



## SportsReach Football League Constitution 2022-23

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## **Article I. NAME**

1. The name of the league shall be called the 'SportsReach Football League' hereafter referred to as "the league". The league comes under the authority of 'SportsReach' overall ministry.

## **Article II. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Membership shall be open to all Churches or Organisations whose message is Evangelical and who believe in the Scriptures as the inspired, infallible word of God.
2. All the teams must be managed by committed Christians, and will abide by the laws of Association Football.

## **Article III. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES and PRACTICAL STEPS FOR LEADERS**

1. The overriding purpose of the league is to reach people for Christ through the avenue of football.
2. This league is an 'outreach' league, and the Executive recommends that all team Managers, and spiritual leaders should try to have at least 4 or 5 non-Christians in their respective teams.
3. Managers are responsible for making sure these guidelines are kept.
4. Any team, individual or player or official whose conduct is deemed to be contrary to these objectives will be subject to disciplinary action to be determined by the Executive.

## **Article IV. AIMS OF THE LEAGUE:**

1. To maintain that The Lord Jesus Christ is first and foremost in our league.
2. To advance the Gospel of God to all, in the best way we can.
3. In every match, there should be a presentation of the Christian message, which all players are encouraged to attend as well as spectators. It is the responsibility of the home manager to prepare / delegate this biblical presentation well in advance.
4. Managers and Team Leaders are encouraged to take a pastoral role within their respective teams. This involves caring for the welfare of each individual by various means e.g. Caring for the sick and injured, comforting the bereaved, and giving help wherever needed.
5. Prayer is a vital part of Christian Ministry and the Executive encourages Managers and Team Leaders to meet for prayer.
6. Football is a great way of communicating the Christian message – One to one friendships can be built with players, and invitations should be encouraged to Church meetings and social activities.
7. The Managers' Meetings are vital to the running of the league. Managers are expected to attend each meeting of which there are roughly six per year. If for any reason a Manager cannot be present, the Manager should inform the Chairman prior to the meeting and a representative must be sent (authorised by the Chairman prior to the meeting).
8. The End of Season Awards dinner is a very important part of the league. The Executive expects all Managers and players to attend.
9. The league seeks to set a good example of sportsmanship, and because of its Christian nature all Managers, Team Leaders and players are expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour on and off the field, and travelling within their respective teams. The Managers and Team Leaders are expected to support the referee at all times. Foul and abusive language both on and off the field is not tolerated in the league and will be firmly disciplined if it occurs.
10. The central importance of the league is not winning but to portray the love of Jesus to all. People from varied backgrounds throughout the community are to be encouraged to play and enjoy, with a view of seeing and believing the Christian faith.

Managers should personally read these 10 aims and objectives before the start of each season and make players aware of any that are relevant to them.

## Article V. EXECUTIVE

1. There shall be an Executive committee of the league, which exists to promote the aims of the league.
2. The Executive shall consist of the Director of SportsReach, Chairman, Referee's Co-ordinator, and other such officers as are deemed to be necessary.
3. The Executive shall meet with all Managers.
4. The Executive is accountable to the Trustees of SportsReach.
5. Any issues involving teams connected with the executive will be passed to suitable *independent parties/named managers* (eg. *Danny Garratt etc*) to deal with.

### a. SportsReach Executive:

- i. Director: Will Marsden
- ii. Co. Chairman: Mick Lund & Anthony Marsh
- iii. Referee's Co-ordinator: Richard Sutton
- iv. Exec: Jim Ellershaw
- v. Exec: Rob Tomkins
- vi. Fixture Secretary: James Rosendale
- vii. Results / website Secretary – Ruth Marsden (non-Exec)

## Article VI. LEAGUE STRUCTURE

1. The league shall consist of a number of teams, which will be decided at the beginning of the season.
2. Teams will not be permitted to join the league mid-season.
3. Teams wishing to join the league should approach the Executive of the league and apply in writing indicating their willingness to abide by the rules of the league.
4. Such nominations should be discussed by the Executive, and if they are in favour, the team(s) joining will be included in the league in the following season.

### a. Matches

- i. Dependant on team numbers, during the season teams will play each other three times, at least once at home and once away.
- ii. Teams will have an equal number of home and away games over the course of the season.
- iii. If one of the pitches is unplayable, then an alternative pitch should be used.
- iv. The fixture list will be arranged by the Executive.
- v. Teams which cannot fulfil fixtures can re-arrange their games with the consent of the League Secretary and other team/s, but not on the date of another fixture.
- vi. All changes should be informed to the Secretary and Referee's Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- vii. If no suitable date can be arranged, the League Secretary should be contacted.
- viii. If a team withdraws part way through a season, all results against that team will be nullified.
- ix. The Executive may amend the league structure at the beginning of the season.

### b. Managers responsibilities:

#### 1. Prior to the season starting:

- a) To inform players of the standards expected within the SportsReach Football League.
- b) Ensure that every player is signed on to play for the team.
- c) Any under 18's MUST have a parental consent form signed as well.

- d) Ensure that every player is aware of the need for arranging their own personal accident insurance.
- e) Arranging the use of a pitch, which must be of a suitable standard with full markings, full size corner flags and good quality nets.
- f) Ensuring that there is an Emergency procedure document in place and laminated and kept in the first aid bag (see managers pack)
- g) Completing a risk assessment for the home pitch, which is then to be sent back to the office, prior to the first game of the season (see managers pack)
- h) Having a first aid bag fully stocked and ready to be used before the first game of the season (see managers pack).

## **2. Throughout the season:**

- a) To inform new signings during the season of the standards expected within the SportsReach Football League.
- b) To ensure any new players are signed on before playing for the team.
- c) That players are held accountable for their actions and conduct before, during and after a game.
- d) Bringing their own players under control if they are abusive towards match officials or linesmen.
- e) Support the referee in their decisions
- f) Providing a competent linesman
- g) Providing a First Aid Kit (see Manager's pack)
- h) Ensuring that the Emergency procedure document is in place and up to date
- i) Filling in a team sheet and keeping a personal record for one season.
- j) Completed registration forms are given to the SportsReach office
- k) Informing the Secretary of the result of the match – and your choice of man of the match from the opposition team if it's a league fixture - by 6pm on that Saturday.
- l) Managers are to liaise with one another to ensure there is no kit clash.

## **3. As home manager:**

- a) Ensuring the use of a pitch, which must be of a suitable standard with full markings, full size corner flags and good quality nets.
- b) Providing an official league match ball and spare (It was decided at the end of the 2018/19 season that we would all use i-Pro Hibrid footballs. These are available from the SportsReach office at £12 each.)
- c) Arranging prayer time between the Managers and the Referee before the match. ((Every Manager must really encourage this!) Managers should also encourage other Christians on the team to arrange or partake in this))
- d) Arranging an epilogue, which will take place at a suitable time during the afternoon.
- e) Providing the Referee with expenses (£40 per match).
- f) Pitch inspection prior to each game (if there is any doubt of the match not being played due to conditions, please inform the Referee's co-ordinator by the Thursday evening of that week if possible.)

## **4. Social Media**

- a) As expected on the football pitch, a Managers conduct on social media is also expected to be a high standard.
- b) The exec appreciates and encourages the managers running Facebook pages, Instagram accounts etc as it increases the awareness of the League and its

message, but it needs to be used wisely and considerately of players, referees and opposition.

- c) If the exec believes a post brings the league or result into disrepute, they reserve the right to request a manager removes the post from the social media platform it is on.
- d) The Managers Whats-app groups can be a useful tool for information and updates – please refrain from having private conversations and discussions over this media. Please also be aware of what is written in these messages as it can easily be passed on.

## **Article VII. CANCELLATION OF MATCHES**

1. Teams are expected to fulfil all their fixtures.
2. If a game is in doubt, Managers must contact the Secretary.
3. Cancellation for non-weather related reasons must occur by Thursday evening of the week of the fixture by informing the Secretary, the referee of the game and the Referee Co-ordinator.
4. Teams **MUST** play if they have a minimum of 10 players.
5. The Secretary would expect as much notice as possible for the cancellation of games due to pre-arranged social events (e.g. Weddings) to enable alternative fixtures to be arranged.

### **a. Unfit Pitches**

- i. It is the responsibility of the home manager to carry out a pitch inspection and let the referee and away team know 3 hours in advance of the kick off time if the pitch is unplayable.
- ii. In the event of a decision being made by the home team to allow the match to play and the referee at kick off time deems the pitch unplayable then the home team will forfeit the match at a 3-0 defeat or lose the cup tie in the event of a game over 2 legs.
- iii. Please be considerate to other teams travelling distances.

### **b. Abandoned games**

- i. The referee has the power to abandon the game where they deem fit and necessary to.
- ii. If a game is abandoned after 70 minutes, the result at that point stands.
- iii. If a game is abandoned before 70 minutes, the game is to be replayed from 0 minutes.
- iv. When ready to abandon a game, the referee will inform both captains of his decision and explain why.

## **Article VIII. COMPLETION OF FIXTURES**

1. All teams are expected to complete all their fixtures before the End of Season League Meal.
2. Whilst this is the League's desire, there is an understanding that on rare occasions this may not be the case.
3. When re-arranging fixtures at the end of the season, with the permission of and consultation with the League secretary, the home team is to offer three separate dates (no Sunday dates) for a fixture to be fulfilled.
4. If the away team cannot fulfil any of the offered dates, they forfeit the game 3-0.
5. If the home team is unable to fulfil any dates, they forfeit the game 3-0.
6. A team can cancel up to two games during the season due to lack of players. They forfeit the game on the 3<sup>rd</sup> occasion.
7. When the third game is forfeited, it will not be rescheduled.
8. Following that, each time a team postpones a game due to lack of players, they lose 1 point per games postponed.

## Article IX. POINTS

1. A win will receive 3 points, a draw 1 point, a defeat 0 points.

## Article X. RULES

1. The rules of the game will be the laws of Association Football, altered and discussed by the SportsReach League Exec.
2. Each team should provide for itself a copy of the laws.
3. On points of fact connected with play, the referee's decision is final and must be supported by managers.
4. Teams should appreciate the difficulties facing referees and endeavour to assist them by displaying good conduct and encouragement.
5. The football rules within SportsReach are largely the same as the F.A rules, although we do have a different motivation to consider (Constitution aims & objectives points 1 & 2).
6. At the beginning of each new season, the exec will consider and discuss any new rules being implemented by the FA and will decide if they are applicable to the SportsReach Football League.
7. Managers will be informed of any new rules at the first managers meeting of the season.
8. We are playing football to sow the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ to the players.
9. Rolling subs take place within League games
  - a. **Goal kicks**
    - i. In keeping with the addition of new rules in the 2019/20 season by the FA, players can now receive the ball inside the penalty area from a goal kick.
    - ii. Opposing players cannot enter the area until the ball is live and has been kicked by the goalkeeper.
  - b. **Free kicks**
    - i. In keeping with the addition of new rules in the 2019/20 season by the FA, when the attacking team is awarded a free kick by the referee, they can take it straight away, to preserve the advantage, rather than having to wait for the referee's whistle
    - ii. This is, however, at the discretion of the referee.
    - iii. The referee can choose to stop the game if they feel the foul warrants it.
    - iv. If the referee chooses to allow the game to continue, the player who committed the foul will then be booked in the next phase of play.
    - v. In keeping with the addition of new rules in the 2019/20 season by the FA, attacking players are not allowed to stand in the defensive wall at a free kick.
    - vi. The referee is able to tell attacking players to move away from the wall.
    - vii. Attacking players must not be stood within 3 yards of the wall.
    - viii. Attacking players who ignore the referee persistently will be booked for doing so.
  - c. **Inhibiting substances**
    - i. For the 2021/22 season, it was agreed to introduce a rule related to inhibiting substances and their consumption on or around a pitch on a match day.
    - ii. Inhibiting substances are things such as cigarettes, alcohol, drugs.
    - iii. Items that may give of the impression of an inhibiting substance, such as E-Cigarettes or Vaping are also not allowed.
    - iv. During a match day, there is to be no consumption of alcohol, cigarettes etc within changing rooms, pitch side or car parks near the pitch.

- v. Players are asked to listen to and respect managers and referees when asked to stop doing so.
- vi. If players refuse to do so, referees can take action to remove them from the game.
- vii. In extreme cases, the Executive reserves the right to intervene and punish players who refuse to follow these rules.
- viii. It is up to the managers discretion where the boundaries of the pitch lie.

## **Article XI. FINES**

1. Yellow Card - £10 (First offence)
2. Yellow card - £12 (Second offence)
3. Yellow card - £15 and 1 match ban on the third offence
4. Every booking thereafter stays at £15
5. Two yellow cards followed by a red card - £20 fine and 1 match ban (increased to a 3 match ban for violent conduct)
6. A straight red card - £25 and a 1 match ban (increased to a 3 match ban for violent conduct)

## **Article XII. SUSPENSIONS**

1. The exec reserves the right to call players before the exec at any point during the season, to explain their conduct.
2. If a player accumulates 3 yellow cards during a season (not 2 in a match, as that will equal a Red card), the player and their manager will be expected to meet with members of the exec and explain their conduct and serve at least an automatic 1 match ban.
3. If they gain 2 more yellow cards during the season, the player and their manager will be expected to meet with members of the exec again and explain their conduct, who will then decide on appropriate punishment, which will be at least a two-match ban.
4. Bookings will equate to a points system during the season, with a yellow card equivalent to 2 points and a red card equivalent to 5 points.
5. Once a player reaches 6 points, the player and their manager will be expected to meet with members of the exec and explain their conduct and appropriate punishment will be imposed.
6. If a player gains a 3<sup>rd</sup> yellow card in the final match of the season, the 1 match ban will be wiped out for the following season.
7. Depending on the Red offence, it will be either a 1 match ban, or for violent conduct, 3 matches, to be served immediately.
8. Intimidating or threatening behaviour has no place in the League and will not be tolerated in any form. It will be dealt with firmly by the exec if it is brought to light that a player has behaved like this.
9. The Executive has the power to extend suspensions depending upon the situation.
10. Players have the right to appeal against a booking, but must have the backing of their Manager.
11. Managers will be informed of a forthcoming ban by the League Secretary.
12. A disciplinary table can be viewed on the SportsReach League website outlining which players have received yellow and/or red cards.

## **Article XIII. REGISTRATION**

1. Each team will register its players with the league by means of a registration form.
2. All players **MUST BE SIGNED ON** by their respective teams before they can play any part in the league.
3. Any team playing an unregistered player shall forfeit any points gained or goals scored in a league match and shall be subject to a one point deduction.
4. The opponents in such instance shall be awarded 3 points and a victory of 3-0 (unless in the match such opponents score more than 3 goals in which event they shall be deemed to have scored the goals actually scored).

5. For the 2019-20 season and until further notice, it has been agreed that we could relax the rule on player registration to allow any players to play in league matches even if they are signed on for another team outside of the SportsReach League.
6. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL PLAYERS STILL SIGN A REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE SPORTSREACH LEAGUE BEFORE PLAYING.**
7. The consensus was that managers can all trust each other to apply this rule in good faith and that the more people hearing the Gospel each week, the better.
8. The Executive encourage all managers to field a consistent team whenever possible to show loyalty to regular players.
9. The Executive reserve the right to intervene if they feel players are being drafted in for specific matches at the expense of normal team members.
10. For cup matches, the Executive would advocate the use of team sheets for your own records.
11. The registration fee for each team to join the league shall be £200
12. There is no maximum number of players for each team.
13. All players must be male and at least 16 years of age.
14. **IF A PLAYER IS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE HE MUST HAVE SIGNED PARENTAL CONSENT BEFORE PLAYING.**
15. **PLAYERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO GET THEIR OWN PERSONAL INJURY INSURANCE AS SPORTSREACH DON'T HAVE INSURANCE TO COVER PEOPLE BECAUSE OF INJURY.**
16. Each team will be expected to charge a signing on fee and subscription, the amount to be determined by each team at the start of the season.

#### **A. TRANSFER RULES**

1. A player cannot play for more than 1 team in any cup games.
2. Players are permitted to play for a different team in the all day tournament.
3. A player can only play for two SportsReach football league teams in one season.
4. A deal sheet **must be completed** for a player to be able to transfer teams
5. For a player to transfer between teams, both managers must be aware of the move and agree to the move.
6. Player transfers **must be submitted** to the league secretary.
7. The exec reserves the right to reject a transfer if they feel it necessary
8. Once they have transferred teams during the season, they are committed to that team for the rest of the season.
9. Players cannot transfer to another team if any money is owed to the league or club by that player for subs, fines etc.

### **Article XIV. TEAM COLOURS**

1. The team colours are to be agreed before the beginning of the season.
2. In the case of clashes, the away team will ensure that their strip is changed or agree a suitable change with the home team in advance.
3. Managers are to liaise with one another to ensure there is no kit clash.
4. All kits must be complete ie: shorts & socks and have correct numbers on the back of shirts.
5. All teams must not have publicity of bad taste, or be disrespectful to the Christian faith in any way.
6. Sponsorship on kits will have to be approved by the Executive.
7. Players must wear shin protection and adequate footwear.
8. The referee reserves the right to ask the player to leave the pitch if this is not adhered to.

### **Article XV. SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. Rolling substitutes can be used in league matches.



2. The Executive will not enforce any rules as to how many times a substitution can be used or how many times a player can be brought on or off.
3. However, please bear in mind that this facility should be limited in use and is there to allow a team to replace an injured player or be used to allow a longer period of play for fringe players.
4. Referees must always be notified before any changes take place.
5. We will trust managers to use this facility wisely for the benefit of the players and not to create an American Football style system of changing players dependant on which end of the pitch play is at!

## **Article XVI. CUP COMPETITIONS**

### **A. FORMAT**

1. The format of the cup competitions was changed for the 2018/19 season and the intention is to continue with this format for the forthcoming season, dependant on entrants.
2. There are 8 participating teams taking part in the cup this season.
3. They will be split into two groups of four, playing each other once.
4. The top two from each group qualify for the Champions Cup semi-finals.
5. The bottom two from each group play in the League cup semi-finals.
6. The groups are to be drawn on League positioning from the previous season.
7. The remaining teams will be put into a draw and drawn fairly.

### **B. SUBSTITUTIONS AND REGISTRATION**

1. Rolling subs are permitted throughout the cup.
2. However, there are to be no rolling subs in the final
3. There can be up to 5 subs made in the final
4. If a player signs for a SportsReach team and has left their Saturday league team, they can play in the cup.
5. If they are still registered to their Saturday league team, they can't play in the cup.
6. This is unless they have played in 50% of league games at that moment in time, they are then allowed to take part in the cup.

### **C. SPORTSREACH SHIELD**

1. At the start of the following season, the winner of the League and the winner of the Champions Cup may face each other as the season opener.
2. If the League winners and the Cup winners are the same, the winners of the League Cup will partake in the fixture.

## **Article XVII. DUTIES & POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

1. Investigating all complaints made by teams concerning the eligibility of players.
2. Interpreting rules of the league.
3. As appropriate, dealing with league matters pertaining to the running of the league.
4. Dispensing justice fairly and without regard to self interest.
5. The power available to the Executive Committee shall include the following actions against players and teams:
  - a. Fines
  - b. Suspensions
  - c. Deduction of points

