**Solent Churches Football League Constitution 2019/20**

This constitution combines both SCFL and FA rules that have been discussed and agreed by both parties and should be read and agreed by all teams currently playing in and teams looking to join the Solent Churches Football League.

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**1. Name**

The full title: **Solent Churches Football league (SCFL)**. The SCFL are affiliated with the governing body the FA. As well as the FA’s governing rules the league also upholds the SCFL constitution detailed in this document.

**2. League Ethos, Setup and competitions.**

The SCFL is a church league containing Church based teams using football as a tool to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others, both on and off the pitch. The football is no less competitive than any other league but the atmosphere is much more enjoyable, with an emphasis on respect for other players and officials. Each club operates in a different way but with one common theme: God as the centre point.

**2.1** This Competition (SCFL) shall not consist of more than fifty (50) Clubs approved by the sanctioning authority.

**2.1.1** All such Member Clubs must be affiliated to an affiliated County Football Association and their names

and details shall be returned annually by the appointed date to the Hampshire County Football Association.

The area covered by the Competition Membership shall be the Southampton Divisional FA and Portsmouth

Divisional FA area as designated by the Hampshire FA Ltd.

**2.1.2** This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Hampshire Football Association(s) and the constituent teams of Member Clubs may be grouped in divisions, each not exceeding 10 in number.

 **2.2** This Competition shall only permit one team from a Club to participate in the same division unless there is no viable alternative because of logistical issues and/or reasons linked to participation and geographical boundaries. This Competition will obtain the prior approval of the sanctioning Association in the event of a division comprising of more than one team from the same Club. This Competition will ensure that, where permission is given, teams from a Club operating in the same division are run as separate entities with no interchange of players other than via transfers of registration in accordance with Competition Rules.

 **2.3** Inclusivity and Non-discrimination:

(i) This Competition and each Member Club must be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

(ii) This Competition and each Member Club does not and must not in any manner whatsoever unlawfully discriminate against any person within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination.

(iii) This Competition and each Member Club must make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community.

(iv) Any alleged breach of the Equality Act 2010 legislation must be referred to the appropriate sanctioning Association for investigation.

 **2.3.1** The SCFL and its Clubs shall support the FA’s Respect programme. As such it recognises that everyone in football has a collective responsibility to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place. A Respect League values the contribution of match officials, players and spectators and ensures that they are treated with courtesy and fairness by opposing players, club officials and spectators. The League and its Clubs will seek to play fixtures in a fair, competitive but not antagonistic environment, in the spirit of the game and more importantly the spirit of the league itself.

**2.4** Member Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of FA and County FA Competitions) except with the written consent of the SCFL Committee.

 **2.5** The structure of the leagues will depend on the amount of teams eligible to play within them. The SCFL will always try and encourage as many fixtures as possible, however keeping in mind the need to complete all fixtures. Currently we have 3 divisions, consisting of 19 teams playing fixtures in the following format:

(i) The **SCFL league** setup dictates that we will have 8 teams in division 1 and 8 in division 2, with two games being played against each other during the season.

(ii) Alongside the league fixtures the SCFL also has the **SCFL league cup and plate** competition, as well as all SCFL teams being offered the opportunity to play in the **Faith cup** (a cup competition between Dorset Church league and the SCFL)

(iii) Where applicable a **Divisional cup** (or cross-divisional) competition will occur to ensure that more competitive fixtures are available to teams. The structure for this cup competition will be a mini group stage, with the winners (and where applicable best placed runner up) going onto a knock out stage - this will not take place within 2018-19 season

**3. Aims and Objectives**

**3.1** Aims

**3.1.1** The Aim of SCFL is to give local Churches the opportunity to play football in an enjoyable environment.

**3.1.2** The SCFL also gives local church football teams the opportunity to use football as a means to introduce men to the Christian faith.

**3.2** Objectives

**3.2.1** Through participation in the league, each team may have different objectives. However to ensure we stand out as a league we anticipate common expected objectives to include:

 (i) Sharing the Christian message in order to bring others to faith

 (ii) Providing a football team that both Churched, and non-Churched, players can participate and play in.

 (iii) Supporting team members and team links both relationally and practically.

**4. Expectations, entry requirements, membership and fee’s**

*All teams are to ensure that the areas of ‘Expectations, entry requirements and Membership ‘are met in order to be entered into the SCFL, failure to keep and cover all of the below will mean that teams are unable to enter or continue to participate in the league.*

*The SCFL committee individually vets and confirms all teams prior to acceptance into the league (or re-entrance) season on season. Only when the SCFL are confident that a team are accountable too and have involvement from their named Church will a team’s request to join the league be agreed.*

*In order to help and support teams in their individual aims and faith objectives/mission statements the SCFL want to give every opportunity to teams to share the Christian faith amongst its squad. To help teams do this the SCFL have team and match day expectations these are:*

**4.1** The team must have a strong affiliation with their Church.

**4.1.2** The affiliation is more than in name, i.e. there must be a strong relationship between Church and team. With this in mind a team ‘Mission statement/objective’ must be entered by a team clearly outlining the following:

**4.1.3** The team’s spiritual direction over the season, clearly stating how as a team you will be giving opportunities to your squad ways in which to engage with Christianity and encouraging players in your team to understand that church football is more than the football itself.

**4.1.4** What will you as a team bring to the league, i.e. how will you encourage and support the SCFL in upholding the leagues values and ethos, and in which ways will they be practically shown on a match day.

**4.2** On your mission statement you must have a clear contact of a leader at your affiliated Church such as an Elder, Minister, deacon or similar positions, the SCFL will not accept entry from a team unless they are satisfied that each team is known to the Church and has a leader from the Church overseeing them. To make it clear, other positions such as Churchwarden, a member or caretaker from a Church are not sufficient links. Your Church contact cannot be a player or manager within the team, for example if a team has an elder/minister or similar position running the football team, that team needs to supply the SCFL with a different leaders name and contact from within that Church. This is because each team has to be accountable to the Church leadership, so that if there are problems with any teams the committee can contact the Church directly ensuring that the Church deals with the problem accordingly.

**4.3** At least three members of each individual squad must be a practicing Christian and an active member of either the Church they are representing or a part of another Church family and regularly attend and worship at their home Church. The three Christians need to be named before the season, and on match day two of those three have to be named in the match day squad. When scorecards are received the named players will be able to be verified as being present, if however there is no record of those players being present then we will be contacting managers and escalating to the Church if needs be.

**4.3.1** If a Church team has more than 3 active Christians within the squad they can name as many as they like before the season.

**4.3.2** It is preferable (but not expected) that each team also has a Church based pitch side presence; this may come in the shape of a manager, assistant manager, or overseer. However we are aware that not all Churches have the luxury of having someone from the Church available every week. Where this is the case one of the minimum three named Church based players must hold a leadership role within the team.

**The SCFL agree that it is vital for each team to have at least a small core of Christian players in order for each team to uphold the SCFL league ethos.**

**4.4** If a church has two or more teams represented in the leagues, each team must be able to fulfil the required match day expectations (see ‘4.3’ above)

**4.5.** Membership to the SCFL includes responsibility, meaning the SCFL expects a representative at **every** SCFL meeting from each team; consistent apologies will lead to a review of team involvement in the league. All are welcome at these meetings, but it is important that each team has Christian representation at every meeting.

**4.6** Each season a team must have paid its £75 ‘bond’ to the SCFL for the upcoming season. This is to cover match day costs in the event that a team has to cancel at the last minute. Bonds are only payable once and roll forward into the next season if not used and are refundable in the event of a team withdrawing from the league. Once a bond has been used, it must be replaced. A Club shall not participate in any Competition until the Entry Fee, Annual Subscription and Deposit have been paid.

 **4.6.1** Applications by Clubs for admission to this Competitions or the entry of an additional team(s) must be made in writing to the Secretary and must be accompanied by an Entry **Fee of £150** per team per season which shall be returned in the event of non-election.

 **4.6.2** Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by 1st August of its Hampshire County Football Association affiliation number for the forthcoming Season, failing which they can be fined £10. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the declaration and agreement form, of details of its points of contact (Manager, Organiser etc) and any other information required by the SCFL Committee in order to compete in the desired Competitions.

 **4.6.3** All Clubs must have public liability insurance cover of at least 10 million pounds (£10,000,000).

(In 2013, The FA introduced a rule making it mandatory for adult eleven-a-side teams to have personal accident insurance in place each season. Public liability insurance is also mandatory, and all clubs should carry a limit of indemnity of no less than £10,000,000 for any one occurrence)

**4.7**The SCFL have the responsibility and discretion to review a team’s involvement in the league at any point throughout the season, if for any reason the SCFL deem it necessary to remove a team it will be due to the above expectations not being met, or consistent issues that are not adequately dealt with either by the Church overseeing the team or the manager of the team.

**4.8** For any team joining or re-joining the league the SCFL have the right to withhold entry if they feel that a team is unable to fulfil all of the above requirements.

**4.9** SCFL expects a club, who are represented in the leagues by two teams or more, to have team names that are easy to differentiate. FA advice is to add ‘rovers’ or ‘united’ or a name that perhaps reflects more clearly the identity of the ‘2nd’ team.

**5. SCFL committee members and their responsibilities. Voting/election of committee members**

**5.1** The committee of the SCFL shall be as follows: Chairman – Secretary – Treasurer – Welfare Officer. As a committee these positions must be the minimum that are filled. **We also have a delegate position of administrator.**

**5.1.1** The SCFL Committee may appoint other committee positions, sub-committees and **delegates** such of their powers as they deem necessary. The decisions of all sub- committees/delegates shall be reported to the SCFL Committee for ratification. The SCFL Committee shall have power to deal only with matters within the Competition and not for any matters of misconduct that are under the jurisdiction of the Football Association or affiliated Association.

**5.1.2** All new SCFL committee members, sub-committee positions/delegates will be assigned a position for a probationary period, if applicable and voted in, that position will be made permanent when all committee members are in agreement.

**5.2** The role of a Committee member is to be able to balance the Football and the Christian direction of the league; therefore any proposed new committee members must be a Christian and regularly worshipping at their home Church. The SCFL will talk to any proposed new committee and sub-committee/delegate’s Church before officially making the position permanent.

**5.3** Each Member of the SCFL Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Meetings and have one vote only, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Member or to the Club so represented or where there may be a conflict of interest. (This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee).

 **5.3.1** In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

 **5.4** All decisions of the SCFL Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal.

 **5.5** Three Members of the SCFL Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the SCFL Committee.

 **5.6** The SCFL Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur amongst their number.

**5.7** A copy of the duly verified Balance Sheet, Statement of Accounts and Agenda shall be forwarded to each

Club at least seven days prior to the applicable meeting, and to the Hampshire County Football Association

**5.8** Voting will take place for the re-election and election of committee members every year during the AGM, the voting will be a hand vote at the ‘managers meeting’ at the end of every season.

**5.8.1** Election of a new committee member will require a reference from the potential committee members’ Church, written by a member of the Church leadership which will have been presented to the existing committee a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the ‘managers meeting’

**6. Meetings (Committee and Managers)**

**6.1** As previously stated all teams are expected to have a representative from their team at any SCFL meetings over the course of the season where applicable. When voting is needed, each club shall be entitled to one vote only.

**6.1.1** Any continuing Member club failing to be represented at the AGM without satisfactory reason being given may be fined £20, and may affect your membership within the SCFL.

**6.1.2** All fines and charges shall be paid within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification

**6.2** The committee will meet throughout a season, but specifically at the start of each new season at a time and place agreed by the committee members (called by the Chair).

The purpose of these meetings is to:

**6.2.1**. Receive reports of matters arising since the last meeting.

**6.2.2**. Ensure the general smooth running of the SCFL.

**6.2.3**. The meetings will also include the opportunity to review each team’s progress in fulfilling the team’s mission statement and there general upholding of league expectations.

**6.2.4.** Reviewing requests to join the league and requests for constitutional changes.

**6.2.5** To organise and finalise fixtures.

**6.2.6** To determine that the league is heading in the right direction both football wise and faith wise.

**7**. **Participation in the league/resignation from the league and Cup involvement.**

(Details what the club needs to do should a team decide to participate or resign their position in the SCFL)

**7.1** Each season, teams will receive an invitation from the SCFL committee to enter the league for the following season. Each team must respond by the end of March with their intention to continue playing the following season.

**7.1.1** During April/May/June the SCFL committee will assess all teams involvement as well as revising (if needed) any necessary FA and SCFL rules, then during the June AGM the constitution will be voted in. At which point all teams have a two week window to fill out and complete the declaration and agreement form. As well as sending in a mission statement/team objectives for the upcoming season.

**7.1.2** During the month of June all SCFL teams will be contacted via their given Church contact. And upon sufficient positive conversation, and confident that teams are accountable to the church as well as having the required Church representation (see ‘**4**’) teams will then be formally accepted into the SCFL.

**7.2** At this point fixtures will be produced and sent out no later than the first weekend in July

**7.3** Any teams wishing to withdraw from the league must give written notice to the committee by the beginning of June each season, early notice is paramount as this means admin for that particular team can be closed down, if a team does not respond to a league entry invitation the SCFL will assume they are not playing for the upcoming season.

**7.3.1** Any team looking to pull out of the SCFL once fixtures have been confirmed (or during the season itself) will waive their £75 team bond.

**7.4** As previously mention all finances must be paid and received before a team is allowed entry into the league or cup, failure to pay costs will result in either a team not being permitted entry into the competition or results to be reversed.

**8. Changes to the Club Constitution**

**8.1** Changes may be implemented to the SCFL constitution if approved by a *(two thirds)* majority vote obtained at any SCFL AGM meeting. Teams who wish to raise a point with the constitution and want the committee to look into editing or amending anything must raise any such point prior to the meeting taking place, in order that it can be discussed AGM.

**8.1.1** Any proposed/requested changes to the constitution will be considered and discussed accordingly by the committee and the team members at the AGM and then can only be agreed once a two thirds vote takes place

**9. SCFL Discipline points and Procedures**

**9.1** Instances of indiscipline will result in the SCFL committee discussing and considering any breach of the SCFL and FA constitution and communicate directly to any team or individuals who are involved (according to the club rules and code of conduct), taking account of any relevant evidence and then provide an appropriate course of action.

**9.1.1** The SCFL will have the responsibility and authority to issue a ‘3 warnings’ process to either a team or an individual, meaning that if the committee need to speak to a team/individual on more than 3 occasions (the first being an informal warning) SCFL have the right to remove (or fine) a team from the leagues or ban a player from playing in the leagues.

**9.1.2** It is at the SCFL’s discretion to contact the Church if and when they see fit, the aim of which is to build a rapport between the SCFL committee and Church to ascertain the next step for any indiscipline from a support point of view. Meaning we wish to support teams who have disciplinary issues and that is best done through regular contact with the Church they represent.

**9.2** FA rules will apply regarding yellow and red card situations. The FA is in full support and accordance regarding the SCFL’s policy of zero tolerance both in behaviour and language, language also including blaspheming on the pitch.

**9.2.1** Appeals will not be allowed for dissent or foul and abusive language.

**9.2.2** Any team naming an unregistered player or players who have been banned (in the match day squad) will automatically lose the fixture will have points deducted and the club will be fined £25 (as per FA rules)

**9.3** If a player is sent off more than once in a season, the FA will issue the player with the usual fine and correspondence however the SCFL also have the right to lengthen the ban of a player for second or third time depending on the severity of the sending off.

**9.4** Any Club failing to complete 75% of its fixtures in any season can be (unless the conditions are beyond their control) de-registered from membership the following season. This is decided by the SCFL committee with a 2/3’s vote.

**10. Match day rules, conditions of play, and times of kick-off, postponements and substitutes.**

**10.1** This combines both the FA code for match day league rules and the SCFL added expectations:

**10.1.1** Due to this being a church league, the league has a zero tolerance approach regarding bad language on the pitch, regardless of who it is directed at. This includes, as previously stated, things that may offend or come across as disrespectful to the Christian faith such as blasphemy. It is each team **managers/leaders** responsibility to ensure that the whole team prior to kick off is aware of the importance of zero tolerance in regards to blasphemy within the SCFL.

**10.1.2 The Sin bin FA ruling states that a player will be sin binned for 10 minutes. The players name will still be recorded. However 5 sin bins over the season and the player will receive a fine.

10.1.3 Sin bin is for dissent only. Not any other bookable offence.**

**10.2** Regarding Rolling Substitutes – In order to encourage participation for all ages and abilities, the league in co-operation with the FA operates a rolling substitute’s policy, enabling a substituted player to come back on later in the game. There is no limit on the number of substitutions that can be used.

**10.2.1** It is encouraged that if a player is on a caution (yellow card) or is struggling to control themselves that the manager takes it upon themselves to use the rolling subs rule and give the player in question time to ‘cool down’ to prevent any further discipline problems. **If as managers/leaders you can help the referee at any time this is encouraged.**

**10.2.2** In the event of a club playing in any match with less than 11 players they may be fined £5 for each missing player (SCFL committee discretion). A minimum of 8 players will constitute a team for a competition match. Regular failure to complete a fixture due to ‘lack of players’ or other reasons will be investigated by the SCFL Committee, potentially the team in question can be fined and the opposing team will be awarded with the 3 points.

**10.3** All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

**10.4** Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their grounds in a playable condition. All matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the SCFL Committee. If through any fault of the home team a match has to be replayed, the SCFL Committee shall have authority to order the venue to be changed.

**10.4.1** The SCFL Committee shall have authority to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for matches in the Competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground if needs be.

**10.4.2** Football Turf pitches (3G) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA’s Register of Football Turf pitches.

**10.5** The home Club is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming match arrangements.

**10.6** All matches shall have duration of 90 minutes unless a shorter time (not less than 60 minutes) is mutually arranged by the two captains in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves.

**10.7** The times of kick-off shall be 10.30am, unless an earlier (only) kick off is agreed by both teams prior to match day. **In the case of a postponed match with an earlier kick off time, the rearranged fixture date will still have an earlier kick off time unless stated by the home team.**

**10.7.1** Any Club failing to commence at the appointed time may be fined a sum not exceeding **£20** or be otherwise dealt with as the SCFL Committee may determine.

**10.7.2** Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

**10.7.3** All cup competitions have no extra time except for cup finals

**10.8** The home team must provide at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if the footballs are unsuitable. Goal nets must be used.

 **10.9** The half time interval shall be of 10 minutes duration, but it shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee.

 **10.10** The participating clubs taking part in the fixture shall identify a team captain designated with a captain’s armband who has a responsibility to offer support in the management of the on-field discipline of his team mates.

 **10.11** Prior to each match the participating teams and officials shall conduct sportingly and in the spirit of the league by participating in handshakes and/or ‘three cheers’ to the opposing team after the match.

**10.12** The home Club must communicate full details of the location, and access to, the ground as well as confirmation of the time of kick-off to the match officials and the manager/organiser of the opposing Club at latest by the Wednesday evening of the week of the match.

 **10.12.1** Both Clubs shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such details. If no communication is forthcoming from one club beyond the deadline of the Wednesday evening the opposing club can contact the SCFL committee, at which point contact will be attempted by the SCFL committee of the club in question, if no response the SCFL committee can award a win, as well as warning and/or fining the defaulting team.

**10.13** In addition to the match day rules, all teams are required to provide each referee with a copy of their team sheet before the game. It is also up to the home team to provide the result to the SCFL (either by email, text or the SCFL homepage or Facebook page) the details need to include the goal scorers and any yellow or red cards (for both teams). A team will be accountable if there are cases of blatant disregard for the SCFL rules by their referee. All correspondence is to be sent in immediately, and no later than the Wednesday of the following week.

**10.13.1** All scorecards should be sent automatically to the SCFL and FA contact so that all refereeing concerns can be picked up.

**10.13.2** The match result notification must be received within 2 days of the date played with all detail correctly completed. Both clubs shall notify the result of each match to the automated web service by 5pm the following day. The match result notification, correctly complete, shall be signed by a responsible member of the club. Failure to complete all of these actions will result in a fine of £15, regular failure will also be investigated and appropriate action taken by the SCFL committee.

**10.14** It is not the responsibility of any team member or manager to contact the referee post-match. Any issues regarding referee performance should be registered and then taken up directly with Andy Poole only.

 **10.15** If and when a 3rd fixture in the league takes place between two clubs the ‘home’ team will be responsible to book the pitch however the pitch fee and referee fee will be split between the two teams.

**10.16** Each team has to ensure **‘4.3’** (minimum of a named two Church based players) is being adhered to for each match day.

**(See section 17 – For more information on cup competitions)**

**11. Postponements, rescheduling of fixtures and forfeits

( Cup games take priority over league matches – See section 17 for more information)**

**11.1** Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture or where a fixture has been postponed for any reason must, without delay, give notice to the (Fixtures) Secretary, the Competition Referees Appointments Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials. Any Club failing to comply shall be dealt with by the SCFL Committee who may inflict a fine or a warning and potentially award points to the opposition upon investigation (and particularly if teams are postponing games regularly).

**11.2** In the event of a match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, the home team will advise the SCFL as soon as possible and the SCFL will suggest an alternative date for the match to be played in its entirety.

 **11.2.1** The SCFL committee shall have the power to order a double header to be played to assist with fixture congestion. In the event that a club fails to play a double header then the SCFL committee may inflict a fine, deduct points from the defaulting club, and award the points to the opponents. A double header is not one game with a potential 6 point win; it is two separate games with win totals of only 3 points (as per normal)

**11.3** The SCFL Committee shall review all matches abandoned in cases where it is due to the conduct of either or both Teams. When necessary the SCFL Committee shall have authority to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the SCFL Committee are satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) and/or supporters they shall be empowered to award the points for the match to the opponent. In cases where a match has been abandoned owing to the conduct of both teams and their Club member(s), the SCFL Committee shall rule all points for the match as void. No fine(s) can be applied by the SCFL committee for an abandoned match.

**11.4** As fixtures are known in September it is not acceptable for teams to postpone games due to ‘lack of players’ or other events such as weddings, work shifts or lacking student\* players, especially considering there is a maximum of 30 players per squad.

**11.5** The SCFL expect all teams to be organised enough to give opposition two weeks’ notice for a game they are unable to play in. If a request of postponement happens during the week of the upcoming fixture the SCFL committee may decline the request and offer forfeited points to the opposition.

**11.5.1** Teams can **forfeit** their points if they are unable to field a team and haven’t given sufficient time (**11.5**)to the opposition in notifying them. If a team knows that they are unable to field a team for the upcoming fixture they are to notify the opposition ASAP and at latest by the Wednesday evening of the week of the fixture. It is NOT up to the opposition’s discretion to accept a forfeit or choose a postponement.

**11.5.2** On a rare occasion that a team is unable to raise a team or are limited to signing players on for a fixture the SCFL committee will investigate the request for a postponement (the request to postpone needs to be sent to both the opposition and the SCFL committee) and will decide whether the fixture be postponed or forfeited, this will be done in conversation with the Church contact for the team.

**11.5.3** A forfeited match does not affect goal difference, and is simply awarded either as a home win or away win on the league updates.

**11.6** It is the responsibility of both managers to apply common sense when the weather is likely to mean a fixture is postponed, meaning the home manager needs to find an alternative pitch ASAP either prior to being told the pitch is unplayable or after being notified. When other avenues have been exhausted and all reasonable effort to provide a solution is not found and if the away team cannot also provide a solution then the game is rightly postponed due to weather. At which point all players from both teams and referee need to be notified.

**11.6.1** If an alternative is found, the referee will need to be informed of the changes of location, as will the referees secretary.

\*in the event a team is predominantly student based, all fixtures must be re-arranged around semester times, but this needs to be done at the beginning of the season. It is not acceptable for teams that are student based to not play fixtures during a certain month or holiday without prior arrangement with the opposition to postpone those games. As this affects other teams and their own availability, and potentially leads to a backlog of fixtures beyond the close of season date, which in turn could result in a fine/warning or removal of a team.

**12. Reporting results**

**12.1** The (Registration/Fixtures) Secretary must receive within 3 days of the date played, the result of each Competition match in the prescribed manner.

**12.1.2** This must include the forename(s) and surname of the team players (in block letters) and also the Referee marks out of 100\*, opposition marks out of 5\* and any other information required by the Competition.

**12.1.3** Failure to send in the result in the required time limit will incur a fine of £15 and/or the Club being warned and dealt with as the SCFL Committee decide.

 \*Scores less than 60 or 3 respectively is unacceptable.

 **12.2** Both Clubs shall notify the result of each match to the automated web service by 5pm on the day of the match. Clubs in default can be fined/warned

**12.3** The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by a responsible member of the Club. Failure to do so will result in a fine of £15 and/or a warning

**13. Referees**

**13.1** Registered Referees (and Assistant Referees where approved by the FA or County FA) for all matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the sanctioning Association(s).

**13.2** In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee the appointed senior Assistant Referee shall take charge and a substitute Assistant Referee appointed by the competing Teams. In cases where there are no officially appointed Assistant Referees, the Clubs shall agree upon a Referee. An individual thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered Referee. Individuals under the age of 16 must not participate either as a Referee or Assistant Referee in any open age competition.

 **13.2.1** Where Assistant Referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club Assistant Referee. Failure to do so will result in a fine of £5 being imposed on the defaulting Team.

 **13.2.2** The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final subject to either in the case of a ground of a Local Authority or the owners of a ground, the Representative of that body is the sole arbiter and whose decision must be accepted unless the ground is declared fit for play.

**13.2.3** A team can refuse to play a fixture if the FA appointed referee does not show up, there is no obligation to play the match as an official match by either team. However if a suitable non FA appointed ref is available and both teams agree then the match can go ahead as an official match.

**13.3** Subject to any limits/provisions laid down by the sanctioning Association, Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be paid a match fee and travel expenses as determined annually by the Hampshire FA.

 The Home Club shall pay the Officials their fees and/or expenses immediately after the match.

 **13.4** In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to expenses only. Where a match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that defaulting Club shall be ordered to pay the Officials, if they attend the ground, their full fee and expenses.

 **13.5** A Referee not keeping his or her engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to their non-appearance, may be reported to the Association with which he or she is registered.

**13.6** Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed by The Football Association, award marks to the Referee for each match and the name of the Referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed Form provided. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined or dealt with as the SCFL Committee shall determine. (see **12.1.2**)

**13.6.1** The Competition shall keep a record of the markings and, on the Form provided by the prescribed date each season, shall submit a summary to The Football Association/County Association.

 **13.7** The Referee shall submit a report Form, supplied by the Competition, giving the result of the match, the number of players in each team and the time of kick-off to the (Registration) Secretary within two days of the match.

**13.8** Referees and Assistant Referees shall be supplied, each Season, with a copy of the Competition Rules free of charge.

 **13.9** Referees and Assistant Referees shall have undertaken a Respect briefing offered by the FA/County FA or the League.

**14. Signing on players (pre-season and during the season) changing teams and player legibility.**

**14.1** As a league we pride ourselves on having teams represent the SCFL who are able to uphold the league ethos and by doing so create a culture within each team in which the Christian faith can be shared, the SCFL feel this is best done through relationship and continuity, with this in mind and supported by the FA, the SCFL c have placed certain restrictions on the signing on of players.

**14.1.1** Over the course of the season a team can only sign on a maximum of 30 players. In the past not only has multiple player sign on caused controversy but also provided teams with an unfair advantage. Couple this with our aim as a league and the ethos of the league we feel that this restriction should give a fairer playing field for all teams involved.

**14.1.2** If a team needs to de-register players (injuries, moving away etc.) ) in order to keep within the 30 man squad limit, they can do so by de-registering a maximum of three players over the season. Meaning technically by the end of a season a team can have signed on 33 players.

**14.1.3** Any players under the age of 16 are ineligible to play in the SCFL, a player needs to be 16+. In the event of a Club having an under 18, one of the management/leaders of the team must have a DBS and must be present at all games that the under 18 is playing in. **If a team has an under 18 in the squad they must notify the SCFL Committee as soon as the player is signed on.

14.1.4 If you have an existing DBS with the FA you will not need to apply for another, likewise if you an existing DBS you can transfer your DBS over with the DBS. If however you need to apply for a new DBS with the FA it will cost upward of £60. For further information on DBS please visit -** [**https://www.onlinedisclosures.co.uk/already-using-online-disclosures/the-fa/**](https://www.onlinedisclosures.co.uk/already-using-online-disclosures/the-fa/)

 A registered playing member of a Club is one who, being in all other respects eligible has:-

 **14.2** Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form, countersigned by an Officer of the Club, and who has been registered with the SCFL registration secretaries, a minimum of 2 days (Thursday Midday latest) prior to playing and whose completed registration form has been acknowledged by the SCFL with confirmation prior to the player being eligible to play. Failure to send players registration through within the given timescales will result in the any fixtures involving that player to be reversed and a fine of £25 for the club.

 **14.2.1** Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing, countersigned by an Officer of the Club and witnessed by an Officer of the opposing Club as well as a time stamp and signature of the referee. This then needs to be submitted to the registration secretary within two days (by Tuesday) subsequent to the match. The player shall not again play until the SCFL is in possession of the completed counterfoil. A maximum of 2 players may be registered in this way. Failure to send a players registration through within the given timescales will result in the any fixtures involving that player to be reversed and a fine of £25 for the club.

**14.2.2** Registration forms can be scanned, an image of, written, and sent as an attachment to the registrations secretary via email. Postal copies are accepted by we encourage all teams to use electronic modes of communication.

**14.2.3** In the interest of fairness and in keeping with the spirit of the league, in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding match as well as cup finals and playoff matches, all teams are unable to register more than 1 player in the run up to that fixture or on the match day itself.

**14.2.4** The SCFL Committee shall decide all registration disputes and requests.

 **14.3** A team has up until the weekend before the season starts to sign on a minimum of 11 players prior to their first fixture. Failure to send a minimum of 11 players registrations through within the given timescale will result in the result being reversed, and the opposition will be rewarded a default win of 2-0 as well as a £10 fine for the club. .

**14.4** A team that is represented by two clubs has in the past used ‘A’ team players in their ‘B’ team’s fixtures; this is not permitted and will result in a default result of 2-0 in favour of the opposition. Registration of players to specific teams should mean this doesn’t happen.

**14.5** If a player has played for one team in the SCFL and wishes to play for another team that player must first be de-registered by his first team and registered by his new team. Only when the SCFL committee has confirmed de-registration and registration can that player then play for his new team.

It shall be a breach of Rule for a player to:-

**14.5.1** Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.

**14.5.2** Submit a signed registration form for registration that the player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

 **14.5.3** The SCFL Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any player or may fine any player, at their discretion who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities

**14.5.4** The SCFL Committee shall have power to make application to refuse or cancel the registration of any player charged and found guilty of undesirable conduct subject to the right of appeal to the FA or the relevant County Football Association. Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated proven misconduct, which may deter a participant from being involved in this Competition.

**14.6** A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played, and shall produce such records upon demand by the SCFL Committee

**14.6.1** A register containing the names of all players registered for each Club, with the date of registration, shall be kept securely by the SCFL, this information is protected by the data protection and will not be shared unless specific consent is given. Player registrations are valid for one Season only.

 **14.7** Any team playing an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player or players shall have the points gained in the match deducted from its total and **will be fined £25** and dealt with at the discretion of the SCFL Committee.

 **14.7.1** In addition the team may have 3 points deducted from its total at the discretion of the SCFL Committee and may be dealt with in any further manner which is thought to be fit.

 **14.7.2** The Management Committee may, at its discretion, award the points available in the match in question to the opponents, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

**15. DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP, relegation and promotion**

**15.1** Team rankings within the Competition will be decided by points with three points to be awarded for a win and one point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners. Matches must not be played for double points.

**15.1.1** In circumstances where two or more teams are equal on points team rankings shall be determined by goal difference where the goals scored against by each team shall be deducted from the goals scored by that team and the largest positive difference shall be placed the highest. In the event of the goal difference being equal the highest placed team shall be the team which has scored the most goals. In the event that two or more teams have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals then the highest placed team shall be the team which has won the most matches.

**15.1.2** In the event of the two teams still being equal the team which has the better playing record against the other team in their head to head Competition matches during the Season will be the highest placed team.

**15.1.3** If the records of two or more teams are still equal and it is necessary for any reason to determine the position of each then the teams affected shall play a deciding match or matches as determined by the SCFL Committee.

**15.2** Automatic promotion and relegation shall be applied for the first placed and last placed teams in each Division, regardless of whether other teams have withdrawn from playing in the upcoming season. Meaning if you finish bottom of a division you are to be relegated.

**15.2.1** If there are 6 or more teams in a division there will be 2 teams promoted and 2 teams relegated as long as there are 6 or more teams in the leagues receiving these teams. If there is less than 6 teams there will just be one team promoted or relegated.

**15.2.2** Where applicable there may also be a **playoff** fixture between the 2nd / 3rd to bottom team in the division above and the 2nd / 3rd placed team in the division below to determine whether there is a 2nd or 3rd team promoted or not. Playoffs may be used or refused if the SCFL committee are aware of teams intending to leave the SCFL or intending to join for the following season.

**15.2.3** If a promotion winning team decides not to continue participating in the upcoming season or are removed from the league, the 2nd or 3rd placed team (as determined by size of divisions) will receive automatic promotion. These decisions will be made by the SCFL committee, and is also dependent on new teams joining or more than one team leaving.

 **15.3** In the event of a team not completing 75% of its fixtures for the season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting team shall be removed from the Competition table.

**16. Club Colours and Club name**

**16.1** Every Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the Secretary by 1st August who shall decide as to their suitability.

**16.1.1** Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from other players and the referee.

**16.1.2** No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.

**16.1.3** Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify the colours in which they will play to its opponents at least 3 days before the match.

**16.2** If, in the opinion of the referee, two Clubs have the same or similar colours, the away team shall make the change. Any team not having a change of colours or delaying the kick-off by not having a change shall be fined £10.

**16.3** The Secretary of the Competition may request shirts to be submitted if complaints are received as to lack of distinguishing colours, and the SCFL Committee may refuse to permit any shirts or shorts as they think fit. Shirts must be numbered.

**16.4** Any Club wishing to change its name and/or colours must obtain permission from its affiliated County Association and from the SCFL Committee.

**17. Key dates and procedures during playing season.**

**17.1** The Annual General Meeting shall determine the date for the commencement of the season in accordance with Football Association Rules. The SCFL will aim to organise team’s first fixtures to be played the first week in September. Original fixtures arranged by the (Fixtures) Secretary, to be confirmed no later than 1st Saturday in July.

**17.1.1** The SCFL season will finish on the last week of April each year; all fixtures need to have been played, failure to fulfil fixtures before the end of April will result in a warning (either informal or formal depending on previous warnings).

**17.2** If a team has failed to fulfil a number of fixtures by the end of April, it is the SCFL’s discretion to fine and/or remove a team for the following season.

**17.3** All cup fixtures take priority over league fixtures, meaning that a team must arrange a cup match first as a matter of importance as to not clash with the next round draw and hold up the progress of the cup stages.

**17.4** The SCFL will aim to have all cup finals played in the last week of April or 1st week of May.

**17.4.1** Semi-finals of cups – Referees and assistants to be split between the two teams represented. The Final will be organised by the SCFL committee.

**17.5** At the end of every season the SCFL will endeavour to run a 5/6 aside football competition, teams have no obligation to be a part of this competition however we ask that the SCGL committee are made aware of teams intentions to play in the competition or not.

**18. Protests and complaints**

**18.1** The SCFL committee will only deal with protests and complaints instigated by the Manager/Organiser of the team, no protest or complaint given by a player will be acted upon

**18.2** All questions of eligibility, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the SCFL Committee.

 **18.3** Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be entertained by the SCFL Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match. Any Club lodging such protest and not proceeding with it shall be deemed guilty of a breach of this Rule and shall be dealt with by the SCFL Committee.

 **18.3.1** Except in cases where the SCFL Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full details of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged in duplicate with the Secretary within 3 days (excluding Sundays) of the match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the SCFL Committee. A Member of the SCFL Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.

 **18.3.2** Any dispute occurring between Clubs in the Competition shall be referred for determination by the SCFL Committee whose decision shall be binding upon all parties.

 **18.3.3** No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the SCFL Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the SCFL Secretary a sum of £10. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The SCFL committee shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the enquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties.

 **18.3.4** All parties to a protest or complaint must receive a copy of the submission and must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement at least 7 days prior to the protest or complaint being heard.

(i) All parties must have received 14 days’ notice of the Hearing should they be instructed to attend.

(ii) Should a Club elect to state its case in person then they should forward a deposit of £10 and indicate such when forwarding the written response.

**18.4** Within 14 days of the posting of written notification of any decision of the SCFL Committee, a Club, Official or Player against whom action is taken may appeal against such decision by lodging details in duplicate with the Secretary of The Hampshire Football Association, including a fee of £50, for adjudication of a Board of Appeal. The grounds of appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules. The Board of Appeal may order the appeal fee to be forfeited and shall decide by whom the costs of the appeal shall be borne. The decision of the Board of Appeal is final and binding on all parties concerned.

**18.4.1** No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an Annual or Special General Meeting unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

 **19. Declaration and agreement**

**A signed copy of this constitution has to be handed in to the SCFL before the start of June.**

**19.1** By signing and returning this constitution to the SCFL committee it signals your team’s intent to uphold all areas of the constitution that you have support and involvement from your Church, that you are in the financial position to have covered all costs involved and that you fully understand and support the objectives and ethos of the SCFL.

**Your team name**…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Team management/setup and named Christian players (specify name and role within the team - see ‘4.3’)

**Managers/Team Organiser’s name(s)**:…………………..………………………………………………..……………………………..………….

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**Home Church based player 1 (Name and contact details)**……………………………………………………………………….…………

**Church based player 2\*(Name and contact details)**……………………………………………………………………………………………

**Church based player 3\*(Name and contact details)**……………………………………………………………………………………………

**(\*These players can be someone who attends a different Church to that of the Home Church, however the name of the Church, a contact number and the position of someone in a leadership role within that Church must also be provided)**

**Additional Church based players – If applicable**………………………………………………………………………………………………..

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**Church leaders contact details (this must be someone not involved in the team from the Church)**

**Name of Church Leader**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….……..

**Position held in Church**……………………………………….……………………………………………………………………………………………...

**Contact details (Phone and Email)**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Address**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

 **Any alteration of the above details and contacts must be notified to the Hampshire County Football Association(s) to which the Club is affiliated and to the SCFL Committee.**

**(Note: The spaces above are intended for the inclusion of the signatures and addresses of officers and members).**