



JUNIOR FOOTBALL GUIDELINES

2022-23 SEASON



JUNIOR FOOTBALL | UNDER 14-17

From the 2022-23 season, a standardised set of Junior Football Rules will be introduced to ensure a consistent playing format is followed throughout Wales. Developing a standardised set of rules specific to junior football will help to:

- Make it simpler for players, coaches, clubs, leagues and parents to better understand the rules which are consistent across the Country
- Retain players, make the game more accessible for players of all abilities and make football a more appealing sports for players and parents.
- Ensure rules are age appropriate

The following rules are to be Implemented as guidance for the 2022-23 season, with a mandatory requirement for Junior Leagues to comply from the 2023-24 season.

1. PLAYING FORMAT

- 1.1. The Playing Format below is to be implemented as guidance for the 2022-23 season and will be mandatory for all Leagues to adopt from the 2023-24 season.

| Age Group | Playing Format | Max number of players in match day squad | Ball Size | Squad Size Cap | Match Duration |
|-----------|----------------|--|-----------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Under 14 | 11 v 11 | 18 | 5 | 20 players | 70 mins (35 min halves) |
| Under 15 | 11 v 11 | 18 | 5 | 20 players | 80 mins (40 min halves) |
| Under 16 | 11 v 11 | 18 | 5 | 20 players | 80 mins (40 min halves) |
| Under 17 | 11 v 11 | 18 | 5 | 20 players | 80 mins (40 min halves) |

- 1.2 From the 2023-24 season, where two-year age bands apply, the playing format must reflect the youngest age group of players. For example, from the 2023-24 season, an under 14 fixture consisting of under 13 players must play the 9v9 format and not 11v11.

2. AGE GROUPS

- 2.1. To align with the Small sided football regulations, players are permitted to play a year group up. Age groupings must be a minimum of a one academic year and a maximum of two academic years (FAW rule 88.2).
- 2.1.1 For the purposes of age groupings, an Academic year begins on the 1st September and ends on the 31st August of the following year. Academic year one (1) is the year in which a player reaches his / her 6th birthday.



2.1.2 Clubs are encouraged, if practically possible, to run single age group teams as this will help us grow the game and band players together who, in the main, are of similar age, size and football ability. It is recognised, however, that this may not be possible due to limited player numbers.

2.1.3 If leagues run single age band divisions, we would encourage players to play within their relevant age group, however, we do want players participating within a suitable environment and therefore, there are circumstances when an individual playing up an age group should be considered by the club:

- If a player attends an FAW Licenced Academy at Under 8 – Under 11 only, or an FAW Trust Girls Development Centre (any junior age group).
- Physical attributes – if the player continually dominates the opposition physically
- If player has existing permission to play up one year by the relevant League.
- If a club does not have a team at a specific age band, players are eligible to play one year up in accordance with regulation 2.1.

2.1.4 If a Junior League feels that based on a player's ability or physicality, he or she should be playing down one-year group, permission to play down must be gained annually in accordance with FAW Rule 88.

2.1.5 Where clubs operate single age bands, entire teams are not ordinarily permitted to move up and age group or have a large number of their players move up on mass. This approach could benefit some players but may also disadvantage others within a team. If a Club feels it would be of benefit for an individual to play up an age group, permission must be requested annually to the relevant League Secretary detailing the reasoning. The League Secretary will then report to the relevant Area Association with the League's recommendation if the request should be approved or rejected.

2.2 From the 2022-23 season, the Junior Football age bandings have been extended to Under 17 (academic year 12).

2.3 A Junior player is permitted to play in the age group directly one year above. The age groups that a player is eligible to play in are set out in the table below:

| Age as of August 31 st of the relevant playing season | Academic year | Eligible age groups | Format |
|--|---------------|---------------------|--------|
| 13 | 9 | Under 14 | 11v11 |
| | | Under 15 | 11v11 |
| 14 | 10 | Under 15 | 11v11 |
| | | Under 16 | 11v11 |
| 15 | 11 | Under 16 | 11v11 |
| | | Under 17 | 11v11 |
| 16 | 12 | Under 17 & Open age | 11v11 |



- 2.4. Junior Leagues will have discretion on whether to introduce an under 17 league programme. This age group is not a mandatory requirement.
- 2.5. On their 16th birthday, a player will be permitted to play open age football for the same registered club. Therefore, a player on their 16th birthday would have permission to play in both junior, youth and senior matches.

3. Football size

3.1 The ball size for all junior football must be size 5.

4. Match Duration

4.1. Match duration for each age group is set out in the table below:

| Age Group | Match Duration |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Under 14 | 70 minutes (35 minute halves) |
| Under 15 | 80 minutes (40 minute halves) |
| Under 16 | 80 minutes (40 minute halves) |
| Under 17 | 80 minutes (40 minute halves) |
| Under 18 and above | 90 minutes (45 minute halves) |

5. Squad size

5.1 To help provide adequate playing opportunities, teams can have a match day squad cap of up to 18 players, all of whom are eligible to play (teams can use all 7 substitutions). Teams are capped at signing 20 players per squad.

6. Playing time

6.1 All players in the match day squad should have a minimum of 50% playing time when participating in matches.

7. Substitutions

7.1 There is no limitation on the number of substitutions allowed during a match. Rolling substitutions are allowed throughout meaning players may re-enter the game after being substituted.

8. Smoking

8.1 Smoking is banned from the side-lines at all training and matches. This includes e-cigarettes.

9. IFAB Laws of the game

9.1 Expect for the regulations detailed above, the '[IFAB Laws of the Game document](#)' must be followed.

