



Hungerford Town Juniors Football Club

Tournament Rules 2025 v0.1

Competition Format

1. The competition is an open-invitation event. Applications will only be considered upon receipt of a fully completed entry form and cleared payment. Entries will be confirmed by the Tournament Organiser at least 30-days prior to the tournament (unless the team registers after 1st April, 2025).
2. The tournament format for Under 6 and Under 7 teams will comprise a group table phase only.
3. The format for other age groups is TBC but is likely to consist of a group phase plus:
 - i. the top two teams in each age group progress to a tournament trophy competition knockout phase consisting of quarter finals (dependent on age group), semi-finals, and a final match
 - ii. the third-placed teams and under in each age group progress to a tournament plate competition consisting of semi-finals and a final match of quarter finals (dependent on age group), semi-finals, and a final match

Player Eligibility

4. Players shall be eligible to play in the age group in which they played during the 2024/25 season.
5. A list of all player names must be handed to Tournament Officials at the tournament control room at the point of tournament check-in.
6. Team squads may contain up to 2 non-FA registered 'guest' players; however, clubs fielding such players must satisfy themselves that they have any relevant insurance cover (see '**Loss or Damage Liability**' below).
7. Players must be able to show a form of ID to Match Officials if requested to do so. Players who are unable to provide ID or found to be ineligible to play in their respective age group, may be disqualified from the competition.
8. Each player shall only play for one registered team throughout the duration of the tournament.
9. Players registered with professional youth football academies and registered football academy teams are not eligible to play in the tournament. For the purposes of this tournament a Professional or Registered Academy is one which is registered as an (Category 1 to Category 4) academy under the Premier League/EFL's Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP).
10. All questions of eligibility, qualification of players or interpretation of the competition Rules shall be referred to the Tournament Committee.

Match and Team Format

11. All tournament matches for Under 6s to Under 14s are to be played in a 6-a-side format.
12. All tournament matches for Under 15s to Under 16s are to be played in a 11-a-side format.
13. The duration of each match will be 10 minutes straight-through, i.e., there are no halves or half-time period/changeover. Match Referees will allow drinks breaks in the case of hot weather.
14. All teams are responsible for considering players' playing time does not exceed the FA's guidelines on maximum playing time for children.
15. The maximum team size is:
 - 6v6 format (Under 6s to Under 14s) - 8 players, so at any one time there will be 6 players on pitch and up to 2 substitute players.
 - 11v11 format (Under 15s and Under 16s) - 15 players, so at any one time there will be 11 players on pitch and up to 4 substitute players.
16. There is no limit on the number of substitutions that may be made during that match and players who have been substituted off the pitch can be re-substituted back into play; but, team managers are asked to keep substitutions to a minimum if possible to maximise playing time.
17. To make a substitution, the team manager should clearly signal their intention to do so to the match referee. The match referee must consent to the substitution being made and all substitutions are at the referee's discretion. Substitutions can only be made during dead ball situations and/or at the discretion of the match referee.
18. Teams must be ready at the correct pitch by the start time of their match. If a team fails to arrive on time, they may forfeit the match and a 2-0 loss will be registered as the result of that match.
19. The HOME team (the team named first in the match listing) shall take kick-off.

Match Equipment

20. All players must wear shin pads and appropriate footwear.
21. The HOME team (the team named first in the match listing) shall supply the match ball.
22. The AWAY team (the team named last in the match listing) shall supply and wear bibs in cases of kit colour clash if requested to do so by the match referee.

Match Rules and Clarifications

23. Standard FA rules apply with the following exceptions (for all age groups):
 - The offside rule applies only in 11v11 format matches (U15s and U16s). There will be no offside rule for all other age groups.
 - Goalkeepers kicking from hands:
 - i. **U9s to U14s (inc U11 and U14 Girls)** - Goalkeepers MUST NOT kick the ball from their hands. If a goalkeeper has the ball in hands, they must return the ball to play using an underhand or over-head throw. If a goalkeeper kicks the ball from their hands a direct free kick will be awarded to the opposition. The direct free kick will be taken from the penalty area line nearest to where the kick was made.
 - ii. **U6s, U8s, U15s and U16s** – The ball can be kicked out of the goalkeeper's hands.
 - Goal kicks will be taken from the goal line for all age groups except for U15s and U16s. Goal kicks for U15s and U16s can be taken from any point within the goal area (as per standard FA rules) . U7s and U8s may also take goal kicks by kicking the ball from their hands if they opt to do so.
 - The pass back rule will be enforced, except for U6s, U7s and U8s
 - Opposition players must retreat a minimum of 5 yards if a ball is being played from a dead-ball situation.
 - All free kicks will be direct free kicks.

- A penalty may be awarded if a relevant offence is committed within the penalty area.
- The FA rules governing deliberate heading of the ball and throw-ins introduced at the start of the 2024/25 season will apply to Under 6 to Under 9 groups, so for these age groups:
 - i. Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick to the opposition, to be taken from the spot where the offense took place (or the sideline of the penalty area nearest where the offence took place if a player heads the ball in their own penalty area).
 - ii. Throw ins are replaced with 'pass ins' or 'dribble ins'.

Group Table Calculation

24. 3 points shall be awarded for a win. 1 point shall be awarded for a draw.
25. In the event that teams are level on points after all matches have been played the following criteria will be used in the following order to determine the final group table positions:
 - Goal difference
 - Goals scored
 - Head-to-head results
26. If the group table positions are still equal after the above criteria have been applied the final positions will be determined by a toss of a coin. The coin toss must be directly supervised by a match official or a member of the tournament staff.

Knockout Stages

27. If the scores are level at the end of regular time in a knockout stage match a period of up to 10 minutes of extra-time will be played. After each minute has elapsed, on the referees signal, each team will withdraw a player from the pitch so that the number of players in each team will reduce until it becomes a 2v2 situation. The referee will not stop the match to withdraw players and it does not need to be a dead-ball situation when the withdrawals occur. Players withdrawn must leave the pitch without delay.
28. Throughout the period of extra time, the 'golden goal' rule shall apply. i.e. the team scoring the first goal shall be declared the winner without any further extra time being played.
29. If there is no winner after the period of 10 minutes, the winner will be determined through a round of 'sudden-death' penalties.

Match Officials and Results Reporting

30. All match referees will be appointed by the tournament organisers.
31. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. There is no appeal or protest process regarding refereeing decisions or match results UNLESS the conduct of a referee presents a tangible safeguarding concern in which case the issue should be reported directly to the Tournament Organisers at the Tournament control room.
32. The winning team shall be responsible for reporting the result of the game to the Match Control at the conclusion of each game. This will be done using a match result reporting slip provided by the referee.

Match Discipline

33. This competition uses the yellow and red card system.

34. An accumulation of two yellow cards on a single day in the competition will result in the player being suspended from the next match.
35. Two yellow cards in one match equals a red card and the player will be sent off.
36. A player who receives a red card (either straight red or for two yellow cards in the same match) will be suspended from the next match BUT if the player has shown grievous dissent, aggression, or disrespect to other players, officials, or spectators will be suspended from the competition as a whole.
37. All cautions and red cards will be dealt with and disposed with on the day of the match.
38. Any misconduct from the tournament will be reported to Berks & Bucks FA by the referee as normal.

Behaviour

39. The Tournament Organisers will not tolerate abusive behaviour or language directed at players, match officials, spectators, or Tournament Staff. Referees have the discretion to stop a match and to impose a match-forfeiture on a team if they believe a player, team official, or spectator of that team is being abusive or disruptive.
40. Appeals against a decision made in respect of behaviour should be made in writing to Tournament Officials within 10 minutes of the decision being made. A fee of £20 will be charged at time that an appeal is made; to be forfeited if the appeal is not upheld. Appeals will be considered by the Tournament Organisers in private and their decision is final.
41. Teams may be asked to leave the tournament with no refunds offered if they repeatedly act in an abusive or disruptive manner.

Loss or Damage Liability

42. Hungerford Town Juniors FC and Hungerford Town FC cannot be held liable for any loss or damage to persons, personal property or vehicles during the tournament.
43. It is the responsibility of each registered team/club to ensure they have appropriate insurance for players playing in the tournament.

Cancelation Policy

44. No refunds will be offered in the event of cancellation due to bad weather or other circumstances beyond the Organisers' control.
45. No refunds will be offered for clubs voluntarily withdrawing from the Tournament after 19th April, 2024.
46. No refunds will be offered for clubs being expelled or ejected from the Tournament due to poor behaviour, unacceptable standards of fairplay, etc.