

FAQ's: Some Frequently Asked Questions about our Tournament.

Why don't you hold or reserve places?

Teams will ask to have places reserved and then will not book all of those places. This will sometimes mean that a team wanting and ready to book are denied their place because a reserved place is held and never used.

So our advice is always the same "sorry we do not reserve or hold places – but it is quick and easy to book"

Where Is It and What Facilities Are There?

The tournament is hosted at Buntingford Cougars Football Facility, The Bury, London Road, Buntingford Herts SG9 9HZ. At the facility is a bar and BBQ serving food, drinks and ice creams, there are also fun activities and stalls. There is wheelchair access to the sports field.

What Is The Surface?

The tournament is played on grass.

Are Dogs Allowed?

No dogs are allowed at our tournament.

What time do we need to arrive?

For all groups registration is from 8.30am. Teams must register by 09.15. First matches 9.30am. With so many arriving at the same time it is advisable to give yourself plenty of time to park and get into The Bury facility.

How long are matches? How many games will we play?

All matches are twelve minutes long, knockout matches if level, go straight to penalties.

Assuming all places are booked and all teams turn up every team at U7s and older will play a minimum of five group matches and between one and three knockout games. Knockouts start at either quarter finals or semi finals depending on numbers so a team reaching a final will play a maximum of seven or eight matches.

For Under6s the number of matches will depend on number of entries but we aim to group teams in sixes so they all play a minimum of five matches of 12 minutes.

How do you seed and group teams?

Each entry is asked a series of questions when booking, we ask them to describe each team as 'strong' or 'average' or 'development', we also ask them to confirm which league and division most players play in and finally we ask how many of their squad have been at elite academies, centre of excellence or regional development centres, we will then rank teams 1 – 24 or 1-18 or 1-12 depending on the number of entries.

Once seeded we structure groups with group 1 containing the strongest teams 1-6, teams 7-18 (theoretically average teams) go into groups 2 and 3, teams seeded 19-24 (theoretically development teams) in group 4. Please note we rely on information when booking and this is not an exact science but we do the best we can to create meaningful matches for everyone.

How do knockout stages work?

In every section there will be knockouts; we call them a cup, a trophy and a shield.

In a section with 24 teams in 4 groups (U7 – U14) knockouts start with a quarter final. Group 1 teams and group 2 and 3 winners enter the cup KO (this should be the strongest eight teams), group 2 2nd - 5th and group 3 2nd – 5th go into

the trophy KO (this should be average teams) and then group 2 and 3 6th place teams and all group 4 teams (this should be the weakest eight teams) go into the shield KO.

All KO matches including finals are 12minutes and go straight to penalties if needed.

In age groups that have less than three groups of six knockouts may start at semi-final stage.

How many players can I register? And do the players have to be registered to our club?

Maximum number of players per team is 9. Players can only play in one team on the day. Each team is allowed a maximum of two guest players. All other players must be registered to your team except Under6s.

Why do I need to bring registration cards or proof of DOB for guest players?

We do not ask to see registration cards or DOB at registration on the day, only your team sheet indicating if the player is registered with your club or a guest player. Registration cards or proof of DOB will only be requested if there is a dispute about a player's validity to play in the tournament based on age i.e. someone claiming that a team is playing an over or under age player. In that event the player's age will be checked with the registration card or D.O.B. document and if the team cannot produce either then the entire team risk facing disqualification.

Can Academy Players Play?

The FA rule and academy agreements restrict a player who is contracted and / or registered with a professional club academy or centre of excellence to only allowed to play for the organisation they are contracted / registered with.

Players and / or parents who are contracted will always know that they are because they will have signed a contract / agreement making clear that the player cannot play for other grassroots teams.

Players who train with professional club regional development centres but are not contracted to the club can play.

What about girls in the tournament?

Our tournament allows mixed teams except in the girls only section where girls teams must contain girls only.

What Will I Need to Bring?

Bring equipment that you would normally bring to a match including bibs (in case of colour clash) and at least one correct sized match quality ball and a medical emergency aid kit appropriate for grassroots football.

Do teams and players get trophies or medals?

Teams winning the knockout sections are awarded a team trophy and eight individual player trophies, the cups and trophies are for clubs and players to keep. Losing finalists are awarded eight individual player trophies or medals.

In Under6s festivals all players get a medal.

Can players play up a year?

Normal FA rules apply so yes a player can 'play up' one year.

Can players enter the penalty area? Is the goalie allowed out of the area?

Yes and yes. We try to keep rules as similar as possible to normal football. This also helps to keep games flowing without too many stoppages.

Is there a retreat line?

There is a retreat line up to and including U10s as per normal mini soccer rules so that it is familiar to the children.

Is the ball allowed over head height?

For up to and including U10s it is allowed over head height so as to keep rules simple and familiar.

For U11s and older the ball is not allowed over the head height of the referee. (see rules for details).

Why do you ask all adults to pay to come in?

We ask that everyone 16years and over pays £1 at the gate. This is to support the tournament and the club's fundraising efforts.

Do I get a refund on cancellation?

A cancellation before 1st May will get a refund. There are no refunds for cancellations after 1st May. This is because we will have started working on the online groups and fixtures and we have little time to replace a withdrawn team.