



ERSDA 11-a-side

Season Guide 2026/2027

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#1 - ERSDA League Formalities

1.1 - About ERSDA and this Season Guide

- ERSDA is an SYFA associated league running 11-a-side and small-sided leagues.
- ERSDA is run entirely by non-salaried volunteers that are also managing teams, clubs, and lives outside of football. We're not perfect but we do our best at all times to give the best football experience to our young people and all other volunteers making games happen. Please bear that in mind when engaging or communicating with anyone involved in running the league.
- If you have ideas for improving ERSDA, we'd love to hear them. And even better, if you'd like to get involved as a volunteer in organising the league, then talk to any member of the committee.
- All SYFA policies and procedures apply to ERSDA registered teams. You can find the full list of contacts, rules and guidance at:
<https://www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk/>
<https://support.scottishfa.co.uk/portal/kb?btn=61&id=213>
- A constitution describing how ERSDA will apply the SYFA guidelines, as well as further local rules, will be posted on the ERSDA website.
- All the details from the SYFA documents and the ERSDA constitution will be referred to in the remainder of this document as the "rules and guidance".
- This season guide is to help all associated with ERSDA understand and follow the rules and guidance.

1.2 – Revision of this guidance

- This season guide will be kept updated throughout the course of the season as new, relevant information becomes available. The latest version will always be available on the ERSDA website.
- During a season, the ERSDA committee may be required on occasion to clarify rules and guidance or enact new requirements from the governing body. If that happens, the season guide will be updated and posted to the website, and club secretaries informed to communicate with their teams.



#1 - ERSDA League Formalities

1.3 - Main and League Age Group Committees

- An overall ERSDA committee organises all aspects of league activities for 11-a-side competitions, and the small-sided game. Contact details and explanation of the ERSDA committee roles can be found on the ERSDA website (ersda.uk)
- Each 11-a-side age group shall have a league age group committee with at least 3 different clubs represented across 4/5 representatives. The league committee will assist the ERSDA committee in running the leagues smoothly, and ensuring coaches' voices are represented. The league age group committee will have a chair with a casting vote in any age group decisions. ERSDA committee members will not sit on age group committees.
- Typical duties of the age group committee are: Posting scoring & results;; divisional placements of teams; awards and trophy presentations; support for local and disciplinary matters; and engaging with the ERSDA committee
- The first point of escalation for teams should be their league age group committee for any questions, issues or feedback.
- Please speak to an ERSDA committee member if you'd like to get involved in your league committee
- ERSDA League secretary email address: **secretary@ersda.uk**

1.4 - Fees for ERSDA Participation

- Fees for club participation in an ERSDA age group – covering all league games, ERSDA cup games, trophies/medals and registrations – is £75 per team per season
- Team secretaries will be invoiced in the summer before the season starts, and fees must be settled before the first game.

1.5 - ERSDA Charter

- Based on materials from the SFA "let them play" initiative, there is an ERSDA matchday charter for supporters and coaches – displayed on the next page
- By signing up to play for ERSDA, teams are agreeing to work to the behaviours listed in the ERSDA charter
- A sharable copy will be posted on the ERSDA website (ersda.uk)



ERSDA 2026/27 – Matchday Behaviour Charter

In ERSDA we pride ourselves on working together to create a positive environment for our young people to enjoy their football. So there is no doubt as to what that means, we've borrowed from the SFA's "Let Them Play" guidelines to make our own match day charter for coaches and supporters. Thank you in advance for helping us put it into practice.

Coaches

- Have the well-being, safety and enjoyment of players as top priorities
- Think twice about challenging a referee's call – it never changes their mind and doesn't help anyone
- Never tolerate any form of bullying or abuse
- Help players improve with feedback and coaching, not making decisions for them
- Encourage fair play & high standards of behaviour
- Always show respect to everyone involved in the game
- Respect the decisions of the referee
- Don't gloat or antagonise the opposition
- Don't address opposition players or supporters not adhering to code of conduct – leave it to the opposition coaches
- Remind fellow coaches and supporters from your team only of their obligations if matters get heated

Supporters

- When spectating, stay outside the cage if an Astro pitch, or at least 2m back from the edge of a grass pitch
- Applaud good play and celebrate if a goal is scored
- Let the players play – it's their game
- Be a role model for your player in how you talk and act around the game
- Respect the referee's decisions & don't shout abuse at them – without the referee there would be no game
- Don't approach the referee or any member of the opposition at any point with aggression or negativity
- Don't shout instructions – the team already has a set of coaches
- Try to have fun and enjoy watching your player play
- Be aware, supporter misbehaviour will result in your club getting fined, taking valuable funds away from the players



#1 - ERSDA League Formalities

1.6 - Annual General Meeting - AGM

- ERSDA has an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is lined up with the end of the small-sided game to take place in either November, December or January.
- All official business of ERSDA will be communicated and ratified at that AGM, which is open for teams and clubs to attend.
- Clubs will be informed of the AGM date c. 4 weeks in advance, and will be able to table suggestions for amendments to the league and questions to be addressed.
- During the season, the ERSDA committee may temporarily extend or modify the rules and guidelines to ensure the smooth running of the league. If this is done, notice will be provided to all teams on the ERSDA website, and explained and ratified at the AGM.
- Full details of how the AGM works are contained in the ERSDA constitution
- If required, the ERSDA committee may schedule an exceptional general meeting (EGM) with 1 week's notice during the course of the season. Should this happen, the meeting will be communicated to team and club secretaries.

1.7 - Meeting Attendance

- Periodically, we'll hold meetings for an age group, which shall be organised and communicated by the league secretary
- When these meetings are mandatory, all teams must ensure at least one registered team official is present to represent the team. Non-attendance of all officials will result in a £30 fine for a team.
- A full explanation of formal league meetings is contained in the ERSDA constitution



#2 – Arranging Matchday

2.1 - Home team obligations

- Home team secretaries should direct message the away team secretary no later than 5 days (Monday evening for a weekend fixture) before a scheduled fixture is due to take place. Please do not use the main age group Whatsapp chat to arrange specific fixtures.
- Teams should agree the colours to be played in (see section 2.2), and the home team will confirm venue and time of the pitch.
- Scheduled Saturday games should kick off between 9am and 12pm for 2012-2014 age groups, and 12pm and 3pm for 2010-2011 age groups. If a home team arranges a fixture within that time window, and the away team can't make it, then they must use one of their 'passes' to request a different time (explained later in this guide).
- Any kick-off proposed outside of this window is allowable, but can only proceed with the agreement of both teams.
- Requests for changes to the day of match, for example Saturday fixture moving to a Friday night or Sunday should be submitted through the Google Form.
- The home team must then contact Andy Robertson, the ERSDA referee coordinator, to be allocated an SFA approved referee, by 4pm on a Wednesday evening for weekend fixtures.
- Once allocated, home teams are responsible for confirming game arrangements (date, time, location, opponent and team colours for both teams) with their allocated referee as quickly as possible to secure the referee for the game.
- If a referee is arranged other than through the ERSDA referee coordinator or without prior notification to the ERSDA referee coordinator, the home team will forfeit the game 3-0.
- Match details, including venue, kick-off and referee, should be sent to league secretary at least 48 hours before scheduled fixtures.



#2 – Arranging Matchday

2.2 - Colours

- Every team must have access to a home and away strip which are substantially different in the colours of top, shorts and socks
- When the home team contacts their opposition, they should check the opposition team colours.
- As per SYFA conventions, in the event of a clash, the away team gets to select the strip they will wear, and the home team will adopt whatever colours don't clash.
- The home team should inform the ref of selected team colours.

2.3 - Referee fees and communication

- The referee fees for all ERSDA fixtures at 11-a-side – cup and league, all age groups – is £50 per game.
- At a league committee level, a decision for all teams in the season should be made that this fee is covered by the home team, or split 50:50 in all games. The same approach should be followed all season.
- If a game is abandoned for bad weather or the pitch becoming unplayable, the referee shall receive a fee of £25. Where game is unable to go ahead due to weather and pitch cancellations home team should notify the league secretary by email.
- If a game is abandoned because of disciplinary issues or non-attendance of one or both sides, the referee shall receive a fee of £50.
- If circumstances change and a referee is no longer required because a fixture is called off in advance, it is the responsibility of the home team secretary to notify the referee immediately.

2.4 - Locked-in Fixtures

- Once a date and time of fixture has been agreed by both teams and a referee allocated, it is considered locked-in
- If a team pulls out of a locked-in fixture, the game is considered a forfeit and will automatically be awarded to the opponents 3-0. Team unable to play in fixture must email the league secretary to advise of this.
- Once that outcome is ratified by the league committee, the team that didn't default may seek to make alternative arrangements (such as a friendly)



#2 - Arranging Matchday

2.5 - Arranging Friendlies

- Friendly matches may be arranged by the home team secretary emailing the ERSDA secretary in advance with the name, age group, and SYFA ID for both teams; a venue and kick-off date and time. If the friendly is against a non-ERSDA team, the team secretary must copy the opposition league secretary in on correspondence.
- The friendly shall be considered approved to proceed when confirmation is received from all relevant league secretaries. Arrangement of friendlies that do not follow this guidance will be considered non-sanctioned.
- If the ERSDA team is at home, then the referee must be arranged from the approved list by contacting referee coordinator Andy Robertson

2.6 - Rescheduling

- If a club wishes to reschedule an agreed fixture on any given date throughout the season (e.g. to attend a tournament), the team must submit a request for change to the league secretary 7 days prior to the scheduled date using the Google Form. A new date will be issued by the league for the postponed fixture.
- No team shall be allowed more than 3 accepted fixture rescheduling requests in the same season. **No rescheduling requests are allowed for fixtures due to take place in the months of April or May, or within 4 calendar weeks of a league division's scheduled split date.**
- Any team that is unable to fulfil a fixture at short notice (i.e. requesting a change with less than 5 days notice) shall be considered to have conceded, and a 3-0 victory will automatically be awarded to their opponents.
- **Within 3 days of a fixture being postponed by authorized request or for a factor outside of team control such as bad weather,** home team should complete the Google Form to advise and a new date will be issued by the league for the fixture.



#2 – Arranging Matchday

2.7 - Home-Away swap

- If pitch availability is problematic for the home team and the away team have access to a pitch for a scheduled fixture, ERSDA allow Home-Away swapping if both teams agree. This means the fixture proceeds with the home team becoming the away team, and vice versa
- If a “Home-Away” swapping occurs, the original home team must cover the costs of the pitch hire and referee fees with the original away team.
- Later in the season, should the teams play again post-split, it will be arranged so that the original home team for the first game is the home team, and the away team should return the costs of pitch hire and referee fees. This ensures the fairest outcome.

2.8 - Get Ahead fixtures

- Should appropriate circumstances arise, fixtures from later in the ERSDA schedule may be brought forward (a “get ahead” fixture).
- Both teams must agree and propose the “get ahead” fixture, and both teams must have no scheduled games for that date (e.g. in a holiday period, both knocked out of cup etc.). Notification of the “get ahead” fixture should be provided using the Google Form.
- A “get ahead” result will only be recognised if fixtures are approved in advance by the match secretary.
- Get ahead fixtures can be played on any day of the week agreed by both teams.



#3 - Running Matchday

3.1 - Age group specific details

- Regulation time in the 2010 age groups will be 90 mins (2x 45 mins halves). In the 2011 and 2012 age groups will be 80 mins (2x 40 min halves). In the 2013s and 2014s age groups, regulation time is 70 mins (2x 35 min halves).
- In ERSDA cup games that require a tie to be settled, in the event of a draw at full time in regulation minutes, the game will go straight to penalties. The home team should ensure a let that can accommodate regulation time + an interval + penalties.
- In the 2014s age group, size 4 footballs will be used. In the 2010s - 2013s, size 5 footballs will be used. Both home and away teams should bring 2 match balls to each fixture.
- In keeping with SYFA conventions, aside from the game arrangements above, all other aspects of the game shall follow the rules and guidance of iFAB

3.2 - Team Lines

- From season 2026/7 onwards, all teamline activity will be undertaken through the COMET system
- The details listed on team lines in COMET should be complete and accurate by 9pm the night before the fixture is due to be played. It is the responsibility of a team secretary to ensure that is the case.
- COMET team lines must include trialists and accurate player details. If there is any change to player strip numbers or starting line ups, the team secretary must inform the match official before kick-off. Where teamline information is inaccurate and not reported to match officials a fine of £10 will be issued.
- Regardless of format, teams may include 18 players in their match day squad, and must have at least two club officials present, one of whom is a qualified first aider. Any trialists should be noted. Teams may have a maximum of 4 trialists in any fixture. Trialists are not permitted in any ERSDA cup final game.
- Concerns about ineligible players on opposition teamlines must be reported to the referee on the day and escalated to the league secretart by email within 24 hours.



#3 - Running Matchday

3.3 - Before kick-off

- Teams should aim to have their full match day squads at the match venue at least 15 minutes in advance of kick-off
- It is the responsibility of the home team to work with the venue provider to ensure that the pitch is free from obstructions and suitable for play
- It is the responsibility of each team to ensure all player safety equipment is present at games (e.g. shinpads, sports-grade eyewear for those that need it), and that each team has an appropriately stocked first-aid kit, in line with SYFA approved first aid training.
- Not having the appropriate personal protective equipment will prevent a player from participating in a game – no exceptions.
- Jewellery – such as earrings, necklaces, rings and watches – must not be worn during games. Any items of clothing which might be requested to being worn for exceptional reasons (e.g. on medical or religious grounds), the team secretary should contact the match official in advance to discuss.

3.4 - Lateness for kick-off

- If a team is running late to a fixture, the team secretary of the late running team should make all reasonable attempts to contact the team that is on time, provided it is safe to do so, to inform them of their likely arrival time.
- If a team is more than 15 minutes late, then the team that is on time shall be awarded the victory 3-0. This is necessary to preserve the integrity of fixtures given time limits on pitch lets.
- Once a team has 7 players present, and the required number of officials, they may kick-off. As further players arrive, they may be subbed on at the referee's discretion up to the full complement of 11.
- If a game is underway and a team is reduced to less than 7 players because of injury or discipline issues, then the game is abandoned and the opposition awarded the victory 3-0.



#3 - Running Matchday

3.5 – Reporting results

- The referee will record the result of fixtures directly into COMET.
- To help with running the league, the home team is requested to message their league committee contact with the result within an hour of the game concluding
- At 11-a-side, the results for all ERSDA league and cup games shall be displayed on the ERSDA website, and potentially on further systems linked to COMET
- The maximum goal difference that will be recorded for an ERSDA fixture is 9 (e.g. 9-0, 10-1, 11-2 etc.). So if a team wins 11-0, the score shall be recorded as 9-0
- Head to head record – and not goal difference - shall be used to decide the winner of a divisional grouping. If teams are tied on points with an even head to head record at the top of a divisional grouping, a one off game will be played to settle the final league outcome.

3.6 - Protests, abandoned or unfulfilled fixtures

- The results of any games abandoned or unfulfilled may be decided by the ERSDA committee. This may take place as part of a disciplinary investigation process where required
- Team protests of game outcomes must be made in accordance with the latest SYFA guidance.
- Where teams do not fulfil an agreed fixture, a 3-0 victory shall be awarded to their opponents and the team may be subject to disciplinary proceedings

3.7 – Reporting Matchday Issues

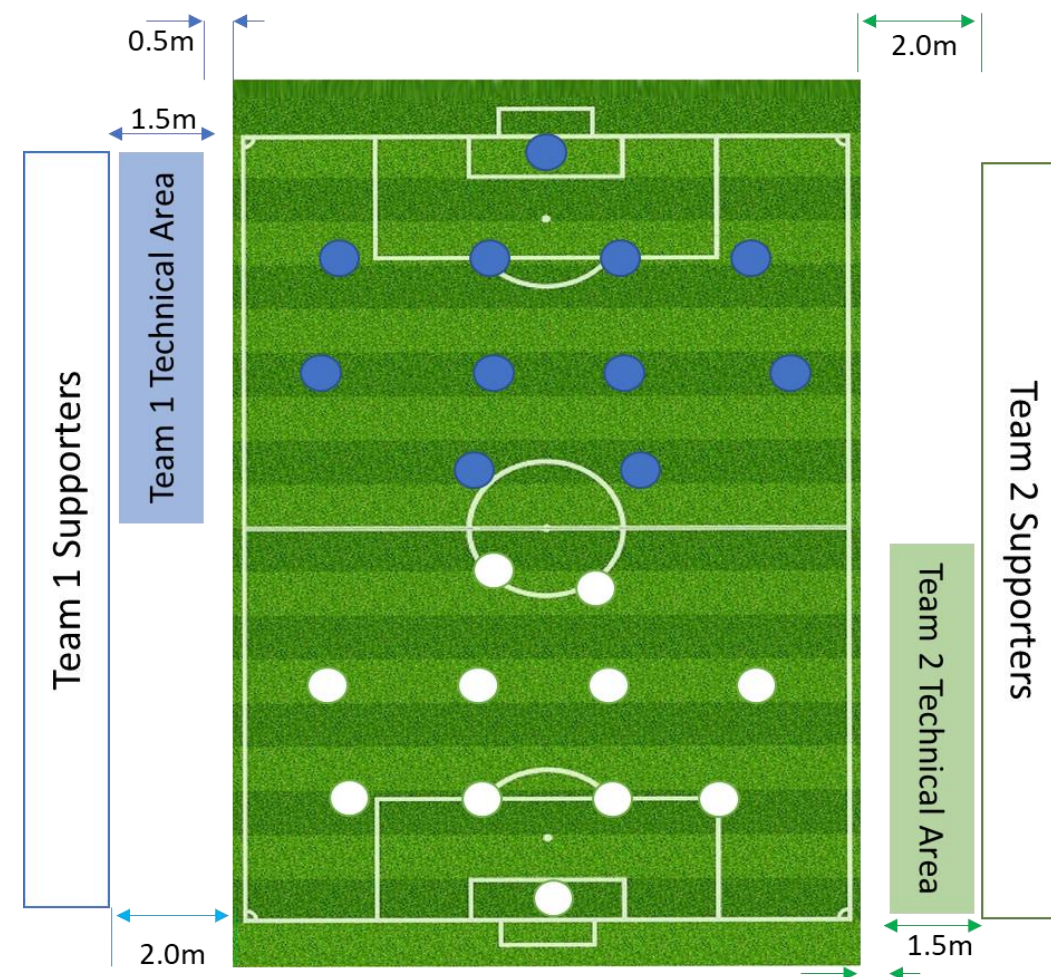
- During a game, any activities observed that breach disciplinary guidelines or cause concern can be reported to the match official by club officials for inclusion in the match report
- After a game, club officials may also report issues (disciplinary, general organisation or otherwise) to the league committee for investigation.
- All endeavours will be made to investigate and respond to issues raised in a timely manner, and where relevant following ERSDA procedures outlined in this guide



#3 – Running Matchday

3.8 - Recommended Venue arrangements

- The venue arrangements described on this page are intended to help all minimise conflict around matchday, and create a good environment for games.
- It is recognised that the specific set up of venues may limit the extent to which this design can be followed. Coaches are requested to consult with each other and the match official to select the best way to set-up before a game, in keeping with the intent of this design.
- On arrival at the pitch, coaches from both teams agree a side of the pitch for their supporters and technical area. If there is any dispute, the away team can select where they locate.
- If an area behind a barrier is available, such as a cage, this should be used by all supporters
- Supporters must be 2m back from the edge of the pitch. The only exception is where the pitch facilities do not allow this... in which case supporters should be as close to 2m back from the touchline as possible.
- Both sides have a technical area which, for simplicity, is one half of the pitch, from 0.5m from the touchline to 2m back. The touchline should be left clear.
- The lead coach for a team should organise their subs, coaches and supporters before kick-off as per the arrangements agreed with the referee and opposition coaches.
- During the game, the referee may ask the lead coach of a club to intervene if subs, coaches or supporters don't follow the pitch set-up guidance.
- Repeated failure to follow the guidance – including from supporters - will be noted in the referee's report, and the team secretary will be contacted by ERSDA following the game.





#4 - Behaviour, Discipline and Conduct

4.1 - Club/Team responsibility for player, coach and supporter behaviour

- All clubs and teams are responsible for the behaviour of their players, coaches and supporters.
- This means that clubs and teams must take all reasonable steps to ensure that players, coaches and supporters follow the rules and guidance.
- In the event of any of the rules and guidance not being followed, team secretaries and possibly club secretaries will be contacted by ERSDA officials for follow-up and where warranted, disciplinary proceedings.
- This applies to any league-related activities – e.g. coaches' training, communication with opponents or the committee, posting on social media about games – as well as all aspects of match day.
- Please note that digital communications relating to team, club or ERSDA activity fall under the remit of the ERSDA disciplinary guidance.

4.2 - SYFA disciplinary guidelines

- We will follow the SYFA disciplinary guidelines laid out at <https://support.scottishfa.co.uk/portal/kb?btn=61&id=213>
- If there is a breach of the rules or guidelines, at the earliest opportunity the team or club secretary will be contacted by a member of the ERSDA disciplinary committee to investigate.
- Where necessary, the disciplinary investigation process (outlined on the ERSDA website) shall be followed
- Match day disciplinary issues will be dealt with by the ERSDA match official, and recorded in the comet system. This includes on-field issues, and any misconduct occurring before, during or after a match from any supporters, officials or players.
- ERSDA are running an iFAB and SFA approved trial of referee bodycams. This has made a significant impact on reducing abusive behaviour in grassroots football in England (<https://www.revealmedia.co.uk/referee-safety-cam>). Evidence collected in any such trial may be used as part of disciplinary proceedings.



#4 - Behaviour, Discipline and Conduct

4.3 Supporter and club official guidance

- First and foremost we want all supporters to be able to attend and enjoy watching grassroots football.
- Supporters have obligations to each other and the game, and are encouraged to read and follow the ERSDA charter which outlines expected supporter conduct.
- No supporter has the right to use threatening or abusive language / behaviour to any other supporter, official or player.
- At all times, regardless of pitch set up (grass, astro, caged, open etc.) supporters must be a minimum of 2m back from the touchlines
- If there is a caged area, such as round an Astro pitch, supporters must remain outside the cage at all times
- Supporters are reminded that their behaviour reflects on the club. Their club will be liable for any breaches of discipline that are noted by the match official, or discovered during reported issues and/or disciplinary investigation.
- Supporters should not approach the referee before, during or after any game, nor should they enter the field of play. ERSDA are asking referees to report any unsolicited exchanges with supporters, and disciplinary investigation will follow for any incidents reported.
- If match officials are subject to abusive or threatening behaviour from team officials or supporters, or such behaviour is evident around the pitch, then the game shall be suspended until such times that those causing the issue are removed from the vicinity of the pitch (which is taken to mean returning to a vehicle or leaving the grounds). Anyone failing to leave the vicinity when requested by a match official shall cause the game to be abandoned, the opponents to be declared 3-0 winners, and a disciplinary process will follow
- Clubs are reminded that supporter misbehaviour falls into the category of serious misconduct in the SYFA disciplinary rules, code EM25. This carries up to a *"Maximum sentence of expulsion from membership of the SYFA Or a fine not exceeding £500 and deduction of up to 10 league points or dismissed from the cup competition"*
- We are making, and will be enforcing uniformly, these rules in ERSDA as we want our grassroots game to continue, and for our young people to have the best environment in which to play. There were too many touchline incidents occurring in season 24/25 – all clubs are asked to work with us to eliminate these issues.



#4 - Behaviour, Discipline and Conduct

4.4 – Disciplinary Investigations and consequences

- As a matter of course, match officials will submit a match day report which will note cautions and any actionable incidents of ill discipline.
- Any supporter, coach or player can report such issues also, by contacting a member of the ERSDA committee (details listed on the website)
- A member of the ERSDA disciplinary committee will initiate a follow-up investigation as soon as is reasonably possible once alerted.
- Investigations will follow a standard process – where both sides of the story are heard, and any/all sources of evidence are collected.
- VEO or video footage collected from teams is considered a useful source of evidence, and may be used. This includes video from referee body cameras – in line with IFAB guidance for use – that may be introduced through the course of the season.
- All impacted by the reported disciplinary issue will be made aware of the outcomes once agreed by the disciplinary committee.
- ERSDA will continue to not issue fines for yellow cards, or for red cards received by players with code A1, A4 or A6
- All other cards will carry a fine, initially suspended, which becomes payable on further incidents
- Suspensions accrued will be taken immediately, and apply to both ERSDA league and cup fixtures but not friendlies
- Suspensions for red cards accumulated in any SYFA league at the end of season 25/26 which haven't yet been served will carry into the opening weeks of the season 26/27
- Please note - bans for any red card offences apply immediately, even if not yet visible in COMET. Teams should not include players or officials in subsequent matchday squads by default. If a suspended player seems visible in COMET, the team secretary should contact the league secretary to adjust the record.



#4 - Behaviour, Discipline and Conduct

4.5 – Racism and discriminatory behaviour

- For the avoidance of doubt, ERSDA stands against discriminatory behaviour or conduct of any kind and will strive to eliminate it in all forms from our game
- We are seeking to work with the SFA and police in dealing with discrimination in line with hate-crime legislation introduced earlier in 2024.
- In the event that an incident of discrimination (such as racist or homophobic comments) is witnessed or believed to be witnessed, it should be reported via the SFA discrimination reporting tool.

<https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/football-development/attractive-game/discrimination-reporting-form/>

- If ERSDA are the appropriate investigating body, the requirement to do so will be cascaded back to ERSDA from the SFA to follow up. However, with recent changes to the law, the most appropriate organisation to lead follow up may be the Police.

- Clubs are urged to educate officials and players about discrimination and its consequences. The SFA provide a grassroots guide which is available for all to review:

<https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/media/7149/scottish-fa-grassroots-discrimination-reporting-guide.pdf>

- ERSDA welcome contact from anyone associated with the league that has ideas, resources or contacts for how we can address discrimination effectively

4.6 – Red Card Fines

- On receipt of a red card the following fine amounts will be issued:
 - Player -£10
 - Coach - £20



#5 – Squads and Players

5.1 - Player eligibility and trialists

- Teams may have **20 eligible players** in their squad, up to **18 of which may be selected for matchday via team lines**.
- Trialists must be logged in COMET for all ERSDA fixtures. A trialist is not eligible to participate in an ERSDA fixture unless registered in this way.
- Players de-registered from a team are not eligible to re-join and play for that team again for 4 calendar weeks.
- Teams are reminded that players can only be registered for one team in SYFA competitions. This includes at the first year of 11-a-side that players cannot be registered for a 9-a-side team if they are in an 11-a-side team.
- Players are not allowed to play for a team to which they are not registered and eligible (e.g. no suspensions, not re-joining with 4 weeks)
- If an ineligible player enters the field of play for all or any part of a game – for whatever reason – the team fielding that player will be subject to a disciplinary investigation. This should be reported to the match official for inclusion in the match report and also reported by email to the league secretary.
- In cup competitions, players will be cup-tied if they have entered the field of play on behalf of one team in any ERSDA cup competition. So if a player plays for one team in the div 1 cup, they are cup-tied should they move to a different team participating in the div 1, 2 or 3 cups. Players that are in a matchday squad but who don't play in a cup fixture are not cup-tied.
- No trialists are allowed in any ERSDA cup final.
- The only exception to player availability for a cup final is the position of goalkeeper. Through suspension, injury or otherwise, if no goalkeeper is available for a team for a cup final, special dispensation to play an eligible trialist may be requested by a team. Whether this is allowed or not will be decided by the ERSDA committee, and supporting evidence of circumstances will be expected to be provided.
- A player can only be a trialist for a team for a maximum of 4 ERSDA league or cup games before they must register with that team, or cease trialling.
- If teams are in any doubt about player eligibility, they should contact the league secretary to discuss the issue well in advance of a fixture
- We request teams not to engage in the practice of moving players from more advanced age groups (possibly in different leagues) into development teams at the end of the year. We consider this unsporting conduct and will escalate any such instances reported to the relevant club secretary. The final date to register any new player for ERSDA competitions next season is 1st May 2026.



#5 – Squads and Players

5.2 - Player approaches

- Teams are reminded that ERSDA will follow the SYFA guidelines for player approaches, as outlined in the supplementary and playing rules. Key aspects of those guidelines are reproduced below.
- Teams that wish to approach a player must inform the team to which the player is currently registered in advance of proceeding with discussions or non-match day activities, such as inviting a player to attend training.
- The team to which the player is registered must then let them know of the approach within 7 days, and allow them to decide how to proceed. After 7 days, the prospective club may then approach the player directly
- If a player asks to be deregistered from a team, this must be done within 3 days.
- Players should not play in an ERSDA sanctioned friendly, league or cup game for a team until they are registered with them, or they are acknowledged as an eligible trialist by the league committee.

5.3 - Teams folding or exiting before the end of the season

- A team which is registered that needs to fold for whatever reason should contact the league secretary (secretary@ersda.uk)
- If a team folds or exits before they have played 1/3 of their games in a league competition, all their previous results shall be voided. This means points previously gained from fixtures against that team will be removed from any other team that has played them.
- If a team folds or exists after they have played 1/3 of their games, all existing game outcomes will stand, and any future games scheduled will be awarded as a 3-0 victory to their opponents.
- Once a team declares to the ERSDA secretary that it is folding, players in that team will be eligible trialists (although may be cup-tied as per the details of 5.1). Until that official declaration is submitted, the full rules of “5.2 – Player Approaches apply”.



#6 - League and Cup Formats

6.1 – Competitions and awards

- Every ERSDA age group shall run at least 2 competitions – a divisional league and a league cup. A further knock-out cup may also be arranged.
- The divisional league follows a split format, where teams play all other teams in their division (either once or twice, according to the number of teams in the division), and then split SPL style. The winners of upper and lower halves of a league win a trophy and up to 20 player medals
- The league cup format follows a knock-out format, concluding in cup final competitions held in May. Teams in a league cup are divided into groups to play a round-robin set of fixtures. At the end of those fixtures, teams finishing 1st, 2nd or 3rd in their groups will proceed to a cup, plate or bowl final respectively against a team finishing in the same position in a different group. The cup, plate and bowl winner will win a trophy and up to 20 player medals
- Earlier age groups may also start the season with a “sprint” competition, which is a limited number of fixtures between a mixture of teams to establish competitive league positions.
- The number of divisions at an age group, and the number of league cup competitions, will be determined by the number of teams in the league. This will be advised, along with team placements, at the earliest opportunity, after agreement with the age group committee. For age groups operating sprints, this will happen at the end of the sprint fixtures.



#6 – League and Cup Formats

6.2 - Split League Format

- In ERSDA league competitions operating a split division competition, every team will play every other team in their division for at least one full round of fixtures. Games carry 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss. A second round of fixtures may happen when there are 10 teams or less in the division.
- After the full round(s) of fixtures the league will split into two groupings for a further set of fixtures. If there is an equal number of teams in the league, the split groups will be equal. If an odd number of teams, then one split group will have one more team than the other.
- Teams will be advised of the final date by which they have to complete their pre-split fixtures. If teams have not completed their games by the required date, the league committee may use all available data to decide the league split, in order that other teams are not delayed in moving on to post-split fixtures.
- The split is decided on points, then head to head result, then disciplinary record (the more disciplined team joining the upper grouping). Goals scored are not used as a criteria. Coaches and the league committee will also engage in dialogue about the decision-making process
- Where the split is uneven, the odd team will be allocated to the grouping where the team is closer in points than the other.
- After the groups split, teams in groups will play each other either once or twice (depending on division size).
- At the end of the split group fixtures, the team with most points in the upper group will win the 'division title'. The team with the most points in the lower group will win the 'division shield.'
- Where teams are matched on points and head-to-head at the end of grouping fixtures, a one-off play-off (regulation time then straight to penalties) will decide the title or shield.
- When communicating final league positions at the end of the season, no team in the lower grouping will be shown to finish higher than a team in the upper grouping.



#6 - League and Cup Formats

6.3 - Split League Format – Worked Example

1

Play round of league fixtures within division

Position	Team	Played	GD	Pts
1	Lakers	9	15	23
2	Warriors	9	13	18
3	Nets	9	12	15
4	Thunder	9	9	14
5	Jazz	9	6	12
6	Spurs	9	-1	12
7	Magic	9	-8	9
8	Heat	9	-13	8
9	Pistons	9	-15	4
10	Knicks	9	-18	1

2

Divide into upper and lower tier

Team	Played	GD	Pts
1 Lakers	9	15	23
2 Warriors	9	13	18
3 Nets	9	12	15
4 Thunder	9	9	14
5 Jazz	9	6	12

6 Spurs	9	-1	12
7 Magic	9	-8	9
8 Heat	9	-13	8
9 Pistons	9	-15	4
10 Knicks	9	-18	1

If teams tied on points in position 5/6, head to head record + discussion between coaches and league committee will decide where split occurs

3

Teams play within tier – top of group at the end win competition

Team	Played	GD	Pts
1 Warriors	17	18	35
2 Lakers	17	13	33
3 Thunder	17	6	27
4 Nets	17	7	26
5 Jazz	17	2	22

Divisional Title Winners

6 Magic	16	2	28
7 Heat	16	-8	25
8 Spurs	16	-8	21
9 Pistons	16	-14	20
10 Knicks	16	-18	12

Divisional Shield Winners

Teams in lower tier can't overtake teams in upper tier once split occurs, regardless of points gained



#6 - League and Cup Formats

6.4 – League cup format and finals day

- At the end of round 1 of fixtures teams will be put in rank order of league position for the entire age group. The bottom team in an upper division will be one place higher than the top team in a lower division
- League cup competitions will then be formed by dividing the rank order of league positions. This may mean that teams are allocated into a league cup competition with teams from a different division. This is intended to bring variety and cup run opportunities for all teams, and for those at the boundaries between league divisions in particular.
- Within the league cup competition, two round robin groups of c.4 teams shall be formed (depending on where age group divisions are drawn). Exact groupings and fixture dates will be advised by the league committee after the conclusion of the first round of league fixtures.
- At the end of the round robin group fixtures, teams in first place in both groups shall progress to their league cup final, teams in second place shall progress to their league plate final, and teams in third place shall proceed to their league bowl final. All teams in 4th place or below are eliminated from the competition
- Finals for all teams will take place in May, at a finals day event. Further information about finals day will be shared as part of a post league-split briefing for all teams about league cup groupings.
- Finals day is a fixed date. Any teams unable to make that date will be considered to be withdrawing from the competition, and their place in any final will be awarded to the next best placed team in their group.
- A worked example is shown on the following page for a 24 team, 2 division league structure, splitting into 3 league cup competitions. The exact number of competitions, and teams per group, will be decided by the league committee in consultation with the ERSDA committee once pre-split results in an age group are known.



#6 - League and Cup Formats

6.5 – League cup worked example

A

Team	Division 1 position after 1 complete round of fixtures	League Cup Ranking
A	1	1
B	2	2
C	3	3
D	4	4
E	5	5
F	6	6
G	7	7
H	8	8
I	9	9
J	10	10
K	11	11
L	12	12

Team	Division 2 position after 1 complete round of fixtures	League Cup Ranking
M	1	13
N	2	14
O	3	15
P	4	16
Q	5	17
R	6	18
S	7	19
T	8	20
U	9	21
V	10	22
W	11	23
X	12	24

This shows a 24 team, 2 division league. After all teams have played each other once, they end up in the following order, and receive a corresponding league cup ranking

B

League Cup 1

Group 1	Group 2
A	B
C	D
E	F
G	H

League Cup 2

Group 1	Group 2
I	J
K	L
M	N
O	P

League Cup 3

Group 1	Group 2
Q	R
S	T
U	V
W	X

League Cup competitions will be established based on league cup rankings, with each competition splitting into 2 groups.

C

After round robin

Position	Group 1	Group 2
1	Cup	Cup
2	Plate	Plate
3	Bowl	Bowl
4	Out	Out

At the end of the round robin group stage, teams in positions 1,2,3 in their group table will proceed to a cup, plate or bowl final game to be held in May.

Each league cup will have a cup, plate or bowl competition. In this example, there would be 9 finals – a cup, plate and bowl for each of the league cups.

This means that 9 teams – from across all levels of the league – will win silverware.



#6 – League and Cup Formats

6.6 – SYFA Scottish Cup and West Region Cup

- Teams in ERSDA can optionally enter the SYFA Scottish and West Region Cups. Teams sort their own inclusion in these competitions during their annual SYFA registration process, during which they select ERSDA as their league
- ERSDA will endeavour to recirculate planning and scheduling information about SYFA cups. However, the SYFA is the best source of information – the latest details about cup draws, regulations etc. will be through the SYFA website. Look out for emails from the SYFA/ SFA directing you to the correct websites for this year's competitions.
- As per SYFA guidelines, SYFA cup competitions take precedence over any ERSDA fixtures. Teams in SYFA cup competitions will be required to re-arrange their ERSDA fixture with their opponent, and it shall not count against a team's annual allocation of fixture rescheduling requests. This should be done by a team as soon as they are aware of the need to play an SYFA cup game on a date when an ERSDA fixture is scheduled (regardless of whether they are home or away). This gives maximum opportunity for their opposition to arrange an alternative game for that date, and for the re-scheduled game to be rearranged in a timely manner.
- Teams should share the outcomes of their SYFA cup fixtures with their league committees, to help the league committee know which future fixtures will need rescheduling.
- Teams are advised to read the SYFA cup competition guidelines carefully, as there are strict rules about many features of match day which must be followed (e.g. from how to report scores, to ref fees, corner flags etc.), and may be slightly different to ERSDA stipulations.
- Note, it is unclear whether COMET or manual team lines will be required for SYFA / West Region fixtures.
- The ERSDA fixture schedule avoids including any league games on the anticipated first round date for both SYFA cup competitions. As the SYFA cup dates are informed to the league after the season starts though, teams are advised to look out for confirmation of dates. If an SYFA first round cup date is happening on a different weekend to that anticipated, then the league may swap a different weekend's set of fixtures with the SYFA cup date.
- If teams have chosen not to enter those cup competitions, then they may seek opponents to play a 'Get Ahead' fixture. They should inform the league as soon as such arrangements are made.



#7- Further Information

7.1 – Communication

- The official ERSDA website is now ersda.uk. There are some older websites which may appear on google searches, but the one with the current information is ersda.uk
- All information about the league format, documentation, fixtures, guides etc. shall be placed on the ERSDA website. During transition to COMET, league tables will also be maintained on the website
- ERSDA also posts on “X” and maintains an ERSDA facebook page. Recognising that not all coaches have access to such social media, all attempts will be made to make sure that any critical messages on social media also feature on the website, and are distributed through direct communications by whatsapp and/or email
- Each age group shall maintain a Whatsapp group for all team secretaries of that age group. This will be administered by the league committee for that age group, and may include members of the ERSDA committee also to help with organising.
- Within age groups, once divisions are established, league committee members may set up division specific whatsapp groups to help organise matches, discuss issues etc.
- To facilitate arrangements of games, all team secretaries in an age group are asked to provide their contact details for sharing with other teams in their age group. This will be arranged by the ERSDA secretary.
- Participants in ERSDA whatsapp groups should show courtesy to all other members of that group in their language, tone and content shared. Further, members of the group are asked to stick to group-relevant posts, and to direct message other members with specific messages (e.g. organising a game).
- Please be respectful of committee members time, and do not contact them after 9pm in the evening.
- Conduct in communication is covered by the disciplinary guidance as an ERSDA relevant activity. There have been a limited number of occasions of abusive or inappropriate messages being sent in recent years. This will be subject to disciplinary proceedings should any contact between league, club or team officials breach accepted standards.
- Clubs are also asked to be respectful to their opponents when posting to social media or web pages about results of games



#7- Further Information

7.2 – League Calendar

- ERSDA will operate a 28-32 fixture season at 11-a-side age groups across sprints, league games, round robin and knock-out cups (some of which may not apply to an age group). The exact number of games per format will depend on the number of teams and agreements with teams made through the age group committee.
- There are periods throughout the calendar when fixtures are not scheduled, such as around holiday periods, to ensure smooth running
- Scottish and West Region cup dates are given at short notice. Teams in those competitions will need to rearrange their scheduled ERSDA game at the time (see earlier in the guide).
- In any free or holiday weeks, or midweek, teams can arrange catch-up or 'get ahead' games.
- Teams are encouraged to collaborate in getting games on, and sticking to their divisions schedule as closely as possible. This may include using "Home/Away" swaps in case of difficulty organising pitches, as well as using additional grass pitch capacity in August/September and April/May to play get ahead or catch up fixtures.
- It is the responsibility of teams to try to follow the calendar – for support they can contact their age group committee
- Age group and division specific calendars will be shared by league committees to each team.



#7 – Further Information

7.3 –References

Resource	Reference
ERSDA website	Ersda.uk
SYFA supplementary rules and disciplinary guidelines	https://support.scottishfa.co.uk/portal/kb?btn=61&id=213
iFAB – laws of the game	https://www.theifab.com/
SFA discrimination reporting guide	https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/media/7149/scottish-fa-grassroots-discrimination-reporting-guide.pdf
SFA discrimination reporting tool	https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/football-development/attractive-game/discrimination-reporting-form/
East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust – ERSDA partners	https://www.ercultureandleisure.org/
ERCL pitch information	https://pitchbooking.com/partners/ERCULTUREANDLEISURE