NATIONAL SCHOOLS CRICKET CUPS

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National Under 15 T20 Cup

Competition Regulations 2027

ENGLISH SCHOOLS CRICKET ASSOCIATION

The National Under 15 T20 Cup is a direct-entry knockout competition for school teams, run by the English Schools Cricket Association (ESCA) as part of the National Schools Cricket Cups, with a four-team finals day at Kibworth Cricket Club in the week beginning 6 September 2027. It replaces the ECB/ESCA National Under 15 T20 Cup.

1. The competition and entry

1.1 **Organisation.** The competition is run by the English Schools Cricket Association (ESCA). The Tournament Director is Mark Fenton, who can be contacted at info@escaonline.co.uk. Fixtures and results are published on the competition Play-Cricket site: escacompetitions.play-cricket.com.

1.2 **Who may enter.** Entry is open to schools that provide full-time education for pupils in Years 9 and 10. Private cricket academies and clubs may not enter.

1.3 **One team per school.** Each school may enter one team only.

1.4 **How to enter.** Schools enter directly with ESCA using the online entry form. Entries close at 11.30pm on 11 December 2026. Late entries will not be accepted unless the Tournament Director agrees.

1.5 **Entry fee.** The entry fee is £60 for independent schools. State-funded schools (maintained schools, academies and free schools) enter free. Independent schools will be invoiced by the ESCA Treasurer and must pay by 30 January 2027. A school whose fee is unpaid by that date may be withdrawn from the draw.

1.6 **Play-Cricket.** Every school must have a Play-Cricket site by 5 January 2027, so that fixtures and results can be recorded.

2. Eligibility

2.1 **Age.** All players must be under 15 on 31 August 2026.

2.2 **School roll.** Players must be permanent bona fide pupils of the school, following its normal curriculum, and must have been on the school roll by 1 February 2027. Players temporarily on roll for the summer term are not allowed to participate.

2.3 **Overage players.** A player who is overage but in the same year group as the eligible players may be allowed to play under ESCA's Overage Players Policy, published at escaonline.co.uk. The school must apply to the ESCA General Secretary by 31 March 2027, and must not field the player until permission has been given.

2.4 **Confirmation and penalties.** The Tournament Director's decision on eligibility is final. A school that fields an ineligible player will be removed from the competition and may be barred from entering for up to two further years.

3. Structure, fixtures and finals

3.1 **Format.** The competition is a knockout. After entries close, the Tournament Director will draw schools into early-round groups based on road travel distance between schools, and publish the draw and a result-by date for each round. Winners progress through further knockout rounds to produce four national semi-finalists. The number of rounds and how winners are paired will depend on the number of entries. A regional structure will be used.

3.2 **Arranging ties.** The home school must offer its opponents at least two dates before the result-by date.

3.3 **Result-by dates.** Result-by dates must be kept. A tie may only go beyond its result-by date in exceptional circumstances, with the Tournament Director's prior permission. Exams and player unavailability are not exceptional circumstances. A school that does not play its tie by the result-by date, without having made every reasonable effort to do so, may be withdrawn.

3.4 **Weather.** If a tie is washed out after the away school has travelled, it may be rearranged before the result-by date at the away school's ground. If a tie due on the result-by date is washed out, the result will be decided on the day by a bowl-out (rule 4.9) or, if that is impossible, by the toss of a coin.

3.5 **Host school.** The home school must:

(a) communicate with its opponents and confirm arrangements;

(b) arrange the ground, umpires and normal hospitality (tea and juice; each team brings its own meals);

(c) have these regulations, and access to the competition Play-Cricket site, available on the day;

(d) post the result on Play-Cricket within 24 hours, showing both teams' runs, wickets and overs. Live scoring is encouraged.

3.6 **Transport.** Each school is responsible for its own transport.

3.7 **Withdrawal.** A school that has to withdraw must tell its opponents and the Tournament Director as early as possible. Failure to do so may prevent the school entering the following year.

3.8 **Finals day.** The semi-finals and final will be played at Kibworth Cricket Club in the week beginning 6 September 2027, on a date to be confirmed. Finalists provide their own transport and a scorer; the organisers meet the costs of the ground, umpires, balls and meals (for 13 players, a scorer and three staff per team). Finals day will not be rearranged. If play is not possible, the trophy will be shared.

4. Playing conditions

The Laws of Cricket (2017 Code, 4th edition 2026) and the ECB's guidance for junior cricket apply, except as set out below.

4.1 **Teams.** A team may name 12 players on a team card handed to the umpires at the toss. Only 11 may bat, and only 11 may field at any one time. A school may choose to play with 11.

4.2 **Match ball.** A pink ball must be used, and the same type of ball must be used in both innings. Each school supplies one ball per match until finals day.

4.3 **Clothing.** Teams play in coloured clothing, but this can include whites or normal PE kit.

4.4 **Duration.** One innings per side of up to 20 overs. Each side must be in position to bowl the first ball of its last over within 1 hour 15 minutes of playing time. The interval is no longer than 15 minutes. Each side must face at least 5 overs for a match to count.

4.5 **Over-rate penalty.** A side not in position to bowl its last over in time completes its overs, but with one fewer fielder allowed outside the fielding restriction area for each over bowled late. In reduced-overs matches the fielding side has one over's leeway. Umpires will apply the time-wasting Laws strictly to batters.

4.6 **Fielding restrictions.**

(a) No more than 5 fielders on the leg side at the instant of delivery.

(b) The fielding restriction area is two semi-circles of 30 yards' radius around the middle stump at each end, joined by straight lines, and marked where possible.

(c) In the first 6 overs, no more than 2 fielders may be outside the area at the instant of delivery; for the remaining overs, no more than 5.

(d) In reduced innings, the number of fielding restriction overs is reduced as shown in the table below.

(e) A breach is called and signalled No ball by the square-leg umpire.

(f) No fielder other than the wicketkeeper may stand closer than 8 yards from the middle stump until the batter has played at the ball, in line with ECB junior fielding regulations.

Overs in the innings	5–6	7–9	10–13	14–16	17–19	20
Fielding restriction overs	1	2	3	4	5	6

4.7 **Bowling.** No bowler may bowl more than 4 overs, or one-fifth of the overs in a reduced innings (rounded so that the minimum number of bowlers get one extra over). In innings of 5 to 9 overs, no bowler may bowl more than 2 overs. If a bowler cannot finish an over, another bowler completes it, and it counts as a full over for both. The ECB Fast Bowling Directives apply.

4.8 **Wides and no balls.**

(a) Umpires will apply a strict interpretation of wides. A leg-side delivery passing outside the batter's legs is a wide.

(b) No more than one delivery per over may pass above shoulder height of the batter standing upright. A second is a No ball. A bowler no-balled twice in an innings for this is removed from the attack for the rest of the innings.

(c) The delivery after any No ball is a free hit, on which the batter can only be out in ways allowed from a No ball. Fielders may not change position for a free hit unless the striker changes.

4.9 **Bowl-out.** Where a result is needed and no play is possible, five players from each side bowl two deliveries each at an unguarded wicket. The side hitting the wicket most often wins; if equal, the same players bowl one ball each in turn until there is a winner.

4.10 **Rain and reduced overs.** If time is lost, overs are reduced at one over per 3 minutes 45 seconds, so that both sides face the same number of overs where possible (minimum 5 each). If the side batting second has its overs reduced, its target is set by the DLS method, using Play-Cricket Scorer, and par scores should be shown throughout the second innings.

4.11 **Result and ties.** The side scoring more runs wins. If scores are level, a Super Over decides the match: the team batting second bats first; two wickets ends the over; if still level, the side hitting more boundaries in the Super Over wins; if still level, a count-back from the last ball decides it.

5. Umpires, scorers, conduct and disputes

5.1 **Umpires.** All umpires should be members of the ECB Association of Cricket Officials (ACO). A school may provide its own competent umpire if the opposing school agrees. ESCA will provide umpires for the national finals.

5.2 **Umpire fees.** Where umpires are paid, the two schools share the cost.

5.3 **Scorers.** Each school provides a competent scorer. Ideally one scorer uses electronic scoring, to support DLS calculations and uploading to Play-Cricket.

5.4 **Safety.** Batters, and wicketkeepers standing up to the stumps, must wear helmets, in line with ECB guidance for young players.

5.5 **Conduct.** Players, staff and spectators are bound by the Laws of Cricket (including Law 41 and Law 42), the ECB General Conduct Regulations and the ESCA Disciplinary Policy. Umpires should report any breach, including poor conduct by staff, to the ESCA General Secretary (info@escaonline.co.uk), copying in the school's teacher in charge, within 48 hours, using the ESCA Disciplinary Report Form, available from escaonline.co.uk.

5.6 **Disputes.** Disputes about results or any other matter are referred to the Tournament Director, whose decision is final.

Mark Fenton, Tournament Director
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