals to player ratios (minimum 3-5 goals = 1 additional player and 6+ goals = 2 additional players).
- In league matches, the winner of each game will be determined by the team that scores the most goals. The winner will be awarded 3 points. In the event of a draw both teams will receive one point.
- Placings in final league tables will be decided by points won. If points for two teams are level, goal difference should be taken into account. If teams are still level, then goals scored will be used to try and determine final league position.
- If after all of the above has been taken into account the positions are still level, then the match result between the two teams concerned will count.
- A penalty shoot-out can then be used to determine the winner if there is no difference in the playing records. This should be on the basis of five penalties per side, and then sudden death if the score is still level. A coin toss should decide who goes first and kicks should be taken in traditional ABAB format.
- If knock-out matches are played, and the scores are level at the end of the game, they will go straight to a penalty shoot with three allotted penalty takers from each team. A coin toss should decide who goes first and kicks should be taken in traditional ABAB format.
- There should be no further substitutions following the final whistle and the same goalkeeper who finished the game must remain in goal. Kicks from the penalty mark must be taken in line with FA regulations and the goalkeeper must have at least one foot on the line when the ball is kicked.
- Players taking a penalty should only take a few steps forward before striking the ball, and this is at the referees' discretion.
- If the scores are still level at this time a sudden death penalty shoot-out will determine the winner, with the players who were on the pitch at the final whistle taking kicks in turn.
- Additional rules for semi-final/final:
  - For these games when the scores are level at full-time, then a period of extra-time can be played. This should be three minutes. If the scores are still level then a penalty shoot-out will take place as above, with no further substitutions and five penalties taken by each team.
  - If the scores are level after five penalties each side, the sixth players on the field at the end of the match should start the sudden death process, followed by the full complement of substitutes taking turns. If the game has still not been decided, then the starting players kick again.

## **PLAYING RULES**

- The law relating to offside does not apply in this competition.
- The ball is allowed to go above head height.
- A goal can be scored from anywhere on the playing area.
- Throw ins, corners and goal kicks are taken as normal, the latter to be taken from anywhere within the penalty area.
- 'Retreat Line' rule - When the defending team are taking a goal kick, the opponents must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out the penalty area. The defending team does not have to wait for the opposition to retreat and has the option to restart the game beforehand, should they choose.
- Goalkeepers must roll the ball out when receiving the ball with their hands in open play and could be penalised (referees' discretion) with an indirect free kick if they distribute the ball either kicking from their hands or placing the ball on the floor and kicking from the ground. Goal kicks are to be taken as normal.
- Players can go anywhere on the pitch. Attacking and defending players are allowed in both penalty areas.
- Players must be two metres away from any free kick, kick off, throw-in or corner. This is again at the referee's discretion.
- A player cannot score direct from a kick-off.
- Goalkeepers cannot pick up the ball from a back pass. If this happens, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposition on the edge of the box.
- Repeated/rolling substitutions may be made. Substitutions must be carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game and players may only enter play (when making a substitution or through the Power Play rule) under the direction of the referee and when there is a stop in play.
- Players who are substituted then become substitutes and may return to the game later.

## **DISCIPLINE**

- Any player sent from the field of play under FA Rules on Misconduct will take no further part in that particular stage of the competition.
- A player should miss the rest of the competition (both Regional and National Final events) if guilty of a serious offence including violent conduct, abusive behaviour, racist or homophobic comments or spitting at an opponent.
- For a technical offence such as deliberately handling a goal bound shot or an obvious and clear professional foul to gain an advantage, a sending off would be punishment enough.

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

- Clubs are encouraged to consider diversity within staff attending and the referees officiating at Regional Tournaments.
- Clubs should ensure that all facilities, activities and workshops are accessible and inclusive for all participants, school staff and spectators (if applicable).



*For reference:*

Laws of the Game - <http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules>

FA Respect Guidelines - <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect/play-your-part>

We Only Do Positive - <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect>

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## **KEY DATES**

- Confirm you plan to enter to the NLT by **5pm on 15 September 2023**
- Do this by completing this online form:
- Primary school tournaments can be held at any time in **the autumn term up to 1 December 2023**
- You must tell us the names of your winning schools by **Friday 1 December 2023**
- Regional tournaments will be held between **15 January and 9 February 2024**
- Winners and runners up of the regional events will be invited to North and South Finals. These will take place in the week of **18 March 2024**
- The Finals will take place at **Wembley on 4 May 2024**

## **Any questions?**

Please contact us by phone or email at the usual numbers and addresses:

### *Administration:*

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