

Wessex League – Management Directives 2026/27

INTRODUCTION

Please note that these directives have been updated and should be observed at all times.

The Football Association standard code and FA Directives may supersede these directives which are subject to change at any time.

1). ALCOHOL

Regarding Clubs that occupy a clubhouse, the consumption of alcohol in the ground or premises during the period of a match shall be subject to the terms of the Club licence agreement and the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) Act 1985 and/or any successor legislation. Glasses, glass bottles or cans containing alcohol are not permitted outside of the clubhouse and must not be brought into grounds. Any affiliated League, Competition, club member, player or other officials and participants in breach of this Rule and the clause above shall be liable to a charge of Misconduct.

The Wessex League will ask for a copy of a Club's licence agreement from time to time.

2). DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary matters NOT covered by the FA specifically, particularly actions or statements that may bring the League into disrepute, will be dealt with by the Board.

Where a club consistently infringes FA Rules, the Board will reserve the right to take the appropriate action to maintain the standards required.

Any club wishing to bring a disciplinary matter to the Board, must put it in writing within seven (7) days of the event to the board with a non-returnable fee (£100), otherwise it will not be dealt with.

The Board if requested may arbitrate on any disputes, protests, appeals, claims or complaints between two member Clubs in which event, both clubs shall send a non-returnable fee (£500) to the League. Such arbitration shall be final and binding upon the parties to the arbitration.

3). ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION

The Wessex League is an England Football Accreditation League.

The Wessex League requires all member clubs to have an Accreditation. Clubs that do not have England Football Accreditation Status will pay fully their annual subscription fee.

Any club that has their status removed shall pay an annual bond of £500 until their England Football Accreditation status is reinstated, at which time the annual bond will be repaid.

4). DUG OUTS, TECHNICAL AREA, TEMPORARY DISMISSALS and SUBSTITUTES

a) A Technical Area to meet the requirements of the Laws of Association Football is to be marked out by the sides and front of both the home and away team dug outs.

Only two persons at a time shall occupy the Technical Area; only one person at a time has the authority to convey tactical instructions to players during the match from within the technical area. When it is reported and proven that more than two persons were standing unduly in the technical area or dug out, the offending club will be liable to a fine of £50.00 for each additional person.

b) Substitutes can warm up at any time. They must use the touchline opposite the Assistant Referee, or the spare ground behind the barrier. Only named substitutes and Managerial Staff listed on the team sheet shall occupy the dug outs. Other than two coaching staff all named personnel must always remain seated in the dug outs unless warming up in the designated area.

c) Coloured bibs supplied by the League must be worn by the substitutes for the duration of the match; until the substitutes replace a member of their team on the field of play.

d) FA Observers and League Officers shall also make a report on any breach of the Directives to the League Secretary but must name the club official that they warned at half time (if the offence occurred in the first half) or at full time. If the warning is not heeded, a club official must be informed that their club will be reported.

e) Any person dismissed from the technical area and dug out must return to the changing room area for the duration of the match. If this applies to the Physio and no other person present is available to take over that role, the named Physio will be permitted to stay to administer treatment but will be suspended for the next competition fixture.

f) When a player receives a Temporary Dismissal (Sin Bin) Yellow Card from the match referee, they are to wear a Temporary Dismissal bib, that distinguishes them from other players in TA.

5). EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

All clubs should have an Emergency Action Plan. The EAP must be on the club website and displayed in a prominent position within the ground.

6). MATCH FOOTBALLS

The Wessex League approved match ball, available from MJM Sports at a discounted price of £35.00, must be used in all Wessex League and Cup games. Six (6) will be provided free of charge to each Club that is represented at the League AGM. Failure to use these match balls will result in a fine, £25 minimum to £100 maximum. It is the duty of the home club to ensure that a minimum of three (3) Wessex League approved match balls are available to the Match Officials at every fixture.

7). GENERAL MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than the last Sunday in June.

All meetings for clubs, called by the League Management Board must be attended by the Club's Chairperson, Secretary and if requested the manager or a deputy. A fine of between £100.00 & £250.00 shall be levied for any Club not attending.

8). GROUND & CROWD CONTROL

Home clubs are responsible for Ground Control at each match. Please take note of the FA E20/21 charge regarding Pitch Invasions and Pyrotechnics which subject to Aggravating or Mitigating circumstances has a sanction of up to £400.00. It is recommended for guidance that stewards are allocated to spectators using a ratio of 1:50; the head steward should brief stewards as to their responsibilities prior to each match. Under no circumstances shall any person or persons be allowed inside the permanent fixed barrier surrounding the playing area during a match.

9). GROUND ACCREDITATION

Every Wessex League Club shall have an FA Ground Accreditation suitable for the level of the NLS which they are playing at (unless permission has been granted by the FA). Each club has a responsibility to ensure the standards to retain the Ground accreditation are reviewed and met. The Wessex League Ground Grading Officer will have the responsibility to monitor ground accreditation for the League and liaise with The FA and Football Foundation.

Where work is required and is not completed within the previously advised completion date, a weekly variable financial sanction may be applied until such time as the League's Ground Grading Officer receives confirmation that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

The League will carry out an unannounced visit to inspect each ground twice a season, to ensure standards are maintained.

10). HOSPITALITY (MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS)

Hot or cold drinks will be provided at half-time for players and match officials as requested. Hot drinks and refreshments will be provided for invited guests and visiting team officials (maximum of 8) ., which will be in a reserved area at half time.

After the match hot or cold drinks and solid refreshments shall be provided in the club house in an area set aside for the purpose of entertaining visiting players, match officials and guests.

Any teams and match officials travelling long distances should have a hot or cold drink on arrival if requested. The visiting Club must provide the host Club with a list of Directors/Committee Members attending a match at least 24 hours prior to kick off on the Form available from the League website.

11). INSPECTION OF PITCHES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is the duty of the home club to contact an authorised Match Official and arrange a pitch inspection should there be a doubt over the fitness of the pitch.

(i) Inspections – Best Practice Guidelines – Times of Inspection

Saturday: 11.00 - Midweek: 12.00 (Consideration should be given to travel distances and Ferry travel when arranging an inspection to avoid unnecessary journeys if possible).

Match Officials should take into consideration the distance being travelled by the home club's opponents and the impending weather forecast.

Should the fixture be postponed the home club MUST fill in the League cancellation form and send it to the League Secretary within 24 hours of the postponement. The home Club shall also contact the League Administration Officer immediately on 07780 496313. It is also the responsibility to contact the Away club, all match officials and FA Referee Observer (if appointed), prior to posting on social media.

Failure to carry out any of the above will result in the Club being dealt with by the Board as they see fit.

Instructions and Guidance for Clubs and Match Officials in Determining the Suitability of Grounds in Adverse Weather Conditions.

(a) Each club must take every precaution to ensure that the ground is in a fit playing condition. Only in extreme weather conditions may a game be postponed prior to the day of the game. This decision will be at the discretion of the League Management Board. In these circumstances a match official will not be required to inspect the ground, unless requested to do so by the Board.

In all other circumstances when the home club consider that there may be a doubt regarding the suitability of the playing surface, they will arrange for the Match Referee (if available) or another Wessex League Referee or Level 5 Assistant Referee to make an early decision on the day of the game. If the home club cannot identify an official of the required level to carry out an inspection, they must contact the League Secretary who will determine a suitable person to carry out the inspection or authorise a remote pitch inspection by video call with the allocated Match Referee.

The Referee making the inspection must:

Consult with the Match Referee (before and during the inspection to mutually agree a decision prior to notifying the home club).

Notify the home club of the decision.

The inspecting referee must sign the Wessex League postponement form, provided by the home Club, if the game is postponed.

Following full consultation with the Match Referee during the inspection, if the ground is declared fit and the away club travel, only in exceptional circumstances and severe deteriorating weather conditions should the Match Referee reverse the decision.

In the event of Match Officials travelling to the ground, and the game being postponed, they will be entitled to half match fee (plus ferry expenses if incurred). This is also applicable if the game is abandoned due to weather or pitch conditions before 45 minutes has been completed.

The home club must submit the postponement form to the Competition Secretary within 24 hours of the postponement.

The Match Referee must notify the Referee Observer (if appointed) of the postponement asap.

When making the inspection the Referee must consider the following:

- Whether the playing area is dangerous.
- Whether all public areas of the ground are safe. The views of the groundsman are to be considered (if available) in terms of local knowledge and draining capabilities of the ground in the event of standing water. The existing ground conditions in conjunction with the prevailing weather conditions before and during the match (it is recommended that the Met Office weather forecast is consulted)
- Whether or not the pitch conditions could turn farcical
- Whether the home club have any manpower to carry out necessary work to make the ground playable.

The Referee should inspect the ground in match footwear and use a football to determine whether the surface is playable

Frost & Ice

Player safety must be the ultimate factor in determining if a frozen ground can be played. When dealing with frost and ice, the highest temperature of the day is usually around midday and early afternoon. When consulting the weather forecast take into account the projected temperature during the period of the game.

12). KICK-OFF TIMES

The standard kick-off times shall be as follows:

Saturday matches – 3.00pm

Midweek matches – 7.45pm

Changes to the standard kick off times will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Requests should be forwarded to the Competition Secretary, and if approved will be subject to the agreement of both clubs and Match Officials (if appointed). Requests will not be considered unless a minimum of 7 days' notice is given.

13). MATCH OFFICIALS

Referees Fee £75.00

Assistant Referees Fee £55.00

In addition, Referees and Assistant Referees will be entitled to ferry charges at the cheapest rate available. The cost of car parking for one car at the ferry port will also be allowed to be claimed. No other travelling costs will be paid.

The total maximum possible cost for match officials, excluding ferry charges will therefore be £185.00.

When a fixture is postponed by the appointed match referee or abandoned before 45 minutes has been played, where neither club are at fault, half match fees are to be paid.

14). PAYMENTS TO THE LEAGUE

All financial transactions to the League, Transfer Forms, Registrations Forms, fees and fines, should be paid by BACS or by cheque and made payable to 'The Wessex Football League'.

For BACS payments:

Account name: Wessex Football League

Account No: 00815520

Sort code: 30-97-58

Cash will not be accepted under any circumstances.

All fines and charges imposed by the Board shall be received by the Company within twenty-eight days of the date of notification of imposition (unless otherwise ordered). Any Club or person breaking this Rule shall be liable to such penalties as the Board may impose.

15). MATCH PROGRAMMES

All programmes must contain the League Partners page which has been recently distributed to all Clubs.

Player's shirt numbers must correspond to the numbers listed in the Match Programme, which should also correspond to the numbers listed on the Team Sheet and Whiteboard, Player's first names must be provided. All programme information should be forwarded to the home club at least 5 days prior to the game.

It is a League requirement that clubs must produce a programme for each home game in the League, League Cup, FA Cup, FA Vase and County Senior Cup. Clubs can choose to either print their programme or have an online version but may not alternate. Online programmes must be submitted to the League Media Officer 24 hours prior to kick-off. This may not be altered without prior permission from the Competition Secretary.

The programme competition will run again this season; you will be advised of two dates in the season when programmes are to be submitted to an address as notified.

Clubs failing to comply with this request will be subject to a fine as determined by the Board.

16). MATCH RESULTS

The Wessex League requires that all Clubs submit their results, from all competitive matches, including goal scorers and attendances to FA Full Time within 48 hours of the match. The nominated SMS contact must respond to requests for match updates, and all results and attendance details should be submitted by this method within 30 minutes of the completion of the game.

17). ELECTRONIC SUBSTITUTIONS BOARD

Electronic substitute boards are to be used when making substitutions during matches. Home and Away clubs must use these boards for all FA, Wessex League and Cup fixtures.

It is not acceptable for visiting clubs to request to share the board of the home club.

Clubs are responsible for their own electronic boards in terms of damage and replacement; faulty boards should be reported to the League's Competition Secretary, advising time of repair or replacement.

18). TEAM SHEETS

Both teams should exchange Team Sheets in the presence of the Referee, also giving the Referee a copy, at least 60 minutes before kick-off.

A member of the Team Management who is listed as a technical area occupant will be present at the Team Sheet exchange.

19). WARM-UP AREAS

Where clubs have warm up areas other than on the designated playing area (i.e. the pitch) – visiting Clubs are instructed to comply with the home Clubs wishes regarding the use of allocated warm up areas.

20). TEAM WHITE BOARDS

Each Club has been provided with an all-weather, Drywipe whiteboard to be used for listing the appointed Match Officials and both squads on match days.

These whiteboards must be used and displayed in a prominent position for all fixtures, failure to comply will be dealt with under FA Standardised Rule 4.8.

21). SOCIAL MEDIA

Each visiting club will be entitled to have free ground admission for a maximum of two social media personnel. Names should be forwarded to the host club on the form provided at least 24 hours prior to kick off.

22). WESSEX LEAGUE CUP

The Wessex League Cup will be played under the same rules as the Wessex League.

Any player registered to a Club is eligible to represent that Club provided they have not played in the Competition for another Club in the same season.

The first drawn Club will have home advantage in all rounds up to and including the Semi Finals, with the Final being played on a ground selected by the Board.

If the scores are level in all rounds up to and including the Semi Finals, the match will go straight to penalty kicks to decide the winner. Extra Time will only be played in the Final.