



SCHOOL COMPETITIONS COMPETITION HANDBOOK



Table of Contents

1. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT	3
1.1 Purpose of Competition Management	3
1.2 Responsibilities of Competition Management	3
1.3 Responsibilities of Schools	3
1.4 School and Player Eligibility	4
1.5 Insurance	4
2. COMPETITION RULES	6
2.1 Application of other rules and policies to this Handbook	6
2.2 General Match Guidelines	6
2.3 Cards	6
2.4 Modified Laws of the Game – Primary School Competitions (Stage 2)	7
2.5 Modified Laws of the Game – Primary School Competitions (Stage 3)	7
2.6 Forfeits	8
2.7 Drawn Finals Matches	8
2.8 School Officials	8
3. PROGRESSION – PRIMARY DIVISIONS	9
3.1 Local Gala Days	9
3.2 Regional Finals	9
4. PROGRESSION – SECONDARY SCHOOL DIVISIONS	10
4.1 Local Gala Days	10
4.2 Regional Play-Offs	10
4.3 Regional Finals	10
4.4 State Final	10
5. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	11
5.1 General Code of Conduct	11
5.2 AFL NSW/ACT own-motion investigation	11
5.3 Reportable Offences	11
APPENDIX 1 – GENERAL MATCH GUIDELINES	12
APPENDIX 2 – SECONDARY DIVISIONS PATHWAY	13



1. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

1.1 Purpose of Competition Management

The competition management team is appointed by AFL NSW/ACT and is responsible for facilitating the competitions.

1.2 Responsibilities of Competition Management

- a) Competition Management are responsible for:
 - i. Overseeing the operations and administration of the Competition
 - ii. Distributing information to Schools
 - iii. Determining venue availability
 - iv. Addressing complaints generally and as per this Handbook
 - v. Promotion of the Competition
 - vi. Distributing nomination information for the Competition
 - vii. Constructing Competition fixtures
 - viii. Enforcement of Competition rules, including investigation and/or disciplinary process outlined in this Handbook
 - ix. Briefing Ground Managers on their responsibilities, including but not exhausted to:
 - a. Ensuring grounds are open, safe and suitable for playing on
 - b. Ensuring grounds are set up correctly according to the rules
 - c. Ensuring footballs (correct size) are available
 - d. Ensuring umpiring and timekeeping equipment are available
 - e. Ensuring scores and results are updated on PlayHQ
 - f. Ensuring Schools are briefed on competition rules prior to the start of play

1.3 Responsibilities of Schools

- a) During each round of Competition, the school staff member must:
 - i. Ensure all teams are accompanied by a staff member or responsible adult
 - ii. Ensure all Players are correctly attired (e.g. AFL playing shorts, socks and guernseys or equivalent)
 - iii. Ensure all Coaches are accredited and registered via [Coach.AFL](https://coach.afl.com.au)
 - iv. Ensure teams are nominated into the correct division
 - v. Ensure players are within the appropriate year group and eligible (as per rule 1.4)
 - vi. For Regional Finals, ensure all Players are registered via PlayHQ
 - vii. With the exception of Local Gala Days, ensure team sheets are completed, with correct player names and jersey numbers, and submitted to the Competition Manager
- b) Schools must ensure their Players and Officials comply with the AFL Concussion Guidelines, including the return to play protocols



1.4 School and Player Eligibility

- a) For a School to nominate a Player, that Player must be enrolled within the nominated School
 - i. Schools are only eligible to combine and form a team where the total number of enrolments does not exceed 150 students
- b) If a Player changes their school of enrolment during the Competition, they are no longer eligible to play for their former School. A Player may play for their new school, provided their new School nominates the Player accordingly
- c) Schools must register:
 - i. Teams via the Local Gala Day Nomination form in the first instance
 - ii. Players via the PlayHQ platform, if the team progresses to the Regional Final (Sydney only for Paul Kelly Cup, and Sydney, Northern NSW, South Coast and ACT for High School Competitions)
 - iii. Coaches via the [CoachAFL platform](#) (for all rounds of the Competition)
 - iv. If any player noted in (b) does not wish to be registered via PlayHQ, the School must make a written request to Competition Management which must include reasons for the request. Approval is at Competition Management's discretion.
- d) [Appendix 1](#) outlines all Divisions within the Competition and the criteria to participate in each Division (i.e. gender and school year).
- e) For the purpose of this Handbook, an Ineligible Player is:
 - i. With respect to rounds beyond a Regional Final, a Player who is not registered on PlayHQ (unless granted an exemption pursuant to clause 1.4 (c iv))
 - ii. A Player who is not listed on the team sheet ([pursuant to clause 1.3 \(a\) vii.](#))
 - iii. A Player who is serving a suspension pursuant to this Handbook
 - iv. A Player who is playing contrary to the AFL Community Concussion Guidelines
 - v. A Player enrolled in the incorrect school year for the specified Division
 - vi. A Player enrolled with an alternate school to the one they are playing for
 - vii. Playing an Ineligible Player will result in:
 - i. The loss of Competition points
 - ii. The team being prevented from progressing to the next stage of the Competition
 - viii. Players are permitted to play up one (1) Division higher for their gender provided they:
 - i. Have written consent from their parent/guardian and the Head of Sport via an [Age Dispensation to Play Up form](#)
 - ii. [Clause 1.4 \(a\)](#) does not apply to Players requesting to play up from a Primary Division to a Secondary Division



1.5 Insurance

Students participate in AFL NSW/ACT School Competitions at their own risk. They are responsible for their own personal injury/accident insurance. The AFL holds Public Liability Insurance to a limit of \$20,000,000 per occurrence to cover its legal liabilities in respect of third-party personal injury or property damage. The AFL expects each School participating in Australian Football programs to procure and maintain public liability insurance to sufficiently cover its own legal liabilities. At its own discretion, each school or individual may consider purchasing personal accident insurance providing cover for non-Medicare medical expenses arising from this Australian Football program, or any other school program.



2. COMPETITION RULES

2.1 Application of other rules and policies to this Handbook

- a) The [Laws of the Game](#) apply to all Divisions unless modified pursuant to this Handbook. In the event of any discrepancy between the Laws of the Game and this Handbook, this Handbook will prevail
- b) The National Policy Handbook and AFL NSW/ACT Community Football Generic Rules do not apply to this Competition unless explicitly stipulated within this Handbook

2.2 General Match Guidelines

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for general match guidelines

2.3 Cards

- a) Yellow Cards
 - i. A yellow card is issued by a field Umpire if a Player or Official:
 - a. Commits a Reportable Offence
 - ii. A Player ordered off under a yellow card is:
 - a. Required to leave the playing area immediately through the interchange area
 - b. To be seated with the Timekeeper, Ground Manager or Interchange Steward
 - c. Not permitted to resume playing in the Match for fifteen (15) consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters
 - d. For matches with a quarter duration less than fifteen (15 minutes), an amount of time equivalent to one quarter, of consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters
 - e. Not permitted to enter the Field of Play for the duration of the penalty period, including breaks
 - iii. The Ground Manager is responsible for noting the Player's number, time of send-off and time of return to the ground
 - iv. All Players who are ordered from the Field of Play with a yellow card can be replaced immediately
- b) Red Cards
 - i. A red card is issued by a field umpire if a Player or Officials commits:
 - a. Two yellow card offences in the same Match; or
 - b. Two Reportable Offences in the same Match for separate incidents; or
 - c. A single Reportable Offence that is considered a serious breach of the Laws of Australian Football ([Law 22.2.2](#))
 - ii. A Player or Official ordered off under a red card:
 - a. Is required to leave the playing area immediately through the interchange area;



- b. Is not permitted to sit on the bench or enter the Field of Play at any time (including breaks) for the remainder of the Match; and
 - c. Is not permitted to return to participate in the match in any capacity
- iii. The Ground Manager is responsible for noting the Player's number, time of send off and time of return to the ground
- iv. All red cards are Reportable Offences and must be submitted by the field Umpire to the Competition Manager.

2.4 Modified Laws of the Game – Primary School Competitions (Stage 2)

- a) Refer to [NAB AFL Superkick Match Play Factsheet](#) for modified laws of the game for Stage 2

2.5 Modified Laws of the Game – Primary School Competitions (Stage 3)

- a) A mark is awarded when a Player catches the ball from another Player's kicked that has travelled at least 10 metres
- b) A Player is only permitted to bounce the ball once
- c) A Player cannot take possession directly from a ball-up. A Player must tap the ball and cannot play the ball again until another player has touched it
- d) When the ball goes out of bounds, a free kick is awarded against the team to have the last disposal (kick or handball). The opposition Player closest to where the ball went out of bounds is awarded a free kick
- e) A Player can kick a goal from an out of bounds free kick, if the closest player is a forward in the forward zone
- f) When the ball goes out of bounds from a defensive act, including fumble, smother or punch, play is restarted with a ball-up 5-10 metres from the boundary where the ball went out of bounds
- g) Players are permitted to hold and "bear hug" an opponent in possession of the ball between the shoulders and wrap (modified wrap tackle)
- h) A free kick will be awarded where:
 - i. A tackle forces an opponent to the ground
 - ii. An opponent is pushed in the back
 - iii. An opponent is held without possession of the ball
 - iv. A tackle is deemed by the umpire to be rough
- i) Players are not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground
- j) Only forwards, wearing a wristband, can score from the forward zone
- k) If a non-forward scores from the forward zone, or the ball is kicked from outside the forward zone, there is a ball up from where the ball was kicked
- l) The maximum distance for an advanced free kick is 30 metres
- m) Players must start in zones (4-4-4) but can move from zones in general play



- n) When the score differential in a match exceeds 30 points, umpires will, at their discretion, implement strategies for equalisation (e.g. encouraging players to return to zones at ball ups etc.)

2.6 Forfeits

- a) If a team wishes to forfeit, their School must notify Competition Management as soon as possible
- b) Where a team forfeits, the opposing team shall progress through to the next stage of the Competition (where progression apply)
- c) In the event of a forfeit during a Gala Day, the following margin will be applied and entered into PlayHQ:

Primary Girls & Boys	30 points
Junior Schools Girls & Boys	30 points
Senior Schools Girls & Boys	40 points

2.7 Drawn Finals Matches

- a) In the event of drawn scores in a semi-final match, the highest ranked team progresses into a Grand Final
- Where semi finals include two teams that finished first in the pool stages, percentage will be used to determine which team is higher ranked to progress
- b) In a Grand Final, in the event of scores being equal, the following procedure will apply:
- Scores will be confirmed by goal umpires and/or scoreboard
 - The Coach will be allowed to address their team during a three (3) minute break after the final siren, but will not be able to address their team further during extra time
 - Teams will re-position themselves in the same direction as at the end of regular time
 - Teams will play 5 minutes each way (no break, change ends)
 - Should scores remain even at the end of extra time, teams will reset their position (not changing ends), with golden point until there is a winner

2.8 School Officials

- a) Each team is entitled to the following Officials:
- One (1) Coach
 - Three (3) Assistant Coaches
 - One (1) Team Manager
 - One (1) Runner
- b) The Runner is to deliver a Coaches message to a Player and immediately depart the field.



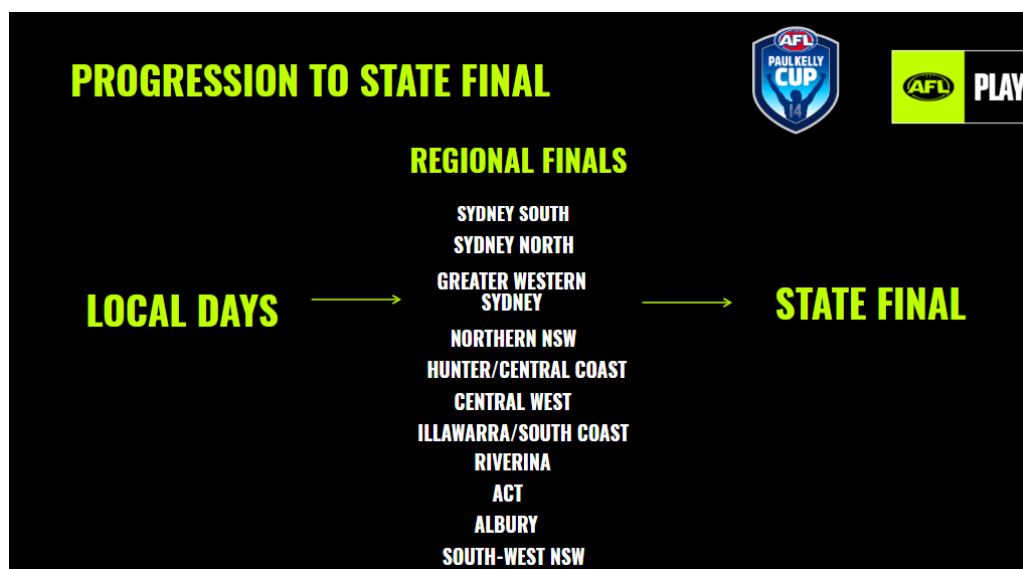
3. PROGRESSION – PRIMARY DIVISIONS

3.1 Local Gala Days

- a) Each Region will conduct Local Gala Days
- b) The competition format for Gala Days is determined by the host Region
- c) The number of schools per Local Gala Day that progress to the Regional Final is at the discretion of the host Region
- d) Progression will only take place in Stage 3 divisions (Year 5-6)

3.2 Regional Finals

- a) The following Regional Finals will be held:
 - i. Sydney South
 - ii. Sydney North
 - iii. Greater Western Sydney
 - iv. Northern NSW
 - v. Hunter Central Coast
 - vi. Central West
 - vii. Illawarra/South Coast
 - viii. Riverina
 - ix. ACT
 - x. Albury
 - xi. South-West NSW
- b) The most successful team from each Region will progress to the State Final (in both girls and boys)





4. PROGRESSION – SECONDARY SCHOOL DIVISIONS

4.1 Local Gala Days

- a) Each Region will conduct Local Gala Days
- b) The competition format for Gala Days is determined by the host Region
- c) A visual representative of the pathway for each region can be found in [Appendix 2](#)
- d) The most successful team from each Division in each Region will progress as follows:
 - i. Greater Sydney – to the Regional Play-Offs
 - ii. Northern NSW – to the Northern NSW Tier 1 Gala Day
 - iii. ACT & South Coast – to the Regional Play-Offs
 - iv. Southern NSW – to Grand Finals

4.2 Regional Play-Offs

- a) Where applicable as per [Rule 4.1 \(c\)](#), Regional Play-Offs will be held to determine progression the Regional Finals
- b) Match timings are as per [Appendix 1](#)
- c) The winner of each match will progress to the Regional Finals in the following regions:
 - i. Greater Sydney & Northern NSW
 - ii. ACT & South Coast

4.3 Regional Finals

- a) The following Regional Finals will be held:
 - i. Greater Sydney & Northern NSW
 - ii. ACT & South Coast
 - iii. Riverina (Finals Night)
 - iv. MIA (Finals)
 - v. Albury (Finals Night)
- b) The winner of the AFL Independent Schools Girls Competition Opens Division 1 will progress to the Greater Sydney & Northern NSW Final in the Senior Schools Cup Girls Division
- c) The winner of each Regional Final will progress to the State Final

4.4 State Final

- a) Each region will have one representative per division (girls & boys and Junior & Seniors Schools) present at the State Final
- b) The winner of the Senior Schools Cup Boys Division will progress to the State Final versus the winner of the AFL Independent Schools Boys Competition Opens Division 1



5. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

5.1 General Code of Conduct

- a) Any person involved in Australian Rules football must:
 - i. Comply with this Code of Conduct, this Handbook and the Laws of Australian Football
 - ii. Prioritise the safety and welfare of children
 - iii. Respect the spirit of fair play and behave accordingly
 - iv. Never engage in physical and/or verbal intimidation or verbal abuse
 - v. Never engage in any type of violence either on or off the field
 - vi. Never engage in conduct that is unethical, unbecoming or likely to cause harm to the reputation of the game of Australian Football, the AFL or the League
 - vii. Never abuse an Umpire, argue with, ridicule or dispute the decision of an Umpire

5.2 AFL NSW/ACT own-motion investigation

- a) If AFL NSW/ACT becomes aware any person (s) may have breached any provision (s) of [Rule 5.1](#), the Competition Manager may determine to investigate the matter
- b) All schools must use their best endeavours to require persons associated with their Schools cooperate with an AFL NSW/ACT investigation, including the provision of a statement on request
- c) If AFL NSW/ACT is comfortably satisfied that a breach has occurred, they can recommend a reasonable sanction and will inform the relevant School of this finding and sanction
- d) It is the responsibility of the school to enforce any sanction recommended for any breach of Code of Conduct

5.3 Reportable Offences

- a) Where an umpire considers that a Player or Official has committed a Reportable Offence, the umpire must issue the Player/Official with a yellow or red card and advise the Player/Official that they are on report
- b) The Umpire must:
 - i. Complete a Notice of Report, outlining the Reportable Offence and provide this to the Competition Manager
- c) Competition Management will review the Reportable Offence, and grade the offence pursuant to [Appendix One of the National Handbook](#), including a recommended sanction (in line with early guilty plea)
- d) The sanction is to be used as a guide for school disciplinary processes
- e) Schools cannot refer suspected Reportable Offences that are not reported by an Umpire

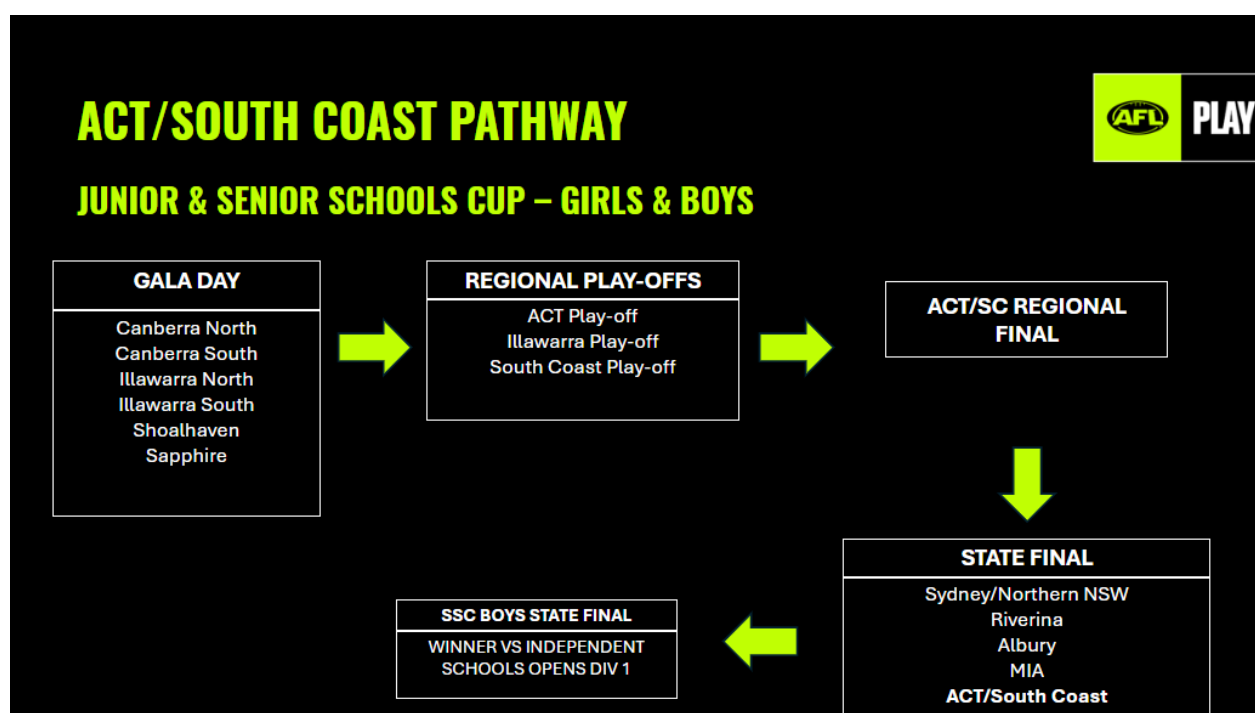
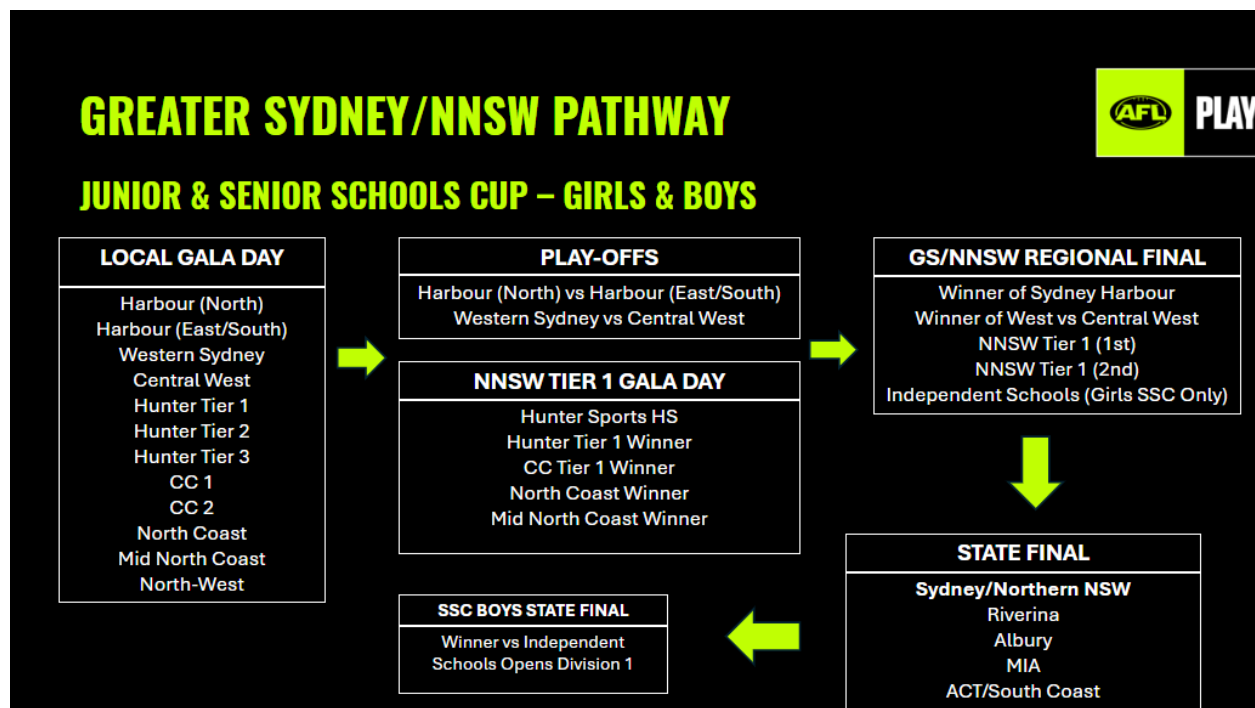


APPENDIX 1 – GENERAL MATCH GUIDELINES

Division	School Year	Min. Team Size	Max. Team Size	Max Squad	Match Timings	Ground Size	Ball Size	Progression
Primary Girls & Boys (Stage 2)	Year 3 and 4	6	9 per side 3/3/3 stay in zones	12	2 x 10-min halves	85-100m x 50-75m (35/25/35 zones)	Size 2 Synthetic	No
Primary Girls & Boys (Stage 3)	Year 5 and 6	9	12 per side 4/4/4 start in zones	16	2 x 10-min halves	90-120m x 50-75m (40/30/40 zones)	Size 3 Synthetic	Yes
Junior Schools Girls	Year 7, 8 and 9	14	16	22	2 x 15-min halves (Gala Days) 4 x 15-min quarters (Regional Play-Offs)	Full	Size 4 Leather	Yea
Junior Schools Boys	Year 7, 8 and 9	16	18	24	2 x 15-min halves (Gala Days) 4 x 15-min quarters (Regional Play Offs)	Full	Size 5 Leather	Yes
Senior Schools Girls	Year 10, 11 and 12	14	16	22	2 x 15-min halves (Gala Days) 4 x 15-min quarters (Regional Play Offs)	Full	Size 4 Leather	Yes
Senior Schools Boys	Year 10, 11 and 12	16	18	24	2 x 15-min halves (Gala Days) 4 x 15-min quarters (Regional Play-Offs) 4 x 20-min quarters (State Final)	Full	Size 5 Leather	Yes



APPENDIX 2 – SECONDARY DIVISIONS PATHWAY





SOUTHERN NSW (ALBURY/MIA)



JUNIOR & SENIOR SCHOOLS CUP – GIRLS & BOYS



SOUTHERN NSW (RIVERINA)



JUNIOR & SENIOR SCHOOLS CUP – GIRLS & BOYS

