

Maidenhead Boys & Girls FC

2026 Tournament Rules

1. All Clubs and teams entering the tournament must be affiliated to their appropriate County FA and this information provided prior to the tournament.
2. **Players who are currently contracted to or have played for Academies, Centres of Excellence, Regional Talent Centres, including those that played for any Junior Premier League team at any point during the 2025/2026 season are NOT permitted to play in this tournament.**
3. **Age groups apply to the (current) 2025/2026 season** as detailed below:
Players in each age group shall be below that age as of midnight on 31st August 2025.
The relevant age for each player is determined by his or her age as at midnight on 31st August of the relevant Playing Season i.e. children who are aged 6 as at midnight on 31st August in a Playing Season (together with those who attain the age of 7 during the Playing Season) will be classed as Under 7 Players for that Playing Season. Children who are aged 7 as at midnight on 31st August in a Playing Season will be classed as Under 8 Players for that Playing Season, and so on.
Notwithstanding the above, a child is permitted to play up in the age group above his or her chronological age group, irrespective of any changes of format or competition structure, save that a child who attains the age of 7 after 31st August is permitted to play only in the Under 7 age group, and may not play in the Under 8 age group, for that Playing Season.
4. Each team is required to bring to the tournament their Player ID cards for players who have played for their club during the season or proof of age for new players in the form of a copy or photo of the player's passport photo page or birth certificate. Random checks of players' ages will be made during the tournament. **Any team that the Tournament Committee consider to include a player not of the correct age or a player that is not eligible as per point 2 may be disqualified and play no further part in the tournament.**
5. **There is a cap of a maximum of 3 external club teams allowed at any 1 age group from the same external club.** Multiple team entries across a variety of age groups are welcomed though.
6. Each team shall name and register each of their players and the team/player registration form MUST be handed in to the Control Tent 45 minutes before the first scheduled match in their age group.
7. A player may only play for the team he/she is registered with for the tournament. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in the team being excluded from the rest of the tournament and any previous results being made void.
8. Please note that the organisers reserve the right to re-organize the age group tournaments where necessary, for example due to late cancellation/non-appearance of teams.
9. Managers shall be held responsible for ensuring that their teams kick off at the allotted times or when the referee is ready. Failure to report to the pitch on time may result in the opposition being awarded 3 points for a 0-0 win or the team being disqualified at the Controller's discretion, with any of the disqualified team's previous results then being rendered void.
10. The laws of Association Football will apply except Law 1 (pitch sizes), Law 3 (number of players), Law 7 (duration of play), Law 11 (no offside). When free kicks are taken (Law 13) opposing players must be three metres away from the ball. A goal cannot be scored from the kick off.
11. All age groups will play matches as 6aside with a maximum squad of 8 players, with the exception of U7s and U8s who will play 5aside with a maximum squad of 7 players. One player may be the goalkeeper and players may be substituted at any time provided the referee is notified. Substituted players may return to the game at any time, as substitutes, with the permission of the referee.
12. U7s & U8s shall play a subsidiary tournament consisting of leagues of round robins. In line with FA rules, all results of these matches shall not be collated but all participants will receive an award.
13. For U9s through U18s points will be awarded as follows for the league matches: three points for a win and one point for a draw. If teams are level on points at the completion of the league, goal difference will count. If teams are still level then the team scoring the most goals will go through. If still level then, the result between the two teams will be taken into account. If the teams are still level after all of these criteria, the tournament administrators will toss a coin to determine which team goes through. Where it is necessary to decide the best 2nd, 3rd or 4th placed teams, across leagues, to progress to knockout matches, then the mathematical formula of points divided by matches played will be used. If the teams are still level then the tournament administrators will toss a coin to determine which team goes through.

14. In the event of a draw in the knockout stages the tie will be decided by penalties (no extra time). Each team will take 5 penalties. If scores are still level then sudden death penalties will decide the outcome. Note: Only those players remaining on the field of play at the end of the match will be permitted to take part in the penalty shoot-out. It is permitted to change goalkeepers for the penalties with one of the players on the field at the end of play. The number of players available to take penalties will be evened up across both sides, to take account for any players being ineligible due to disciplinary/injury issues.
15. Each game shall be 8 minutes in duration, one way, unless otherwise advised. For U9s through U18s the duration of all knockout matches shall be 10 minutes, with no half time and no extra time, unless otherwise stated.
16. The first named team will provide the match ball. U7s through U10s will use a size 3 football, U11s through U14s will use a size 4 football and U15s and above will use a size 5 football.
17. The first named team shall have choice of ends while the second named team shall have kick off.
18. The first named team will be required to change colours if there is a colour clash.
19. Instructions for Goalkeepers:
 - U7s & U8s shall roll the ball out for goal kicks and open play.
 - U9s through U18s:
 - a) The goalkeeper may not fly-kick or drop-kick the ball out of his/her hands. Punishment will be an indirect free kick from the nearest point of the edge of the goal area.
 - b) All goal kicks to be taken from the back/base line.
 - c) A goalkeeper may throw the ball any which way he/she chooses.
 - d) Normal back pass rules apply.
 - e) Goalkeepers are allowed outside the area, but they are then subject to the same laws as outfield players
20. U7s, U8s, U9s and U10s will retreat to the half way line for opposition goal kicks.
21. The manager of the winning team or in the case of a draw, the manager of the first named team, is responsible for the result card being delivered to the Control Tent immediately after each match. Failure to comply may result in the reversal of the result.
22. A player booked for any reason will not be allowed to take part in their team's next game. Two bookings throughout the tournament will mean that the player shall take no further part in the tournament. If a player is given a straight red card and sent off the field of play by a referee, they shall take no further part in the tournament. If any team is found to be non-compliant with this rule it will result in the team being disqualified. This is an FA sanctioned tournament and any disciplinary issues will be reported to the relevant County FA.
23. Managers are responsible for the conduct of anyone associated with their team. Abuse of Match or Tournament Officials and abusive language or threatening behaviour by any Manager, their Assistants, players or supporters may result in immediate disqualification of the team(s). All misconduct will be reported to the relevant County FA.
24. The referees' decisions on all points of play and the laws of the game will be final.
25. Any issues not covered by the above rules must be referred to the Tournament Controller or Tournament Committee whose decision will be final.