

# **KDM Group named as new title sponsor of revamped Challenge Cup**

**The SPFL has today announced KDM Group as the new title sponsor of the revamped Challenge Cup – which will be renamed the KDM Evolution Trophy.**

The SPFL has agreed a multi-year deal with the Scottish based, internationally operating construction firm as the league reveals further details of its new competition format and a record-breaking prize pot.

The title partnership marks another milestone in KDM Group's growing and significant support of Scottish football alongside their Soccer Centre partnership with the Scottish FA and stadium sponsorship of Dunfermline Athletic's KDM Group East End Park.

The competition logo, also revealed today, features the illustration of the brand-new competition trophy which has been commissioned by the SPFL and KDM Group to celebrate this exciting new era for one of Scottish football's best loved competitions. The final trophy will be unveiled this summer, in time for the tournament's kick off.

An estimated £1.25 million in prize money will be shared with clubs for the 2025/26 KDM Evolution Trophy – an increase of more than 50% on this year's competition.

Next season's winners will receive £150,000, with increased prize money at every stage in the competition.

Competition format changes were confirmed earlier in the year alongside a new Scottish FA Cooperation System, which is designed to strengthen youth development in the Scottish game.

The new set-up will continue to include William Hill Premiership B teams in support of the Scottish FA's aim to provide more opportunities for players in the key 'transition phase' of ages 16-21, as they move from the academy environment to senior football.

In a further move to allow the best young players in the country to experience first-team football at an earlier age, youth prospects aged 15 will now be eligible to participate in the competition.

The new format includes an opening round league phase and was inspired by UEFA's new club competition formats. The first round league phase will comprise 10 William Hill League 1 clubs, 10 William Hill League 2 clubs, and 10 William Hill Premiership B-teams.

Clubs participating in the league phase of the competition will be split into three pots by division and regionalised into North and South sections, reducing travel costs for clubs and supporters across six league phase matchdays.

Points gained by clubs across six league phase matchdays will feed into a single league table, with the top 22 clubs qualifying for the seeded knock-out Round of 32.

William Hill Championship clubs will enter the competition from the Round of 32 as seeded clubs, alongside clubs finishing in the top six of the league phase, with the remainder of the competition following a traditional knock-out format.

Neil Doncaster, group chief executive of the SPFL, said: "We are really pleased to welcome KDM Group as the title sponsor for the KDM Evolution Trophy from season 2025/26, and to announce a significant rise in prize money for next season's competition.

"KDM Group is a highly-respected and well-established firm in Scotland, the UK and beyond, and have already demonstrated a passion for Scottish football. They have a proud history of supporting our national sport and this long-term deal is really positive news for all 42 member clubs.

"We're confident the new competition format will help develop some of our most promising players across the country. Allowing players to compete at a high level from the age of 15 will pay dividends for them, for their clubs and ultimately, for the national side."

The changes to the KDM Evolution Trophy format were made following lengthy consultation with SPFL clubs and the launch of a Scottish FA Transition Phase report last year which sought to establish trends in successful player development from across the world, and those recommendations fed into discussions with clubs, the SPFL and Scottish FA.

William Hill Premiership B-teams will play all league phase matches away from home in a further move to reduce travel costs for William Hill League 1 and League 2 clubs and their supporters.

Clubs participating in the league phase will also be permitted to play a limited number of trialists to support squad management in the early stages of the season.

Doncaster added: "We've had long discussions with our member clubs and the Scottish FA about this new competition format and we've also introduced some key principles to reduce travel time and costs, particularly for William Hill League 1 and 2 clubs.

“We would lastly like to thank the SPFL Trust and the donors who support them, who have been fantastic supporters of this competition for the last four seasons.”

KDM Group offers a variety of construction services to blue chip clients across the UK and Europe, which includes delivery of services such as: general contractor, interior fit-out, mechanical and electrical, manufacturing and design. The company is based in Dalgety Bay, Fife, with regional offices and operations throughout the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Republic of Ireland.

Iain Jones, Chief Executive of KDM Group, said: “We’re incredibly proud to support the launch of this exciting new football competition and to see the KDM Evolution Trophy come to life. The name reflects the evolution of our business, from a smallshopfitting company to a leading international brand. It mirrors the journey of this tournament and the aspiring players it supports. Our investment in football spans all levels of the game, from grassroots to the professional stage.

“Through our KDM Group Soccer Centres, we provide primary-aged schoolgirls access to the game whilst having fun, helping to grow the game from the ground up. We’ve previously been the official partner of the Scottish Cup and are proud sponsors of the Scotland Women’s National Team & Dunfermline Athletic FC.

“This new tournament is another step forward, providing a platform for talent to grow and evolve, just as we have.”

The full schedule of prize monies for the KDM Evolution Trophy is set out below:

Winner – £150,000

Runner up – £100,000

Losing semi-finalists – £75,000

Losing quarter-finalists – £50,000

Round of 16 losers – £40,000

Round of 32 losers – £30,000

1st round (league phase) losers – £15,000-18,500 (depending on final league position)

A summary of key competition dates is set out below:

League Phase MD1: 12/13 August 2025

League Phase MD2: 26/27 August 2025

League Phase MD3: 6/7 September 2025

League Phase MD4: 23/24 September 2025

League Phase MD5: 11/12 October 2025

League Phase MD6: 11 November 2025

Round of 32: 9/10 December 2025

Round of 16: 6/7 January 2026

Quarter Final: 27/28 January 2026

Semi Final: 24/25 February 2026

Final: 28/29 March 2026 / 4/5 April 2026