

Tournament Rules

Registration

1. Each manager must register his or her team at the control point at least **30 minutes** before the start time for their age group competition. Team managers are responsible for the conduct of their players and supporters.
2. Players must compete in their age group for the 2026/2027 season, using age groups as per the Avon Youth League, Hanham Minor League or Bristol Girls' League as appropriate.
3. Individual players who are attached to an Academy or School of Excellence are allowed to play, but not whole teams. Players can only play for one team on the same day. Proof of age must be produced on request. Any team playing an over-age or ineligible player will be disqualified.

Rules for all age groups

4. Teams must be at the named pitch, ready to kick-off, at the programmed time. The first-named team will supply a match ball and change shirts in the event of a colour clash. Match ball (for both boys and girls) is size 3 for U7s to U11s; size 4 for U12s to U13s; and size 5 for U14s to U16s. For 9-a-side games, each team shall supply an adult to "run the line".
5. The referee will toss a coin to determine which team kicks-off the match. To avoid time wasted by teams swapping ends, the referee may simply dictate the direction of play.
6. THE REFEREE'S DECISION ON ALL MATCH POINTS IS FINAL. We have a Zero Tolerance Policy relating to abuse of match officials – abuse may lead to bookings, suspensions, expulsion from the tournament and a ban from entry in future years. You have been warned.
7. Substitutions may only be made after confirming with the match referee, and when the ball is out of play.
8. **Points are awarded as follows:**
win = 3pts, score draw = 1pts, no-score draw = 1pt
Teams will be awarded a 5-0 win if their opponents fail to fulfil their fixture.
9. A team's position in the group is determined by the number of points gained. If two or more teams are level on points the following criteria will determine the final positions:
 - a) The team with the best goal difference, if still level then (b)
 - b) The team scoring the most goals, if still level then (c)
 - c) The result of the game between the two teams. If still not resolved then (d)
 - d) A penalty shoot-out (as set out below). If two teams cannot be separated by criteria a) to c) and both have qualified for the knock out stage then a toss of a coin will be used in place of a penalty shoot-out, in the interests of time.
10. A decision on the format of the knock out stages for each age group competition (ie, semi finals, final) will be made by the organizing committee shortly before the date of the tournament. Full details will be confirmed to the participating teams on the day of the event.
11. In the event of a draw in the knock-out stages, it will go straight to a penalty shoot out
12. In 9-a-side or 11-a-side if a player receives a caution for dissent, they will be "sin binned" (forced to leave the match for 3 minutes). Cautions for any other infringement will be sanctioned according to the Laws of the Game. In addition, the player may be banned from the team's next game. At younger age groups, sin bins are not used but players who are booked may still be banned from the team's next game. Bans will be decided by the tournament committee following advice from the referee. Any player receiving two cautions or being sent-off will be disqualified from taking any further part in the competition. Any player, club official or spectator who is cautioned or sent off during the tournament will be reported to their relevant County FA.
13. The normal FIFA Laws of the Game will apply unless set out here, including the changes to the Laws effective July 2025. All disputes and protests relating to a particular game must be made at the Control Point within 15 minutes of the end of that game. The Tournament Committee will decide the outcome based on the best interests of all parties. DECISIONS MADE BY THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE WILL BE FINAL.

14. **Additional rules for 5-a-side and 7-a-side games**

- 3-a-side teams may register a squad of 12 players in total.
- 5-a-side teams may register a squad of 8 players with 5 players on the pitch at any one time..
- 7-a-side teams may register a squad of 10 players with 7 players on the pitch at any one time.
- There is no offside rule for 5-a-side, 6-a-side or 7-a-side matches.
- At all age groups up to and including U10s, teams are reminded that when a goal kick is awarded, opponents must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play. The defending team does not have to wait for the opposition to retreat and has the option to restart the game before should they choose to. The ball must be placed on the goal line and is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.
- At U7s, U8s, U9s, U10s and U11s deliberate heading of the ball is not permitted and will result in an indirect free kick.
- At U7s, U8's and U9's throw ins will be replaced by a dribble in or kick in from the point that the ball left the pitch. All opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the dribble or kick in place. A goal cannot be scored direct from a kick in.
- At U7s and U8s, goalkeepers can either throw or drop-kick the ball in place of a goal kick.
- At U7s, U8s, U9s, goalkeepers may pick up the ball from a 'back-pass' without being penalised.
- At U10s, and for all Girls matches, the goalkeeper may not drop kick the ball in open play – he/she must throw the ball or kick it off the ground.
- In 6-a-side and 7-a-side games, a penalty shoot-out consists of 3 penalty kicks for each team then "sudden death".
- For U7s and U8s, this is a Festival of Fun. All players receive a medal for participating, league tables are not produced and there are no matches after the group games.

15. **Additional rules for 9-a-side games (Boys U11s to U16s)**

- Teams may register a squad of 12 players with 9 players on the pitch at any one time.
- A penalty shoot-out consists of 5 penalty kicks for each team then "sudden death".

16. **No jewellery to be worn during the game by all players. Ensure your players don't delay kick offs if asked to remove jewellery as the game will start without them!**

Other rules

- All discipline will be passed on to County FA
- Spectators must keep well clear of the pitches while games are in progress. Team managers must ensure that spectators stand at least 1m behind the touchlines and 5m from the goals.
- Smoking and the consumption of alcohol is not permitted at pitch side. There is a licensed bar on site – alcohol can only be consumed within the designated area.
- In the interests of safety, we do not allow dogs, barbecues or football games other than the officially organised matches.
- Neither the organisers nor Whitchurch Sports Junior Football Club will be held responsible for any loss or damage to property or injury to any person however caused, throughout the tournament. Any damage caused to property or equipment at this tournament will be charged to the club responsible.
- Participating team managers will be asked to take the result card to the control tent at the end of each match played.
- Car parking only in the designated tournament car park and not on the pavement or coned areas outside of the event site or in surrounding residential streets.