

# HARROW YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

*A leading and award-winning FA Charter Standard League,  
facilitating football for the Under 12 to Under 18 age-groups*

## Introduction

At our AGM and Meeting on 11 August 2020 (attended 'virtually' by over 120 people), we looked back, with regret, at the inevitable close-out of season 2019-2020 and made plans for season 2020-2021, albeit with a slightly later start date than normal, due to the on-going impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

We also all recognised that we would need to be flexible and agile over the coming weeks and months, to meet any requirements of the Government and Public Health England, and also having due regard to guidance from The Football Association.

## Season 2020-2021

In total we had 73 clubs (including 7 new clubs) and over 635 teams (HYFL - 306 and HSC 329) affiliate for the season. This is at the same record level as for last season (albeit variances seen at different age groups), which is remarkable given the overall decline seen across the country this season in the number of youth teams, which The FA attribute to the impact of Covid-19. That is a testament to the hard work and commitment of all our members clubs, since March 2020, in keeping engaged with their members.

We held a pre-season meeting on 28 September (attended virtually by over 100 people) at which we discussed, inter alia, different ways of working and engaging in a Covid-19 secure environment.

Our next virtual on-line meeting will be held on Monday 18 January 2021.

## Fixtures

The League season was able to, successfully, kick-off on Sunday 4 October.

A full programme of League matches was facilitated in all 30 divisions.

As we all know, the season was temporarily curtailed after a five-week period.

At the time of writing, we are hopeful that this can commence again on Sunday 6 December.

If that is the case, then there will be fixtures for a 3-week period through to Sunday 20 December; with then a 2-week Christmas/New Year break, and back again on Sunday 10 January 2021; hopefully then through to the season-end in May 2021 without any further major or lengthy interruptions.

We would remind clubs that the exact procedure to follow in the case of inclement weather is set out on page 8 of the Handbook. In essence, only the match referee can initially postpone a fixture, having reviewed the pitch in person; and a match can only be finally postponed if the away team has first been contacted to see if they can host the match; if they can then the game must be switched and played.

Finally, in this section, please do read page 9 of the Handbook for the correct and mandated pitch size and goal size; and that pitch interventions are used as mandated by The FA (barriers or cones or additional marked lines).

### Referees

The Referee panel is slightly down, in number, on last season, at just over 155, but the average number of matches each referee has volunteered to officiate in has increased. The average mark awarded in the season, to date, is 80/100 for the full panel, consistent with last season.

### Player Registrations

In total, to date, clubs have registered over 8,200 players across all age-groups. This is a marginal decline on last season, which is attributed to clubs running slightly smaller squad sizes this season, due to the impact of Covid-19.

The quality and input of player data and documents to the registration system, by member clubs, remains highly variable; and we encourage all clubs/teams to make use of the detailed User Guide to improve this going forward.

The player registration and transfer and de-registration process is also set out on page 7 of the Handbook.

Player laminate ID cards will be distributed to all clubs, largely via a suitable collection point, as soon as possible after the current Covid-restrictions are lifted.

### Match Results

This is working very well and the results of the vast majority of matches are being correctly communicated to the First Eleven Results' Service on a Sunday.

The completion of the on-line match result forms are also generally satisfactory, with a small number of exceptions noted to clubs/teams, as to timing of receipt and accuracy of completion.

### Web-Site

The League website: [www.firsteleven.co.uk/harrow](http://www.firsteleven.co.uk/harrow); is a portal for important information about the League and its operations; including a tab for Covid-19 related matters.

It includes, fixtures, results, grids, tables, the League handbook plus club detail amendments, referee contact details, and much more.

We encourage all clubs to visit the site frequently for updates; along with our other forms of communications, such as via email.

### Finance

As we indicated at the meeting back in August, we have now completed a review of the League's finances.

Given the current financial position of many; the League has decided to utilise reserves and apply a circa 40% reduction (per team) in invoiced amounts for this season, compared to last season; being a circa 25% reduction (per team) including player registrations, which are a direct cost.

In addition, as you know, the normal invoicing date of early September has passed, and we have extended this by some 4-months to end-December for payment; to provide clubs with further direct cash flow benefits. Invoices will be sent out to clubs shortly.

### Middlesex FA youth cup/trophy competitions

MFA currently plan to continue with these competitions to a revised timeline; this has been communicated by MFA to those clubs involved. We hope that this does not unduly and adversely impact on the League programme of fixtures.

### RESPECT

This is an area of continuous review and improvement required. This covers both on-field and off-field behaviour of players, coaches and parents/spectators alike.

We encourage all clubs to advise us of any unacceptable behaviour (preferably via the match result forms) and we will take action along the lines of the four Levels previously communicated to all clubs:

- L1 – review and note;
- L2 – review and speak to club;
- L3 – review and speak to club and League action as appropriate/permitted;
- L4 – review and pass direct to The FA for action.

### FA Charter Standard Club – status

The vast majority of our member clubs are duly accredited and receive the benefits of being an FA Charter Standard Club.

For those that are not, can we please encourage you, in the months ahead, to engage with this programme and gain accreditation, by end May 2021.

### Concluding remarks

We are in extraordinary and unprecedented times, in many respects, and grassroots football is not immune to this. We thank all member clubs for your on-going support and co-operation.

We would ask that this and all of the League's communications are shared with all of your club members; so that they can be fully engaged in the activities of the League.

Please stay safe; and we thank and wish you and all your club members the very best.

Andy Lowe – Chairman

For and on behalf of the HYFL Management Committee

26 November 2020



*“National FA CHARTER STANDARD LEAGUE OF THE YEAR”*

*“National FA RESPECT SILVER REWARD WINNER”*