

FANTASY NON-LEAGUE - 2026/27 SEASON INTRODUCTION & RULES.

Well, here we go again, it only feels like yesterday that we were finishing last season's competition.

This season's Fantasy Non-League will again only cost you £5 to enter. The FNL 2026/27 entry deadline will be Midnight on Monday 31st August 2026. It is very important that you read the rules very closely as I am making as I always some major changes to the competition this season.

Before we get into the nitty gritty of this season's competition I must tell you that Fantasy Non-League has reach a very special milestone. This season FNL celebrates its 30th anniversary. Yes, this game was originally launched in the 1996/97 season in a football matchday programme.

Again, this season the EARLY ENTRY BONUS is in play, which again will be 1,000pts. This subject is always a difficult one and gauging what this should be is not easy. Last season the team that finished in third place entered the game before the season started so it does go to show that you still stand a chance even if you enter the game before a ball is kicked.

So, how does the Early Entry Bonus work? Well, if you enter the competition before 3pm on Saturday 8th August 2026 you will receive those EARLY ENTRY BONUS points. I still get emails and calls commentating on the fact that we allow people to enter the competition nearly four weeks into the season. The reason for this is that a lot of our players don't buy the Non-League Paper until the season has started. Ideally, I would love to start the competition before the season starts but if we did, we would only have around half the players we normally have. My normal answer to everyone that asks this question is everyone can enter either before the season starts or before the deadline at the end of August. In fact, I know that many players enter at least two teams one before the season starts and one before the 31st of August deadline when they have an early indication on who might be the main performers of the new season. Let's face it at £5 an entry for a full nine months of football is pretty good value.

There will again be Manager of the Month awards. In total, there will be eight Manager of the Month awards with the last one being April 2027. The first Manager of the Month will be September 2026; this means none of the games that feature in the month of August 2026 will feature in a Manager of the Month.

At the End of the Season there will be cash prizes for the top three places and once again we will have my personal favourite a prize for finishing bottom, so why not enter two teams one to win it and one to lose it. If you have never tried to finish bottom then give it a go, it is not easy! Again, this season you will be competing for the Barrie New Bottom Spot!! (If you are planning to try and finish bottom, can I suggest that you enter after the season starts so there is no chance of me accidently giving you the Early Entry Bonus).

Every season I like to make a few changes to the competition and this season is no different. This season there will be two major changes. *(So please make sure to take note of the changes).*

1. The first change is to do with how you select your teams on the entry forms. For those of you who are veteran FNL players and have been with me from the start you will remember that the leagues use to be split into three sections. I have decided to bring this back. So, each league is split into three sections, and you will need to pick one team only from each section.
2. The second change is quite controversial and many of you may be annoyed with me, but it is a decision I have been contemplating for a few seasons now. I have decided to remove the substitutions from the game. So, the choices you make in August 2026 will be with you for the whole 2026/27 season. This will mean you will really need to study your teams, and I know many of you do this anyway. (The only way you will be able to change a team is if unfortunately, any teams fold and leave a league. If this does happen I will inform you of the teams that are available to replace the lost team).

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The Rules for Fantasy Non-League 2026/27: - (Please read these very carefully).

1. You will need to choose 3 teams from each of the ten leagues. As stated above each of the leagues have been split into 3 sections and you must pick 1 team from each section. *(Which will give you a total of 30 teams)*. Then you will need to nominate your 5 FNL JOKER TEAMS from the 30 teams you have already picked. Those five teams will mean that you will receive double points throughout the season. That will include all bonuses awarded during the season it will also include the End of Season bonuses. Then you will need to pick your SUPER JOKER which must be 1 of your original 5 jokers. This will mean that you will receive treble points for that team. The SUPER JOKER could will be key to you either finishing top or bottom so pick wisely. (On the entry form in the paper please put a tick against each of your chosen teams. A “J” instead of a tick if you also want that team to be one of your jokers and “SJ” against the team that you want as a Super Joker).

2. Points allocation, in all Ten Leagues.

(There are some changes from last season, these changes are in red).

League & Cup games:

Home win = 10pts + goals Away win = 20pts + goals

Home Draw = 2pt + goals Away Draw = 4pts + goals

Home Defeat = -10pts Away defeat = -5pts

Every goal scored = 1pt (This counts if your team wins, draws or loses).

Every goal conceded (Win & Defeat only) -1pt.

Goal Bonus Points = 5pts (This is awarded if your teams score 4 or more goals).

Goal Bonus Points = 5pts (This is awarded if your teams score 8 or more goals).

Clean Sheet Bonus = 5pts (This is awarded for both wins and 0-0 draws).

Concede 4 goals = -5pts (This does not apply to drawn games).

Concede 8 goals = -5pts (This does not apply to drawn games).

(Two-legged ties count as two separate games. Cup replays that go to penalties. The penalties are only used to decide the winner. No points are awarded for the penalties scored).

Bonus points for reaching various rounds in each Cup competition:

For reaching the FA Cup 1st round proper and each round beyond = 25pts.

For reaching the Quarterfinals and each round beyond in all the other cup competitions that are involved in the competition which are listed below = 25pts.

League Leaders & Bottom Club bonus:

At the end of each month up to and including April 2027 the top three teams leading each of the ten leagues will be awarded **40pts, 20pts & 10pts** respectively. The bottom three teams of the ten leagues will be awarded **-40pts, -20pts & -10pts** respectively. The Mixture bonus points will be allocated based on the top three and worst three teams over the leagues that are included in The Mixture Leagues. (Please remember and this is important these bonus points will only count towards the main FNL season total and not the Manager of the Month points).

Manager of the Month Bonus Points.

Each month the best and worst team in each of the ten leagues will be awarded **40, 20 & 10pts** and **-40, -20 & -10pts** respectively. (These bonus points only count in the Manager of the Month calculations).

Play-Off Games:

The actual Play-Off games themselves will be awarded points as if they were league games. The Play-Off Final winners will be awarded 150pts for gaining promotion. The defeated team in each play-off final will

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be awarded 50pts. *(All these points will be awarded at the end of the season).*

End of Season Bonus Points: *(These points will be awarded at the end of the FNL Season in May 2027).*

All League Champions will receive 250pts for winning their respective leagues. Second place will get 125pts and third place will receive 60pts. The bottom team in each league at the end of the season's Fantasy Non-League will be awarded -250pts. Second from bottom -125pts and third from bottom -60pts.

Cup Winners will receive 250pts for the FA Trophy and 150pts for the other Cups.

Play-Off Winners will receive 150pts.

New this season, the team that goes the furthest in the FA Cup will receive 100pts if there is more than one team each will receive 100pts.

Remember if your FNL Joker team get these bonuses they will be doubled, for example a league champion picked in August 2026 at the start of the FNL Season will win you 500pts. Also, if your Super Joker is a league champion that team will gain you 750pts.

The Mixture Leagues will be awarded the End of Season Bonuses based on their respective league positions in the league that make up the Mixture leagues. However, if any of the clubs in The Mixture win their respective leagues or get relegated, they will also receive 150pts or -150pts respectively.

3. The following Leagues and Cup competitions will be involved in this season's Fantasy Non-League: -

<u>National League</u> -	FA Cup and FA Trophy. (The Nation League Cup does not feature).
<u>National North</u> -	FA Cup and FA Trophy.
<u>National South</u> -	FA Cup and FA Trophy.
<u>Northern Premier</u> -	FA Cup, FA Trophy.
<u>Isthmian Premier</u> -	FA Cup, FA Trophy and League Cup.
<u>Southern Premier Central</u> -	FA Cup, FA Trophy.
<u>Southern Premier South</u> -	FA Cup, FA Trophy.
<u>The Mixture Leagues</u> -	FA Cup, FA Trophy and League Cup.

Entry this season will be the same as normal either via the Non-League Paper or on-line via the NLP website. If you can enter on-line I would suggest you do as this is the easiest way.

Ian White.

Fantasy Non-League.