



COMPETITION REGULATIONS

AFC U-23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2018



AFC
U23
CHAMPIONSHIP
2018™

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Competition Regulations

AFC U-23 Championship 2018

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DEFINITIONS

In these Competition Regulations, capitalised terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context specifically indicates otherwise.

Accommodation	Any location approved by the AFC which provides accommodation to the AFC Delegation, Team Official Delegations, AFC Commercial Rights Partner, and Official Licensees.
Accreditation Card	Any physical item which is issued by the AFC and/or Organising Association which provides the recipient the right to access a Controlled Access Area (or part thereof) where the Controlled Access Area is under the control of the AFC or the Organising Association.
Advertising Rights	The right to promote brand and/or corporate names and/or products and/or services at and/or in relation to the Competition by whatever means available, whether existing now or to be developed in the future, whether at the Stadia or Facility Areas or within the Controlled Access Areas, in association with the Competition Marks and/or AFC Marks, by in-stadium/out-stadium perimeter signage and other advertising, digital signage and screens, closed circuit television, equipment usage or other methods and through printed matter (including digitally delivered printed matter) such as programmes, posters, letterheads, press releases, newsletters and Tickets, and subject to any AFC regulations, the right to display such advertising on the clothing or footwear worn, or on any equipment used, carried or transported by officials (including for the avoidance of doubt Match Officials), medical and security staff, ball kids, player escorts, flag bearers and/or photographers. The display of the name and/or logo of the bona fide supplier of clothing on the strip of the uniforms of the officials are also included. For the avoidance of doubt, advertising on the strip of Participating Players is excluded, other than where it is the trade mark of the bona fide manufacturer and is in accordance with any FIFA and/or AFC regulations. Similarly, branding on any equipment, goods and/or services used in connection with the Competition, save where supplied by an Official Licensee, may only include customary branding of the bona fide manufacturer and may not be associated in any way with the Commercial Rights.

AFC	Asian Football Confederation.
AFCAS	The AFC Administration System, the AFC's online competition management and registration system.
AFC Commercial Rights Partner	The entity appointed by the AFC for the sale of Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) and the provision of services in relation thereto.
AFC Committee	Any Committee of the AFC as constituted in accordance with the AFC Statutes.
AFC Competitions Committee	The AFC's internal organising committee for the Competition which has been appointed in accordance with the AFC Statutes, and which has ultimate authority over all matters relating to the organisation of the Competition.
AFC Delegation	(i) AFC staff; (ii) Match Officials; (iii) Other officials appointed by the AFC; (iv) AFC Committee members; and (v) AFC guests.
AFC Marks	All design marks, slogans, designations, names, logos, insignia, emblems or devices (in any application) owned and/or controlled by the AFC (in any language) relating to the AFC itself, but excluding the Competition Marks.
AFC Website	The domain http://www.the-afc.com owned by the AFC, including without limitation all other domains or official media platforms and channels created and/or owned by the AFC (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc).
Broadcast Licensee	Any entity, including the Host Broadcaster, which has been granted the Media Rights from the AFC or the AFC Commercial Rights Partner for the Competition.
Champion	The Participating Team that wins the final Match of the Competition.
Clean Stadium	A Stadium or Official Training Site, whether inside, in the air space above or the outer perimeter, delivered to the AFC at a prescribed time, that is free from:

	<p>(i) any signage or advertisement, commercial or otherwise, of any kind, whether on any stadium infrastructure, staff uniforms, accreditations, fences, equipment or elsewhere;</p> <p>(ii) third party agreements relating to the use and operation of the Stadium (or part thereof;) and/or</p> <p>(iii) stadium or venue naming rights.</p>
Commercial Rights	Advertising Rights, Concession Rights, Hospitality Rights, Image Rights, Media Rights, Merchandise Rights, Promotional Rights, Sponsorship Rights, and Travel and Tour Rights.
Competition	The AFC U-23 Championship 2018, which includes without limitation, all Matches as set out in the Match Schedule, all qualifying Matches, all activities on the Field of Play (other than Matches), opening ceremonies, presentation or closing ceremonies, press conferences or Official Functions connected therewith.
Competition Data	Any and all information related to the Competition, including fixture lists, Image Rights, information and/or statistics about the Participating Teams and/or Participating Players, information and/or statistics about their participation and/or performance in the Competition, Match analysis, Referee decisions, and any other information in relation to the Competition.
Competition Marks	All design marks, slogans, designations, names, logos, insignia, emblems, mascot or devices (in any application) owned and/or controlled by the AFC (in any language) relating to the Competition.
Competition Title	“AFC U-23 Championship 2018” or any variation thereof as advised and adopted by the AFC.
Competition Website	The official website of the Competition with a dedicated URL including without limitation all other domains or official media platforms and channels of the Competition created and/or owned by the AFC (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc).
Complimentary Tickets	Tickets which are supplied without charge.

Concession Rights	Sampling, vending, display and other distribution methods and payment methods connected therewith for and of products or services, including pourage rights at the Stadia and Facility Areas.
Controlled Access Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) any Stadium; (ii) any Official Training Site; (iii) any official hotel (public areas being excepted), subject to and to the extent agreed in any executed hotel agreement; (iv) any official exclusion zone encircling a Stadium on a Match day; (v) any official parking area, accreditation centre, International Broadcast Compound, and/or hospitality area; (vi) the venue of any Official Function; (vii) any official AFC fan park; (viii) Facility Areas; and/or (ix) any other location and/or facility designated by the AFC as a Controlled Access Area; <p>associated to the Competition to which access is permitted only to those in possession of an Accreditation Card, Ticket, and/or other officially-sanctioned entry permit.</p>
Extra Time	Two (2) equal periods of additional time which shall be played in accordance with these Regulations should there be no winner at the conclusion of a Match.
Facility Areas	The location of Official Functions, ceremonies, press centres, ticket offices, competition hotels, media areas (including without limitation areas used for viewing of any public exhibition), sponsor village areas (including without limitation “AFC fan park” areas, and areas used for the activation of the Commercial Rights), official hospitality areas (including without limitation areas used for the exploitation of the Hospitality Rights), and information centres controlled by or on behalf of the AFC and used in connection with the Competition whether at the Stadium or elsewhere at the Venues.
Field of Play	The area described in Law 1 of the Laws of the Game issued by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) and administered by FIFA.

FIFA	The Federation International de Football Association.
Finals	The Final Stage of the Competition, split into the Group Stage and Knockout Stage.
Football Association	The controlling body for football within a country or territory recognised by the AFC.
Force Majeure	Any event affecting the performance or any provision of these Regulations arising from or attributable to acts, events, omissions or accidents which are beyond the reasonable control of a party, and shall include but not be limited to abnormally inclement weather, flood, lightning, storm, fire, explosion, earthquake, structural damage, epidemic or other natural disaster, failure or shortage of power supplies, war, terrorist action, military operations, riot, crowd disorder, strike, lock-outs or other industrial action, or civil commotion.
Group Stage	The first stage of the Finals held in accordance with these Regulations.
Hospitality Rights	The opportunity to offer and sell hospitality and entertainment facilities at the Venues or within the Controlled Access Areas in combination with the Tickets as may be purchased from the Host Association whether such facilities are in boxes, marquees or otherwise, but excluding those private facilities reserved for AFC officials and its guests not forming part of the Commercial Rights.
Host Broadcaster	The party appointed by the AFC to ensure and provide the production of broadcast signals of the Matches and other events of the Competition, and the provision of all related services in accordance with the Media Rights granted to it.
Host City	Any city and/or identifiable metropolitan area in which any Match is staged.
Image Rights	The right to use still and/or moving images and/or representations of images of Participating Teams and Participating Players participating in the Competition, and including, for the avoidance of doubt, images of Participating Officials, Match Officials, and other officials forming part of the Competition.

Kicks from the Penalty Mark	“Kicks from the Penalty Mark” as described in the Laws of the Game.
Knockout Stage	The second stage of the Finals held in accordance with these Regulations.
Laws of the Game	The laws of association football laid down by the IFAB.
Match	<p>A football match in its entirety (including a replayed and/or deferred football match, Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark) which takes place as part of the Competition in accordance with the Match Schedule.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, a Match formally commences when the Stadium is officially opened to spectators and formally concludes when the Stadium is officially closed to spectators.</p>
Match Officials	Any individual appointed to officiate a Match in the Competition in the role of referee, assistant referee, fourth official or fifth official, and the appointed Referee Instructor(s) and/or Referee Assessor(s).
Match Schedule	The official schedule which sets out, without limitation, the dates and times on which Matches will be played, the Stadium at which the Matches will be played, and the names of the Participating Teams.
Media	Any individual granted a media Accreditation Card by the AFC.
Media Rights	The right and license to produce, edit, and transmit, for intelligible reception throughout the world in any language and in any format, and on any platform including film, fixed media, digital media, games, internet, public exhibition, radio, mobile, and television, a visual, audio-visual, and/or audio signal and/or image or recording (including without limitation the basic feed, multi feeds, additional feeds, audio feeds, a feed incorporating Competition Data, world feed, and unilateral feeds) of the Competition, and all interview activities and action during and forming part of the Competition including Official Functions and the Image Rights by any and all means of transmission distribution, exhibition and reception, now existing or hereinafter developed including but

not limited to analogue, digital, satellite cable and interactive communication systems, on a live, delayed, and unlimited repeat basis, in full or in part (including without limitation by way of clips and/or highlights and/or support programmes and/or magazine shows and/or news access), and all rights to exploit any and all commercial opportunities (including for example broadcast sponsorship and commercial airtime opportunities) arising from and/or in connection with such rights.

Member Association	A Football Association which is a member of the AFC.
Merchandise Rights	The right granted to Official Licensees for the use and exploitation of the Competition Marks and/or official designation in the manufacture, packaging, distribution, and sale of goods and services of all kinds, including items of equipment (i.e. footballs), clothing, coins, medals, games (electronic or otherwise), other collectibles and premiums related to the Competition.
Official Function	<p>Any event which is officially organised or sanctioned by the AFC in connection with the Competition.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, this expressly includes, without limitation, all matches and/or events held at Official Training Sites, the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony, any AFC gala dinner, lunch, or banquet, cultural events, official press conferences, and launch events.</p>
Official Licensee	Any entity to which the AFC and the AFC Commercial Rights Partner has granted the right to exercise and exploit the Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) in respect of the Competition.
Official Training Site	Any site designated by the Organising Association and approved by the AFC for use by the Participating Teams throughout the duration of the Competition for training purposes.
Organising Association	A Member Association approved by the AFC to organise, stage, and host Matches in the Competition.
Participating Official	Any official who is registered to participate in the Competition.

Participating Player	Any player who is registered to participate in the Competition.
Participating Team	Any representative team affiliated to a Member Association who participates in the Competition.
Promotional Rights	Any rights to official publications, official suppliers, official products, sales promotion including but not limited to the right to organise promotional competitions (including without limitation any sweepstakes or lotteries) and to make awards and give prizes, official music rights, the right to use an official designation and all other rights of commercial value in regard to the Competition.
Proprietary Interests	Without limitation, intellectual property, copyright and analogous rights, trademark rights, moral rights, performing rights, personality rights, and all remedies available under the applicable laws of unfair competition comprised in the Commercial Rights.
Qualifiers	The Qualifying Stage of the Competition.
Regulations	These Competition Regulations.
Runner Up	The Participating Team that loses the final Match of the Competition.
Sponsorship Rights	The right, in any and all media, throughout the world, and in all languages, to promote an association between the Competition and certain products, services, and/or brands, and shall include (by way of illustration only) the exclusive right to exercise rights of association with the Competition, including without limitation the right to (a) use an official designation; (b) use the AFC Marks and/or applicable Competition Marks on branded products and/or product packaging (including Premiums, and in relation to the Competition Marks only on items for retail sale) and/or advertising; (c) receive commercial programme Tickets, and (d) receive broadcast sponsorship opportunities in connections with broadcasts of a Match or Official Function.
Stadium	Any stadium at which a Match is played. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes:

- (i) the entire premises (to the extent that a valid Accreditation Card or Ticket is required in order to gain access) of a stadium facility inside the outer stadium perimeter fence and (on Match days and any day on which any official training takes place within the stadium), the aerial space above such stadium premises;
- (ii) parking facilities;
- (iii) VIP and hospitality areas;
- (iv) the Media tribune;
- (v) concessions areas;
- (vi) commercial display areas;
- (vii) buildings;
- (viii) the Field of Play;
- (ix) any broadcast compound or stadium media centre;
- (x) any stands; and
- (xi) any areas beneath the stands.

Team Official Delegation	The final-registered delegation of a Participating Team for the duration of the relevant stage of the Competition subject to the limits set out in the competition regulations.
Ticket	A pass providing access to a venue for the purpose of attending a Match, official training, or Official Function.
Ticketing	All operational measures to provide Tickets to all spectators of every Match and for Official Functions of the Competition allowing them to enter the Stadium or a Venue. Ticketing shall include the management of the operation necessary for the production, sale, distribution, delivery and payment of the Tickets of the Competition.
Travel and Tour Rights	The right to organise and/or sub-license official travel and tour activities in relation to the Competition, which travel and tour activities shall, for the avoidance of doubt, include the provision of Tickets to a Match and/or Official Function of the Competition.
Venue	The Host City and immediate surrounding area in which a Stadium is located.

For the purposes of these Regulations, and provided the context so permits:

- (a) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;
- (b) the feminine gender shall include the masculine and vice-versa;
- (c) reference to natural persons shall include any legal person or corporation;
- (d) references to the AFC shall include its successors and permitted assigns and, in relation to the availability of the Commercial Rights, its respective Member Associations and AFC Committees.
- (e) reference to the AFC Commercial Rights Partner or Official Licensees shall include where advised by the AFC, its successors, and permitted assigns and, in relation to the exercise and exploitation of the Commercial Rights; and
- (f) all defined terms, unless otherwise stated herein shall bear the same meaning as ascribed in the AFC Statutes, unless the context indicates otherwise.

SECTION 1: AFC U-23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The AFC stages the AFC U-23 Championship (“**Competition**”) comprising of a Qualifying Stage (“**Qualifiers**”) and Final Stage (“**Finals**”) once every two (2) years.
- 1.2. These Regulations govern the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the AFC, Organising Association, Member Associations, Participating Teams, Participating Players and Participating Officials taking part in the Competition.
- 1.3. These Regulations and all related directives, decisions, guidelines, and circulars issued by the AFC shall be binding upon all parties participating and involved in the preparation, organisation, and hosting of the Competition.
- 1.4. The AFC Competition Operations Manual (“**Manual**”) forms an integral part and shall be read in conjunction with these Regulations. The Manual shall be binding upon all parties participating and involved in the preparation, organisation, and hosting of the Competition. Failure to adhere to any matter set out in the Manual may lead to the imposition of sanctions as set out in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code. In the event of any discrepancy between these Regulations and the Manual, these Regulations shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.
- 1.5. Any rights and Proprietary Interests associated with the Competition that are not granted by these Regulations and/or specific agreements to any Organising Association or Member Association shall vest in the AFC.
- 1.6. Any reference to the AFC Statutes and to AFC and FIFA regulations refer to those valid at the time of application.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2. The Asian Football Confederation

- 2.1. The AFC shall be responsible for organising the Competition in accordance with the AFC Statutes. The AFC General Secretariat shall carry out the necessary administrative work in support of the AFC Competitions Committee.
- 2.2. The responsibilities of the AFC shall include, but are not limited to:
 - 2.2.1. supervising general preparations and deciding on the Competition format, the draws, and the entries to the Competition;
 - 2.2.2. determining the Match Schedule (*cf.* Article 8);
 - 2.2.3. selecting Stadia for the Competition (*cf.* Article 15);
 - 2.2.4. appointing Match Officials for each Match;
 - 2.2.5. choosing the official football and stipulated technical material;
 - 2.2.6. approving the choice of the WADA-accredited laboratories that will carry out doping analyses (*cf.* Article 46);
 - 2.2.7. reporting cases where appropriate to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (*cf.* Article 49);
 - 2.2.8. replacing Participating Teams that have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Articles 6 and 7);
 - 2.2.9. dealing with cases of abandoned Matches or cancelled Matches (*cf.* Articles 13 and 14);
 - 2.2.10. dealing with cases of force majeure (*cf.* Article 56);
 - 2.2.11. providing insurance coverage for the AFC Delegation appointed to any Match from the time of their departure from their home Member Association to their departure from the Venue; and
 - 2.2.12. dealing with any other aspect of the Competition that is not the responsibility of any other body of the AFC pursuant to these Regulations or the AFC Statutes (*cf.* Article 57).
- 2.3. All decisions made by the AFC Competitions Committee and/or AFC General Secretariat in relation to the Competition are final and binding and not appealable (*cf.* Article 54).

- 2.4. All decisions made by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in relation to the Competition are subject to the operation of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

3. Organising Association

- 3.1. The principal obligations and responsibilities of any Organising Association are stipulated in the (where relevant) Organising Association Agreement (“OAA”), these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars.
- 3.2. The Organising Association shall undertake, at their own cost, to:
 - 3.2.1. observe all obligations set out in the (where relevant) OAA, these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars and all applicable national and supra-national laws;
 - 3.2.2. perform each of its obligations and exercise each of the rights granted to it as host, in connection with the hosting, staging and organization of the Competition in accordance with professional standards;
 - 3.2.3. assist and coordinate with Member Associations on all arrangements relating to the Competition in agreement with the AFC;
 - 3.2.4. negotiate with and/or lobby the appropriate government bodies and/or local authorities to assist for the successful hosting, staging and organising of the Competition;
 - 3.2.5. obtain all applicable and relevant licenses, permits, grants and authorisations as may be required to fulfil its obligation in relation to the hosting, staging and organising of the Competition;
 - 3.2.6. comply with the AFC’s instructions on the provision of key services, facilities, equipment and infrastructure at each Stadium;
 - 3.2.7. provide the necessary assistance and support to the AFC, AFC Commercial Rights Partner and Official Licensees in relation to the use and exploitation of the Commercial Rights and all Proprietary Interests of the AFC and the protection and enforcement of rights in relation thereto;
 - 3.2.8. procure all necessary insurance policies which shall provide coverage for all risks relating to the hosting, staging and organizing of the Competition and name the AFC as a co-insured;
 - 3.2.9. obtaining all clearances and executing all required documentation to enable the free and unfettered exercise and exploitation of Commercial

Rights and clearance of all products, equipment or materials relating to the exploitation of the Commercial Rights of the Competition; and

3.2.10. guarantee safety and security at the Stadium.

- 3.3. The Organising Association shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend the AFC, the AFC Commercial Rights Partner, its Official Licensees as well as their officers, members, agents, auxiliary persons, representatives, and employees from and against all liabilities, obligations, damages, losses, claims, demands, recoveries, deficiencies, costs or expenses (including without limitation all costs and expenses for finding and contracting with another Organising Association able and willing to stage the Competition and/or all attorney fees and expenses) which such parties may suffer or incur in connection with, resulting from, or arising out of any breach by the Organising Association (including its officers, directors, representatives, auxiliary persons, employees or agents) or any act or omission of the Organising Association (including its officers, directors, representatives, auxiliary persons, employees or agents) in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement.

4. Member Associations

- 4.1. The principal obligations and responsibilities of each Member Association are stipulated in the Participating Team Agreement (“PTA”), these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes, and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars.
- 4.1.1. Each Member Association that has entered the Competition must submit a PTA.
- 4.1.2. The PTA shall be completed and submitted to the AFC not later than the deadline provided by the AFC.
- 4.1.3. Failure to submit the PTA to the AFC by the deadline shall result in the non-participation of the relevant Member Association.
- 4.2. Each Member Association shall ensure as a condition of its participation in the Competition that every member of its Team Official Delegation for each Match is aware of and agrees to comply with the PTA.
- 4.3. Each Member Association shall undertake to:
- 4.3.1. observe all obligations set out in the PTA, these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes, and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars, and applicable national and supra-national laws;
- 4.3.2. comply with the Laws of the Game laid down by the IFAB;

- 4.3.3. accept that all the administrative, disciplinary and refereeing matters connected with the Competition shall be settled by the AFC in compliance with these Regulations;
- 4.3.4. field their strongest team throughout the Competition;
- 4.3.5. observe the principles of Fair Play;
- 4.3.6. ensure the good conduct of its Team Official Delegation and of any person carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the Competition, which includes but is not limited to their arrival on the territory of any Organising Association until their departure;
- 4.3.7. accept all arrangements made by any Organising Association in agreement with the AFC;
- 4.3.8. attend and participate in all official activities and events, including without limitation any team arrival meeting, match coordination meeting, press conferences, and other media and marketing activities in accordance with the instructions issued by the AFC;
 - 4.3.8.1. failure to attend and/or fully participate in any official activity or event shall result in the Member Association being fined at least USD5,000.00; and
 - 4.3.8.2. the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion;
- 4.3.9. provide to the AFC, free of charge, prior to the Competition, any photographs, audio/visual materials and/or information regarding the Member Association, Participating Team, Participating Player and/or Participating Officials including without limitation statistics and historical information and any further information as requested by the AFC;
- 4.3.10. link the official URL for the Competition on its official website.
- 4.3.11. not establish any digital, media or social media platform without the involvement and express approval of the AFC
- 4.4. Each Member Association shall, at its own expense, be solely responsible throughout the Competition for:
 - 4.4.1. the procurement of insurance coverage of its Team Official Delegation which shall include without limitation hospital and surgical insurance, travel insurance, and/or sports equipment insurance for all Matches;

- 4.4.2. all other necessary insurance policies, which must provide an appropriate guaranteed sum for injury and damage to persons, objects, and property, and correspond with the specific circumstances of the Member Association's participating in the Competition. The AFC must be notified of all insurance policies, and may request copies of any and all policies at its discretion;
 - 4.4.3. payment of incidental expenses and for any costs incurred by its Team Official Delegation (*cf.* Article 28);
 - 4.4.4. payment of any costs of extending the stay of any member of its Team Official Delegation in any Organising Association (*cf.* Article 28);
 - 4.4.5. obtaining visas to enter the territory of any Organising Association no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match at that Venue. This includes all costs related to the visa application process; and
 - 4.4.6. payment of all taxes, fees, duties and any other costs related to the importation and/or exportation of equipment, merchandise and/or goods to be used for the Competition.
- 4.5. Each Member Association shall indemnify, defend, and hold the AFC and all of its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents, and all other auxiliary persons free and harmless against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, claims, actions, fines, and expenses (including reasonable legal expenses) of whatsoever kind or nature resulting from, arising out of, or attributable to, any non-compliance with these Regulations by the Member Association, their Team Official Delegation, their affiliates and any third-parties contracted to the Member Association.
- 4.6. Member Associations may qualify directly and shall undertake, if required, to take part in the following competitions:
 - 4.6.1. any intercontinental competition(s) arranged by the AFC with other confederations.
- 4.7. Member Associations are not authorised to represent the AFC or the Competition without the prior written approval of the AFC.
- 4.8. All Participating Players and Participating Officials shall ensure their presence at the AFC Annual Awards in the relevant calendar year if they are nominated for an award.
- 4.9. Each Member Association shall ensure that any decision made by the AFC relating to its duties and responsibilities is enforced immediately.

SECTION 3: ENTRY, WITHDRAWAL, MATCH SCHEDULE, COMPETITION SYSTEM

5. Entry

Qualifiers

- 5.1. The AFC shall determine the Member Associations eligible to participate in the Qualifiers.
- 5.2. Eligible Member Associations must complete a PTA and submit it to the AFC in accordance with Article 4 to confirm their entry into the Qualifiers.

Finals

- 5.3. Sixteen (16) Member Associations shall participate in the Competition by virtue of:
 - 5.3.1. qualifying through of the Qualifiers; and/or
 - 5.3.2. being the Organising Association; and/or
 - 5.3.3. being invited by the AFC to participate in the Finals.

6. Withdrawal Prior to Commencement of the Competition

- 6.1. All Member Associations undertake that their Participating Teams shall play all of their Matches in the Competition until elimination.
- 6.2. In the case of a Member Association withdrawing or being excluded from the Competition, the AFC Competitions Committee shall be responsible for making any decisions, including without limitation whether to:
 - 6.2.1. replace the Member Association;
 - 6.2.2. change the competition system (*cf.* Article 9); and/or
 - 6.2.3. change the technical rules (*cf.* Section 4).

Qualifiers

- 6.3. Any Member Association that withdraws from the Qualifiers shall be fined:
 - 6.3.1. up to thirty (30) days before its first Match: at least USD10,000;
 - 6.3.2. less than thirty (30) days before its first Match: at least USD20,000.
- 6.4. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in its discretion.

Finals

- 6.5. Any Member Association that withdraws from the Finals shall be fined:

- 6.5.1. up to thirty (30) days before its first Match: at least USD25,000;
- 6.5.2. less than thirty (30) days before its first Match: at least USD40,000.
- 6.6. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in its discretion.

7. Withdrawal After Commencement of the Competition

- 7.1. Any Member Association that:
 - 7.1.1. withdraws from the Competition after it has commenced; or
 - 7.1.2. does not report for a Match; or
 - 7.1.3. refuses to continue a Match; or
 - 7.1.4. leaves the Stadium prior to the completion of a Match,shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition after its commencement.
- 7.2. A Member Association that withdraws from the Competition after it has commenced shall:
 - 7.2.1. have all its Matches cancelled and considered null and void. For the avoidance of doubt, all points and goals in those Matches shall not be taken into consideration when determining the final rankings in the Group Stage pursuant to Article 9.3;
 - 7.2.2. be required to pay compensation for any and all damages or losses suffered by, where applicable, the other Participating Teams, the AFC, the AFC Commercial Rights Partner, Official Licensees, and the Member Associations. The amount of compensation shall be determined by the AFC Executive Committee;
 - 7.2.3. be disqualified from participating in the next edition of the Competition;
 - 7.2.4. be disqualified from participating in the Competition, if qualification is attained;
 - 7.2.5. be disqualified from participating in any tournaments listed in Article 4.6, if qualification has been attained;
 - 7.2.6. be fined:
 - 7.2.6.1. at least USD50,000 if it withdraws after the commencement of the Qualifiers; or

- 7.2.6.2. at least **USD75,000** if it withdraws after the commencement of the Finals;
- 7.2.7. be referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee which may impose further sanctions in its discretion; and
- 7.2.8. return to the AFC any subsidy that had been paid in support of their participation in the Competition or if not yet paid, forfeit their right to that subsidy.
- 7.3. The above Articles 7.1 and 7.2 are not applicable in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Competitions Committee.
- 7.4. The AFC Competitions Committee shall take whatever action it deems necessary in cases of Force Majeure.

8. Match Schedule

- 8.1. All Matches shall be played in accordance with the AFC Competitions Calendar.
- 8.2. The Match Schedule shall be determined following the official draws for the Qualifiers and Finals.
- 8.3. The AFC Competitions Committee retains final discretion to amend the Match Schedule at any time.

9. Competition System

- 9.1. The Competition shall consist of:
 - 9.1.1. Qualifiers; and
 - 9.1.2. Finals, comprised of the Group Stage and Knockout Stage.
- 9.2. The AFC Competitions Committee shall decide upon the format of the competition system.
- 9.3. The ranking in each group shall be determined in descending order as follows:
 - 9.3.1. higher number of points obtained in all group Matches;
 - 9.3.2. if two (2) or more Participating Teams are equal on points, the following criteria are applied to determine the ranking (in descending order):
 - Head-to-Head criteria
 - 9.3.2.1. higher number of points obtained in the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;

9.3.2.2. superior goal difference from the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;

9.3.2.3. higher number of goals scored in the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;

Tiebreaker

9.3.2.4. if, after having applied the Head-to-Head criteria, two (2) or more Participating Teams still have an equal ranking, the Head-to-Head criteria shall be reapplied exclusively to the Matches between the Participating Teams in question to determine their final rankings. If this procedure does not lead to a decision, the Group Results criteria shall apply;

Group Results criteria

9.3.2.5. superior goal difference from all group Matches played;

9.3.2.6. higher number of goals scored from all group Matches played;

9.3.2.7. Kicks from the Penalty Mark if only the two (2) Participating Teams are both on the Field of Play;

9.3.2.8. the lower score calculated according to the number of yellow and red cards received in group Matches (**Appendix 1 of the Manual**); or

9.3.2.9. the drawing of lots.

9.4. Should the competition system require the best-ranked Participating Teams from among different groups to advance, the rankings shall be determined by the method set out at **Appendix 2 of the Manual**.

10. Qualifiers

10.1. The Qualifiers shall be drawn into groups depending on the number of Participating teams.

10.2. Each Member Association shall play against the other Member Associations within its group once in accordance with the Match Schedule.

10.3. The duration of Matches shall be played in accordance with the Manual.

11. Finals

Group Stage

11.1. Sixteen (16) Participating Teams shall be drawn into four (4) groups of four (4) teams each.

- 11.2. Each Member Association shall play against the other Member Associations within its group once in accordance with the Match Schedule.
 - 11.3. The duration of Matches shall be played in accordance with the Manual.
 - 11.4. At the conclusion of the Group Stage:
 - 11.4.1. the first-placed and second-placed Participating Team in each group shall qualify for the Knockout Stage; and
 - 11.4.2. all other Participating Teams shall be eliminated from the Competition.
- Knockout Stage
- 11.5. The Knockout Stage shall consist of Quarter Finals, Semi Finals, 3rd/4th place playoff, and Final, each conducted as single-leg knockout Match.
 - 11.6. Each Round of the Knockout Stage shall be conducted in accordance with the Match Schedule.
 - 11.7. The duration of Match, including Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark (if required), shall be played in accordance with Article 12.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

12. Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- 12.1. If no winner is determined at the end of normal playing time during the Knockout Stage, Extra Time comprising two (2) fifteen (15) minute periods shall be played.
- 12.2. If no winner is determined at the end of Extra Time, Kicks from the Penalty Mark shall be taken in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the Manual

13. Cancellation of Matches

- 13.1. For any Match which is cancelled as a result of Force Majeure, the AFC Competitions Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
- 13.2. Any Match which is cancelled, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Competitions Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the cancellation in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

14. Abandonment of Matches

- 14.1. For any Match which is abandoned as a result of Force Majeure, the AFC Competitions Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
- 14.2. Any Match which is abandoned, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Competitions Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the abandonment in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

15. Stadium

- 15.1. The Organising Association shall ensure that no Matches and/or other activities are held at any Stadia approved to host Matches in the Competition at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first Match, unless written permission has been obtained from the AFC.
 - 15.1.1. The Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.1 shall be fined at least USD5,000.
 - 15.1.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.
- 15.2. Unless otherwise specified or directed by the AFC, the Stadia approved to host Matches in the Competition shall be made available to the AFC as of seven (7) days prior to the first Match until one (1) day after the last Match.

16. Team Bench and Technical Area

- 16.1. A maximum of eight (8) Participating Officials and a maximum of twelve (12) Participating Players are permitted to sit on the team bench during a Match, provided they are in possession of the appropriate Accreditation Card.

17. Official Training Sites

- 17.1. Official Training Sites shall contain a fully equipped training field prepared to Match-condition.

17.1.1. The Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 17.1 shall be fined at least USD5,000.

17.1.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

- 17.2. The Organising Association shall ensure that no Matches and/or other activities are held at any Official Training Site at least seven (7) days prior to the relevant Match, unless written permission has been obtained from the AFC.

- 17.3. Participating Teams must solely utilise Official Training Sites for any official training from four (4) days prior to their first Match until their last match of the Competition.

18. Footballs

Qualifiers

- 18.1. The footballs used in the Qualifiers shall be and supplied by each Organising Association. The Organising Association shall supply the visiting Participating Team with the same football for its official training at the Stadium.

- 18.2. Participating Teams shall solely utilise the training footballs provided by the Organising Association for training and warming-up purposes.

- 18.3. Only footballs that bear one (1) of the FIFA quality marks or the “IMS – International Match ball Standard” mark shall be utilised for the Qualifiers.

Finals

- 18.4. The footballs used in the Finals shall be selected and supplied by the AFC.

- 18.5. Participating Teams shall solely utilise the footballs provided by the AFC for training and warming-up purposes.

- 18.6. Each Member Association is responsible for any taxes and/or fees pertaining to the customs clearance of footballs delivered to it by the AFC.

SECTION 5: TEAM OFFICIAL DELEGATION

19. Team Official Delegation

19.1. Participating Teams shall ensure that no unauthorised persons are permitted entry into the team dressing room, Field of Play, or any other Controlled Access Area without being in possession of the necessary Accreditation Card.

Qualifiers

19.2. For each Match in the Qualifiers, Participating Teams shall register a Team Official Delegation, subject to the conditions set out below, comprising of between eighteen (18) and twenty-three (23) Participating Players and eight (8) Participating Officials.

19.2.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional four (4) officials who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the eight (8) Participating Officials included in the Team Official Delegation.

19.2.2. All costs related to the additional four (4) officials shall be borne by the relevant Member Association.

19.3. Each Participating Team may nominate maximum eight (8) officials to sit on the team bench, which must include the Head Coach and Team Manager. Their identity must be confirmed on the 'Officials on the Team Bench List' to be submitted prior to the commencement of each Match.

Finals

19.4. Participating Teams shall register a Team Official Delegation, subject to the conditions set out below, comprising of between eighteen (18) and twenty-three (23) Participating Players and twelve (12) Participating Officials.

19.4.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional four (4) officials who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the twelve (12) Participating Officials included in the Team Official Delegation.

19.4.2. All costs related to the additional four (4) officials shall be borne by the relevant Member Association.

19.5. The individuals nominated for the Team Official Delegation for the Finals may differ from the Qualifiers.

19.6. Article 19.3 shall apply equally to the Finals.

20. Eligibility of Players

20.1. Each Member Association shall ensure that all players:

20.1.1. are duly registered with the AFC pursuant to these Regulations;

20.1.2. hold the nationality of its country and are subject to its jurisdiction;

- 20.1.3. were born on or after 1 January 1995; and
- 20.1.4. are eligible to participate for the representative team of the Member Association in accordance with Article 5-8 of the Regulations Governing the Application of the FIFA Statutes.
- 20.2. Individuals who meet the criteria set out in Article 20.1 are eligible to participate in the Competition, subject to the provisions of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 20.3. The approval of the registration of a Participating Player by the AFC General Secretariat does not automatically provide for the eligibility of the Participating Player. Each Member Association is responsible for fielding only eligible Participating Players. Failure to do so shall lead to the consequences stipulated in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
 - 20.3.1. The AFC General Secretariat makes all decisions regarding player registration.
 - 20.3.2. Decisions to reject the registration of a player may be appealed directly to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in accordance with Article 52.
- 20.4. A Participating Player shall be deemed ineligible, without limitation, if:
 - 20.4.1. there is a violation of Article 20.1; or
 - 20.4.2. he participates in a Match contrary to a decision of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, these Regulations, or the operation of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code; or
 - 20.4.3. the AFC determines that any document submitted during registration is false.

21. Registration of Players

- 21.1. There are three (3) stages of player registration for the Competition:
 - 21.1.1. Preliminary Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum fifty (50) Participating Players;
 - 21.1.2. Final Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players comprised of individuals registered in the Preliminary Registration;
 - 21.1.3. Player Selection List: each Participating Team must submit a Player Selection List prior to each Match which identifies the starting eleven

(11) and up to twelve (12) substitutes comprised of individuals registered in the Final Registration.

- 21.2. All Participating Players will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC Competitions Committee. Should a card be misplaced, the relevant Participating Team shall be required to pay USD1,000 as a replacement production fee.
- 21.3. Should the AFC not receive all required documents by the stipulated deadline, the Member Association concerned shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to its commencement and subject to Article 6.

22. Documents for Registration of Players

- 22.1. Participating Players must be registered via the AFCAS online registration with the supporting documents set out in the Manual.

23. Preliminary Registration

- 23.1. Each Participating Team shall submit via AFCAS online registration the supporting documents in accordance with Article 22 by the deadline provided by the AFC.
- 23.2. There is no allocation of jersey numbers during the Preliminary Registration.
- 23.3. Each Participating Team shall register minimum eighteen (18) and maximum fifty (50) Participating Players in the Preliminary Registration.
- 23.4. If a Participating Team fails to register minimum eighteen (18) Participating Players, its Member Association shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to its commencement and subject to Article 6.
- 23.5. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Preliminary Registration.
- 23.6. Once the Preliminary Registration has been received by the AFC and after the deadline has passed, under no circumstances shall Participating Teams be permitted to submit additional names or replace any registered individual, even if their quota of fifty (50) has not been met.

24. Final Registration

- 24.1. Each Participating Team shall submit a Final Registration of minimum eighteen (18) players and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players.
 - 24.1.1. The Final Registration may only be comprised from those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration.
 - 24.1.2. The Participating Players must be assigned jerseys numbered 1-23. Jersey number 1 shall be reserved for a goalkeeper. Each Participating Player shall wear the same number allocated in the Final Registration during all Matches in the Competition.
 - 24.1.3. Each Participating Team shall submit their Final Registration to the AFC by latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Competition.
- 24.2. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Final Registration.
- 24.3. Once the Final Registration has been received by the AFC, Participating Teams may replace any of the registered Participating Players up to six (6) hours prior to their first Match in the Competition, subject to the below conditions:
 - 24.3.1. Any replacement Participating Player must have been registered in the Preliminary Registration.
 - 24.3.2. Replacement Participating Players shall only be allocated the vacated shirt numbers.
 - 24.3.3. To replace a Participating Player, a Participating Team must provide his Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Player in exchange.
 - 24.3.4. Replacement Participating Players shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

25. Player Selection List

- 25.1. For all Matches, each Participating Team will receive a 'Player Selection List' on which the numbers and full names (last name, first name) of the Participating Players are listed prior to their arrival at the Stadium.
- 25.2. Each Participating Team must mark on the 'Player Selection List' the starting eleven (11), including the team captain, and the (up to) twelve (12) substitutes.
 - 25.2.1. Each Participating Player who is marked on the Player Selection List must be available at the Player and Equipment Check undertaken by the AFC Match Commissioner on Match day.

25.3. Each Participating Team must hand their 'Player Selection List' signed by the Head Coach or the Team Manager together with the 'Officials on the Substitution Bench' form with the names of the eight (8) Participating Officials who shall be entitled to sit on the team bench to the AFC Match Commissioner by latest ninety (90) minutes prior to the commencement of each Match.

26. Registration of Officials

26.1. There shall only be one (1) registration period for Participating Officials for the Competition.

26.2. Each Participating Team shall submit via AFCAS online registration the supporting documents in accordance with Article 27 by the deadline provided by the AFC.

26.3. Each Participating Team may nominate twelve (12) Participating Officials. Each Participating Team may also nominate an additional four (4) officials in accordance with Article 19.

26.4. The following two (2) Participating Officials must be registered on the "Participating Officials on the Substitution Bench" Form:

26.4.1. Head Coach; and

26.4.2. Team Manager.

26.5. Each Participating Team is entitled to register a 'Video Analyst' who shall be the only member of a Team Official Delegation entitled to record Matches in the Competition. This recording shall be strictly for technical purposes, and should not interfere with Match operations or be utilised by any Broadcast Licensee.

26.6. All Participating Officials will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC Competitions Committee. Should a card be misplaced, the relevant Participating Team shall be required to pay USD1,000 as a replacement production fee.

26.7. Once the registration of Participating Officials has been received by the AFC, Participating Teams may replace any of the listed Participating Officials up to twenty-four (24) hours before each Match by submitting the documents set out in Article 27 in the AFCAS online registration, subject to the below conditions:

26.7.1. To replace a Participating Official, a Participating Team must provide his Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Official in exchange.

26.7.2. Replacement Participating Officials shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

27. Documents for Registration of Officials

- 27.1. Participating Officials must be registered via the AFCAS online registration with the supporting documents set out in the Manual.

SECTION 6: LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

28. Responsibility

Qualifiers

28.1. The following conditions shall apply to the Qualifiers during the official period:

28.1.1. the visiting Participating Team shall cover its international travel costs to the Venue or the nearest airport, as well as incidental expenses;

28.1.2. the Organising Association shall pay for board and lodging in a high-standard hotel and domestic transport in the Host City for the entire Team Official Delegation of the visiting Participating Team, subject to flight connections;

28.1.3. the Organising Association shall pay for board and lodging in a high-standard hotel and domestic transport in the Host City for the Match Officials, the AFC Match Commissioner, and any other appointed AFC officials; and

28.1.4. the Participating Teams shall not be permitted to stay at the hotel chosen for the AFC Delegation.

Finals

28.2. The AFC and Organising Association shall provide all logistical arrangements in accordance with the Organising Association Agreement. Such arrangements shall be communicated to the Participating Teams by circular prior to the Finals.

SECTION 7: MEDIA

29. Media Access

29.1. The Organising Association shall ensure that the AFC, the Host Broadcaster, and all Broadcast Licensees have free access to the Stadium from ten (10) days prior to the first Match in the Stadium until three (3) days after the final Match in the Stadium to allow for the resolution of any technical issues and for the assembly of the relevant infrastructure required to execute the Media Rights.

30. Press Conferences

30.1. The Head Coach must attend a pre-Match press conference for each Match in which they participate to be held at least one (1) day prior to the Match.

30.2. The Head Coach of each Participating Team must attend a post-Match press conference for each Match in which they participate, commencing no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the Match.

30.3. Any individual who fails to attend an obligatory press conference shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team shall also be held liable in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

31. Mixed Zone

31.1. The Team Official Delegation shall pass through the Mixed Zone on their way from their team dressing room to their bus after each Match.

31.2. Any individual who fails to pass through the mixed zone shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to pass through the Mixed Zone in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

32. Interviews

32.1. If requested by the AFC, Participating Teams shall make their Head Coach and one (1) Participating Player available the day before each Match for an interview of up to ten (10) minutes, to be recorded by the Host Broadcaster or any other Broadcast Licensee, any Official Licensee or Official Partner. All interview locations shall be designated by the AFC Media Officer or AFC General Coordinator.

32.2. If requested by the AFC, Participating Teams shall make their Head Coach available on Match day for an interview of not more than ninety (90) seconds at their point of arrival at the Stadium for the Match.

32.3. Any individual who fails to conduct an interview when requested shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct an interview when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

33. Flash Interviews

- 33.1. If requested by the AFC, any Participating Player and/or Participating Officials shall participate in a 'flash interview' following each Match.
- 33.2. Any individual who fails to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested shall be fined at least **USD2,500**. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

34. Recording of Matches

Qualifiers

- 34.1. Any Organising Association that fails to provide three (3) copies of the Match recording to the AFC Match Commissioner immediately after the completion of each Match shall be fined at least **USD5,000**.

Finals

- 34.2. The AFC shall provide each Participating Team the footage of each Match in the Finals.

SECTION 8: EQUIPMENT

35. Responsibility

- 35.1. The AFC has the sole authority to approve the equipment (including kit) set out in the AFC Equipment Regulations.

- 35.2. Each Member Association shall indemnify the AFC and hold the AFC harmless from any and all damages in the event that a conflict arises as a result of any endorsement deal existing between itself and its sponsor(s) which contravenes the AFC Equipment Regulations.

SECTION 9: TICKETING

36. General Requirements

- 36.1. Tickets shall include seat numbering and serial numbering, and only include AFC Marks, Competition Marks, and/or marks of Official Licensees approved by the AFC.

37. Terms and Conditions

Qualifiers

- 37.1. Each Organising Association shall be responsible for the design, production, distribution, and sales of all Tickets. Such matters are subject to the approval of the AFC.

- 37.2. All costs of printing Tickets shall be borne by each Organising Association.

Finals

- 37.3. The AFC shall, in collaboration with the Organising Association, issue special Ticketing terms and conditions which are applicable to all Ticket holders.

38. Complimentary Tickets

- 38.1. The Organising Association shall provide complimentary Tickets to the AFC for each Match in the Competition as instructed by the AFC.

- 38.2. The Organising Association shall provide the following complimentary Tickets to each Participating Team competing at a Venue which it controls for each Match it participates in:

38.2.1. two (2) VVIP Tickets;

38.2.2. five (5) VIP Tickets; and

38.2.3. twenty (20) Tickets of the next-best category;

38.2.4. two (2) Tickets of the next-best category for all other Matches at the Venue not involving the relevant Member Association.

39. Purchasable Tickets

- 39.1. The Organising Association must make available at least eight percent (8%) of the net saleable capacity of a Stadium available exclusively to the supporters of each Member Association, in a segregated, safe area to be determined by the AFC and the Organising Association.

- 39.2. This allocation shall be comprised of a mixture of Category 1 and Category 2 Tickets. The number of Tickets to be purchased must be declared by each Member Association in accordance with the Ticketing timeline and guidelines issued by the AFC. Each Member Association is responsible for all Tickets purchased, even if not utilised. The price of the Tickets shall not exceed the

price of comparable Tickets that are sold to the general public in the Organising Association.

- 39.3. The Organising Association shall provide the AFC Commercial Rights Partner with the opportunity to buy Tickets at face-value for each Match. The number of Tickets to be purchased must be declared at a time to be mutually agreed between the AFC and the Organising Association.

SECTION 10: COMMERCIAL

40. Rights Protection and Enforcement

- 40.1. The Organising Association shall use reasonable efforts in seeking political and administrative support from all local, regional and national governmental authorities through the implementation of government guarantees and tabling of supplementary legislation for the effective exploitation and protection of the Commercial Rights.
- 40.2. The Organising Association shall, where requested by the AFC, procure at its own cost the registration of all Competition Marks and Competition Websites in its territory, at least two (2) months prior to the start of the Competition.
- 40.3. The Organising Association shall appoint a reasonable number of personnel to assist the AFC in the conduct of its rights protection regime or programme.

41. Clean Stadium and Official Training Sites

- 41.1. The Organising Association shall deliver all Stadia and Official Training Sites as a Clean Stadium seven (7) days before the first Match at each Stadium or official training at each Official Training Site, until 24 hours after the final Match of the Competition.

42. Advertising and Branding

- 42.1. The Organising Association shall ensure that all relevant approvals are secured and unrestricted access for the placement and publishing of advertising or branding of the Competition shall be available to the AFC and/or AFC Commercial Rights Partner seven (7) days before the first Match at each Stadium or official training at each Official Training Site.

SECTION 11: SAFETY AND SECURITY

43. General Principles

- 43.1. All matters relating to safety and security shall be undertaken in compliance with the AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.
- 43.2. The Organising Association shall, in conjunction with the relevant government authorities and/or Stadium owners, devise, plan, and implement adequate security and safety measures for the Competition at all Controlled Access Areas within the Venue and other relevant locations to protect all relevant persons, including without limitation the AFC Delegation, Team Official Delegations, AFC Commercial Rights Partner, Official Licensees, Media, and spectators, and all goods brought in by the AFC, Team Official Delegations, AFC Commercial Rights Partner, and Official Licensees.
- 43.3. The Organising Association shall issue a detailed security plan in the form of a binding agreement with, without limitation, the management of all Stadia, Official Training Site(s), and the Accommodation of the AFC Delegation and Team Official Delegations. This security plan shall be based upon the principles set out in the AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.

SECTION 12: MEDICAL & ANTI-DOPING

44. Pre-Competition Medical Assessment

44.1. Each Participating Team shall ensure that each Participating Player in its Preliminary Registration undergoes a pre-competition medical assessment (PCMA) at least thirty (30) days prior to the first Match of the Competition.

44.1.1. Participating Players that have undertaken a PCMA for a FIFA competition may provide the AFC with the physician and player's declaration form originally provided to FIFA, provided that the PCMA was conducted within one (1) year of the Competition.

44.1.2. The AFC shall provide all Participating Teams with the PCMA form setting out the necessary matters to be tested, which shall include testing to prevent players from experiencing sudden cardiac death during any Match.

44.1.3. Each Member Association must submit to the AFC latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Competition the following signed documents:

44.1.3.1. "*Member Association Declaration of Agreement to the PCMA*"; and

44.1.3.2. for each Participating Player, the "*Player and Examining Physician Declaration for PCMA*".

44.1.4. Any player for whom the required documents are not provided is not eligible to be registered in the Final Registration for a Participating Team.

44.2. The AFC Medical Committee may, in its sole discretion, order any further medical evaluation of a Participating Player that it deems necessary. The cost of such further testing shall be borne by the AFC.

45. Facilities and Personnel

45.1. The Organising Association shall provide a medical room and doping control room fully-equipped with all items stipulated in the Manual.

45.2. The Organising Association shall be fined:

45.2.1. at least USD20,000 for failing to fully equip the medical room; or

45.2.2. at least USD10,000 for failing to fully equip the doping control room;
or

45.2.3. at least USD40,000 for failing to fully equip both rooms.

- 45.2.4. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in its discretion.
- 45.3. The Organising Association shall provide all medical personnel and doping control personnel stipulated in the Manual.
- 45.4. The Organising Association shall be fined:
- 45.4.1. at least **USD10,000** for failing to provide all required personnel (subject to Article 45.3); or
- 45.4.2. at least **USD20,000** for failing to provide all required medical officers.
- 45.4.3. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in its discretion.

46. Anti-Doping

- 46.1. Doping is strictly prohibited. The AFC Anti-Doping Regulations, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, and all relevant AFC directives in relation to anti-doping are applicable to the Competition.
- 46.2. The AFC shall inform each Participating Team by means of a circular of the doping control procedure for the Competition.
- 46.3. The AFC Medical Committee shall be responsible for the approval of the WADA-accredited laboratory which shall carry out the analysis of all doping samples.

SECTION 13: DISCIPLINARY

47. Disciplinary Measures

- 47.1. All disciplinary measures in relation to the Competition shall be undertaken in accordance with the current AFC Statutes, AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, and any relevant AFC circular.
- 47.2. The AFC may introduce new disciplinary rules and sanctions for the duration of the Competition. Such rules shall be communicated to the Member Associations thirty (30) days before the first Match of the Competition at latest.
- 47.3. All Participating Players agree to:
 - 47.3.1. respect the spirit of fair play, non-violence, and the authority of the Match Officials;
 - 47.3.2. behave accordingly; and
 - 47.3.3. refrain from doping.

48. Good Conduct

- 48.1. Member Associations are liable for the improper conduct of:
 - 48.1.1. any member of its Team Official Delegation; and/or
 - 48.1.2. any person carrying out duties on their behalf throughout the Competition.
- 48.2. For any violation of Article 48.1, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue any sanction listed in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

49. Administrative Procedure

- 49.1. Subject to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, for any offence set out in these Regulations with a listed minimum fine, where it is the first such offence committed by a party:
 - 49.1.1. the AFC, after completing its investigation but prior to opening disciplinary proceedings, may write to the party and make an offer to compound the offence and reduce the listed fine by twenty percent (20%) should the party admit to the offence;
 - 49.1.2. if the offence is admitted, the AFC shall submit the compounded offence to the Chairman of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for approval;
 - 49.1.2.1. should the party deny the offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;

49.1.3. upon approval of the Chairman of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, the sanction shall be notified and applied administratively by the AFC;

49.1.3.1. should the Chairman of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee not approve the compounded offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;

49.1.4. by agreeing to compound the offence, the party waives its right to request a motivated decision or appeal the sanction issued;

49.1.5. any sanction issued administratively comes into force immediately upon notification in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

50. Cautions and Expulsions

50.1. All matters relating to cautions and/or expulsions, including the carrying forward of cautions between stages of the Competition, shall be undertaken in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code except where expressly set out below.

Qualifiers

50.2. Any Participating Player who completes the Qualifiers having only received one (1) caution shall not carry-over that caution to the Finals.

Finals

50.3. Any Participating Player who completes the Group Stage having only received one (1) caution shall carry-over that caution to the Knockout Stage.

50.4. Any Participating Player who completes the Quarter Finals having only received one (1) caution shall not carry-over that caution to the Semi Finals.

51. Protest

51.1. A protest is an objection of any kind to any matter that has a direct effect on Matches and any matters related to breach of these Regulations or the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

51.2. Unless otherwise stipulated, to be considered valid, protests shall be:

51.2.1. submitted in writing to the AFC Match Commissioner within two (2) hours of the end of the Match in question;

51.2.2. followed up with a full written report, including a copy of the original protest, sent to the AFC General Secretariat within forty-eight (48) hours of the end of the Match; and

51.2.3. accompanied by a non-refundable fee of USD500 submitted within forty-eight (48) hours of the end of the Match.

- 51.3. No protest shall be lodged relating to the Referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable, unless expressly otherwise stipulated in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 51.4. Should the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee determine that a protest is unfounded or irresponsible, it may impose a fine.
- 51.5. If any of the formal conditions of a protest as set out in these Regulations are not met, such protest shall be disregarded. Following the completion of the final Match of the Competition, all protests shall be disregarded.
- 51.6. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall make decisions on protests. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may transfer a protest to the AFC Competitions Committee for its decision if it is deemed to be purely operational in nature.

52. Arbitration

- 52.1. Any dispute in connection with the Competition shall be promptly settled by negotiation.
- 52.2. In compliance with the AFC Statutes, Member Associations, Participating Players, and Participating Officials are prohibited from initiating disputes in an ordinary court of law and must submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the AFC.
- 52.3. Member Associations, Participating Players, and Participating Officials acknowledge and accept that, once all internal channels have been exhausted at the AFC, their sole recourse shall be to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The Code of Sports-related Arbitration shall be applicable. The language of arbitration shall be English.
- 52.4. The jurisdiction of the CAS to resolve disputes is only available where it has not been expressly excluded or a decision is declared as final and binding and not appealable.

SECTION 14: ADMINISTRATION

53. Special Instructions

- 53.1. The AFC Competitions Committee shall, in conjunction with the Organising Association, issue any instructions necessitated by special circumstances which might arise in the organisation of Matches.
- 53.2. These instructions shall form an integral part of these Regulations.

54. Decisions

- 54.1. All decisions made in accordance with these Regulations, except where expressly identified otherwise, are final and binding and not appealable in accordance with the AFC Statutes.

55. Amendments

- 55.1. The AFC reserves the right to make amendments to any part of these Regulations for any reason whatsoever. Such amendments shall be duly communicated in due course.

56. Force Majeure

- 56.1. The AFC Competitions Committee is the only body capable of declaring a Force Majeure event.

57. Matters not provided for

- 57.1. Matters not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the AFC Competitions Committee. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

58. Closing Provisions

- 58.1. The AFC General Secretariat is entrusted with the operational management of the Competition and is therefore entitled to make decisions and adopt the detailed provisions necessary for implementing these Regulations.

59. Enforcement

- 59.1. These Regulations were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 1 December 2016 and came into force immediately.

For the AFC Executive Committee

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Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa

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