



A summary of league rules for arranging, playing & recording fixtures

When reading this document please remember that the league is a volunteer organisation with limited staff and that the rules have been put in place to cover a large amount of teams and clubs. Rules are highlighted for **HDYFL** / **SCW&FL** where they differ and all information supplied is for guidance and could be subject to change.

Important things to bear in mind:

Every weekend should be considered as a potential fixture (bar the festive break). The leagues will endeavour to provide as much football as possible and have to cater for squads of all sizes. Therefore, when planning your season you should account for the possibility of matches on any given weekend.

Fixtures are determined by Full Time which is an algorithm devised by the FA. All teams, venues and dates are input at the start of the season and the fixtures are created automatically. There is very little human intervention hence the odd anomaly may occur.

The leagues have set start and finish dates which can't be over-run. This is due to cup final weekends and also to avoid overlapping the cricket season. Adverse weather which can cause postponed fixtures can have a dramatic affect on the season hence the need to complete as many fixtures as soon as possible.

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Arranging a fixture

If you are the **home team** you will need to provide your opposition with all the information needed for them to find your pitch and arrive in good time for your game. It is the responsibility of the home team to ensure the following:

- The pitch is marked out to the correct size and fit to play on.
- Goals are the correct size and nets are secured
- Corner flags are in place
- A respect line is in place (ideally a respect banner to cordon off the spectator area although a line of cones is also acceptable).
- 2 match balls (of the correct size)

Best practice: It is your responsibility to preserve the pitches for the duration of the season so in adverse weather conditions it's suggested you don't use the playing surface for warm ups (that could potentially damage the pitch)

Contacting your opposition when you are the home game

Details of each fixture can be found on Full Time and an email will be sent out each week to confirm upcoming games. Notice should be given as follows:

HDYFL – You should contact your opposition and referee, giving them at least 4 days notice. Ideally this should be by phone (all the details will be on the Full Time email and can also be found on the league's website www.hdyfl.net) then followed up by email – There are documents available for all our venues which can be emailed.

SCW&GFL – You should contact your opposition and referee, giving them at least 4 days notice. Initially this should be by email to the Fixtures secretary with the league age group rep CCed in. Details can be found on Full Time and once the fixture has been updated a mail will be sent to you from Full Time with further contact details. There are documents available for all our venues which can be emailed.

Best practice – Please don't assume that emails get delivered and always ask for confirmation of safe receipt. If you haven't heard back from your opposition it is your responsibility to contact them (or the league).

Being contacted for an away game

Your opposition should contact you at least 4 days in advance of all fixtures and include directions, kick off times and contact details. If this is not the case then you should attempt to make contact with them by phone. If this fails contact your Club Secretary who will inform the league.

Best practice – Be proactive and don't assume a game is off just because you haven't received confirmation from your opposition.

IMPORTANT - In times of adverse weather or when there's a risk your home pitch may not be playable, be proactive and liaise with your opposition about the possibility of reversing the fixture when you first contact them.

Postponing a game:

Every effort should be made to complete each fixture as postponing games jeopardises completing the season within the prescribed timeframe.

Postponing a game due to adverse weather/unplayable pitch

Whilst you should always try to complete each fixture you also have a responsibility for your player's safety and the preservation of the pitches that the club hires. In times of bad weather where pitches are waterlogged or frozen an element of common sense should prevail. Most of our home pitches are owned by Horsham District Council and they will advise if the pitches are playable or not. This is a good benchmark for other pitches such as Leechpool Lane and YMCA although they will advise us independently if there are issues.

In the instance where a pitch is deemed unplayable you should do the following:

- Advise your opposition as promptly as possible
- Liaise with them to see if the fixture can be reversed (This is a league rule so should be adhered to wherever possible)
- Advise your appointed referee
- Advise the league (if postponed or the fixture has been reversed)

Best practice – If you are in any doubt about the state of your pitch, an early inspection is suggested, especially if prone to freezing. Keep your opposition advised at all times.

Postponing a game due to a school event

There are strict rules in place and the league will only consider postponing a fixture on the following basis:

- It is a bona fide curriculum based school event (such as field trip or residential event) and proof should be submitted such as details of the event on a school letterhead and from the head teacher.
- The number of players attending the event is sufficient to render the squad too small to field a team (Where one or two players are missing the league will deem there to be enough players to fulfil the fixture)
- At least 28 days notice is given to the league

HDYFL rules – The following rulings and charges will apply:

- Where 28 days notice is given but no evidence of a school event is submitted no club fine will be levied although the fixture may not be rescheduled and the points may be awarded to the opposition.
- Where less than 28 days notice is given, the club will be fined, the points awarded to the opposition and the game will not be rescheduled
- Where 28 days notice and adequate proof provided, the fixture will be rescheduled.

SCW&GFL rules – Teams are allowed one unfulfilled fixture per season although they would lose the points – No fine would be issued to the club. Subsequent unfulfilled, scheduled fixtures would be subject to a club fine. See FAQs documents in this pack for further information.

Good practice – Ask parents in advance for information about any school events. Where possible, arrange with your opposition to bring games forward to fulfil the fixture

Postponing a game at half term or other holiday/event

Once the league has published the fixtures for the season it's very difficult to change them. With many teams to cater for, the knock on effect of making changes would be immense and could potentially open the floodgates and jeopardise the season being completed.

If you have a small squad and suspect that an event or holiday will impact dramatically on your playing numbers the following options are suggested:

- Contact your players parents and collate information about dates for the coming season.
- If there's a date where you will struggle to field a team advise the league BEFORE the fixtures are released – this should be via your club secretary
- There's no guarantee you'll be given a free weekend upon request – However, all games can be brought forward. In any instance where you will struggle (such as half term), contact your opposition and arrange to play the game earlier in the season if possible.
- Please remember, the league will only consider postponing a game if the squad is seriously impeded by lack of numbers and not when just one or two players are missing.

Note – Games can only be bought forward, not played later.

Recording a game

After each fixture, the scores should be submitted by text (reply to the automated text you will receive) and further details completed on-line using the Full Time website.

- Reply to texts within 48 hours of the game
- Complete the Full Time report within 72 hours after the game

You will be asked to provide the score, marks for the referee, respect score and information about the pitch. You should also provide statistics for players that started and were used as a substitute (there are other fields which are not mandatory and can be used for your own records).

Referees marks

You will be asked to provide marks for the referee and when doing so please remember they are volunteers just like you. The odd error is bound to happen and the score you give them should reflect their overall performance and not be based on an individual error. If the marks you give them are lower than 60% you may be asked to submit a report explaining why the mark so low. If this is the case, take time to consider the events and do not resort to personal criticism. If they were genuinely not up to the task and out of their depth then the league should be informed.

However, this is not the place to report on individual decisions such as penalties, free kicks or additional time played that affected the result of the game.

Recording problems and incidents

If you are unhappy with any behaviour that violates league rules or the FA's respect guidelines at your fixture and feel it appropriate to report any incidents, there is a prescribed way to do this:

When completing your match report on Full Time, use the comments area to briefly describe anything that concerned you or any incidents that occurred. This is very important as without this information the league cannot act. Furthermore, if your opposition submits a report and you have omitted this information it can limit your options.

Typical situations that should be reported include:

- Abusive or confrontational behaviour by coaches or spectators
- Entering the pitch without referee consent
- Abusive language/actions to the referee
- Over-zealous coaching
- Continual rule infringements

For more serious incidents such as physical abuse, threats of violence, racism or discrimination you should contact your Club Secretary/CWO immediately.

On a positive note – Every weekend across the Horsham District, thousands of children enjoy playing football in a safe, encouraging and positive environment and this is thanks to the efforts of the leagues and club volunteers alike. If you have had a positive experience and want to record it use the comments section on Full Time and share it with the league.