



National Football Youth League

NFYL Entry Criteria	Season 2026/27
	MALE U19/FEMALE U21
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Football Youth League provides a full-time, high-performance environment for players operating outside the Academy system. The League sits above traditional college-based football programmes and is designed for football clubs/academies delivering a high standard of coaching, facilities and player development. The League strives to provide the highest level of competition outside of the Academy system and therefore invites entries from full-time professional male and female football clubs/academies that meet the required entry criteria contained in this document. The League may in exceptional circumstances accept a top academy that is not part of a full-time professional club if they meet the required entry criteria. League entries must be submitted by the football clubs/academies and signed by a Senior Manager. Club satellite hubs will be viewed on an individual basis and entry is at the discretion of the League Committee. All teams must be located within a 90 minute travel distance from the main football club. Clubs must affiliate with their local County FA under the club name that they are accepted into the League as.
Team Entries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Football clubs/academies may enter more than one team but only one team per division, in line with FA regulations. Football clubs/academies entering a team into an NFYL Premier Division must ensure that team is the highest-level team within their programme at that age group. For clubs operating within the professional EPPP system, this applies to the highest-level team outside of that system. The League reserves the right to review and reassign entries where this requirement is not met.
Affiliation Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £800 per team £100 per team for cup entry The affiliation fee is payable by 1st July 2026.
Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs must carry out trials to ensure players are of an appropriate standard. This is not a league that encourages clubs or their education partners to recruit large numbers of players. The emphasis must be on quality provision.
Playing and Training Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teams (player and staff) must wear training and playing kit of their parent club Playing kit must be numbered

Staff and training requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Football coaching must be delivered by coaching staff employed by the football clubs/academies. Lead coaching staff must hold a minimum of the FA UEFA B Licence/assistant staff may be working towards the FA UEFA B Licence Each club will have a Designated Safeguarding Officer. Each club must comply with the FA's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. There should be a minimum of three training sessions a week in addition to matches and this should include at least two training sessions a week for goalkeepers with a specialist goalkeeping coach. Clubs must ensure that NFYL registered players are part of a clearly defined performance squad operating within a structured, full-time football programme Football clubs/academies must provide an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for all players.
Staff and match day requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be at least two members of qualified staff (adults) at every home and away game. Staff must not travel to games alone with teams. A member of staff must be delegated to welcome the opposition on arrival. Opposition staff should be welcomed with a tea/coffee/cold drink.
Medical requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each team must have at least one medical member of staff with a degree in, or working towards: BSc Physiotherapy, BSc Sports Therapy, BSc Sports Rehabilitation or similar medical/healthcare/sports related degree. In addition they will hold the FA Level 4 Intermediate Trauma Medical Management in Football (ITMMiF) or be working towards. They will be the designated home medical staff. The Home Club must provide a minimum of stretcher, fracture pack and ice for the home side and opposition on match day. If the opposition do not have a fully qualified physio with them the home team physio will assist the staff of the opposition should an injury occur. A member of the away team staff must hold the FA Emergency Aid qualification (EFAiF). Both sides must have fully equipped medical bags on match day. Each club must have access to a defibrillator for their players. The medical member of staff must be present at training sessions to treat injured players
Match Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each club should strive to have the best venue to raise standards and aspirations Changing rooms should be secure, clean, adequate size, well-ventilated with working individual showers. The home and away team should have their own changing room with their own showers and toilet facilities. These should be for sole use of these teams and officials for this time frame. The match officials should have their own changing room with their own showers and toilet facilities. There should be male and female toilets on site for spectators

Female Player Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Football clubs/academies must ensure appropriate provision is in place to support the welfare and needs of female players. Toilet facilities must be clean, accessible and suitable. Changing areas must provide appropriate privacy and security. Sanitary products must be available. Suitable disposal facilities must be provided. Shower facilities must be safe and private. Football clubs/academies should give consideration to the colour of playing kit and avoid the use of white or light coloured shorts.
The field of play and Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitch size minimum 100 m length x 64 m width Goalposts must meet the requirements of the Laws of the Game. The use of metal cup hooks are not allowed. Grass playing surfaces should be level, free from surface depressions and maintained to a high standard. Two dugouts should be provided - covered with seating for a minimum of 8 people Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the FA's 3G Pitch Register and shown as approved for FA affiliated football. https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register In case of bad weather clubs must have access to an AGP if their normal pitch is grass. Each club shall make arrangements for the provision of designated areas for spectators. This area can be marked by an additional painted line, the use of cones, a roped off area or use of a temporary spectator barrier. The area for spectators should start two metres from the touchline and spectators should not stand near the designated technical areas. There must be a technical area which extends 1 metre on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to a distance of 1 metre from the touchline Clubs must ensure there is an alternative venue of the required standard if their main venue is unavailable due to bad weather or other circumstances All match balls must be size 5 and conform to Law 2 of the Laws of the Game: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/laws/football-11-11/law-2---the-ball The home side must provide a minimum of three match balls

<p>Match Officials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be three officials at every game, and it is the responsibility of the home team to appoint the officials. If regular officials are used, then a rotation system must be used. • The Referee must be a minimum Level 5 and Assistant Referees minimum Level 7. • Officials must be registered with their County FA • Match officials' payment set at a minimum of: Referee £50 Assistant Referee: £35 (this includes travel costs)
<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each club will have an education partner(s) who must ensure that the football club is given enough funding to deliver the football programme to the required standard set by the League. • The education partner and club must strive to offer an appropriate range of nationally recognised qualifications to the players. Players should be fully supported to manage their time management and study skills as they balance their football and academic commitments. • The education partner must strive to offer a diverse curriculum for the players, ideally to include both A Levels and BTEC qualifications where possible. • The education partner and football club must work in partnership to ensure sporting expectations and academic achievements are met by the players. They each must work together to ensure appropriate exit routes are mapped out for each player as they move through the programme. • Each player should have an individual learning plan with athletic and academic targets and a review at least every six weeks. The club and education partner should aim to meet the parents/guardians of each player aged under 18 at least twice in each academic year/season.
<p>The Fixture Calendar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Football Youth League is a nationally sanctioned competition by the Football Association. It falls under the Open Age category and follows FA Standard Code of Rules (FA SCOR) • Under FA SCOR, The FA Youth Cup and FA County/Senior Cup competitions take priority and the League will work with clubs to accommodate these fixtures where possible. • In accordance with FA rules, all other competitions are considered secondary to National Football Youth League fixtures and must not impact the fulfilment of National Football Youth League fixtures. • Football clubs/academies must ensure that tours, excursions, or any other external commitments do not impact their ability to fulfil the National Football Youth League fixture calendar. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with League rules.