

The FA Cup, The FA Trophy, The FA Vase and The FA Youth Cup Competitions

Entry Qualifications and Guidance Notes Season 2009-2010

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure that Clubs are more aware of the various rules and instructions necessary for entry into the above Club Competitions organised by The Football Association.

It is therefore essential for Clubs to carefully read and consider the contents of this document when deciding if an entry should be submitted for one of the above Competitions.

Contents

		Page
Section A	MINIMUM GROUND STANDARDS	2
Section B	ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	4
Section C	SUBMISSION AND COMPLETION OF ENTRY FORM	7
Section D	ELIGIBILITY OF CLUBS ENTERING	8
Section E	FLOODLIGHTING REGULATIONS	9

Section A - MINIMUM GROUND STANDARDS

1. Floodlights must be provided, with a minimum average lux value of 120, with no single reading less than 25% of the highest reading.
2. Permanent hard standing (concrete, paving slabs or other suitable approved material) must be provided to a minimum width of one metre on at least three sides in the Cup, Trophy and Youth Cup and on at least one touch-line in the Vase.
3. The playing area must be entirely enclosed by a permanent fixed barrier on all four sides and may be infilled with advertisement hoardings or other barriers, the only exception being those areas excluded from spectator viewing. Wire must not be used, in rope form, to connect the posts.
4. Permanent covered spectator accommodation must be provided adjacent to the playing area or within the immediate vicinity of the playing area.
5. Dressing and washing accommodation must be separate for each team and for the Match Officials. Dressing rooms must have heating and hot water.
6. Dressing and washing accommodation must not be available for spectator use and must be secure and independent of any public access.
7. A call-up bell/buzzer must be provided in the match officials dressing room and connected to each team dressing room.
8. Covered Home and Visitors Trainer's Boxes must be provided and be clearly identified to the Match Officials. Such designated areas shall be clearly marked 'home' and 'away', have direct access to the pitch, be located as near as possible equidistant from the halfway line and be under cover. The team benches should also comply with Competition Rule 18.
9. The pitch must measure between 110-100 metres by 75-64 metres. The size of the pitch must be re-checked prior to the commencement of the Season.
10. Artificial pitches are only permitted in the Trophy, Vase and in the preliminary and qualifying rounds of the Youth Cup providing they meet the minimum standards. Artificial pitches are NOT permitted in the Cup.
11. In the Cup, Trophy and Youth Cup an unimpeded protected passage MUST be provided between the dressing room and the pitch. In the Vase a walkway must be provided between the dressing room and the pitch.
12. Toilets, which are not available for public use, must be provided in the dressing rooms for the use of the players and the Match Officials.
13. Spectators must be provided with separate toilets for ladies and gents throughout the duration of the match and these must not be those used by the players and Match Officials.
14. Refreshment facilities for spectators must be provided in all areas. Clubs shall provide a tea bar for the sale of hot and cold drinks and snacks for spectators during ties in a Club house or other suitable location. Glasses, glass bottles or cans containing alcohol are not permitted outside of the Clubhouse and MUST not be brought into grounds. NO alcohol to be consumed in the ground except inside the Clubhouse.
15. First aid facilities, equipment and a stretcher must be available, and a fully qualified person must be available to administer First Aid.
16. Insurance for registered players and Club Officials with Public Liability must be provided.
17. An admission charge must be taken for all spectators upon entry to the ground. Entrances and exits shall be provided to cater for the anticipated attendance. Access for emergency services must be provided.
18. An area must be available for hospitality for Visiting Officials.

19. A programme or team sheet must be provided.
20. Clubs with shared facilities with cricket clubs which prevent exclusive use for football will only be allowed to enter if a written application is submitted to The Football Association with the Competition entry form, detailing the situation for home football matches in August and September.
21. The playing surface should be prepared and maintained to a reasonable standard.
22. A telephone must be connected and available at the ground.
23. Clubs with grounds not conforming to these minimum ground standards will not be allowed to enter by applying to play home ties on an alternative ground that does.

Section B - ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

1. ADMINISTRATION

Clubs entering FA Competitions are expected to have an administration that is capable of understanding and complying with the requirements needed to compete in the various Competitions. It is important for Clubs to have a Secretary familiar with dealing with the general duties expected of Clubs that enter National Competitions. It is essential to have a daytime contact number for all Club Secretaries. It is also necessary for Club Secretaries to have access to e-mail and to provide an e-mail address.

2. ENTRANCES

All Clubs entering FA Competitions must charge an admission fee (as detailed in the Competition Rules). A collection is not deemed suitable. The attendance must be recorded, either by means of turnstile, pay box or ticket admission. There should be entrance and exit gates to the ground for the emergency services.

3. DRESSING ROOMS

Separate dressing rooms, washing and toilet facilities must be provided for the home team, visiting team and the Match Officials. The washing and toilet facilities must be located in the immediate vicinity of the dressing room complex. It is unacceptable for Match Officials to share a dressing room with anyone else, including Match Officials from other games, or to be forced to use facilities used by spectators or clubhouse users. Dressing rooms must be secure and be independent of any public access and must be cleaned and maintained to a satisfactory standard. A call-up bell must be provided in the match officials dressing room and connected to each team dressing room.

4. FINANCE

Clubs may be required to provide the following details:

- a) State accounting year end period
- b) Year/period end of last statutory accounts produced
- c) Date on which these accounts were signed
- d) For limited companies, date that these accounts were filed with Companies House
- e) Were these accounts signed by an independent auditor/accountant?
- f) Date of general meeting at which the members approved these accounts

Clubs may be required to provide copies of the information on a sample basis, and that those found to have completed incorrect/misleading information may be liable to sanction.

The full Club playing name should be the entity that all gate income, prize money and player payments go through and it should be the name that is on the Club's statutory accounts.

5. FLOODLIGHTING (also see Floodlighting section)

All Clubs must have floodlights to be eligible to compete in FA Competitions. The floodlighting installation must meet with the approval of The Association, and must have an average lux value of 120, with the lowest reading not less than 25% of the highest reading. New Entries into the Vase will have until 1 June 2009 to have installations completed and operational.

Clubs without floodlights are not allowed to enter by applying to play home ties on an alternative ground with floodlights.

6. GROUND

All grounds should be fully enclosed and secure on all boundaries, with solid walls or fencing. Wire mesh fencing with posts will also be permitted, provided that spectator viewing is not possible through it from outside the ground.

When the ground forms part of a sports complex or similar facility, the football facilities must be self contained on match days. Where a boundary of a ground is a natural boundary with no form of access possible, then a solid wall or fence is not necessary.

In the **Cup, Trophy and Youth Cup** an unimpeded protected passage **MUST** be provided for the Players and Match Officials between the dressing rooms and the pitch. Roped off walkways are not considered suitable as sufficient protection. A post and rail structure is essential if a caged or covered structure cannot be provided. Temporary barriers will be permitted.

In the **Vase** a walkway **MUST** be provided for the Players and Match Officials between the dressing room and the pitch. If a post and rail structure cannot be provided then a roped off walkway will be permitted.

Each Club shall provide separate areas adjacent to the pitch for the sole use of team officials, medical staff and substitutes. Such designated areas must be marked "home " and "away", have direct access to the pitch, be located as near as possible equidistant from the halfway line and be under cover.

Clubs with ground sharing agreements must arrange for ties to be played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday if a clash of fixtures occurs with the sharing Club. If for any reason a tie is unable to be played on the ground of the first drawn Club on a Saturday, the tie must be played on either the day before, i.e. on Friday, or the day after, i.e. on Sunday on the ground of the first drawn Club. If agreement is unable to be agreed on the date, then it will be played on the Sunday and Clubs second drawn will not be able to object to ties switched to a Sunday.

7. HOSPITALITY

Clubs must provide hospitality prior to ties, at half-time and at full-time for the visiting players and officials, and also the Match Officials. A suitable area must be made available for this purpose in the stand or the clubhouse.

8. PITCH BARRIER

A wall or permanent fixed barrier must enclose the playing area on all four sides and may be in-filled with advertisement hoardings or other barriers. A post and rail barrier is acceptable; ropes, wire and chains are not. Wire "rope" is not permitted as a substitute to connect the posts as a top rail.

The intention is to ensure that the pitch barrier is either a post and rail structure or a wall. Concerns have recently been expressed that some Clubs have a "wire" barrier around pitches and this may constitute a danger to players, officials and spectators. However, wire used as infill in the form of wire mesh between stanchions/posts is still acceptable. Wire is to be eliminated as a material at the top between the stanchions/posts to enable the pitch barrier to be of a rigid construction and be securely fixed to the ground.

However, Clubs sharing grounds with cricket clubs that are unable to completely fence off a particular section adjacent to the cricket pitch, may restrict spectator viewing to those sides of the pitch with a permanent barrier and display appropriate signs and barriers to prohibit spectators from viewing the match from any unfenced areas.

The shortest distance between the touch or goal lines and the perimeter barrier should be 2 metres, but the recommended distance is 3 metres.

9. PITCH DIMENSIONS

The pitch **MUST** measure between 110-100 metres by 75-64 metres. Clubs may be required to provide and pitches should be re-measured prior to the commencement of the Season to check that the size of the pitch conforms to these dimensions.

The dimensions shall not be altered during the season without the prior written consent of The Association.

10. PITCH – ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

Artificial pitches will be permitted in the **Trophy, Vase** and in the Preliminary and Qualifying rounds of the **Youth Cup** only, provided the pitch is listed on The Association's register of artificial grass pitches, with prior consent of The Association. This should be requested at the time of entry to the competition in each season, provided that the artificial turf meets the following conditions:-

the pitch shall be surfaced with an artificial grass surface that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept Handbook of Requirements for Football Turf (March 2006 edition One or Two Star Category or the International Artificial Standard (March 2006 edition) and have satisfied the performance and construction requirements at the time of its last annual assessment. The pitch must be retested every close season and certificates must be provided to the Association by 1st August each season.

the artificial grass pitch, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour. All line markings shall be white and in accordance with the Laws of Association Football. Any other temporary lines must be removed prior to any FA competition match. The manufacturer of the carpet should be contacted to advise on the painting of temporary lines and the correct method of removing lines.

the home Club shall allow their opposition the opportunity to use the pitch and train on the surface two hours prior to the kick-off and there must not be another game or event on the pitch following the training period. If it is intended to water the pitch before the match, the pitch shall be watered prior to the training period.

the Club using the artificial grass pitch shall advise their opposition at least 10 days before the match of limitations or recommendations on the types of boot or stud that may be used on the surface.

the Club shall provide all necessary assistance and data relating to player assessments, injury records, maintenance etc. as requested by The FA, FIFA or UEFA.

11. PITCH STANDARD

The playing surface should be prepared and maintained to a reasonable standard.

12. SPECTATOR ACCOMMODATION

A permanent covered area for spectator viewing must be provided in the vicinity of the pitch.

Toilets must be provided for both Ladies and Gentlemen and must be available throughout the duration of the match.

Spectators must not, under any circumstances, have access to the dressing rooms for the use of the facilities used by players and Match Officials.

Hard standing (concrete, paving slabs or other suitable approved material) must be provided to a minimum width of one metre on at least three sides in the **Cup, Trophy** and **Youth Cup**. Hard standing must be provided on at least one touch-line in the **Vase**.

It is not allowable for temporary hard standing to be installed, if drawn at home, hard standing must be permanent throughout the course of the football season.

Whilst the minimum ground standards requires the width of hard standing to be a minimum of one metre, if the League that you are currently competing in states that the minimum width of hard standing must be one yard, this is acceptable.

Refreshment facilities for spectators must be provided. Clubs shall provide a tea bar for the sale of hot and cold drinks and snacks for spectators during ties in a Clubhouse or other suitable location. Glasses, glass bottles or cans containing alcohol are not permitted outside of the Clubhouse and **MUST** not be brought into grounds. **NO** alcohol to be consumed in the ground except inside the Clubhouse.

Section C - SUBMISSION AND COMPLETION OF ENTRY FORM

1. CLOSING DATE

The closing date for entries to the **Cup, Trophy, Vase** and **Youth Cup** is 1st April 2009. Entries received after this date will not be accepted.

2. FEES & BANK ACCOUNT

Payment of the entry fee(s) must be made online by following the step by step guide.

The fees are as follows:

Cup	£75
Trophy	£50
Vase	£50
Youth Cup	£40

If entering more than one Competition, please only complete one application and make one 'altogether' payment from the payment options provided. Cheques and cash will not be accepted.

Clubs not accepted will have their entry fees refunded at a later date.

3. COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

County Associations will be sent a copy of each new Club's application form by The Association for comments and recommendations, which will be made known to the relevant Competition Committee.

4. ACCEPTANCE

After the closing dates for the various Competitions, the appropriate Committee will meet to consider each entry after consultation with the County Associations. Clubs will be informed of the Committee's decision as soon as possible after these meetings have taken place.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

Clubs will receive an acknowledgement on receipt of an application and payment, however this acknowledgement does not constitute acceptance into the Competition(s).

A final list of entries received will be published online approximately two weeks after the closing date.

6. FA FULL OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

A Club that is either a Full or Associate Member of The FA who fail to pay The Association's membership subscription by 1 August 2009 may be subject to removal from FA Competitions.

Section D – ELIGIBILITY OF CLUBS ENTERING

FA CUP

Clubs to be automatically accepted

- Clubs in The Premier League, The Football League and in Steps 1,2,3 & 4 of The FA National League System.
- Clubs in Step 5 of The FA National League System subject to the ground conforming to the entry requirements.
- Clubs relegated to Step 6 of The FA National League System subject to the ground conforming to the entry requirements.
- Clubs in Step 6 of The FA National League System finishing in a League position 1-4 of the season just completed subject to the ground conforming to the entry requirements.

Clubs to be accepted subject to available places

- Clubs playing in Step 6 of The FA National League System finishing in a League position 5-10 of the season just completed subject to the ground conforming to the entry requirements.
- New Entries
Clubs must have participated in the Vase in Season 2008-2009.

FA TROPHY

- Entry is restricted to Clubs competing in Steps 1-4 of The FA National League System. Clubs relegated out of Step 4 will automatically be switched into the Vase and Clubs promoted into Step 4 will automatically be moved to the Trophy.

FA VASE

- Entry is restricted to Clubs competing in Steps 5-7 of The FA National League System subject to the ground conforming to the minimum entry requirements.

FA YOUTH CUP

- All Clubs taking part in a recognized Youth League/Academy or Competition in the current season sanctioned by The Association or an affiliated Association as determined by The Association from time to time.
- Clubs affiliated to The Football Association of Wales participating in the Cup.
- Youth Teams representing a Senior Club must be properly integrated within the main structure of the Senior Club.
- All of the above are subject to the ground conforming to the minimum entry requirements.

Although certain Clubs may have competed in FA Competitions for a number of seasons, Clubs should be aware that if their playing standard or League position deteriorates over a number of consecutive seasons, entry may be rejected or warnings issued regarding future participation in the relevant Competition.

County Associations will be advised of Clubs applying to enter FA Competitions and they will be asked to submit their recommendations on acceptance/rejection to the respective FA Competition Committee.

Section E - FLOODLIGHTING REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Clubs wishing to compete in FA Competitions must have floodlighting installations of a particular standard in order to be eligible to compete. A Club must therefore have a valid approved Floodlighting Survey Chart and Floodlighting Inspection Report.

The detailed criteria specified by The Football Association are set out below. The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that minimum standards of lighting are maintained throughout the Competition.

Leagues sanctioned by The Football Association or County Football Associations may also operate a floodlighting standard. Clubs will need to comply with the standards set by The Football Association for its own Competitions regardless of the standards set by a specific League. If a League sets a standard below that set by The Football Association, Clubs must still comply with The Football Association's minimum standards if they are to be accepted into FA Competitions. Likewise, if a League sets a standard higher than the Club must comply with its League.

CRITERIA

1. FLOODLIGHTING AND READINGS

- a) There must be an approved Floodlighting Survey Chart and a Floodlighting Inspection Report in order for a Club to be accepted for entry into a Competition. An approved Chart and Report shall be valid for 24 months from the date it is signed by the "approved" contractor completing the inspection. A Club shall be notified of non-approval of the Chart and Report together with the reasons for this. The Football Association may conditionally admit a Club to enter a Competition on satisfaction of the criteria within a specified time limit.
- b) The average lux value shall be no less than 120.
- c) No single reading shall be less than 25% of the highest reading.
- d) Illumination levels shall be recorded on the horizontal plane at ground level, using a 12 inch square flat board or a self levelling tripod not more than 12 inches above the ground, supporting a corrected Silicon Photometer Cell accurate to 1%, which in turn feeds a digital display.
- e) Details of the light meter used shall be given together with the calibration certificate. The light meter shall be subject to an annual calibration check.
- f) Readings shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across and 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

2. FLOODLIGHTING CONTRACTORS

- a) An "approved" contractor must complete charts and Reports.
- b) An "approved" contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractor's award; ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards Organisation/British Standard) or is a member of the Electrical Contractor's Association.
- c) Clubs should state this requirement when looking for a floodlighting contractor.

Clubs in Leagues operating a floodlighting standard will need to comply with their League's instructions regarding submitting Charts and Reports to their League, rather than to The Football Association. The Leagues will then provide the relevant information to The Football Association.

Clubs entering FA Competitions who play in a League that does not operate a floodlighting standard must submit their Floodlighting Survey Chart and Inspection Report to The Football Association. See overleaf, for example.

FLOODLIGHTING SURVEY CHART

Horizontal illumination level surveys to be taken on a grid pattern of 88 markings of 8 across and 11 down, evenly spaced, with the outside reading falling on the pitch boundary line. The light meter must be placed not more than 12 inches above the ground. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation.

CLUB:

DATE:

TIME:

TOTAL AVERAGE:

SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY:
(state name and company)

X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

This grid must be submitted together with a signed Floodlight Inspection Report supplied by an approved lighting contractor. The position of the towers must be indicated on the survey chart.

Signed (Secretary):

Date: