CAMBRIDGE CUP

RULES OF COMPETITION

24-26th October 2026

John Kerkhof Park, Cambridge NZ

1. STRUCTURE OF COMPETITION 4

1.1 COMPETITION FORMAT 4
1.2 FINAL PLACINGS 5
1.3 GROUP PLAY-OFFS AND GRAND FINALS 5

2 MATCH POINTS 5

3 PLAYER REGISTRATION 5

3.1 TEAM SHEETS 5
3.2 AGE CATEGORIES 6
3.3 ELIGIBILITY 7
3.4 INCOMPLETE SQUAD COMPLIMENTS 7

4 TOURNAMENT RULES 8

4.1 PLAYER UNIFORMS 8
4.2 MATCH BALLS 8
4.3 REFEREES 8
4.4 ASSISTANT REFEREES (AR) 8
4.5 TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS 9
4.6 TECHNICAL AREAS 9
4.7 SCORE SIGNOFF 10

5 GAMES FORMAT 10

5.1 FORFEIT 10
5.2 INJURY TIME 10
5.3 INTERCHANGE OF PLAYERS 10
5.4 ROUND GAMES 10
5.5 PLAY-OFFS FORMAT 11

6 EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS 11

7 OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION 11

7.1 RED AND YELLOW CARD OFFENCES 11
7.2 CROWD BEHAVIOUR 11
7.3 BLOOD RULE 12
7.4 JEWELLERY 12
7.5 FIRST AID 13

7.6 ALCOHOL AND SMOKING 13

8 CODES OF CONDUCT 13

8.1 PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT 14
8.2 PARENT AND SUPPORTERS' CODE OF CONDUCT 14
8.3 TEAM OFFICIALS' CODE OF CONDUCT 15

1. STRUCTURE OF COMPETITION

1.1 COMPETITION FORMAT

	Mixed U8	Mixed U9-U10	Mixed U11-U12	Mixed U13-U17	Girls U9-U10	Girls U11-U12	Girls U13-U17
Numbers	5v5	7v7	9v9	11v11	7v7	9v9	11v11
Field size (approx.)	35m x 25m	1/4 pitch 50m x 32m	1/2 pitch 64m x 50m	Full pitch	1/4 pitch 50m x 32m	1/2 pitch 64m x 50m	Full pitch
Goal size	3m x 2m	4m x 2m	5m x 2m	7m x 2m	4m x 2m	5m x 2m	7m x 2m
Ball Size	3	4	4	5	4	4	5
Playing Time (Rounds and Finals)	2 x 20 min	2 x 20 min	2 x 25 min	2 x 25 min	2 x 20 min	2 x 25 min	2 x 25 min
Maximum players on bench	5	5	5	7	5	5	7
Offside	**No**	**Yes (Retreating line)**	**Yes (half way line)**	**Yes (half way line)**	**Yes (Retreating line)**	**Yes (half way line)**	**Yes (half way line)**
Substitute		Interchange					
Direct Free Kicks	**No**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**
Penalty Kicks	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Format		Group games and play-offs					

The tournament follows the standard NRF league format, in line with regional playing rules.

All rules as noted under the FIFA Laws of the Game. Links can be found below.
FIFA Laws of the Game.

Tournament Management reserves the right to modify the playing conditions above to facilitate a suitable competition for a particular age group.

1.2 FINAL PLACINGS

Final placing of teams after pool games is decided by applying the following:

1. Team with the most points
2. Best Goal Difference
3. Most Goals For
4. Least Goals Against
5. Team with the most wins

If all of the above is equal, then the following will occur:

1. The result of the game between the two equal teams
2. If the teams still cannot be separated, a penalty shoot-out in accordance with FIFA regulations will be used to decide the placings.

1.3 GROUP PLAY-OFFS AND GRAND FINALS

In the event of the Play Offs and/or Grand Final being drawn at full time, a penalty shoot out will be conducted in accordance with FIFA regulations.

2 MATCH POINTS

Match Points are awarded as follows:

- Win 3 points
- Draw 1 point
- Loss 0 points
- Forfeit 3 points and 3-0 to Opposing Side

3 PLAYER REGISTRATION

3.1 TEAM SHEETS

All players need to be registered via the Cup Manager online system which can be accessed under the Team Login menu on the Cambridge Cup website https://cambridgecup.nz/en

Registrations must now be completed by the players parent/guardian and not by the team manager. Team Managers

are responsible to ensure that each player has registered.

All team sheets must be completed online before your first game. Please ensure all players have with them proof of identification that includes a photo and date of birth in case they are ever required to provide it.

Each player is required to have a number on their playing shirt that matches up with the team sheet.

If you are asked to provide proof of a players age you must do so with appropriate documentation that can be in the form of NZ ID card, school ID, passport, birth certificate or other suitable photo ID document.

If the opposing team requests for one of your players to prove their age and you cannot produce reasonable proof, the player in question will not be allowed to participate in that game. The required proof will be at the discretion of tournament management.

For all the divisions each squad can only have a maximum number players on the bench as stated above and only players listed on the team sheet will be allowed to play.

3.2 AGE CATEGORIES

The age categories and requirements for the tournament are:

- Under 8 Born in 2018
- Under 9 Born in 2017
- Under 10 Born in 2016
- Under 11 Born in 2015
- Under 12 Born in 2014
- Under 13 Born in 2013
- Under 14 Born in 2012
- Under 15 Born in 2011
- Under 17 Born in 2010-2009

Any other players who provide written authorisation from their local federation can be offered dispensation to play in a younger age group. Should the local federation not be able to provide written confirmation, a letter from the club president can be considered.

Any teams that are found to be providing incorrect documentation or purposely playing older players to gain an unfair advantage will receive a 0-3 loss for any games the older players participated in. The ineligible players will also be disqualified from the tournament.

Repeated offending teams will be disqualified and affect the participation of their other club's teams at future events at the discretion of tournament management.

3.3 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in the tournament players must:

- Comply with the age eligibility as per section 3.2
- Be registered on an allocated team sheet for a participating team
- Ensure that the team has arranged full payment.
- Failure to comply with the eligibility criteria may result in the whole team being disqualified and expelled from competition.

3.4 INCOMPLETE SQUAD COMPLIMENTS

Squads with incomplete compliments are still required to participate in their scheduled matches. The opposition team does not have to reduce their numbers accordingly however can choose to do so.

Players from younger age groups can play up an age group in order to lessen this problem.
Players from another team that participates in the same age group cannot be used.

4 TOURNAMENT RULES

4.1 PLAYER UNIFORMS

Each player is required to have playing shirts, preferably with numbers that match up with the team sheet.

Should uniform colours clash, it is the responsibility of the away team to wear an alternate colour. All first named teams in the fixture will be deemed the "Home" team and therefore will play in their colours. It is the responsibility of the away team to change into their strip, if there is still a clash, bibs will need to be used by the away team. Teams can use their own bibs or see the ground marshal in your area to obtain tournament bibs.

Goalkeepers shall wear any colour provided it does not clash with either team's outfield players.

4.2 MATCH BALLS

Match balls will be provided. Only official match balls can be used for matches. The ball must be approved by the referee at the commencement of the match or at the re-start of every play if the ball is changed at any time.

- Size 3 balls will be used for U8
- Size 4 balls will be used for U9, U10, U11, U12's
- Size 5 balls will be used for U13,U14, U15, U17's

4.3 REFEREES

Qualified referees will be provided and appointed. All the decisions of the match referee are final and binding as far as the result of a match is concerned, and no protest can be lodged.

Under no circumstances are supporters allowed to approach, question or criticise referees during the tournament.

Any misconduct towards referees will not be tolerated and may result in teams losing points or being disqualified from the tournament and may affect future participation of teams from the same club. Any serious incidents will also be reported to NZF for extra action to be taken.

4.4 ASSISTANT REFEREES (AR)

Qualified referees may be appointed as Assistant Referees in final matches if available. During the group stages, assistant referees will not be provided and the teams will be required to allocate an AR for 11v11 games only.

4.5 Tournament officials

There will be Tournament Officials wearing branded apparel located on all fields to enable easy identification in case information needs to be relayed or clarification needs to be provided to coaches, parents or referees.

Any higher-level issues can be directed towards the Information Desk.

We ask all players, coaches, supporters and parents to respect and work with event officials to ensure a better experience for all involved in the tournament. Players, officials and supporters found to be displaying aggressive or abusive behaviour towards Tournament Officials may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.6 Technical areas

All fields will have clearly designated technical areas. These areas will be clearly identifiable by permanent or temporary fencing and/or ropes as well as signs.

Each team will only be permitted to have coaches, team managers and team officials enter the Technical Areas for their respective game.

Spectators are not permitted to enter the technical area at any time and will have full view of the games from behind the ropes or fences. Spectators will be required to stand clear of clearly marked out technical areas and must comply with any requests by the referee or Tournament staff in regards to this. If unsure of where the technical area is located below, approach the closest staff member.

When permitted players or officials enter the technical areas, they may only do so via the clearly designated gates.

These rules are to ensure the game is able to proceed without obstruction and in a safe environment for players, team officials and referees. Please ask your supporters to respect the Technical Areas and all officials.

4.7 SCORE SIGNOFF

Immediately at the conclusion for each game a tournament official will obtain the official score from the referee.

The official will require the coach or team manager from each team to sign off the game card before the score of the game is submitted.

Coaches are reminded not to leave the field without signing off the game card to make the score official.

5 GAMES FORMAT

5.1 FORFEIT

If a team is not on their allocated pitch ready to start, five minutes after their scheduled kick off time, they will forfeit the game, and a 3-0 loss will be listed as the official result for that particular game.

5.2 INJURY TIME

Generally, injury time will not apply however the referee and tournament officials reserve sole rights to add on injury stoppage time at their discretion.

5.3 INTERCHANGE OF PLAYERS

Interchanges may only take place during a stoppage in play and with the referee's permission.

Each team can make an unlimited amount of interchanges in any given fixture provided they only have a maximum of players on the bench.

5.4 ROUND GAMES

Teams will be placed in groups where they will play a round robin format and accumulate points.

5.5 PLAY-OFFS FORMAT

Please refer to the fixtures for further information on the progression from the group phase to the knock-out stages. To be confirmed once all groups are finalized.

6 EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

In extreme weather conditions, tournament management or the appointed match official reserves the right to shorten, postpone, delay or abandon any fixture that in his/her opinion compromises player safety.

In extreme heat conditions, tournament management or the appointed match official reserves the right to include drink breaks at any time during a fixture. Matches may be shortened, postponed or cancelled as a last resort.

7 OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

7.1 RED AND YELLOW CARD OFFENCES

Red and yellow cards can be issued during a match at the discretion of the referee to players and team officials.

Red card serves an automatic 1-match suspension of the subsequent game. If a match official is assaulted or extreme violent or abusive behaviour is demonstrated the player/official or coach may be suspended from the tournament.

If the whole team demonstrates repeated abusive behaviour, they will be expelled from the competition and may be banned from future tournaments run by the Sports Group.

If a player receives two (2) yellow cards in different games, they will serve an automatic 1-match suspension of the subsequent game. The card count is reset after the group stages.

7.2 CROWD BEHAVIOUR

The event takes crowd behaviour seriously therefore inappropriate behaviour from spectators will not be tolerated. Each team will be required to supply a Team Marshall who will be responsible to liaise with their respective team supporters in order to ensure the opposition, referees, tournament staff and other spectators are respected. Team Marshalls must stay outside the technical areas and located near their team supporters.

Teams and Clubs will be held responsible for their supporter's behaviour. Matches may be forfeited at the referee and/or tournament officials' discretion. Teams may also be deducted points or disqualified from the tournament. Where multiple teams from a particular club are found to be displaying poor behaviour, tournament management reserves the right to suspend whole clubs from future SGM and affiliated tournaments.

Under **NO** circumstances are supporters allowed to approach, question or criticise referees during the tournament.

Supporters must never enter the designated playing areas, failure to comply with this may have severe ramifications on the team including loss of points or disqualification from the tournament.

7.3 BLOOD RULE

In the event a player from either team suffers an injury or wound which results in the loss of blood, the appointed match official will request that the injured player receive attention outside the field of play. Only when the appointed match official is satisfied that the injury or wound has been safely covered and contained, will the player be permitted to re-join the game.

In the event the player's uniform or attire contains blood, the referee will instruct that player to change their attire before being permitted to re-join the game. Should the injured player be required to change their uniform, then the appointed match official will show discretion in allowing the player to wear an alternative numbered shirt if another shirt of the same number is unavailable.

7.4 JEWELLERY

In accordance with FIFA 'Laws of the Game', a player is forbidden to wear jewellery of any kind. Players wearing jewellery will be required to leave the pitch until such time as the offending jewellery is removed and the player has gained the Match Official's permission to re enter the playing area.

7.5 FIRST AID

First Aid staff will be on hand for the duration of the tournament. Taping and strapping will not be part of the duties of the First Aid Staff. If your team requires assistance from first aid please approach the nearest Tournament Official.

Ambulances may be called by First Aid staff in case of emergency. It is the responsibility of the player or official to ensure they have adequate ambulance cover.

7.6 ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

The consumption of ALCOHOL is not permitted in the venue. Anyone found consuming alcohol will be instructed to move from the venue.

Smoking will not be permitted around the pitches and should be kept to an area designated for this purpose. In the case where there is no designated area; smoking is to be 20 metres away from any pitch when a game is in play and away from other tournament attendees.

8 CODES OF CONDUCT

The below Codes of Conduct shall apply to all players, team officials and supporters at the tournament. By entering or attending this tournament, you agree to abide by the relevant Code of Conduct below.

Any breach of the relevant Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action by Sports Group Melbourne. This may include the offending individuals, teams and/or clubs being suspended and/or expelled from the premises and not be allowed into future events or programs operated by SGM.

8.1 PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

"For the good of the game"

- Winning at all costs isn't everything; at this age learning is more important than winning.
- I will only listen to my coaches' instructions during training and games. No one else.
- I will not engage in the use of crude, foul or abusive language that may be deemed offensive or engage in any conduct detrimental to the image of the game when on or off the field.
- I will never argue with the referee and/or assistant referees regarding decisions they make.
- I will treat participants, officials and spectators with respect.
- I will play by the laws of the game.
- I will cooperate with my coach, teammates,referees and officials at all times.
- I will not use any banned substance or drugs of dependence throughout my involvement in the tournament.
- I will display good sportsmanship at all times.
- I will play for the fun of it and not just to please parents and coaches.

8.2 PARENT AND SUPPORTERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

"For the good of the game"

- Parents and supporters must never enter the field of play under any circumstances, this is a serious breach of the code of conduct and may result in heavy sanctions for your team and/or club.

- Any abuse towards the referees and tournament officials will not be tolerated and may result in heavy sanctions for your team and/or club.

- Do not coach your child during training sessions and games. That's what the coaches are there for; it sends mixed messages to the players creating confusion.
- Do not interfere with team warm-ups, stay clear of training areas.
- Cheer on and always encourage the players, including the opposition. Applaud good football all-round.
- Winning isn't everything. Players need to develop and at this age learning is more important than winning.
- Remember that children play sports for their enjoyment, not yours.
- Encourage children to participate, do not force them.
- Encourage children to always participate according to the rules.
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game
- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person at the event regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background

or religion.

- Do not intimidate, harass, or use foul language or violent conduct towards players, match officials, club officials or spectators.
- Respect officials' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
- Show appreciation of coaches, officials and administrators. Without them, your child could not participate.
- Respect the facilities that are being used.
- Keep clear from technical areas, benches and change rooms during games.
- Always follow the instructions of the referee and/or tournament staff.
- Do not enter the fields of play under any circumstances.

8.3 Team Officials' code of conduct

"For the good of the game"

- Remember that players participate for fun and winning is only part of the fun.
- Never ridicule or yell at players for making mistakes or for not winning games.
- Be reasonable in your demands on a player's time, energy and enthusiasm.
- Always operate within the rules and spirit of the game and teach your players to do the same.
- Ensure that the time players spend with you is a positive experience. All players are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.
- Ensure that the equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of all players.
- Display control, respect and professionalism to all involved with the sport. This includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators. Encourage players to do the same.
- Show concern and caution towards sick and injured players. Follow the advice of a doctor or tournament first aid staff when determining whether an injured player is ready to recommence training or competition games.
- Any physical contact with a player should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the player's skill development.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, playing ability, cultural background or religion.
- Refrain from over coaching during games, let the players play and learn from their own mistakes.
- Set an example. Players look up to coaches as role models. Display behaviours that you want your players to follow.
- Always follow the instructions of the referee and/or tournament staff.

- Do not intimidate, harass, or use foul language or violent conduct towards players, match officials, club officials or spectators.

- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game.