



**AFC WOMEN'S
ASIAN CUP™**

**HISTORY OF THE
AFC WOMEN'S
ASIAN CUP™**

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), I am pleased to present to you the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ History Book, which captures the detailed and proud history of Asia's most prestigious women's competition.

The AFC Women's Asian Cup™ has grown tremendously over the years and has played an important part, not only in the remarkable development of women's football on the Continent but also in confirming Asia's position as global leaders in the women's game.

In every edition, we witness the rise of new talents while the stars continue to captivate and shine on the biggest stage in the Continent's women's national team showpiece.

From the dominance of China PR in the mid-1980s to the 1990s, to Japan's victories over Australia in the thrilling 2014 and 2018 finals, this history book chronicles the drama, glory and achievements of every national team that has competed in the AFC Women's Asian Cup™.

We also witnessed history in 2018 when Jordan staged the competition – the first time the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ was hosted in the West Zone.

This book clearly illustrates the history of the competition, which has laid the solid foundations for the AFC to continue inspiring the next generation of rising stars.

The latest edition of the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022™ was yet another celebration of women's football with the theme 'Our Goal for All' that was watched and followed by millions of passionate fans on the AFC's digital platforms and achieved outstanding television broadcast across the region.

All these milestones would not have been achieved without the support and unity of our Member Associations and all our stakeholders. And for that, I must thank them for sharing our Vision and Mission to organise top level competitions.

To all readers, I hope you enjoy this historic journey and relive the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ memories, which have been beautifully captured in these pages.

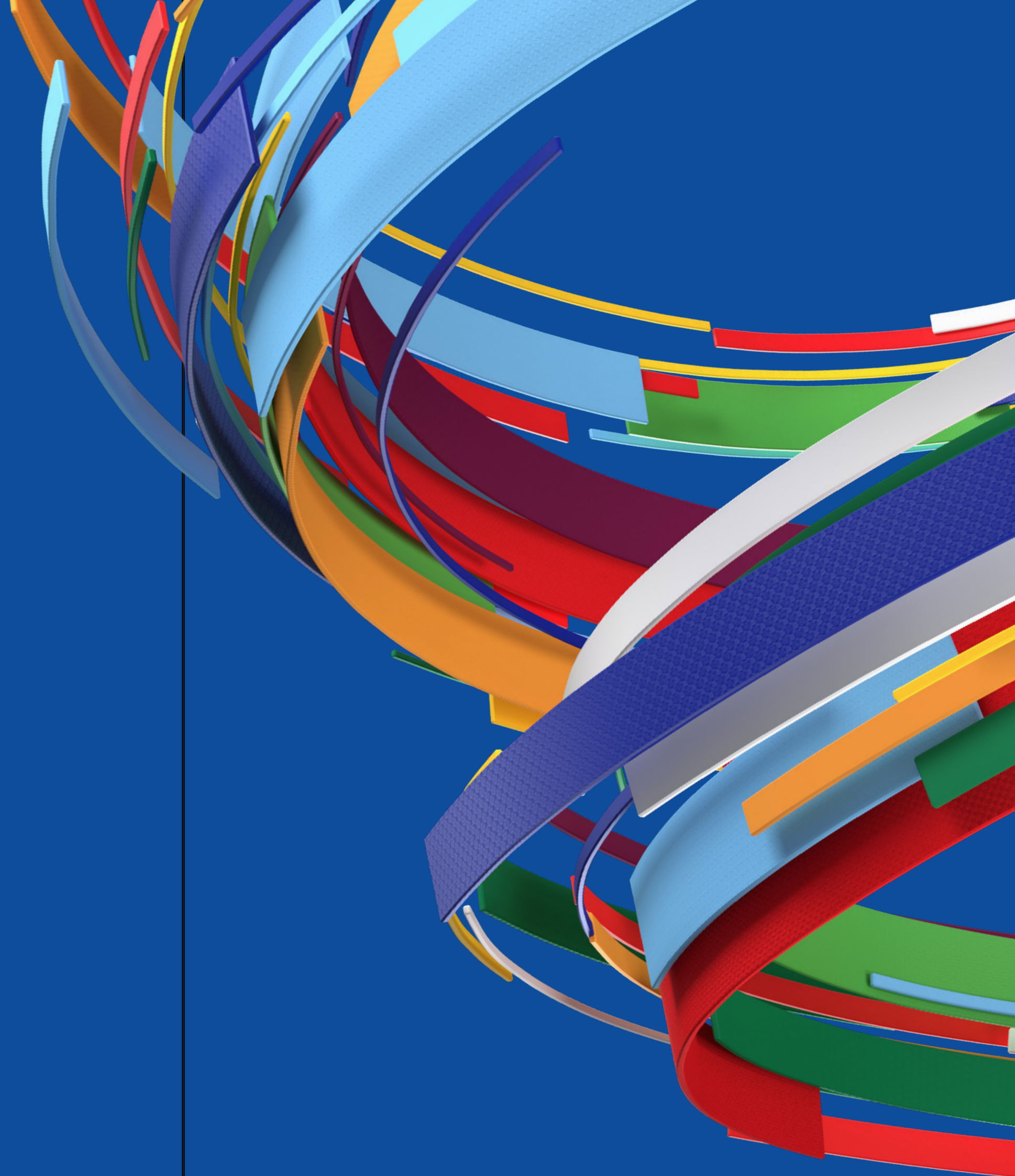
Thank you.

HE Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President





**AFC
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a result, some national associations began to officially recognise women playing and attempted to keep women's football out of the hands of private promoters. Largely concerned with the men's game up to this point, much of the football establishment did not welcome separate organisations for women's football, particularly in Europe. Yet elsewhere, and as was the case for a time in Asia, the existing organisations for men's football saw no issues with distinct bodies to develop the women's game. At the international level, FIFA 'played a waiting game' and only really became involved in the question of women's football when the ALFC returned to the scene after 1974 and began to organise competitions.

ALFC-AFC: A match made in heaven?

It is essential to note that when the ALFC was launched, it was done so as an openly parallel movement to the existing AFC, which was presumed to be responsible for the men's game. But different organisations did not mean these two bodies were bereft of any links or did not communicate. On the contrary, the connection between the AFC and the ALFC could not have been more intimate at the launch of the 1975 tournament and went all the way to the societal elite. Whether it was the sitting AFC President, Tunku Abdul Rahman who was married to ALFC founder and honorary life-president Tun Sharifah Rodziah, or Datin Teoh Chye Hin, the ALFC Vice President whose husband Dato' Teoh Chye Hin was Abdul Rahman's number two man as the AFC General Secretary, the connection between the ALFC and the AFC was naturally close in 1975. As for Abdul Rahman and Dato' Teoh, they not only worked together at the Continental level, but also collaborated closely at the national level since the early 1960s as the FA Malaysia President and Treasurer respectively. Abdul Rahman was no less the former (and first) Prime Minister of Malaysia, having served in office during the period of independence from British colonial rule. If that was not enough, the Patron of the ALFC in 1975 was Toh Puan Hajjah Rahah (wife of the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Abdul Rahman's successor).

Yet the links between the women-focused ALFC and the men's football associations did not stop at Malaysia. ALFC President Veronica Chan's husband was Dr Chiu But York, the other honorary life-president of the ALFC and also a long-time Vice President at the Hong Kong FA. Together, they donated the first trophy for the Asian Ladies tournament. Both members of the Chiu household also worked extensively in the tightly-knit Hong Kong football community whose President, Henry Fok, was also an AFC Vice President. The second ALFC Vice President was General Chetchand Pravitra, a member of the Thailand FA Executive Committee. Apart from Pat O'Connor, who was the third ALFC Vice President along with being an active

player in Australia, the entire ALFC board (members and life members) was either married to or directly connected to someone in the AFC leadership, if they themselves did not also sit on one of the boards of a national member to the AFC. In addition, many of those involved from the Southeast Asian countries were from the upper-class elite as well as some royalty as remembered by long-time Australian administrator Heather Reid.



First trophy with the donors' names engraved

Highlighting these close links is important, since the recognition (or not) of women's football in some countries, notably in Europe, did not often benefit from such a parallel environment of elite husband-wife teams or general cross-over between men's and women's associations. This proximity helps explain the lack of any fundamental issues during the launch years of the Women's Asian Cup. That the ALFC was taking care of the budding women's football movement was not a point of contention at the AFC. As such, separate organisations for distinct parts of the sport were not a problem at this time in Asia and there does not appear to have been any urgency on the part of the AFC to control the activities of the ALFC in 1975.

Even if women's football was somewhat a novel phenomenon and undoubtedly not a priority for the men-focused AFC, the overall situation in Asia was in contrast to the situation in Europe or Australia where the national



Tun Sharifah Rodziah at the 1980 tournament in India

associations and UEFA, in particular, sought to actively control the women's game and the specific associations overseeing them. Perhaps it was a blend of a wider bias in Europe against women playing what was traditionally a man's sport along with the menace of the commercial motives revealed by private endeavours around the early women's tournaments in Mexico and Italy. The gentleman amateur ethos and the disdain (or at least polite toleration) for professionalism still held much sway among the leadership in global sport at this time. This may explain why the FIFA Referees Committee reacted the way it did in 1970 when Koe Ewe Teik, the AFC General Secretary at the time, informed his fellow members that 'in Asia, ladies' football was also being played and the creation of an Asian Women's Football Organisation was contemplated'. In response, the committee agreed that 'national associations and confederations should be encouraged to take ladies' football under their direct control to avoid separate organisations springing up'. There is no record of Koe's views on women's football - his biography is silent on the topic and the archival record of his correspondence only shows that he was sent copies of the various letters about the ALFC - so the extent to which he shared the Committee's response on how to deal with women's football in Asia is unknown. If some in Europe (and in FIFA) were more intent on the need to control women's football organisations, it seems that Asia, in particular the Southeast, had no issue, at least initially, with women's football being organised by a parallel body.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE THAILAND LADIES FOOTBALL CLUB UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF H.R. PRINCESS SIRINTHORN

It is the highest of honour and deepest of appreciation that I am given this opportunity to address you in letter of which the following lines of thought will be sincerely and humbly expressed.

I positively believe that any activity of common interest will grow and prosper to serve all concerned only by and through being exposed to competitive opportunities, not by simply letting it alone. Its growth and prosperity will be eventually achieved when the spirit of fair play is fully realized and gentlemanly observed. I have no doubt, on my mind whatsoever that the Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament, to be held in Hongkong during August 25 and September 4, 1975 is set up, first of all, for the purpose of promoting and advocating this sport throughout Asia and all continents by means of this noble spirit.

Secondly, in our successful endeavor to bring all enthusiasts of lady football from member countries, and arrange for them not only the opportunity to compete sportsmanly but also the opportunity to live and learn to get along with one another, will assuredly result in better understanding among all concerned be it directly or indirectly.

On my own behalf, I should like to live and see women of Asia enjoy exercising leading roles in sports be it competitively or administratively. Co-incidentally, this is the year that the world fist officially recognizes women's equality. I should like very much to see that our Asian ladies prove them selves once and for all that they are second to none generally in all sports and particularly in lady football.

On behalf of Thailand Ladies Football Club, let it be known to all of you that I am completely convinced that the betterment of positive understanding and friendship is the primary goal, while the result of the tournament is but a secondary outcome. Let it be known that I dedicate myself to the promotion of this sport along with you congregate herein. May all of you, officials and players alike, be of good health and successful in your highly honorable missions.



MAJ. GENERAL
(Chetchan Pravitra)

The Thai welcome message from the 1975 programme

It was only in subsequent years - and after changes in leadership at the AFC in particular - that a distinct Continental women's confederation began to pose a problem. In fact, the changes in simple human relational terms as well as the broader geopolitical situation over the next few years changed the paradigm for women's football in Asia. However, in 1975 this was not an issue, and during the first tournament the ALFC openly discussed the creation of a world football body for women's football. Veronica Chan, its President, announced to the press that 'I had a meeting yesterday with officials of various teams now taking part in the Asian Cup, and we discussed the subject'. The *Hong Kong Standard* commented that it would be a 'pioneer group worthy of women's lib if one such organisation is created'.

The AFC was entirely aware of the developments around the ALFC and even included this in the AFC section of the *FIFA News* in the month following the first tournament in August 1975. The note about activities in Asia was written by the AFC General Secretary, Dato' Teoh Chye Hin, who had recently taken over from Koe. Teoh wrote that 'This being Women's International Year and on the initiative of the Hong Kong Ladies Football Association led by the energetic Mrs Veronica Chiu, its President, the 1st Asian

Ladies Cup Football Tournament was organised in Hong Kong from August 25 to September 3, 1975. Six teams, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand participated. New Zealand emerged champions with Thailand runners-up. The organisation has great ambitions and they planned to send a team to tour Europe in 1976, that is, if a sponsor or sponsors could be found to sponsor the tour'.

FIFA NEWS

October 1975
No. 149

English
Edition



Asian Football Confederation –
Activities in Asia

by Dato' Teoh Chye Hin
General Secretary of AFC, Ipoh, Malaysia



Tournaments in Asia

The year 1975 is a very busy one for Asia. We have so many events throughout the year that some National Associations are finding it difficult to cope especially when they also have their own national tournaments to organise.

The following are the major tournaments involved:

1. Pre-Olympic Preliminary Tournaments in Asia

Three Groups are being held to determine the three places for the Olympics Final Round in Montreal.

Ladies' Football

This being Women's International Year and on the initiative of the Hong Kong Ladies Football Confederation led by the energetic Mrs. Veronica Chiu, its President, the 1st Asian Ladies Cup Football Tournament was organised in Hong Kong

from 25 August to 3 September 1975. Six teams, Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand participated. New Zealand emerged champions with Thailand runners-up.

The organisation has great ambitions and they planned to send a team to tour Europe in 1976, that is, if a sponsor or sponsors could be found to sponsor the tour.

Asian Schools Soccer Championship

School Authorities in the East Asian Region have been organising annual tournaments with each country taking turns to host the tournament from year to year

So, FIFA printed news, and rather good news at that, which had been sent by the AFC about the first ALFC tournament in 1975. If the competition did not have the recognition or support of the AFC at the time, then why would its General Secretary have made such an announcement to FIFA and all football associations around the world? Here is where it is important to remember that it is individuals who run organisations, and the personal relationships between individuals are the lifeblood of institutional connections. The AFC was more than aware of the ALFC and its projects because the people involved were intimately connected. The 'Dato Teoh' at the AFC was married to the 'Datin Teoh' at the ALFC. However, institutions change as people come and go, and with them go the relationships and links that are the foundation for institutional legitimacy and recognition.

1977-1980: First changes and first misunderstandings

As the 1977 tournament approached, there were growing questions on how women's football was, and should be, organised. The debate centred on whether the men's and women's games should each have their own separate administrative structures or whether they ought to be managed together. In Europe, the approach since the turn of the 1970s had been to integrate women's football under the existing structures traditionally dedicated to men's football. This had introduced its own set of issues since not everyone involved in men's football in Europe was supportive of developing the women's game, with some federations having decade-long explicit bans on women playing at affiliated clubs and grounds.

Yet, the football world extended well beyond European borders, and despite playing the same game and adopting a similar administrative apparatus, ideas about women playing football were not the same everywhere. The assumption that women's football was constricted by an outright ban until the end of the 1960s and now should just be controlled by men's organisations was a rather Eurocentric, and in some sense Anglocentric, view. Indeed, when the ALFC General Secretary, Charles Pereira, wrote to Helmut Käser, FIFA's General Secretary, in the weeks following the first tournament in 1975, he shared a summary of the event and also the plans for the creation of a world governing body for the women's game and a future international tournament 'played in accordance with the World Cup Tournament (men) rules and regulations'. Käser was less than supportive. He replied to Pereira and suggested that the Asian 'ladies football clubs or teams affiliate with an existing club in membership with the National Association which is a member of FIFA'. He explained that 'in most countries, especially in Europe, all ladies' teams are regularly incorporated in the existing

clubs and National Associations' and that there was 'a committee within the European Confederation which deals especially with the ladies' football'. Käser's view simply assumed that football was the same everywhere and should follow the model in Europe. He went as far as suggesting that Pereira and the ALFC contact the AFC 'to see whether a subcommittee could be included in the existing organisation', which showed that he was entirely unaware of the close personal connections between the two bodies. While this revealed some ignorance about how the game was organised outside of Europe, Käser was simply basing his view on what he knew and, at the same time, was intent on discouraging any potential rival body at the global level.

Message from Mr. Henry Y. T. Fok

President of

the Hong Kong Football Association

I have much pleasure in sending cordial greetings on the occasion of the 1st Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament organized by the HongKong Ladies Football Association.

I am pleased to know that there are 6 countries and region participating.

I would like to congratulate the President and all the organizers for their splendid effort in hosting this tournament and I wish the event every success



HENRY FOK
PRESIDENT (H.K.F.A.)

HKFA President Henry Fok's welcome message from the 1975 programme

However, what other parts of the globe, particularly Asia and North America, illustrate so clearly is that football was not owned by men and there was clear support by men of women's football. The first 1975 tournament programme included welcome messages from Henry Fok, the Hong Kong FA president and active AFC Executive Board member, F.K Hu, Hong Kong FA Chairman, and 1st Division club Hong Kong Rangers FC founder, Ian Petrie. The recognition extended well beyond Hong Kong. The Women's Football Association of Singapore letterhead, for example, clearly stated that it was affiliated both to

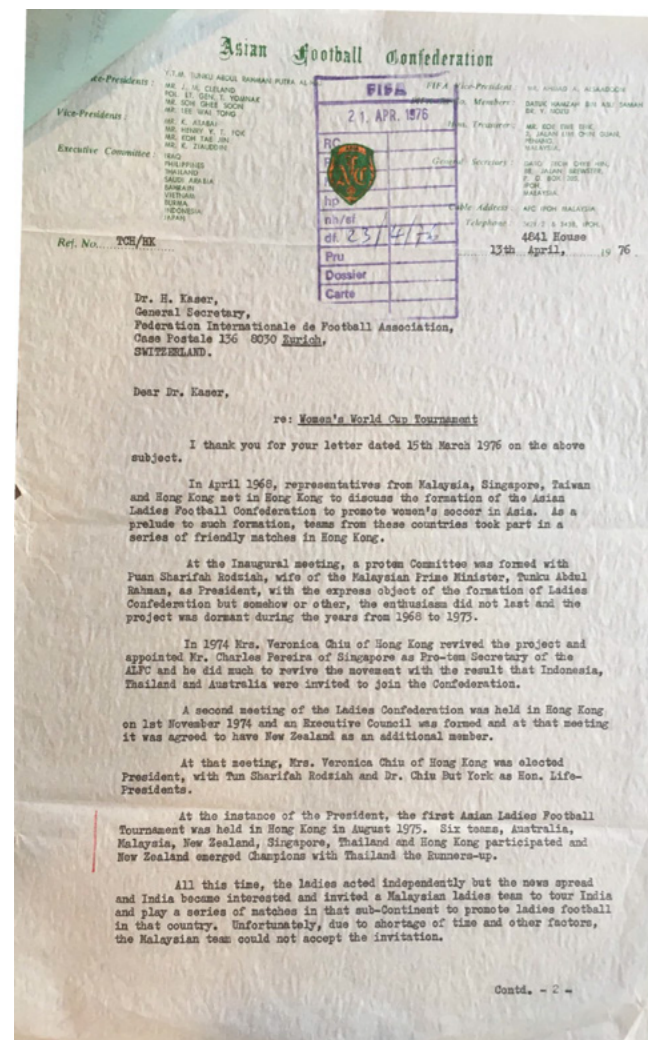
the ALFC and the Football Association of Singapore. As such, there was little doubt that this tournament and the ALFC organisers were legitimate, at least from an Asian perspective. It was simply that there were two parallel organisations which coexisted, something which was different in Europe.

The cross-over in human relationships between the individuals at the ALFC and the AFC as well as in various national associations in Southeast Asia was rather different from what Käser knew in Europe. The Asian reality in 1975 illustrated that there was no problem in having one body for the men's game and another for the women. So, when Pereira intimated in October 1975 that the ALFC was exploring the creation of a world governing body for the women's game, this simply followed the Southeast Asian rationale which was accepted and supported at the time. This was the motivation behind a second ALFC letter to FIFA in February 1976 announcing plans for a 1977 women's world tournament and asking for FIFA's support. Pereira had even sent a carbon copy to the AFC and to the Hong Kong Ladies FA presided by Hong Kong FA and AFC Vice President Henry Fok, further evidence that at least in Asia, separate governing bodies – still connected through personal links – could manage their own half of football. Pereira and the ALFC saw FIFA simply as the men's football governing body with whom they might collaborate in the same way that things operated in Asia with two Confederations.

Käser, however, did not want to encourage a rival world body to FIFA or tournaments beyond its control. It is clear that Käser did not understand how the game was organised in Southeast Asia. He was openly confused with these parallel bodies, a situation drastically different from the European scenario of only a single governing body. In response to Pereira's second letter about the ALFC's plans, he wrote in March 1976 to his counterpart at the AFC, Dato' Teoh Chye Hin (without actually copying Pereira), and enquired as to the role of the ALFC in Asia. Käser again explained how everything in Europe was organised under a single national association or Confederation, but that 'it seems, however, that in Asia things are organised in a different way'. The AFC's reply a few weeks later was fascinating.

Firstly, while Käser had omitted to send a copy of his letter to the ALFC and Pereira, Teoh Chye Hin did send a copy of his official AFC reply to Pereira at the ALFC. In his detailed reply, Teoh explained the history and formation of the ALFC in 1968 with its first president 'Puan Sharifah Rodziah, wife of the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman'. It is unclear if Käser understood the use of the Malaysian titles 'Tun', 'Tunku'

and 'Puan' as signifiers of nobility rather than just foreign names, but he should have recognised the direct link with the AFC President Abdul Rahman. Teoh also gave examples of the development of women's football in India, Singapore and Malaysia. The final interesting point was that when he recounted the foundation of the Ladies FA of Malaysia, he even noted that 'Tun Sharifah Rodziah was elected President, with Datin Teoh Chye Hin as Honorary Secretary'. The Dato' failed to explicitly say that the Datin was his wife, and it is unclear if Käser at FIFA made the link. Yet, Teoh stressed the connections between the women's and men's organisations. He added that the Malaysian Ladies FA, which had invited the FA of Malaysia officials to serve as advisors to their organisation had applied for membership to the FA of Malaysia. For the moment this was not possible, although Teoh 'hoped that the FA of Malaysia will amend its rules to permit ladies membership'. Finally, Teoh noted that the AFLC had not applied to the AFC for membership but that if they did 'the matter will have to be put to Congress'.



Letter from Dato' Teoh Chye Hin to Helmut Käser on April 13, 1976

Teoh saw two ways forward and suggested that either a world federation for women's football be formed and work alongside FIFA or, alternatively, have all the women's organisations affiliate to the men's bodies on a worldwide basis. These suggestions reveal the difference in views since for Käser there could be only one governing body, whereas Teoh's Asian perspective saw FIFA as part of the 'men's organisations' and the possibility for complementary governing bodies working in concert. Teoh was less convinced on one point, however, which was that a world tournament in 1977 would still be 'premature' and that not all national associations around the world were at the same level of development as Malaysia.

How was Teoh's letter received at FIFA? In his reply to Teoh 10 days later of which he sent a copy to Koe Ewe Teik but not Pereira at the ALFC, the trained lawyer Käser underlined the obstacle that 'so far legal links do not exist between most of the ladies' organisations and their national football associations or clubs, or at the Continental level with the Confederation'. He then stressed the FIFA view: national associations should take the women's football movement under their umbrella. Most importantly, in his opinion, was the need to avoid 'two separate world bodies controlling the same sport' and pleaded with Teoh if he 'could insist in Asia that the existing ladies' football organisations in a country should affiliate with the National Association and through them with the Continental Confederation, as the case is in Europe'.

For Käser at FIFA, it appears that the lack of official statutory membership was the key issue for his legal mind. It is unclear whether the FIFA General Secretary was explicitly against women's football per se, but his correspondence reveals that he was not in favour of mixed men's and women's or boys' and girls' teams. On the other hand, just a few months earlier he had been rather helpful to the newly-founded Women's Football Federation of India, answering questions on Laws of the Game and sending them addresses of a number of European federations which had active women's football sections. What was essential in Käser's view was that these women's organisations affiliate with the existing national associations in membership with FIFA. For him, personal connections – however intimate or manifest – were not as valid as legal ones. Until this point, however, at least in Asia, the ALFC and the AFC were unconcerned with the statutory formalisation of the personal relationships across the institutions.

This misunderstanding in views on how football was organised in Southeast Asia versus Europe was not a simple situation and things became more complicated over the next few years. If the connections between the

ALFC and the AFC were as personal as they could be in the mid-1970s, the context was changing and the direct association between the two Confederations was fading. The ALFC continued with plans for its initial world tournament and invited teams from across the globe. FIFA contacted the AFC in the autumn of 1976 to find out whether the proposed women's world tournament was now under the control of the Confederation. Teoh replied with regret that the AFC Executive Committee had recently discussed the affiliation of the ALFC and opposed it, stating that it was 'too premature at this stage to extend membership' because the number of players did not yet merit recognition. As a result, Käser replied that FIFA could not sanction the tournament.

To complicate matters for the ALFC, several major changes occurred between 1976 and 1978. At the start of 1976, Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein passed away leaving Toh Puan Hajjah Rahah, the royal patron of the ALFC, widowed at age 43. As a result, the ALFC lost its direct link to the highest political office in Malaysia. In football circles, the AFC President Tunku Abdul Rahman resigned from the Confederation in December 1977 while his number two Dato' Teoh Chye Hin retired a year later. These changes signalled the end of the ALFC's personal ties to the AFC, even if within the ALFC Abdul Rahman's wife, Tun Sharifah Rodziah still served as Honorary Life President and Datin Teoh Chye Hin as sitting Vice President. As 1978 came to a close, the AFC entered a different era, one in which the direct personal connections which linked the men's and women's Confederations under the prior leadership no longer existed. Furthermore, as of 1976 Chinese Taipei, which was a member of the ALFC and host for the 2nd Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament in 1977, was no longer affiliated to the AFC but still affiliated to FIFA.

This was to cause a fundamental shift to the immediate future of the ALFC tournament, pushing the ALFC out to the periphery of Asian football as the core of the AFC was focused on integrating China PR. At this time, those two associations were unable to coexist, but that was only one facet of the challenges facing the ALFC after its successful start. In writing to FIFA in late 1977, ALFC secretary Pereira highlighted that notwithstanding the strong development of the women's game in Asia, it was difficult to work within some of the existing national structures. Despite a 1977 tournament which had drawn 40,000 spectators, Pereira underlined problems of affiliation with men's clubs and associations in Asia for a 'reason only known to the respective F.A.'s in Asian Countries' and explained that affiliation to the AFC was contingent on FIFA's approval. This created a catch-22 where, on the one hand the ALFC had established a

legitimate recent past with support, but functioned independently. On the other hand, the ALFC's unaffiliated status and its overt connections to a national federation no longer an AFC member – Chinese Taipei – left the ladies' organisation in a sort of limbo.

Yet, FIFA maintained an extended hand to the ALFC while simultaneously exerting pressure. The *FIFA News* published in February 1978 again expressed the statutory impossibility for an organisation such as the ALFC to join FIFA: 'It was reported that in Asia an Asian Ladies' Football Confederation had been formed and had applied for affiliation to FIFA, which was not possible as the FIFA members had to be National Associations'. But it was not just the statutory obstacle - FIFA wanted to avoid a rival global governing body at world level. In so doing, however, FIFA also strongly discouraged the dual women's-men's model that had operated in Asia before the wholesale leadership changes of 1977-78. This was complicated by the fact that Chinese Taipei were not in the AFC but a key member of the ALFC at a time when it had just hosted and won the second Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament in 1977. This certainly did not make things simple either for FIFA or for the AFC. It meant that the AFC was not in a position to approve any competitions organised by a non-member (Chinese Taipei) while FIFA could still do so.

Paradoxically, FIFA could almost be seen as generous a few months later when it approved the regulations for the 1978 Women's World Invitation Tournament submitted by the Chinese Taipei Federation as the delegated organiser on behalf of the ALFC. Compared to many other tournament applications and regulations which were submitted or refused over this period – certainly compared to the ones from the ALFC's 1975 tournament – the three-page booklet with 16 short points was indeed sparse. As such, FIFA were probably justified in requesting that future regulations 'must be more detailed'. Yet in the end, FIFA did support this 1978 precursor to a World Cup for women, and by extension sanctioning the work of the ALFC. FIFA even went so far as to congratulate the Chinese Taipei FA in January 1979, which in spite of bad weather affecting the gate did still pay the minimum match levy fee to the global governing body. In a letter incorrectly dated 1978, FIFA noted 'with pleasure that the tournament was a great success' and thanked them for sending 'the albums with beautiful photographs as well as the different reports'.

Thus, the status of the ALFC at this time was complex. However, one thing was clear, FIFA did not want to compromise on its statutory principles and risk seeing a rival body. Over the next few months, the AFLC continued

to grow with a Japanese Women's Association being formed and affiliated in 1978. At the same time, the ALFC continued to remain connected to the Chinese Taipei FA, not only because they had won their second tournament in 1980 but also because the ALFC was working even more closely with the leadership from that association. Mme Pao Teh-Ming was elected ALFC Vice President sometime between 1978 and 1979 and, by 1981, two other individuals from Chinese Taipei were also honoured as ALFC life presidents. Furthermore, the ALFC pushed ahead with its plans for a parallel women's federation all while planning the 1980 and 1981 Asian Cup Ladies tournaments.

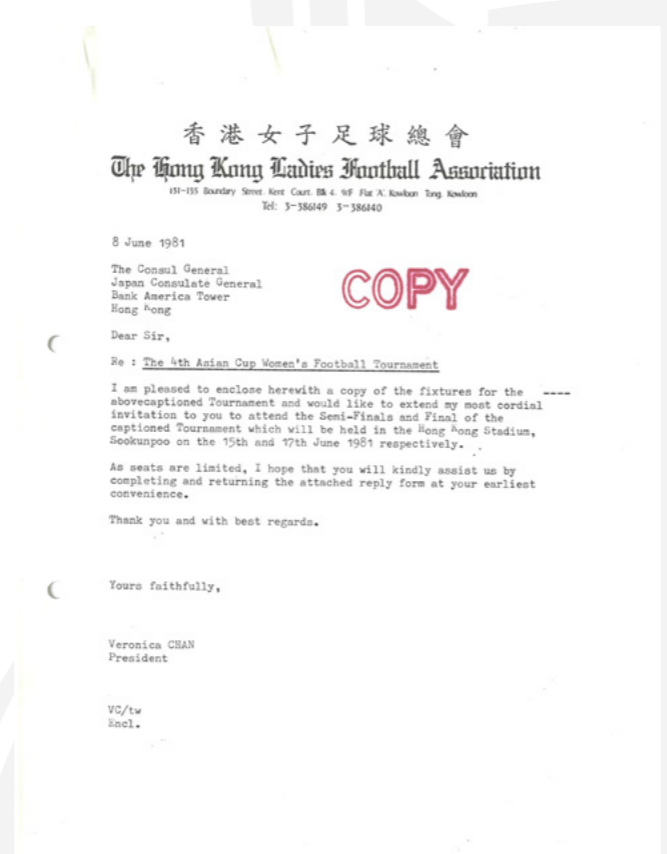


ALFC letterhead used in 1979

1980-1984: Pains, politics, and the merger

The 1980 tournament began to reveal some problems due to the ALFC's limbo status. With some teams withdrawing and organisational conditions being difficult, to say the least, the ALFC navigated rough waters in 1980 and 1981. When Australia sent a team through its Western Australian Women's Soccer Association, it was in the hands of the Australian Women's Soccer Association (AWSA) as to the capacity in which they would travel, either as a regional or club team or alternatively with the blessing to represent the AWSA, a separate national body to the men-focused Australian Soccer Federation. The support of the AWSA took time, although it was ultimately given just a few weeks before the tournament. It must be said that things were complex for the West Australians since travel conditions from their coast to Southeast Asia were as affordable as going to the Australian East. However, it was not the first time that an Australian team preferred to go abroad than play domestically, something which undoubtedly caused tensions with other regional bodies and the AWSA. The same situation had occurred when a New South Wales group skipped the newly inaugurated Australian women's national tournament to go to the first ALFC tournament in 1975. After the 1980 tournament and a disappointing situation with the post-ALFC competition tour which had been contractually offered to the Australians by the Indian organisers, the team returned home disillusioned with the entire experience and out of pocket. The Indians believed they were unfairly criticised and the Australians had held

unrealistic expectations. Shortly after these events, the AWSA left the ALFC. In the following weeks, the Australians pleaded with FIFA to resolve their case, but since neither the Women's Football Federation of India nor the ALFC were technically under their jurisdiction, there was not much FIFA could do.



Invitation letter to the Japan Consul during the 1981 tournament

It appears that the ALFC did manage to sort some issues as India returned for the 1981 competition held once again in Hong Kong. Organised on home soil, Veronica Chan was able to handle everything in the masterful way only she knew how. She wrote to the official consuls of the participating nations. The ALFC negotiated a series of advertising and sponsorship deals with jewellers and beverage companies as well as paid television contracts with Thai and Hong Kong broadcasters. The event went well and the crowds at the third-place match and final provided impressive atmosphere, evident from the video archive footage. Politics were still floating in the background, however, and the organisers convinced the Chinese Taipei side not to play under the name of Republic of China but rather under 'Mulan Taipei'. In return, the visitors asked that two other teams also play under a club name instead of a country one. A different name did not stop Chinese Taipei from winning their third consecutive title.

However, the problems off the pitch perdured. FIFA

continued to resist the ALFC and issued its now-famous Circular 283 which took overt aim for the first time at Veronica Chan and her colleagues. It strongly encouraged all FIFA Member Associations not to attend the ALFC meeting, where future plans for a federation and tournament were on the agenda.

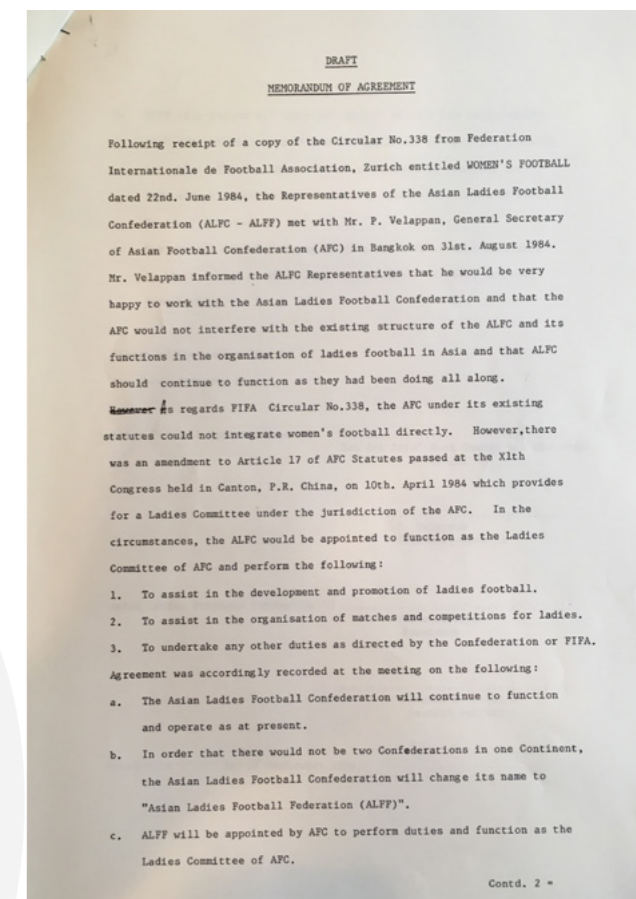


This news clipping refers to Salasiah Din urging the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) to decide on her appointment as a referee

Various Asian Associations resisted, with some even organising their own women's tournaments to show that some affiliated countries were still keen to move ahead with women's football. The ALFC pushed on and was behind the organisation of the 1981 World Women's Invitational Tournament in Chinese Taipei, which received FIFA's blessing. Two years later, the 5th Asian Cup Ladies tournament in Thailand saw Malaysian Salasiah Din considered for a referee appointment, what would have been a significant first but it appears she was not given the final green light. The competition only drew six teams, however, and Chinese Taipei did not compete for the first time since 1975. It was complex since both FIFA and the AFC had discouraged their Member Associations from attending the competition in Thailand all while supporting other women's football developments in parallel.

The 1983 tournament signalled a change as an era came to an end. After months of waiting and correspondence between the ALFC, the AFC and FIFA, a series of meetings were organised in the latter part of 1983. Stressing that Asia was not united in its support around women's football, Veronica Chan made one last attempt to affiliate directly with FIFA in July 1983, but it was without success. The solution was to create a standing committee within the AFC, one incidentally proposed in the 1970s by Käser but refused on account of the AFC Executive Committee at the time. During these exchanges, the AFC General Secretary Peter Velappan admitted to FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter that Chan 'is a very strong lady

but she also knows that both FIFA and the AFC are very firm in the status quo of the ALFC'.



Memorandum of Understanding between the ALFC-ALFF and the AFC in 1984

It was here that things came to a head, first with a meeting between ALFC leaders and the AFC President Tan Sri Hamzah in August 1983. The newspapers reported it as a 'peace-mission' but contrasting news resulted in confusion as to whether a merger with the creation of an AFC committee was still on the table. As the ALFC threatened a boycott of the AFC-supported China PR women's tournament scheduled for November 1983, negotiations continued and the ALFC met FIFA and the AFC together in December. Founders Veronica Chan and Datin Teoh Chye Hin spoke with Blatter and Velappan to discuss in detail the role and future of the ALFC. Everything culminated in an MoU agreement between the ALFC and the AFC.

Although there is no signed copy in the FIFA archives, the draft MoU provided all the details for how the ALFC would 'continue to function as they had been doing all along' and noted that the AFC Statutes had been amended in April 1984 so that the ALFC would operate as a committee within the structure of the AFC. When the new AFC Ladies Committee was announced in 1985, its members all came from the ALFC and even included Mme Pao Teh-Ming from Chinese Taipei which was intriguing since the final meeting in December 1983

Chan was listed as president of each of the competition's four committees (disciplinary, refereeing, grounds supervision and ticketing). As President of the Hong Kong Ladies FA (HKLFA), she signed much of the tournament-planning documents, letters to participating teams with the information, rules and invitations as well as the HKLFA post-event report.

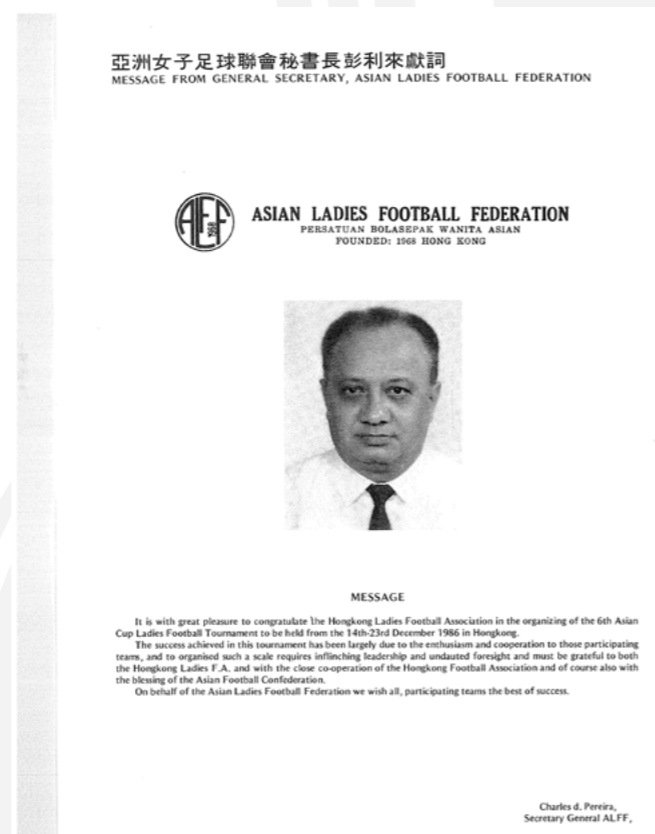
THE RULES GOVERNING "THE 6TH ASIAN CUP LADIES FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT"
TO BE HELD IN HONG KONG IN DECEMBER 1986

1. NAME OF THE TOURNAMENT
The Tournament shall be called "The 6th Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament".
2. MANAGEMENT
 - 2.1. The control and management of the Tournament shall be vested in the Asian Football Confederation who has delegated the power to the Hong Kong Football Association. The Hong Kong Football Association will organise the Tournament in collaboration with the Hong Kong Ladies Football Association.
 - 2.2. The Organising Association shall appoint a Tournament Committee consisting of:--
 - 2.2.1. A Chairman from the Organising Country;
 - 2.2.2. A member from the AFC Ladies Committee;
 - 2.2.3. The Chief of Delegation of each participating team.
 - 2.3. Their duties shall be those as stated in this Rules as well as to deal with any protest lodged by the participating teams within 12 hours after the match. The Committee shall meet within 24 hours after having received the appeal. All decisions of the Tournament Committee shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal.
 - 2.4. A member of the Tournament Committee may not take part in a meeting in which his/her team is involved.
3. PARTICIPANTS
The participants shall be those Women's Football Club/Teams that come under the control of their respective National Associations and are members of the Asian Football Confederation.
4. TROPHY
 - 4.1. The challenge Trophy shall be known as "ASIAN LADIES CUP" and shall be the property of the Asian Football Confederation and shall be kept by the winning team for the period until the next Tournament.
 - 4.2. The Host Country shall provide a replica of the "ASIAN LADIES CUP" to be given to the Champion Team of the Tournament. The replica shall be the property of the winning team of the Tournament.
5. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS
 - 5.1. All players shall be bona fide citizens of their respective country they represent.
 - 5.2. For players of visiting teams, only individual passport shall be proof of nationality. For players of the host country, i.e., Hong Kong, the identity cards, birth certificate or other authenticated documents issued by the Hong Kong Government shall be accepted. All passports and documents shall be free from tampering and any change or erasure must be endorsed or stamped by the appropriate authority.
 - 5.3. The Tournament Committee shall be responsible for examining the eligibility of players.
6. TERMS AND CONDITIONS
 - 6.1. The Host Country shall provide the following to the visiting teams:--
 - 6.1.1. Comfortable accommodation;
 - 6.1.2. Suitable meals at least three times a day; and on the team's match-day, additional light meal shall be served, if necessary;
 - 6.1.3. Local transportation;
 - 6.1.4. Medical treatment, including hospitalization if necessary; and
 - 6.1.5. Reasonable laundry (football attire only), and not dry cleaning or pressing.
 - 6.2. The Visiting Teams shall pay their own air-fares to and from Hong Kong, the venue of the Tournament.
7. NUMBER OF PERSONS OF EACH TEAM
 - 7.1. Each team shall consist of not more than 20 persons made up of:--
 - 7.1.1. Not more than 16 players;
 - 7.1.2. Not more than 3 officials;

But Chan did not run a women's-only show and many Asian men continued to be involved in running the competition. Charles Pereira continued as secretary for the ALFF at the 1986 and 1989 tournaments while the HKFA archival record contains dozens of documents signed by Vincent Yuen, the HKFA secretary. Yuen, who worked on some tournament preparations after his new appointment in January 1986, recalled how essential Chan was and also noted the important behind-the-scenes work by other men such as HKFA assistant secretary, Yung Hung Yau, who had also been heavily involved in the organisation in 1986 and 1989. In Asia, women's football was certainly not only the purview of men, and the history of the tournament shows how both sexes worked for the betterment of the women's game.

The progress of the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ was emblematic of the wider development of women's football in Asia, with the AFC's flagship women's national team tournament a showcase for the sport. When the sixth edition of the tournament returned to Hong Kong for the third time in 11 years, AFC Vice-President, Henry

Fok said in his welcome message, 'Football as a sport for women is no longer regarded as a novelty'. The movement gained increased momentum, whether it was development of the women's game in China PR which had hosted an international tournament in Xi'an in 1984, the continued efforts to organise competitions like the Women's Federation Cup in Kerala, India, or the ongoing world invitational tournaments hosted by Chinese Taipei. But not being a novelty did not necessarily mean that the sport had reached the same popularity levels in terms of number of players in every Asian country.



The tournament was still largely a regional phenomenon. Women's football, as the Women's Committee reported to the 1988 AFC Congress, was 'still a new phenomena in many Asian countries except in China PR and Japan where it is very popular' and looked forward to the upcoming International Women's Tournament in Guangzhou to 'further boost this game in many of our National Associations in Asia'. Even in places like Hong Kong with its active HKLFA, there was need for more development. Following the 1986 tournament, the HKLFA submitted its report and noted that the pre-competition preparation had not been sufficient and urged for further training courses to popularise the sport as well as sending teams abroad more often to gain experience. The HKLFA believed that it 'would be ideal if regular training on two sessions per week could be arranged' with evening sessions 'preferable because most of the participants have to work

in day time'. But even if women's football was growing, there was still much to do to increase the number of players across the Continent.

There were, naturally, strongholds of the women's game as revealed by the 1988 AFC survey. In 12 Asian countries the national associations registered women footballers ranging from 100 in Macau or 200 in Hong Kong to reportedly 24,000 in Japan, 200,000 in India and 600,000 in China PR. These figures should be taken with caution, however, as the AFC conducted a similar survey eight years later with significantly lower figures for India (1,000) and even China PR (16,000). Nevertheless, what this did illustrate was that the women's football phenomenon was largely restricted in East and South Asia. The remaining 24 MAs in 1988 reported no registered women football players. The Confederation was aware of this reality and perhaps this was the motivating factor in organising its 1988 AFC Congress on the same day as the final of the International Women's Tournament in Guangzhou, China PR. As underscored in his Presidential address, Tan Sri Haji Hamzah thanked the Chinese organisers and noted how the AFC Congress delegates witnessed 'football at its best played by leading teams from the continents of Asia, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania watched by thousands of football fans'. How better to truly showcase the women's game to nearly all the Asian regions.

There was, of course, one traditionally important actor in Asian women's football still on the periphery of the AFC: the Chinese Taipei FA. The 7th Asian Cup Women's Championship in 1989 saw the return of one of the early giants of women's football in Asia. In a competition which saw matches lengthened again - now two halves of 40 minutes - the late addition of the three-time winners in November meant that Asian football could now boast the return of all the ALFF's prior champions save for New Zealand, who had chosen to invest their efforts in their region. The two meetings between Chinese Taipei and China PR - including a unique final narrowly won by China PR - were historic and symbolic as the first footballing encounters between the two associations, men or women. At the 1992 AFC Congress, when FIFA President Joao Havelange saluted the participation of Chinese Taipei in the first FIFA Women's World Cup™ in China PR, it was important not to forget that the foundation had been laid 36 months earlier at the 7th AFC Asian Cup Women's Championship.

1990-95: Discovery and progress

Women's football was full of a spirit of progress and this sense of potential was driving the AFC Women's Committee forward. Reporting to the 1990 AFC

Congress, Chan's committee had proposed that the AFC 'organise courses for Women coaches and referees in the future to encourage more women to be involved with the management of the Game'. Their insistence on training courses was heard and by the 1995 Women's Asian Championship, half the referees were women, and the AFC hoped that 'for the next Asian Women's Football Championship, all referees and lineswomen will be women'. Training was important because in 1995, the matches for the tournament were now the regulation 90 minutes. Working towards that goal, the AFC continued to organise referee training courses and coaching courses across the region. Even if the 1997 tournament still only had one-half women referees, the Confederation and its dedicated Women's Committee continued to pursue development and just six months later another course had an additional 14 women referees training in Kuala Lumpur.



The development programmes had long-term benefits as well. One of the beneficiaries of the coaching courses organised as far out as Guam was Kelly Malay Hogan, who was the first woman from her association to sit the AFC coaching course in 1995. The programmes worked to improve not only refereeing but helped the women's tournament more holistically as Hogan would also go on to play in the first Guam team at the 1997 edition.

If the AFC was taking care of the future of the Women's Asian Championship, the Confederation also honoured the earlier generation. The tournament had grown and was no longer just managed by one competent lady. While the 1991 tournament programme was the first to no longer feature a welcome message from Veronica Chan, she was still actively involved as Head of the AFC Women's Committee and also regular Head of the tournament's Disciplinary Committee. This continuity also entailed recognition and the stalwart leader of the

women's football movement received a 10-year service award at the 1996 Congress, a precursor to her later golden star achievement award in 2007.

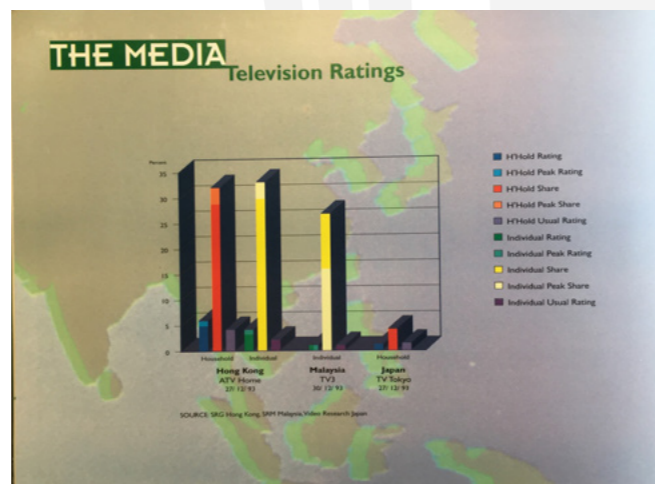
If there was one thing that Chan knew well, it was about the challenges of packaging and selling the tournament and keeping things on budget. From the earliest editions, she had taken on significant financial risk in keeping the tournament afloat at times despite selling advertising, television rights, and of course, ticketing. By 1991, the event had changed, but the tournament was not yet on the same level as the early competitions of the 1970s, other invitational tourneys from the 1980s or even the new FIFA Women's World Cup™, which all drew massive crowds in the tens of thousands. In fact, the competition was still viewed as an investment and developmental project. Its status was at times ambiguous, and sometimes even forgotten. The tournament could be celebrated for strong sporting diplomatic moments like the China PR-Chinese Taipei matches in 1989 or listed as the second point on the agenda of the AFC's official report to the FIFA Executive Committee even before the men's Olympic qualifying. However, just seven months earlier, when the AFC faxed its list of official 'Competitions Organised Directly by AFC', it featured all major men's and youth national team and club competitions but no mention of the Women's Asian Championship.



Sun Wen collectable doll

Perhaps this ambiguity was because the tournament was not yet a profit generator. Six months after the 1991 tournament, the Japanese FA had a meeting with FIFA on a number of topics, and one point on the agenda was the apparent 'enormous deficit' of the 1991 edition in Fukuoka. This may have been one of the reasons to involve the AFC's new marketing arm, the AFC Marketing

Ltd. in the preparations and delivery of the event. While the competition was not new to this kind of business approach – Veronica Chan's management in the 1980s was meticulous and extensive – this was the first time the tournament would benefit from the modern sports management agency approach. The tournament was already witnessing some modern sports marketing as a licensing agreement for the China PR team saw the players with their own personalised collector's doll.



Veronica Chan interviewed by the media in the mid-1970s

As a result, the three subsequent tournament reports in 1993, 1995 and 1997 were all produced by the AFC's marketing arm and had extensive analysis of the media coverage, advertising and sponsorship. Even if Veronica Chan had regularly taken to the media to promote the tournament in the early years, this was no small revolution and the AFC was investing significantly in the tournament. The 1996 Congress reports show how the spending on the 1995 Women's Asian Championship was proportionately 17% of the competition budget. Keeping in mind that there were 16 competitions – of all shapes and sizes – funded that year, the host subsidy and prize money for the men's 5th Asian Cup Winner's Cup represented only proportionately 19% of the total competition budget. This was also a proportional increase as the 1993 Women's Asian Championship represented 11% of the competition budget. The AFC was clearly investing more in the women's game.

Yet, football was not only about performance on the pitch,

but also about the incredible human experience shared by the players during their career. Various editions of the AFC Women's Asian Cup reveal something beyond marketing, goals or business. One of the tournament's legends, China PR's Sun Wen, who played in seven consecutive editions and scored in six of them, recalled with much fondness the broader experience of traveling across Asia, meeting people and experiencing the hospitality of new cultures. One moment in particular stood out for her. It was the faces of two Japanese women who served as team liaisons during the 1991 edition. She spoke of these two 'Japanese aunts' as the players called them and how 'they were so kind, so nice...even now I can remember their faces'.

This human experience at the tournament was continually enriched during the 1990s as the competition almost doubled in size. The boom in new entrants, in particular newly affiliated countries like the post-Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as farther geographic members like Guam mirrored AFC's growth as a Confederation. Some historically participating federations, such as the Philippines under the guidance of Cristina Ramos, came back during this period after a long hiatus; while the federation had 'taken women's football under its umbrella' in 1982, there was no women's team in the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ between 1983 and 1993. The 1990s also saw the return of India, Nepal and the debut of Vietnam.

1997-2003: Growth and the 'Club of Five'

This development was a double-edged sword, however, as it had an effect on the technical level due to the increasing number of countries sending teams to the tournament. The countries that had been developing since the 1980s were more than one step ahead, and by the middle of the decade, a 'club of five' had essentially monopolised the Semi-finals: China PR, Chinese Taipei, Korea Republic, DPR Korea and Japan. Every final quartet pairing from 1991 to 2003 included four of these five teams. As described by Sun Wen, 'we could see a lot of the talent individually, but between the players, they still have a different level' and 'they are not balanced in the team'. Fortunately, that imbalance has changed in her view since the 1990s as today 'all the teams are very well-trained and also the players have a better understanding of the game and the good technical basics'.

The AFC faced a challenge during this period of growth: how to develop the competition, keep it inclusive and grow the game at national team level across Asia but not create too much imbalance at the final tournament. The 1997 edition was perhaps the tipping point, with the worst average goal difference of 6.6 goals between teams

per match. If the focus was not on excluding teams from the final tournament, the AFC Women's Committee did ensure that the Women's Asian Championship provided the best teams with access to other competitions like the FIFA Women's World Cup™ or the Olympic Games. Although the 2003 Confederation competition posted some of the biggest score differences in the tournament's history (six of the first 26 matches included double figures for one team, and seven more 5-0/6-0/7-0/8-0), the experience was priceless for those teams and players who were still young. Bai Lili, whose first outing was with the 2001 China PR team stressed the value of 'playing in the tournament is quite remarkable as a fresh player because it is certainly a step-up in the level of self-confidence' which was important since it was 'the first time that I played in an official international tournament'. Her experience would prove essential when she made the 2004 Olympic squad and then returned to the competition in 2006. But that was a new era for the AFC Women's Asian Cup™.

DEVELOPMENT 2005-22

From the Championship to the AFC Women's Asian Cup™

2005 and the qualification revolution

The year 2005 brought sweeping changes to the Women's Asian Championship. Beyond a renaming which saw the tournament actually return close to its original name and adopt the same 'AFC Asian Cup' moniker as the men, the format of the competition was revisited. For the first time, a full qualifying tournament would be played in the year leading up to the final event. The logic was to diminish the significant competitive imbalance of the wide goal difference in so many of the group matches since the early 1990s when the number of participants began to rise. This would provide more balanced matches in the qualifying round and ensure a final tournament with more competitive games.

AFC WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFYING ROUND VIETNAM | 2005

Beginning in 2006, the four previous Semi-finalists would now all receive byes. This system remained in place for 2008 and increased its number of byes in 2010, which saw five teams automatically qualify for the eight-team tournament. However, since 2010, the trend has gone the other direction, giving more opportunities to teams in the qualifying rounds. From four byes in 2014, three in 2018, the most recent 2022 edition saw the AFC reserve eight slots for Qualifiers in the 12-team competition.

The impact of introducing qualifying rounds was immediate on the pitch as the average goal differential dropped from nearly 5.5 to just over 3.1 goals between teams per match. That trend continued over the next editions with 2010 being one of the closest tournaments on the scoring sheet since the first three tournaments 30 years earlier. Intriguingly, since the qualifying round was introduced, the winner of the final tournament has never been the top scoring team. That correlation was almost unbreakable over the first 14 editions of the tournament with 12 champions also holding the scoring record. In terms of the 'club of the five', the traditional hegemony of China PR, Chinese Taipei, Korea Republic, DPR Korea and Japan which dominated the near 20-year period from 1986 until 2003 finally weakened. From the 15th edition in 2006 until the most recent 2022 tournament in India, the dominant group has seen Australia displace Chinese Taipei, Thailand return to its former glory in 2018 with a fourth-place finish and podium newcomers, the Philippines, shared third place in 2022. The last six finals have all been decided by one goal or penalties, demonstrating how tight the competition has become at the top end.

Another interesting trend between 2006 and 2022 was the rise and fall of bookings. To put this into broader historical context, the 1991 edition produced only seven bookings (no expulsions) over 20 matches. The 10th edition in 1995 saw double the 1991 numbers with 14 yellow cards and one red over 19 games. The figures rose again two years later at the 1997 tournament where 20 cautions (no reds) were given. Notwithstanding the increase since 1991, these figures averaged just around one booking per match and as the 1996 AFC Disciplinary Committee noted, 'the women have the best disciplinary record'. Similarly, the 1995 and 1997 tournaments averaged one caution per match. While there was no data recovered for the three editions between 1999-2003, there was an interesting change in the 2006-22 era. For the first time the average

number of bookings per match (for the editions where data was recovered) increased with China PR leading the yellow card tallies in four of the five most recent tournaments. Referees who had only issued 1.2 cautions per match in 2006 soon were giving more than two yellows per game, with teams averaging over four bookings during the tournament by the 2010 edition. After decreasing in 2014 and again in 2018 – to 1.8 and 1.2 cautions per game – the number of cautions rose slightly in the most recent edition. Despite that increase, at 1.5 cautions per match in 2022 the women's game still remains less aggressive than the men's, as evidenced by the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ which averaged 3.7 yellow cards per match.

For expulsions, red cards have been rare in the history of the tournament generally averaging one per competition. While a complete set of match reports for the first 15 years of the tournament do not exist, in more recent history the 1990s saw only one per competition with none in 1991 or 1997. This has risen from 2006 to the present with every edition witnessing at least one red (two in 2010 and three in 2018). Whether the rise in bookings overall was a product of a renewed balance in the competition (parallel to the decreasing average goal differential between teams per match since the qualifying rounds in 2006) or just greater intensity on the pitch is hard to pinpoint. One thing is sure, the recent editions of the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ have been incredibly competitive.

Yet, scrappy play was not the defining characteristic of the final tournament which saw more and more highlight-reel goals as anyone who watches the videos can attest. There have been goals a plenty since 1975: a total of 1,779 over 20 editions. While this represents an average of almost 89 goals per edition, just a handful of teams claim the lion's share. Over the 43 years of the AFC Women's Asian Cup™, 41% of the goals have been scored by either China PR (367) or Japan (365). DPR Korea, which rose to prominence since the early 1990s comes third with 242 or 14% of the overall total. Adding to the three teams that share 55% of the goals in the competition are four other teams sharing another 30%: Chinese Taipei with 172, Korea Republic at 160, Thailand scoring 108 and Australia with 89 tallies. While there is clearly a historical bias in terms of matches played, some teams punched above their weight and posted strong goals per match ratios such as New Zealand (for its one appearance) and India (1.9 over nine editions) while Uzbekistan compensated some goalless games with a number of high-scoring outings (1.4 over five editions); Kazakhstan which managed 1.8 goals per match (over three editions) was also able to record several high-scoring performances.

Obviously, some countries have played more matches after 20 editions of the tournament. Many teams who were

present in the beginning have been committed to the tournament since the first edition. Of those teams which participated in 1975, almost all were present for the 2022 tournament. Only inaugural winners New Zealand have never returned after moving to Oceania. Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore played the qualifying rounds of 2022, with Thailand winning its group to join Australia who benefitted from a bye as 2018 runners-up. Of course, many others have joined the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ adventure in the intervening years. From an initial six teams to growing to a record 28 teams from all AFC Zones registering for the 2022 Qualifiers, the tournament has gained momentum across the entire Continent.

Over the years, some teams have met often. After the first six editions, the most recurrent matchups were Indonesia versus Chinese Taipei and Thailand versus India (four times). After 10 editions, Japan and Chinese Taipei had met seven times, including three Semi-finals. When the 15th edition ended, the Japan-Chinese Taipei fixture was still the most recurrent with four Semi-finals and two meetings for the third-place match. The second most common matchup through to 2006 had been DPR Korea against China PR (four times in the group phase, four Semi-final encounters and three finals). When considering all 20 prior editions, the DPR Korea against China PR clashes have been the most recurrent (13 times) with Chinese Taipei-Japan following close behind (12).

A tournament not only about winning

However, the competition has not only been about goals. The AFC Women's Asian Cup™ has always had a sense of something extra and witnessed all sorts of memories. For many players who were not professionals, the experience of traveling to the tournament, sometimes over great distances, was incredibly rich from a human perspective. The early tournament programmes regularly included welcome messages from the ALFC, the AFC or the host associations which underlined the competition's importance as a place for 'promoting international understanding, goodwill and friendship' as H.F. Jackson, President of the Women's FA of Singapore reminded the participants in 1981 in her official salutation.

As illustrated by the 1981 programme, the closing gala dinners in the early years appear to have been incredibly festive with players performing for the other teams. Indeed, even the experience of exploring a vibrant overseas metropolis like Hong Kong with its multitude of shops in the 1970s was an amazing experience. Barbara Cox recalled how amazing it was for New Zealanders

accustomed to 'problems with imports and choices' back home where it was a challenge just to buy football boots in women's sizes. Even if the social interaction and mixing between delegations was not the focus in later editions, Sun Wen fondly recalled the dinners and exchanges between players from different countries. Human connections reached beyond just the teams and Bai Lili recalled how Chinese expatriates living in Australia not only came to the matches in 2006 to support the 'Steel Roses', but also even prepared homemade food for the players.



Awards at the official gala dinner in 1975 with Veronica Chan on left

Over the years, an important part of this intercultural exchange at the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ has been the diversity of the Confederation itself. As part of those exchanges were just the real human relationships between players who even engaged in the traditional kit swap like Andrea Yang from the Philippines who gave her shirt to Guam's Kelly Malay Hogan who still keeps it as a souvenir of the unique competition experience. While not all MAs have yet to participate and players are not yet able to meet and exchange kits with their counterparts from every AFC Member Association, a record 34 MAs expressed interest to enter the draw for the 20th edition in 2022. This broad range of MAs from the largest continent on Earth offers the AFC the unique experience of having the greatest mix of countries of any Confederation. From West Asia to Australia, or from Central Asia to East Asia, the AFC spans a geography rich in diversity. In the last few years since 2006, the competition format with qualifying rounds has added some much-needed games and experience for some of the newer teams. Geographically-spread qualifying rounds have moreover been tailored to reduce some of the travel obstacles and support MAs that might not play as many games were there no qualifying competition.



Andrea Yang's training shirt

If qualifying re-established a more competitive final tournament, the byes have allowed the most successful teams to maintain a hold on the Semi-final knock-out rounds. Of those MAs that entered qualifying in the last few editions and reached the final tournament, few teams reached the final four. From 2006 to 2014, the Semi-finalists were all teams which had received byes to the tournament proper. Change may be in the air, however, and the hold of the 'big six' on the Semi-finals may no longer be exclusive. In a first step, Vietnam and the Philippines went as far as the newly introduced fifth place match in 2014 and 2018. Then, both Thailand (in 2018) and Philippines (in 2022) won their qualifying groups and reached coveted Semi-final phase. In Thailand's first appearance in the final four since 1986, they won their 2017 qualifying group and then reached the 2018 Semi-finals, losing on penalties only after Australia managed an injury time equaliser to finish 2:2 after 120 minutes.

The tournament has definitely evolved from the opening double-header in 1975, which included a Thailand-Australia fixture (3:2) as tight as the 2018 Semi-final. One off-the-pitch change has been the name of the competition. From 1975 to 1986 it was officially called the Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament in a clear effort to parallel the AFC Asian Cup™ for men. On a few occasions and in some documents, the name of the tournament mentioned 'Women' instead of 'Ladies' but the title remained consistently Ladies. The year 1989 saw the term 'Championship' replace 'Cup' and had both 'Ladies' and 'Women' used in different places in the same official programme and across many other documents. In 1991, the term 'Ladies' was dropped entirely and the competition was called the Asian Cup Women's Football Championship.

From 1993 to 2005 the tournament was then known as the Asian Women's Football Championship, losing the 'Cup' moniker entirely. While the qualifying round in 2005 was still called the AFC Women's Championship Qualifying Round, it was renamed the AFC Asian Women's Cup™ by the time the 2006 final tournament was launched.

Looking to the future

As the sun has set on the 20th edition of the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022™, a few final observations rise to the surface. The 2022 edition was the first competition to expand beyond the eight-team format in place since 2006. With now 12 spots to play for, the qualifying rounds will produce more opportunities for teams to reach the finals and promote women's football in their countries back home. Indeed, the AFC, through its commitment to continue developing women's sport, has strategically built on the existing media exposure. As a result, the 2022 edition benefitted from unprecedented digital coverage. From a digital engagement perspective, even the successful 2018 tournament paled in comparison to India 2022 with a staggering increase of 5,324% across AFC social media channels. With more than 270 million impressions, 17 million engagements and 74 million video views, engagement with Asian women's football has never been higher. Indeed, had it not been for COVID-19, hopes were high for stadium attendance. And while overall attendance for the 2018 tournament dropped compared to the two prior editions in Vietnam and China PR, the 2018 matches still drew more than 31,000 spectators over its 17-game schedule. A crowd of almost 9,500 – the largest of the tournament – flocked to watch hosts Jordan in their final group match against China PR. But even larger crowds had gathered like one of the record attendances of 18,000 at the Thailand versus Vietnam 2014 match where the teams played in front of colourful and passionate support.



Thailand vs. Vietnam 2014

The level of players' experience across all teams and editions since 2006 has increased as evidenced by the

rising average age of players. The overall average age for the 2006 competition was 22.2 years; by the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022™, it stood at 25.5 years. Asian women's teams are getting more experienced in recent years, and this should bode well for the future and when facing competition from other Continents.

One MA deserves signalling out: the Hong Kong FA. Despite being rather behind on some quantitative measures, the HKFA historically represents some of the smallest numbers of registered players, who have scored only 26 goals over 14 final tournaments until the qualifying phases were introduced in 2006. The change in format was certainly not kind to the Hong Kong FA, which has not since qualified for a final tournament. However, only five teams have played more final round matches than Hong Kong: Japan (78), China PR (70), Thailand (63), Chinese Taipei (59) and DPR Korea (53) who have played just one more match. The small, port-based MA has hosted the event more times (four) than any of its fellow AFC MAs and the Hong Kong FA is the only AFC MA to have participated in every edition since 1975. Having organised the first edition under the aegis of the Hong Kong Ladies FA and supported by Henry Fok's Hong Kong FA, they have contributed proportionately more than any other AFC MA. Hong Kong is also home to Asia's 'godmother of women's football': Veronica Chan who has done as much as anyone to grow the game across the Continent since she revived the ALFC in 1974. She remembers that 'Lots of girls liked to play football back then and it was not very organised, so I decided to help develop the game in Hong Kong and Asia'. It is impossible to argue with the results of her life's work. Going forward, she can only be pleased with how the competition has developed and its potential for expansion.

On the heels of the 1995 FIFA Women's World Cup™, the *FIFA News* headline was 'The Future is Feminine'. Just a few years later, when the AFC launched its Vision Asia development programme in 2003, it came with the tagline 'The Future is Asia'. Perhaps the time has come for a fusion of those two ideas. Indeed, the future is both Asian and feminine. After 20 editions, the AFC Women's Asian Cup™, the future of Asian women's football remains brighter than ever. The Continent can rest assured that, for the AFC, the development of the women's game is without a doubt 'Our Goal for All'.

YEAR	HOST MA	WINNER	
1975	Hong Kong FA	New Zealand	
1977	Chinese Taipei FA	Chinese Taipei	
1980	All India FF	Chinese Taipei	
1981	Hong Kong FA	Chinese Taipei	
1983	FA Thailand	Thailand	
1986	Hong Kong FA	China PR	
1989	Hong Kong FA	China PR	
1991	Japan FA	China PR	
1993	FA Malaysia	China PR	
1995	FA Malaysia	China PR	
1997	China FA	China PR	
1999	Philippine FF	China PR	
2001	Chinese Taipei FA	DPR Korea	
2003	FA Thailand	DPR Korea	
2006	FF Australia	China PR	
2008	Vietnam FF	DPR Korea	
2010	China FA	Australia	
2014	Vietnam FF	Japan	
2018	Jordan FA	Japan	
2022	All India FF	China PR	

1975

The image features the year '1975' in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. The numbers are set against a vibrant red background. Behind the white text, there are intricate yellow line-art patterns. These patterns consist of multiple parallel lines that curve and sweep across the page, creating a sense of motion and energy. The lines are thicker in some areas and thinner in others, giving the graphic a layered, architectural feel.

香港主辦
第一屆亞洲杯
 女子足球大賽



With best Compliments.
 From,
 ASIAN LADIES FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION

1st....
Asian Cup

Ladies Football Tournament Hong Kong

1975 HONG KONG

The first AFC Women's Asian Cup™ was held in Hong Kong in 1975 under its original name: the Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament. In the tournament programme, ALFC General Secretary Charles Pereira highlighted the 'special significance' of the competition being launched during the International Women's Year. A national side from Hong Kong welcomed Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, as well as two delegations travelling from faraway Australia (a composite side largely from the southeastern St. George Budapest club) and New Zealand. Two other members of the ALFC (Indonesia and Chinese Taipei) did not send a team.

The event was high-profile, with the delegations lodged at the recently built three-star Intercontinental Lee Gardens Hotel. The establishment was the tallest building in the area and regularly hosted events like the following year's Miss Universe pageant and had even seen the Bee Gees in town for their 1972 tour. The teams were well taken care of once in Hong Kong by the host, the Hong Kong Ladies Football Association and the ALFC organisers but getting to the tournament was a challenge for some teams. Barbara Cox, captain of the New Zealand side, recounted how the players paid their own way and raised money to cover their travel expenses.

By August 23, all the teams had arrived and were

introduced at a full press conference at the Lee Gardens Hotel, with team managers answering questions from the media. A proper training schedule was arranged by host Hong Kong Ladies Football Association. Cox recalled the daily routine of walking to one of the nearby South China or Hong Kong club professional football grounds where the teams trained in the mornings from 10 to 12 before returning for lunch at the hotel. In the afternoon, the players went on organised visits of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories. She recounted how training also included playing against local men's sides as preparation for the official tournament.

The 16-person tournament committee included seven women and had representatives from all six participating teams as well as one from Chinese Taipei. Chaired by Veronica Chan, the active football administrator in Hong Kong, her deputy chair Datin Teoh Chye Hin from Malaysia and ALFC General Secretary 'Charlie' Pereira from Singapore, the committee organised the referees, the disciplinary committee, an appeals board and approved the regulations.

技冠羣雌
 約西蘭



Top: New Zealand beat Australia; Middle: A goal against Thailand; Bottom: New Zealand scores

The opening ceremony took place on August 25 at the 28,000-seat Hong Kong Government Stadium. The teams marched on to the field under heavy summer rains and accompanied by the music of the official police band. Group matches were played as double-headers under the watchful eyes of several thousand spectators. The first match saw hosts Hong Kong play New Zealand.

Notwithstanding what the *Hong Kong Standard* qualified as the 'heroics of goalkeeper Angie Kwok', the local side fell to New Zealand who were 'too superior - physically and tactically'. According to the tournament report, underdogs Thailand then 'surprised most of the fans when they controlled most of the match' against Australia, defeating a taller and stronger side 3-2.



Following a rest day, another round of double-headers kicked off on August 27 with again close to 5,000 spectators. More rain continued to fall and the Kiwis played 'fast and aggressive football' to outclass the Malaysian side 3-0. Despite the wet pitch, the Thai women proved to be the outstanding team thus far. The *South China Morning Post* hailed 'their style and brainwork' as they defeated Singapore, who struggled and lost a player to injury, 3-0. The final matchday on August 29 saw the Australians redeem themselves with three goals and a clean sheet while Malaysia booked its place in the Semi-finals by defeating Hong Kong 2-0.

The ALFC Council met after the group stage and discussed taking an All-Star team from the tournament for a European tour the following year. The tournament report listed some 24 players selected (there may have been 25 according to one of the Australian players), however, the tour never materialised. Plans for a future world governing body for women's football and a dedicated World Cup for women were also discussed and the next edition of the Asian Cup Ladies tournament was awarded to Australia.

Back on the field of play, the Semi-finals saw the surprise Thailand team face Malaysia while New Zealand played Australia. The *Hong Kong Standard* reported that the victorious Thais and Kiwis both advanced 'deservedly and convincingly' after outplaying their opponents in front of 6,655 spectators. Forward Suwane Monchanaun from Thailand 'created panic' for the Malaysian defence, scoring

twice and 'combined magnificently up front' with Wanvilai Chaudet, who dribbled past two defenders to score the third goal. Although listed as favourites in the press and tournament report, the Australians were caught by surprise as the Kiwi side played what the journalist called a 'brainy game', going up by two first half goals. The Aussies fought back but were unable to resist when another Isobel Richardson strike at goal was deflected by a defender and finished in the back of the net. Responsible for the second and third goals, Richardson led an enthusiastic New Zealand to the final.

The last double-header of the tournament was on September 2. A record crowd of around 12,000 spectators came out to see the opening third place match in which Australia finished on a high note by convincingly defeating Malaysia 5-0, although the score was reported erroneously as 3-2 in a variety of sources. The final was a closer affair with New Zealand defeating a favoured Thailand 3-1. The crowd had sided with the Thais, pushing them back into the match in the second half but a penalty for New Zealand towards the end gave the Kiwis the definitive advantage. The final was televised later that evening on Hong Kong's TVB Pearl. The tournament closed with a reception at Pearl City Night Club and Restaurant which included a traditional awards ceremony and dinner.

In retrospect, the first edition of the tournament outlined separate destinies for the two finalists. Thailand went on to contest three of the next four finals. They also appeared and qualified in more final tournaments than any other nation (tied with Japan). Several players from the 1975 team continued their careers and played in the later editions, including Wanvilai Tongsa (number 10), Sudarat Supinanon (number 5), Yupadee Chairsawat (number 4), Saowanee Jaidee and Lamjiak Buabutr, who all went on to win the 1983 edition. For champions New Zealand, it was their one and only appearance in the tournament, and within a few years, Kiwi teams played in a separate Oceania Women's Football Confederation founded in 1982. Captain Barbara Cox would continue to play and eventually became one half of the first known national team mother-daughter duo, playing with Michelle Cox several years later. The Kiwi team also included one Sandra Twiname, the youngest player at 15, who was brought in to replace Michelle Wakefield (injured just before the trip) as well as a player married at the time to an All-White from the men's national team. While the tournament may not have generated a financial profit (according to later correspondence it actually cost Veronica Chan 60,000 Hong Kong dollars to sponsor the event), it was without a doubt a success and laid the basis for the future of the competition.



Victorious New Zealand in 1975



Winner's plaque on trophy in 1975

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Thailand	4	2	0	0	6	2	4
Australia	2	1	0	1	5	3	2
Singapore	0	0	0	2	0	6	-6

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
New Zealand	4	2	0	0	5	0	5
Malaysia	2	1	0	1	2	3	-1
Hong Kong	0	0	0	2	0	4	-4

SEMIS

Thailand	THA	3
Malaysia	MAS	0
New Zealand	NZL	3
Australia	AUS	2

FINAL

Thailand	THA	1
New Zealand	NZL	3

3rd/4th Place

Australia	AUS	5
Malaysia	MAS	0

NZ team: Front row: Pene Mack (manager), Raewyn Hall, Barbara Cox (Capt.), Marilyn Marshall, (vice-Capt.) Nora Hetherington (later Watkins), Dave Farrington (coach)
Middle: Marianne Poole, Elaine Lee, Carol Waller, Kathy Simeonoff (later Hall), Nadene Elrick, Sue Jacobs, Nell Jonganeel
Back row: Sandra Twiname, Carol Knox, Debby Chapman (later Leonidas), Isobel Richardson



1977

1980

A large, bold white number '1980' is centered on an orange background. Behind the number is a stylized green line-art illustration of a soccer ball, showing curved panels and a central crest area.

木蘭隊隊長賴翠娥捧着第三屆亞洲盃冠軍獎盃，威風凜凜。



Chinese Taipei captain lifts the trophy

1980 INDIA

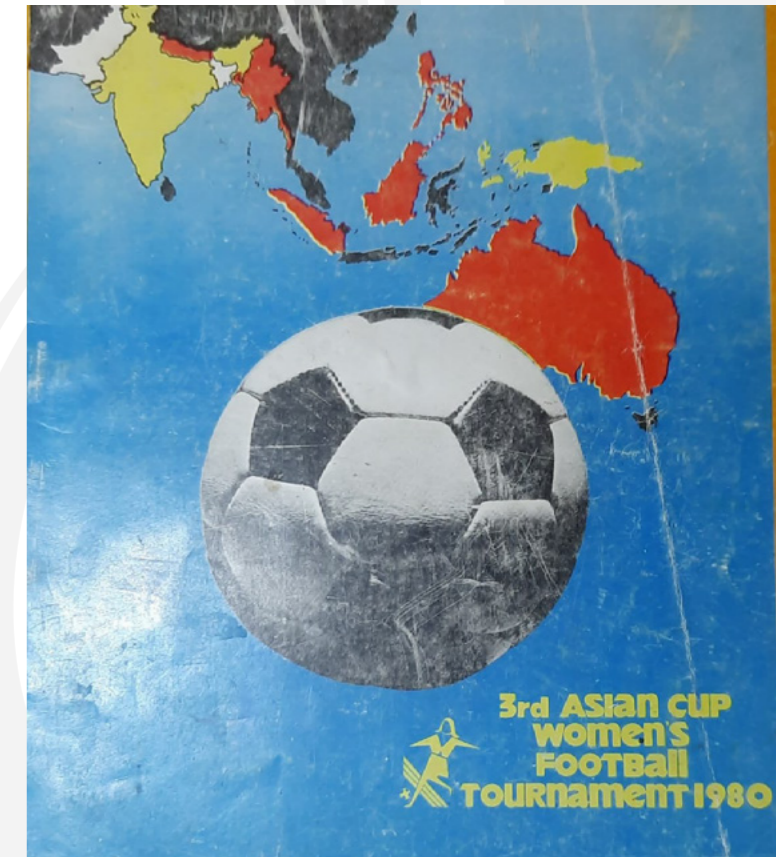
The 1980 tournament took place in Kerala, India, a region with a rich football history going back to the late 19th century. It was hosted by the Women's Football Federation of India (WFFI) and matches were played at the Calicut Corporation Floodlit stadium. The WFFI had sought political support and managed to receive a welcome message from the Indian President, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy through his Press Secretary as well as greetings from the Governor of Kerala, all printed in the now traditional souvenir programme.

In the end, only four teams came from abroad: Hong Kong, Malaysia, Chinese Taipei and a side from regional Western Australia. To round out the competition, two teams from India were formed. One was from the south and the other from the north. Initially planned for late 1979 and finally set for January 1980, the teams arrived by airplane in early January, welcomed with elephants and a traditional Kerala Thalappoli ceremonial procession (including the presentation of a metal platter with flowers, rice, coconut and a lamp).

The tournament format was arranged differently with six teams. All teams were placed in one group and each team met the others once in five group matches, providing a bit more playing experience than in 1977. The top four teams would then move on to a Semi-final round. The competition kicked off on 11 January with the India-South team winning 2-0 against Western Australia who were advertised throughout the tournament as the Australian representative team. The following day the two India sides were in action, the Southerners defeating Hong Kong and the Northerners losing heavily to Chinese Taipei. The Australians started to find their rhythm in their second match as they scored three against India-North while Chinese Taipei rolled past Malaysia for their second win

in as many games. The Malaysians fell again in their next match to the Australians with a close 1-0 scoreline.

With the matches spread unevenly throughout the schedule at the halfway point, not every team had played two games. In the second half of the tournament Hong Kong did better in their three remaining matches, losing once to Chinese Taipei but defeating Malaysia and the side from Western Australia. The girls from India-South were the only team to hold Chinese Taipei to a scoreless draw and split the points. This resulted in that Indian team finishing second overall while Western Australia squeezed into third place past Hong Kong on goal difference. The group phase ended with Malaysia in fifth and India-North sixth.



The cover on the official 1980 programme booklet

In the Semi-finals, Chinese Taipei registered a second 5-0 victory, this time over Western Australia while the impressive India-South team defeated Hong Kong. It was a logical result with the top two teams meeting in the final and Western Australia set to play Hong Kong for third place. The consolation final, however, never took place as Hong Kong were already on a flight home, giving the Australians 3rd place by default. In the final, the newspapers reported that the 'Indian defence were under constant pressure' and held until the 20th minute. Sweeper Chao Feng-Ying sent a perfect freekick which was headed in by Chuang Hai-Li. From that point, hosts India-South were unable to



第四屆 亞洲盃女子足球大賽

4TH ASIAN CUP LADIES' FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

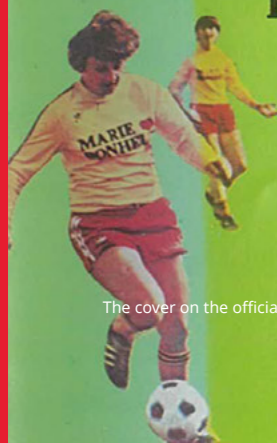
JUNE 7-17 1981 HONG KONG

印尼仙女隊	BUANA PUTRI (INDONESIA)
印度	INDIA
日本	JAPAN
台北木蘭隊	MULAN (TAIPEI)
菲律賓	PHILIPPINES
新加坡	SINGAPORE
泰國	THAILAND
香港	HONG KONG (HOST)



HONG KONG STADIUM · MONGKOK STADIUM

政府大球場 · 旺角大球場



1981 HONG KONG

The fourth edition of the Asian Cup Ladies' Football Tournament returned to Hong Kong and boasted a record eight teams. Two-time champions Chinese Taipei were back to defend their crown and the tournament featured one newcomer, the Philippines, and several teams that had not attended the previous competition. The Hong Kong event welcomed back Indonesia, Japan and Singapore after one edition's absence, but neither Malaysia nor Australia returned after competing in 1980. The eight teams were split into two groups. Group A had hosts Hong Kong, India, the Philippines and Singapore while Group B was composed of Chinese Taipei, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand. On the organisational side, Veronica Chan's omnipresent administration oversaw all aspects of the tournament - from writing to the immigration authorities to request visas and sending official invitations to the various international consuls based in Hong Kong for each of the participating nations to arranging sponsorship agreements with different companies for banners at the matches and working with an advertising agency.

The matches were still 60 minutes in length (two 30-minute halves) and the tournament drew strong crowds to Mongkok Stadium on Hong Kong Island. The opening day's matches and ceremony saw more than 8,000 spectators on hand to watch the hosts defeat the Philippines 2-0 with a goal within the first five minutes and

then a second around the 20-minute mark. In the second match, defending champions Chinese Taipei, in a 4-3-3 formation faced a similarly-organised Japan - one goal nine minutes into the second half saw them obtain their desired result. The Chinese-language *Hong Kong Times* reported that the Japanese coach had been 'disappointed with the team performance due to the lack of physical body and technical advantage'.

It was India and Thailand's turn to open their scoring accounts the following evening. The two sides masterfully dealt with their respective opponents in front of 3,427 spectators at Mongkok Stadium. In the first match, which kicked off at 6:45pm, India ran circles around Singapore, scoring an unanswered five goals. In the 8pm Group B match, Indonesia held on for the first half which finished 0-0, but Thailand then netted three times in the second 30 minutes.

The next round of matches featured the same group playing on the same day. On June 10, a crowd of 2,976 turned out to see Hong Kong defeat Singapore 1-0 and India crush the Philippines 8-0. This meant that both Singapore and the Philippines were eliminated before meeting each other in their final game, which became somewhat of a consolation match. It started out evenly with a 1-1 scoreline until late in the first half when Singapore pulled away with two more goals and ultimately won 4-1. In the other match of the double-header, which drew a crowd of 1,200, Hong Kong and India played to a scoreless draw for which the *Hong Kong Times* gave most of the credit to strong defending, in particular to the good performance of the Hong Kong goalkeeper.



In Group B, the two final matchdays played out in such a way that the Semi-finalists were decided before the final game. Chinese Taipei booked their ticket to the final four thanks to a powerful showing by striker Zhou Tai-Ying (also written Chou, that same young girl inspired by the original 1977 team), who scored five of their 10 goals against

The cover on the official 1981 programme

Indonesia. In the other match of the double-header which drew a 6,822-strong crowd, the technical Thai team defeated Japan 2-0. This set up what amounted to a high-stakes Group B final between Thailand and Chinese Taipei and a consolation match between Japan and Indonesia for third place. With 7,340 fans in attendance, Japan scored after 15 minutes and held their lead for a respectable third place finish. In the second match, Chinese Taipei found the net twice in a three-minute span (21st and 23rd minutes) before adding a third less than ten minutes from full-time.

All in all, the competition had been balanced, with only one match finishing with a double-digit score in favour of one team. However, the overall competitive balance was slowly beginning to drift away. If the first three editions of the tournament had seen an average goal differential of no more than 2.8 per match, the 1981 edition became the first to break the three-goal barrier. Chinese Taipei scored a tournament-record 20 goals over five matches, which represented the lion's share of the new 50 tournament goals overall record. Only Indonesia did not manage to net once. Two teams, Japan and the Philippines scored once while Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand each scored between three and six times. India was the only team coming close to winners Chinese Taipei with a total of 15 goals.

a Southeast Asian tournament in Manila the following year. The consolation match saw India defeat Hong Kong for a podium finish for the second time with goals in each half. Playing in a 4-3-3 formation, the tournament video recording show how the Indians scored following solid combination play up front while Hong Kong, in their 4-4-2, were unable to capitalise on a key second-half chance late in the game.

Chinese Taipei entered the final as favourites despite Thailand impressing everyone on their run to the title match. On the morning of the final, the *Hong Kong Times* announced that all 25 dollar seats had been sold but there were still some available in the cheaper categories of 20, 15 and 10 Hong Kong dollars. A massive crowd of nearly 17,000 gathered to watch the two top teams in a repeat of the 1977 final, which ended in a closely fought 1-0 victory for Chinese Taipei. The final was not a balanced affair, however, and the 5-0 scoreline in favour of Chinese Taipei posted the widest goal difference in the history of the competition's Final matches (a record shared with the 1991 edition where China PR defeated Japan). Chinese Taipei were simply too strong and took a 4-0 lead within the first 20 minutes. There was no way back for the Thai team and they conceded once more in the second half on a well-placed header from an out swinging corner. The Chinese Taipei side celebrated not only what would be their last title to date, but also their final match before an eight-year hiatus from the tournament.

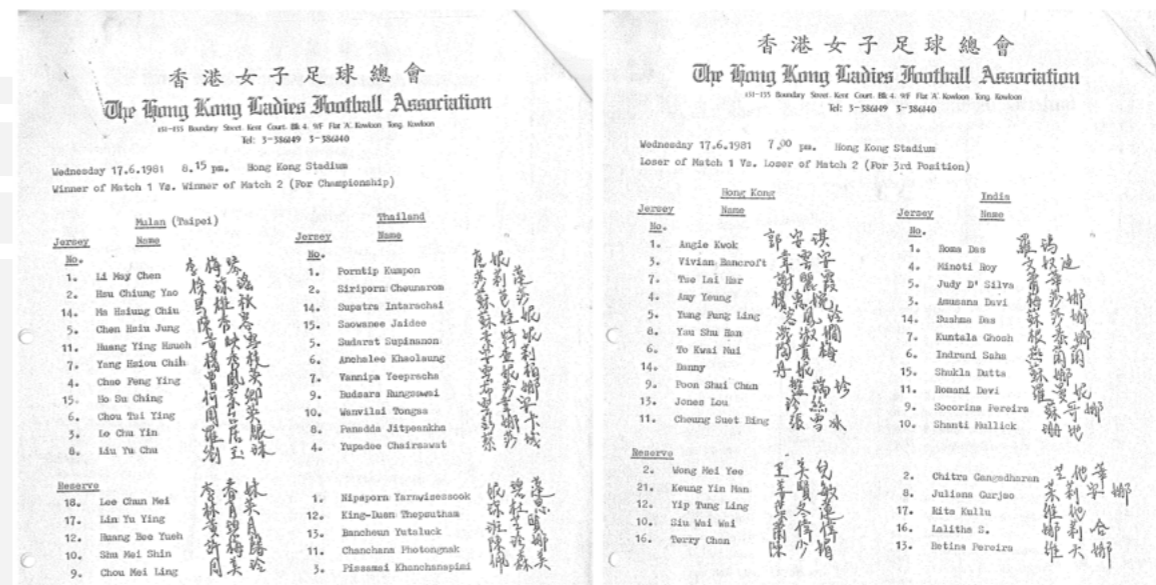


Mulan Team parade their third title



Mulan Team crowned champions

The two Semi-finals once again drew a strong crowd who looked on as Chinese Taipei scored with a second-half penalty to book their ticket to their third consecutive final. Thailand also relied on a single second-half goal to overcome India. While Hong Kong were deprived of a final, the *Hong Kong Times* reported how Veronica Chan was 'quite happy with the players' performance'. The paper also noted the Philippines' women's association, which was working on a five-year plan and hoping to host



Official team sheets in the 1981 final and third place match

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
India	5	2	1	0	13	0	13
Hong Kong	5	2	1	0	3	0	3
Singapore	2	1	0	2	4	7	-3
Philippines	0	0	0	3	1	14	-13

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Chinese Taipei	6	3	0	0	14	0	14
Thailand	4	2	0	1	5	3	2
Japan	2	1	0	2	1	3	-2
Indonesia	0	0	0	3	0	14	-14

SEMIS

Thailand	THA	1
India	IND	0
Chinese Taipei	TPE	1
Hong Kong	HKG	0

FINAL

Thailand	THA	0
Chinese Taipei	TPE	5

3rd/4th Place

India	IND	2
Hong Kong	HKG	0

1983

THAILAND

ฟุตบอลหญิง เอเชียน คัพ เอเอฟซี วีเมนส์ เอ

ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC

เอเอฟซี วีเมนส์ เอเชียน คัพ เอเอฟซี

1983



1983 THAILAND

As the fourth different host country in five editions, Thailand were set to organise the 1983 tournament. As runners-up in 1975, 1977 and 1981, it was high time that well-performing Thailand host the event. The team, however, had not only been a leader on the pitch. After all, the Thai Ladies Football Club, currently presided by Rangsimma Wanglee, had been inaugurated under the patronage of HR Princess Sirindhorn. But despite a history of royal support at some national-level organisations, the tournament no longer benefitted from the direct personal relationships between individuals in the ALFC and the AFC. As such, the competition's status as a recognised event was actually under serious threat for the first time. The natural link and support that had existed only a few years earlier had faded with changes in leadership in Kuala Lumpur in the late 1970s. The effects were finally felt during tournament preparations in 1983.

Due to issues around the lack of an official sanction from the AFC or FIFA, the number of participants dropped from the eight teams just 18 months prior (at the 1981 tournament) to only six. Several federations, including Japan and Indonesia, withdrew in the weeks before the mid-April tournament, all under direct pressure from FIFA not to participate. The competition was also deprived of defending champion Chinese Taipei in its first absence since 1975 as the national federation had actually joined the Oceania Football Confederation a few years earlier. In parallel to the OFC, a new Oceania Women's Football Confederation, inaugurated in 1982, was preparing its own tournament for 1983, although a Chinese Taipei team did not participate until 1986.

But the ALFC tournament went ahead at Supachalasai National Stadium in April 1983 with Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and hosts Thailand. A new trophy was commissioned since prior winners Chinese Taipei had won the cup three times and, according to

regulations, were allowed to keep the trophy. With only six participating teams, the tournament was contested using a one-group, round-robin format, with each team playing five group matches. It was an intense arrangement, with teams playing essentially every day so that all 15 matches were played in five days with just one rest day.

India, Singapore and Thailand all got off to strong starts by winning their opening games. On the second day, India and Thailand continued to show solid form, respectively defeating Hong Kong 1-0 and Singapore 3-0. After three match days, India and Thailand easily led the standings undefeated, while Singapore followed with victories against Hong Kong and the Philippines. Of the bottom three teams, Malaysia lost again – this time to Singapore who were then temporarily level with India for second place – but managed a victory on their last matchday. With two remaining matches to play, the Philippines secured a win and scored twice against Hong Kong. It was not to be Hong Kong's year as they frustratingly finished bottom without scoring a goal.



Thailand in action

The standings were clear and each team had one more victory than the team below. The organisers opted to skip a Semi-final round and directly play the third place match between teams three and four and a final between the top two teams after the group phase. In the third place match, the Malaysians faced the same Singapore team that had beaten them handily in the group phase. It would seem that the then 5-1 result served them well, since in the bronze medal match, the Malaysians held Singapore to a scoreless draw and emerged victorious on penalties. In the final, there was not the same level of surprise. The Thailand team actually did better than their 2-1 group match win against India to claim an emphatic 3-0 victory.



Victorious Thailand and their first trophy

After their fourth final in five editions, Thailand Ladies Football Club president Wanglee could be proud of her victorious national team which included many players who also served in the Royal Thai Air Force or as national police officers. Indeed, former New Zealand player Barbara Cox recalled that the team had a tradition of well-trained military players going back to the first tournament in 1975. One such player, Nongyao Wongkasemsak, continued to play with the team for a number of years and also won the South East Asian Games on several occasions. This was the pinnacle of the golden era of Thai women's football.

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Thailand	10	5	0	0	22	1	21
India	8	4	0	1	11	2	9
Singapore	6	3	0	2	12	5	7
Malaysia	4	2	0	3	7	16	-9
Philippines	2	1	0	4	2	16	-14
Hong Kong	0	0	0	5	0	14	-14

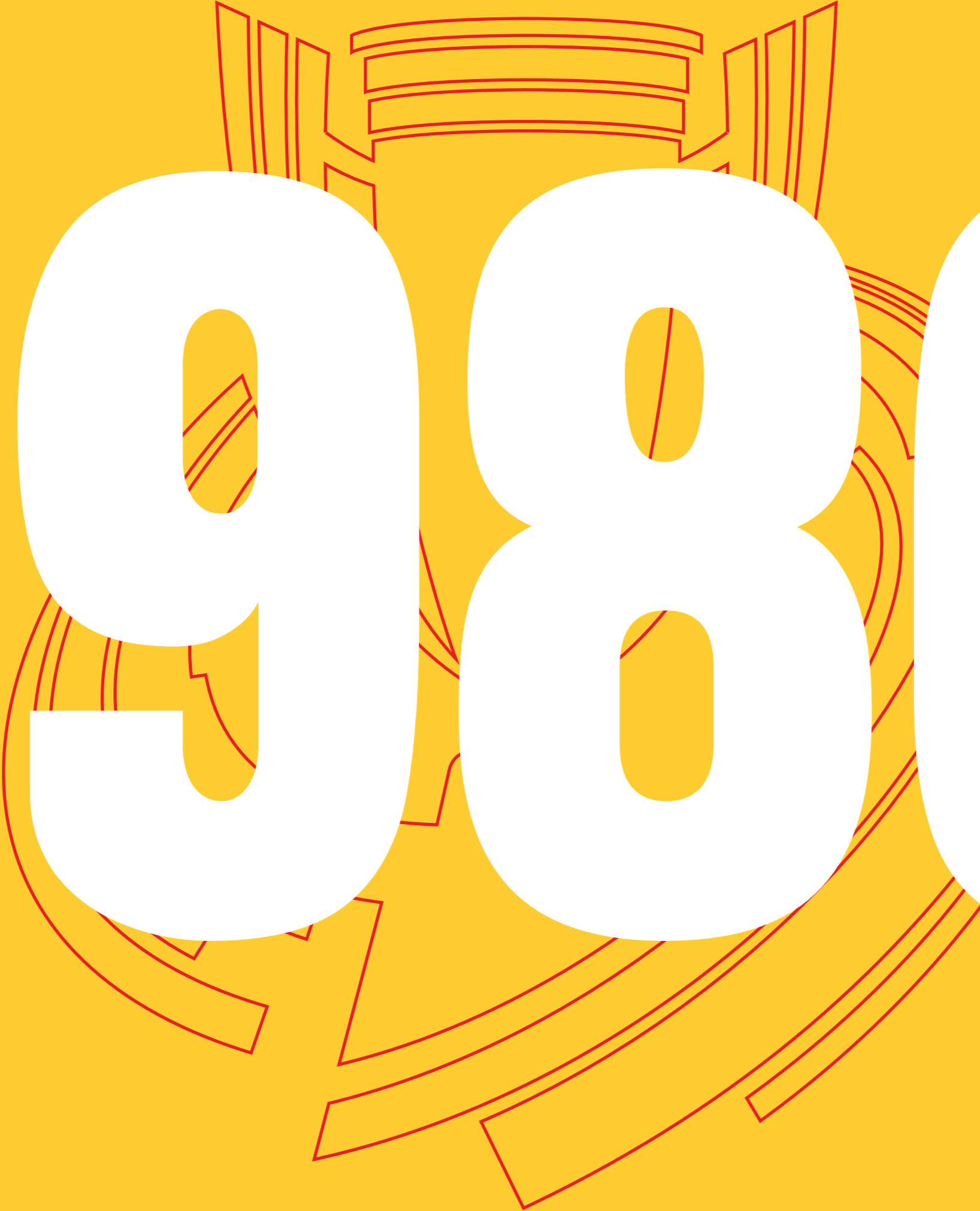
FINAL

Thailand **THA** 3
India **IND** 0

3rd/4th Place

Malaysia **MAS** 0 (5) PKs
Singapore **SIN** 0 (4) PKs

1986

A stylized red line art graphic in the background, resembling a soccer ball or a stylized 'A' shape, composed of multiple curved and straight lines.



第六屆亞洲盃女子足球錦標

6TH ASIAN CUP LADIES FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT



HONG KONG
DEC 14-23

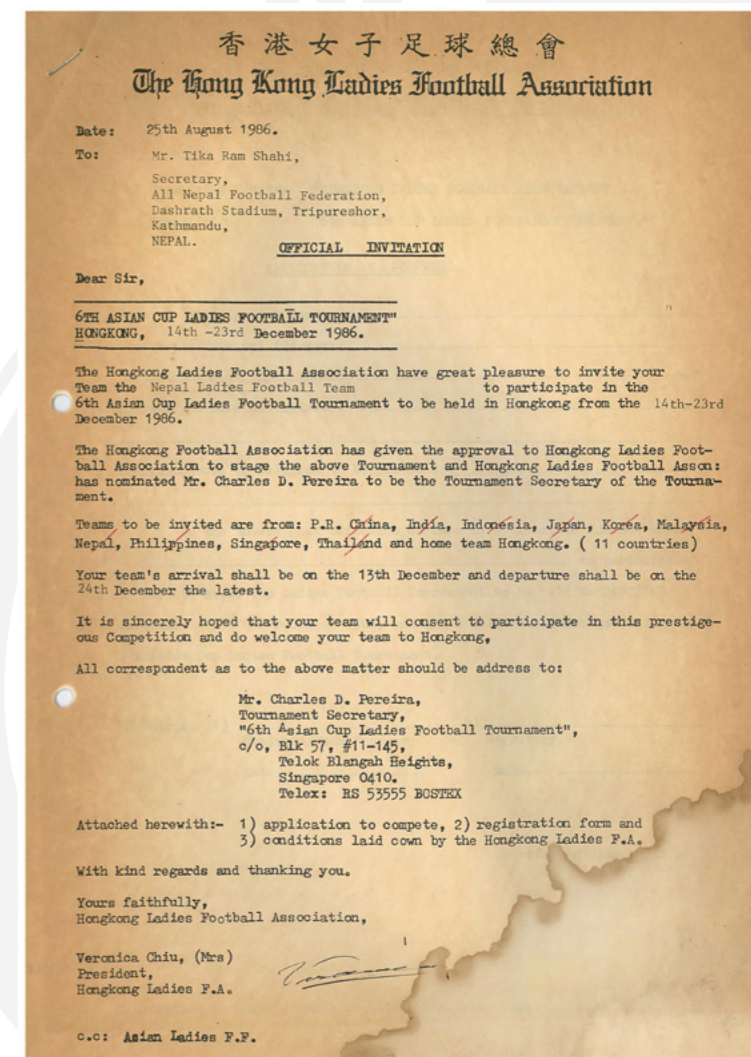
The cover on the official 1986 programme booklet

1986 HONG KONG

The 6th AFC Women's Asian Cup™ was a first turning point for the competition. With a new trophy, new participants and a newly re-formalised relationship with the AFC, the tournament held onto its name as the 'Asian Cup Ladies Football Tournament' and headed into 1986 with renewed vigour. Early preparations in May saw grand plans for 12 teams and 140 hotel rooms pre-reserved. The event was planned for December 1986 with letters sent out to the now 14 national members of the Asian Ladies Football Federation. Air travel to and from the event would have to be covered by the teams, but hotel and accommodation were provided by the organisers. All the procedural aspects were duly respected as was the case for any AFC-sanctioned tournament. General Secretary Peter Velappan informed the Hong Kong FA, with a copy to the AFC Ladies Committee, that detailed competitions regulations were approved and 'wishing the tournament every success'.

The organising committee went through multiple versions of budgets in both English and Chinese, detailed all the way down to hiring liaison officers for each team, travel expenses for volunteers and even standard audit fees. Under the supervision of Veronica Chan, nothing was left to chance. Hotel reservations were revised and significant deposits made to hold the many booked rooms as well as arranging with Nelson Siu, sales manager at the brand-new Harbour View International House, for administrative

space to be used during the tournament. As the event drew closer, eight teams registered to play: regulars Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand as well as newcomers China PR and Nepal. Hong Kong FA secretary Vincent M.C. Yuen was heavily involved in the preparations and submitted many of the organisational plans and requests, including the police requisition form for the 16 matches as well as reservations of local training grounds for the visiting teams to use at any time during the tournament. Even the youth of the local community became involved, as the opening ceremony music was to be provided by the nearby St. Bonaventure School band.



ALFC's invitation letter to Nepal

Three days before the competition, the Hong Kong FA weekly news bulletin tipped China PR as favourites and proclaimed hosts Hong Kong an underdog, but one that could 'produce a shock to the tournament, especially when the team has undergone very comprehensive selection and preparation processes'. The packet prepared for the media listed all the details of interest on the opening day's programme and was printed in English and Chinese. The press conference was scheduled for the familiar Lee

Gardens Hotel on Saturday, 12 December with Charlie Pereira serving as the master of ceremonies for the event. There were speeches by Veronica Chan and Dennis Sun, Director of Fuji Photo Products, the tournament sponsor.

India withdrew late in the process and were still listed when the tournament programme and schedule were printed. The tournament committee adjusted the match schedule: Group A with three teams (China PR, Japan and Malaysia) and Group B with the original four (Hong Kong, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand). The managers' meeting was held on the eve of the first match, where all the organisational details were finalised - from jersey colours to player registration and from competition rules all the way to the discussion for the next tournament. The new regulations included a longer match duration as the tournament witnessed its first 35-minute halves.

Form "B"
(Issued by The Hong Kong Football Association Limited)

List of players of CHINA taking part in the 6TH ASIAN CUP LADIES Division match versus JAPAN played on 23/12/86 at MONGKOK STADIUM Ground

Jersey No.	Name	Registered Number
(/) Goal-keeper	钟红莲	1
(2)	王雯	14
(4)	常萍	3
(5)	王丽娟	52
(7)	冰洁	5
()	李秀毅	6
()	温利蓉	15
()	赵梅	8
()	姜伟英	7
()	申晓志	13
()	孙文敏	11
() Substitute	李艳杰	22
() Substitute	吕学勤	4
() Substitute	张颖	10
() Substitute	刘玲	12
() Substitute	侯晓敏	9

Certified correct 丛青 Captain
 JERSEY COLOUR: - All ~~White~~ RED
 GOAL KEEPER: BLUE

After the opening ceremony and traditional team presentation parade, the tournament kicked off with a double-header. Over 2,000 spectators came to watch Hong Kong take on Nepal followed by China PR against Japan. In the first match, the home side narrowly defeated newcomers Nepal 1-0 while China PR emerged 2-0 winners over Japan in the second. The following day, Thailand, playing in blue, put four goals past the white-clad team of Indonesia. Thailand coach Fuengvit Thongpramool had a deep bench and was able to rotate a few players for the next two matches while still getting results. Despite Malaysia having more experience in the tournament from prior editions, it was clear that China PR and Japan were one level above this year, managing easy victories over the four-time participants. Group A finished with China PR in first and Japan second with nearly the same goal difference.

In Group B, the competition was a bit closer save for Thailand, who showed why they were defending champions. After Indonesia beat Hong Kong 1-0 in their second match, it meant there was still everything to play for on the last day. On 19 December, Indonesia lined up with a starting 11 that featured returning number 10, Nina Noventi. On the opposing side were a Nepal team which saw regular number six, Junu Khadka, return for number 14, Nauda Gurung. Indonesia set the tone, scoring immediately and adding three more before the break, which was too much for Nepal, who were still discovering the level of competition at their first tournament. With the first match completed, the small crowd turned their eyes to the second part of the double-header at Mongkok Stadium between now-favourites Thailand and their home Hong Kong side. Coach Liu Run Tze took the opportunity to introduce a promising young player, Ho Wing Kam. The number 14 had turned 15 years of age just one month earlier, but proved that she could play at the top level in Asia and would go on to make the Hong Kong team again in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1999 (possibly in 1997 but no rosters have been recovered). But Thailand showed why they were a force in Asian football. Even though a draw would have been enough to claim first, Thongpramool's blue-clad Thai team scored twice to extinguish any hope that Hong Kong had for a Semi-final berth.

The fixtures were set for a double-header on 21 December. The Semi-finals had initially been scheduled for the afternoon but were moved to the evening to give players a feel of playing under stadium lights. Cong Zheyu made two changes to his team for the Semi-final against Indonesia and in front of nearly 4,000 spectators, an attendance best so far for 1986. China PR made swift work of their opponents, stopping their momentum and two-match winning streak by scoring nine goals. In the second

match, Thailand were surprised 4-0 by a Japanese side who scored twice towards the end of the first half and again early in the second. This set up two rematches from the group phase with Thailand facing Indonesia for third place and, for the title, a repeat of the Group A opener between China PR and Japan.

Form "B"
(Issued by The Hong Kong Football Association Limited)

List of players of JAPAN taking part in the 6TH ASIAN CUP Division match versus CHINA played on 23/12/86 at MONGKOK STADIUM Ground

Jersey No.	Name	Registered Number
(/) Goal-keeper	MASAE SUZUKI	鈴木正江
(2)	YOKO TAKAHAGI	高根陽子
(4)	MAYUMI KAJI	梶真子
(5)	SAYURI YAMAGUCHI	山口百合
(7)	KAZUKO HIRONAKA	岩中和子
(6)	AKEMI NODA	野田明美
(10)	FUTABA KIKA	木尚雙葉
(3)	MIDORI HONDA	本田緑
(12)	MICHIKO MATSUDA	松田美智子
(11)	ETSUKO HANDA	半田月子
(9)	KAORI NAGAMINE	長谷香即
(17) Substitute	YUKI FURUKI	古木由美
(8) Substitute	ASAKO TAKAKURA	高倉朝子
(15) Substitute	TAKAKO TEZUKA	土蔵貴子
(13) Substitute	AKIKO HAMADA	浜田明子
(14) Substitute	CHIAKI YAMADA	山口千明

Certified correct FUTABA KIKA Captain
 White-Blue-White

In the third place match, Indonesian coach Muhardi made two changes to his team from the opening match, giving Kuncorowati the start in goal and number 14, Paima Hutabarat, her tournament debut. Thailand's only change from the first match was Sune Kridsanachandee, who had started every game since that opener which she had started on the bench. This time, Indonesia knew who they were up against and even if they went down three goals, fought back with a late first-half goal. But it was not enough and Thailand

would retain a place on the podium as they had done for each of the four editions in which they participated since 1975.



The Nepal team

The much-anticipated final drew a strong crowd of close to 8,000 spectators, much higher than the initially-hoped-for and budgeted 2,000. China PR fielded 10 of the same players from the first match, with number 15, Wen Kirong, getting called for the final in place of number 10, Zhang Weiwei. For the white and blue of Japan, defender Honda Midori replaced midfielder Asako Takakura as coach Kazuhiko Takemoto shifted to a 5-3-2 formation. The change was not enough, however, and when referee Chan Tam Sun from Hong Kong blew the final whistle, the 2-0 scoreline was a repeat of the opener. In their first tournament and one where Wu Weiyang was named best player, China PR had emerged undefeated and champions of Asia.



The Nepal team's farewell send-off

1989







THE 8TH ASIAN CUP WOMEN'S FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 1991

第8回 アジア女子サッカー選手権大会 5/26(土) - 6/8(日)

参加国/中華人民共和国、チャイニーズタイペイ、ホンコン、朝鮮民主主義人民共和国、大韓民国、マレーシア、シンガポール、タイ、日本

主催 アジアサッカー連盟(ASIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION) ●共催 福岡市、西日本新聞社、テレビ西日本 ●主管 朝日本サッカー協会、福岡県サッカー協会

The cover on the official 1991 programme

1991 JAPAN

For the first time in the competition's history, the tournament took place in Japan, comprised nine teams and included changes to the countries that had recently competed. After two consecutive appearances, neither Indonesia nor Nepal sent teams, but the 1991 edition did welcome back Malaysia and Singapore after a brief absence. The tournament also marked the debut of Korea Republic, who were also the youngest squad on paper and on the pitch at an average age of 18.6 and 18.4 respectively. This contrasted with Singapore's experienced side who averaged 26.1 years on the pitch.

The 20 matches were spread across three stadiums in the large southwestern port city of Fukuoka: Heiwadai Athletic Stadium (8), Hakatanomori Athletic Stadium (10) and Kasuga Football Stadium (2). The nine teams were split into two groups. Group A had China PR, Chinese Taipei, Korea Republic and Thailand. The five remaining teams – Hong Kong, Japan, DPR Korea, Malaysia and Singapore – played in Group B.

The tradition of double-headers continued and the opening day in Group B saw Hong Kong defeat Singapore while Japan were victorious over DPR Korea. Within the first few matchdays, hosts Japan had already managed two wins. While initial victors Hong Kong slumped, they did field one of the youngest players in tournament history, Jam Ma Li, who was only 14 years and 309 days old when she played in the third game against DPR Korea. By then, DPR Korea had found their rhythm, scoring no less than 17 goals across their second and third games. Despite fielding the oldest player of the tournament, Esah Bte Rashid at age 36, Singapore could not make up for having missed the competitive experience of the last two tournaments and lost all four group matches. The same

could be said for Malaysia, who were also out of practice after missing the prior edition but managed a win and a draw. The head-to-head match between the two, which finished 1-0 for Malaysia, was one of the rare, closely-fought games played by the two sides in 1991. At the end of the four matches in Group B, an undefeated Japan topped the group with a full eight points, followed closely by DPR Korea on six points from three victories.

Group A was somewhat more balanced apart from China PR, who coasted to three wins, scored 23 goals and only conceded one. They also had the youngest player to score, 16-year-old Zhu Tao, in their second match against Thailand. The Thai side had opened their tournament with a 3-0 victory over Korea Republic, where Anchalee Khaolaung became the oldest player at 29 to score in this edition of the tournament. As for Korea Republic, their inexperienced team struggled and conceded often, but a first appearance in the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ is never easy.

The Thailand versus China PR match was symbolic of a generational shift in the tournament. Anchalee Khaolaung, who had started in 1983 as a 19-year-old with the mighty champion Thai team, stood now opposite another young prodigy from China PR. That 18-year-old Chinese player was Sun Wen who scored her first two Asian Cup goals that day, the first of many more to come. In some sense, it was the sign that the times had truly changed and that this was the era of China PR. In their third and final group match, Chinese Taipei and Thailand fought for second place and the coveted Semi-final spot. Unfortunately for Thailand, the 0-0 draw was not enough for them, and the islanders went through to the final four on goal difference.



1991 Final - China PR (white) vs Japan (red)

The stakes were high in the Semi-finals as the top three teams would qualify for the first official FIFA Women's World Cup later that year. In the first match, China PR

faced DPR Korea at Hakatanomori Athletic Stadium, which saw 18-year-old Zhang Yan scoring for the Steel Roses early in the first half and the Koreans unable to equalise. In the other Semi-final kicking off mid-afternoon, Japan faced Chinese Taipei. The match went all the way to penalties with the hosts emerging victorious. Both China PR and Japan had booked their places in the inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup™, but there was one spot remaining. It was between DPR Korea and Chinese Taipei, who played another lengthy but goalless draw and lined up for penalties after 100 minutes of play. It was not to be for the Koreans as Chinese Taipei scored all five of their penalties. Perhaps it was fatigue since five players from DPR Korea – Kim He Ran, Li Chu Wol, Rim Sun Bong, Yang Mi Sun and Im Hyion Suk – had played the most minutes in the tournament (500 minutes each) over the three group stage matches and the knockout rounds. For number 6 and captain, Chou Tai-Ying could celebrate with her teammates as they had booked their ticket for the first-ever FIFA Women's World Cup™.



1991 Final - China PR (white) vs Japan (red)

The much-anticipated final between Japan and China PR was in some sense a surprise: a repeat of the 1986 final which the Steel Roses had won, though it was then not a one-sided contest. The rematch in 1991 was bitterly disappointing for the home side. China PR scored late in the first half to lead 1-0 at the break. But a three-goal flurry between the 73rd and 79th minutes added to what was already a 2-0 lead and the Japanese had no way back. Even considering the 12 subsequent finals, this was the widest goal difference in an AFC Women's Asian Cup™ Final alongside the fourth edition in 1981. It was hard to swallow for Japan, who had scored the most goals going into the final (27) and wanted to avenge their loss from 1986. But China PR were truly coming into their own and the following years would see their domination continue.



1991 Opening match - Hong Kong (red) vs Singapore (blue)



Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	6	3	0	0	23	1	22
Chinese Taipei	3	1	1	1	9	3	6
Thailand	3	1	1	1	4	10	-6
Korea Republic	0	0	0	3	0	22	-22

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	8	4	0	0	27	1	26
DPR Korea	6	3	0	1	25	1	24
Hong Kong	3	1	1	2	3	9	-6
Malaysia	3	1	1	2	1	24	-23
Singapore	0	0	0	4	0	21	-21

SEMIS

China PR	CHN 1
DPR Korea	PRK 0
Chinese Taipei	TPE 0 (4) PKs
Japan	JPN 0 (5) Pks

FINAL

China PR	CHN 5
Japan	JPN 0

3rd/4th Place

DPR Korea	PRK 0 (4) PKs
Chinese Taipei	TPE 0 (5) PKs

1993

The number '1993' is rendered in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. The background is a solid blue color. Behind the numbers, there are several yellow line-art elements: a series of horizontal lines at the top, a series of curved lines at the bottom, and various other abstract shapes and lines that create a sense of motion and depth.



Players from China PR celebrate their fourth consecutive victory

1993 MALAYSIA

In the months that preceded the 1993 Women's Asian Championship, the ninth of its kind, FIFA sent a circular to the Confederations (with a copy to UEFA) reminding them that the 1990 FIFA Congress had made an important change to incorporate three standing committees into the statutes, including one for women's football. FIFA instructed the Confederations that they should introduce these before their Continental Congresses in 1994. Admittedly, it was a general circular letter, but one could almost discern in between the lines the proud smile on Peter Velappan's face as he wrote candidly that the AFC already had a women's committee and they 'have been very competent to look after the women's activities for the last fifteen years'. Indeed, even in 1993, Asia already had quite the history in women's football.

That same 'very competent' committee oversaw the preparations for the ninth tournament held in December 1993. This was the first edition of the tournament to benefit from the recently-formed AFC Marketing Ltd. The business arm of the Confederation was responsible for the competition's sponsorship and marketing as well as supporting their media coverage and distribution. It was the first time media figures were reported, and the 1993 tournament benefitted from 28 hours and seven minutes of television coverage across the Continent spread over 17 terrestrial and four satellite networks. This included a number of Asian countries which had yet to send a team to the competition. In some cases, the television ratings reached over 30% of the household or individual share, particularly in Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Eight teams arrived in Sarawak, Malaysia, during what is usually a wet period of the year, but fortunately only one match had to be postponed due to the weather. Sun Wen recalled how the teams 'stayed in a fancy hotel by the sea and really enjoyed it'. The eight teams were drawn into two groups of four with regular double-header matchdays.

Group A was composed of China PR, DPR Korea, Korea Republic and Malaysia while Group B included Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan and the Philippines. If this was the first time Thailand missed the competition in more than a decade, it also saw the Philippines returning to the competition for the first time since 1983.

The matches kicked off with Korea Republic pressuring host Malaysia, who finally succumbed to the Koreans and conceded three second-half goals for a 4-0 loss. For Korea Republic, it was an impressive start in just their second time participating. Although the teams did not know it yet, the second match was a preview of the final with China PR and DPR Korea playing what was, according to the tournament report, possibly the best match of the competition. Despite playing against overall favourites China PR, the DPR Korea team came close to an upset and only Zhou Yang saved the red-clad Chinese side with a last-minute equaliser. The remaining group matches were mostly predictable, with DPR Korea and China PR scoring often and finishing first and second respectively. DPR Korea midfielder Ko Jong Sun scored the first hat-trick of the tournament against Malaysia. In the final group matches, torrential rain made the pitch nearly unplayable and the DPR Korea-Korea Republic match was postponed until the following morning.



DPR Korea ready to take on Malaysia

In the other group, Hong Kong played only their third match against the Philippines in this competition, and they managed their second victory over the newly-returned side. Japan opened their tournament with a bang, scoring six times against Chinese Taipei in a surprise win. But the match served as a wake-up call for the islanders, who had placed third in 1991, and they won their next two group games, even scoring 12 goals in the third and final match. However, it was Japan's 15-goal haul against the struggling Philippines side which set the record for the highest number of goals for the tournament to date. The standings in Group B sent Japan and Chinese Taipei through to the Semi-finals while Hong Kong could be

proud of their most prolific venture to date, scoring a team record five goals in the competition.



Player of the tournament (Zhao, Li-Hong) and joint top goalscorers (Liu Ai-Ling / Asako Takakura)

In the Semi-finals, a determined Chinese Taipei team defended well but could not hold off DPR Korea who managed two second-half goals. The other match saw China PR defeat Japan in what the tournament report called a 'thrilling encounter which produced some excellent football'. The third place match between Japan and Chinese Taipei was hard-fought with three yellow cards, the highest of the tournament, and ended with the former emerging victorious again for their second win over the latter during the competition. After the initial meeting in the group phase, the final promised a real spectacle of football. Unfortunately for DPR Korea, who lost a player to an early red, the match turned quickly and China PR registered their fourth consecutive title.

Despite falling to China PR in the Semi-finals, Japan could claim the team-scoring record for the 1993 edition. Indeed, the blue-and-white of Japan had scored no less than 29 goals (including one own goal by the Philippines) in their five games to equal the tally by China PR two years earlier. The Japanese were a threat from all over the pitch and four of the top six scorers in the tournament were from Tamotsu Suzuki's side: Takakura Asako (with six goals), Nagamine Kaori and Mizuma Yuriko (five goals each) and Sawa Homare (four goals) and a total of 10 different goalscorers. Two other teams, China PR and Chinese Taipei had nine different goalscorers each. The tournament award for best player went to Zhao Li-Hong (China PR) while the team fair play award was presented to Japan. Takakura and Liu Ailing of China PR were the

joint top scorers with six goals each.

It was both a highly exciting event overall and one which began to reveal the differences in level between some Asian countries. Of the 16 matches only three ended with both teams scoring at least one goal. Indeed, two teams went home without opening their scoring accounts at all while teams like Japan and China PR both scored at least 20 goals during the competition. The average goal difference across all matches had been rising since the 1970s but the 1993 edition saw this break the rather unbalanced five-goal barrier for the first time. The best teams in Asia were getting better faster than the rest of the Continent and it was beginning to show.



Japan and Chinese Taipei in action



Malaysia versus Korea Republic



Liu, Ai-Ling from China PR eludes a tackle from Kim Sun Hui from DPR Korea

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
DPR Korea	5	2	1	0	16	1	15
China PR	5	2	1	0	14	1	13
Korea Republic	2	1	0	2	4	9	-5
Malaysia	0	0	0	3	0	23	-23

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	6	3	0	0	25	1	24
Chinese Taipei	4	2	0	1	15	6	9
Hong Kong	2	1	0	2	5	6	-1
Philippines	0	0	0	3	0	32	-32

SEMIS

Chinese Taipei	TPE	0
DPR Korea	PRK	2
China PR	CHN	3
Japan	JPN	1

FINAL

DPR Korea	PRK	0
China PR	CHN	3

3rd/4th Place

Japan	JPN	3
Chinese Taipei	TPE	0



1995

The background features a stylized blue line-art illustration of a soccer ball and a trophy. The soccer ball is positioned in the lower half, with curved lines representing its panels. Above it, the trophy is depicted with a circular base and a cup-like top, flanked by vertical lines that suggest a pedestal or support structure.



China PR celebrate their fifth title

1995 MALAYSIA

After months of speculation and a host of site visits, the tournament returned to Malaysia for the second time in two years. This time, however, it was on the heels of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ in Sweden, where Japan reached the Quarter-finals and China PR finished fourth. Asian women's football was becoming a force to be reckoned with in global competition. The tournament took place between the end of September and early October. If the 1993 edition had been held in the south, this time it headed north to the tip of Borneo in Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah. The tournament drew 11 participants for the first time. The regulars were joined by India, returning for the first time since 1983 as well as newly-affiliated Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan who became FIFA and AFC members a year earlier. The only glaring absence was DPR Korea, who played in all the competitions between 1989 and 2010.

The teams were split into three groups and matches played at the Likas Stadium and Penampang Stadium. Titleholders China PR, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan and the Philippines were in Group A. Only three teams were in Group B: Chinese Taipei, who finished fourth in the last edition, Thailand and Malaysia. The last group included prior third place finisher Japan, Korea Republic, Uzbekistan and India. The 1995 edition followed similar global changes, and for the first time in the competition's history, matches were now the full regulation 90 minutes. As was now custom, the best player was awarded a trophy by one of the sponsors. Indeed, the off-the-pitch aspect of the tournament was growing in sponsorship and media interest. Despite the far-off location, Paris-based global francophone Agence France Presse had a 'stringer' on assignment to cover the event. In terms of television reach, the work by AFC Marketing Ltd. doubled the number of broadcast coverage hours to 55 cumulative hours across four satellite channels and a record 19 countries.

Officiating at the 1995 edition were five women, representing just under half of the entire referee contingent. The referees were able to focus on the match and did not have to deal with much foul play. In fact, the Disciplinary Committee reported to the AFC Congress in 1996 that the 'women have the best disciplinary record' in comparison to all other AFC competitions and well ahead even of the men's youth competitions, which averaged 2.4 yellow cards per match. With less than one yellow card per match and only one red during the entire tournament, the players at the 1995 Women's Asian Championship led the way and were better than their fellow male national teammates who would register more than 2.6 cautions per match at the men's AFC Asian Cup™ the following year.

The action was definitely focused on the ball rather than the opponent, the entertaining tournament producing a record 102 goals in 19 matches. The day began with a 3-0 Chinese Taipei victory over Thailand, followed by Japan registering a 1-0 victory over Korea Republic. Uzbekistan were the team of the moment as they began their competition experience under stadium lights with a number of milestones. Thanks to a first tournament goal by Gulnara Azamova, who would go on to play in the next three tournaments, the Uzbek side notched their nation's inaugural victory in the competition.



Uzbekistan's first ever AFC Women's Asian Cup™ Team

The next few days saw some close matches – Kazakhstan's 0-0 matches against Hong Kong and the Philippines – but many of the games were lopsided with heavy scorelines on one side. Of 19 games, only one match (3-1 for Malaysia against Thailand) ended with both teams scoring at least one goal. China PR set the tournament record for the largest margin of victory with a 21-0 win over the Philippines. At the Japan-Uzbekistan tie which finished 17-0 for the FIFA Women's World Cup™ Quarter-finalists, Tamaki Uchiyama set the individual scoring record of eight goals in the same match, an apparent record that

still stands even after 20 editions of the tournament.

In Group A, China PR won all three matches with 40 goals scored and none conceded. Hong Kong won their final group match 2-0 but it was not enough for them to finish second and they were eliminated along with Kazakhstan and the Philippines. Group B saw just three matches between the three teams and Chinese Taipei easily won the group, and like China PR, did not concede once. Malaysia struggled despite good support from home crowds of 2,000 for their opener and then 1,000 for their second game in which they even led for a short time during the first half. Thailand finished in between, having rebounded from their opening loss. After a slow start against Malaysia, Thongdum Unjai finally opened the scoring and Prapussorn Rungseeboot and Manee Anuntadachoi followed suit so that Thailand could at least finish on a high note. In Group C, the goals came slowly at first but the second matches for each team were 6-0 across the board, with Japan and Korea Republic on the winning end. India and Uzbekistan did not rebound in their final matches and finished bottom of a group which revealed the imbalance between some Asian nations. Indeed, Japan topped the group with 24 goals and none against while Korea Republic grabbed second and the last Semi-final place.



Clean sweep of awards by China PR

The Semi-finals took place after a rest day, with Japan facing Chinese Taipei in a replay of the 1993 third place match. Japan took the field with at least six of the same starting 11 from two years earlier. While the 3-0 scoreline was the same, the tournament report noted that it was a flattering result and that Chinese Taipei were dangerous throughout much of the hot and humid afternoon. Causing so many problems every time she received the ball, 17-year-old striker Lin Chi-i was awarded the player

of the match, a small consolation prize. Homare Sawa, another 17-year-old on the opposing side, showed the same quality she would reveal for years to come in creating the first Japanese goal from a lovely cross-field assist. The other Semi-final saw China PR march past a solid but outplayed Korea Republic. Sun Wen scored the first on a penalty before her teammates added two more between the 31st and 37th minutes. In the second half, Shui Qingxia scored the fourth goal with a magnificent right-footed curling shot from near the left corner flag.

Chinese Taipei played its second consecutive third place match, this time against Korea Republic in front of a 2,000-strong crowd that included a massive contingent of Korean expatriates thrilled to support their home side. Despite being an entertaining encounter, the match ended 0-0 and went to penalties. A heartbroken Korean team missed their first three penalties and Chinese Taipei celebrated their second third place finish (again on penalties) in four years.

Veronica Chan, named match commissioner for the final, oversaw yet another China PR versus Japan matchup, the third in nine years. In a patient but intense match, the Chinese finally broke the Japanese defence with a two-goal burst in seven minutes midway through the second half and the 2,000 spectators witnessed another display of Chinese supremacy. Over the tournament, the China PR team had featured 12 different scorers, though one-half of their tournament-record 46 goals came from only three players: Shi Guihong (10 goals with five coming from one match), Wei Haiying (nine) and Sun Wen (five - scoring one each in the Semi-final and Final). It was the fifth consecutive title for the Steel Roses, who also claimed all the individual awards (Zhao Lihong as Tournament MVP, Shi Guihong as Top Scorer and Fan Yunjie as Best Defender). With even the team Fair Play award going to China PR, it was hard to tell if anyone could dethrone them.



Kazakhstan's first ever AFC Women's Asian Cup™ team



Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	9	3	0	0	40	0	40
Hong Kong	4	1	1	1	2	12	-10
Kazakhstan	2	0	2	1	0	7	-7
Philippines	1	0	1	2	0	23	-23

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Chinese Taipei	6	2	0	0	11	0	11
Thailand	3	1	0	1	3	4	-1
Malaysia	0	0	0	2	1	11	-10

Group C	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	9	3	0	0	24	0	24
Korea Republic	6	2	0	1	11	1	10
Uzbekistan	3	1	0	2	1	23	-22
India	0	0	0	3	0	12	-12

SEMIS

Chinese Taipei	TPE	0
Japan	JPN	3
China PR	CHN	4
Korea Republic	KOR	0

FINAL

Japan	JPN	0
China PR	CHN	2

3rd/4th Place

Korea Republic	KOR	0 (0) PKs
Chinese Taipei	TPE	0 (3) PKs

1997





1997 CHINA PR

After being held four times in coastal Hong Kong, the competition moved further up the Zhujiang estuary to Guangzhou for the 1997 edition. In early December, Dr Chung Mong Joon reported to the FIFA Executive Committee that 12 teams were set to participate in the tournament's first visit to China PR. While Indonesia was a late withdrawal, 11 teams had still registered for the event, highlighting its stable growth since 1993. DPR Korea were back after a two-year absence but Malaysia missed their first event since 1989. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan returned for the second time and another recent affiliate, Guam, sent a team to mark their first FIFA-sanctioned women's international tournament. While Thailand sat out for only the third time since 1975, Hong Kong retained its special place as the sole association to have participated in all 10 previous editions.

The same format used in 1995 came into play, with three groups and 19 matches in total. The overall competition in 1997 was the highest scoring since 1975 with a record 132 goals. Yet never before had the goals been spread so unevenly. The average goal difference between all teams across all matches was 6.6, reflecting the one-sided nature of many contests. The lion's share was scored by the East Zone trio of China PR (39), Japan (33) and DPR Korea (24). From those teams, both Japan and China PR had 11 different goalscorers. India had their best tally (13) since their first participation in 1980, with K.L. Devi doing India proud by finishing fourth in the scorers list. Korea Republic also posted their tournament best with 11 goals, all scored in one match. However, on the other end of the spectrum, two teams (Kazakhstan and Guam) did not manage to get on the score sheet while three others scored only once (Hong Kong) or twice (Uzbekistan and the Philippines). On a brighter note, only one match in 1995 finished with both teams scoring at least once; this happened three times in 1997.

With 20 cautions across the 19 games, play might have been a bit rougher in this edition or that the referees simply issued more cards. In any case, the AFC Referees Committee was proud to report to the 1998 Congress that nearly half the tournament referees were women acting as both main and assistant referees. The Confederation's accent on development was having an effect.



China PR crowned champions for the sixth time

The first appearance by The Masakãda from Guam, drawn in Group A with Japan, India and Hong Kong, was both festive and, at the same time, a stark reminder of what top level football in Asia was like. Similar to the New Zealanders in 1975, the Guam players raised money to help cover their significant travel costs by playing a celebrity team of politicians, business and sports leaders and media personalities. In their opening match against Japan in front of 8,000 spectators, Guam conceded three times in the first six minutes as they felt the pressure of playing against the three-time finalists, whose players were mostly professionals compared to seven of the Guam players who were still teenagers in high school. After equalling the record for the highest-scoring match at 21-0, Japan proceeded to beat India and put nine goals past Hong Kong to take first place in the group. The Guam team recovered well from their 21-0 drubbing and played a tight game against Hong Kong, only losing by a solitary goal, India performed capably, winning their matches against Hong Kong and Guam and only narrowly losing 1-0 to Japan.

China PR and DPR Korea faced each other in their opening Group B match. Leading 2-0 until the 79th minute, China PR then allowed the Koreans to score, raising a few minutes of doubt in Chinese minds before Fan Yunjie reassured her teammates with an 85th minute goal. Uzbekistan recorded their second victory of the overall competition in their opening match against the Philippines with Karima Yuldasheva and Gulnara Azamova each scoring once.

While the Philippines team succumbed heavily to both DPR Korea and China PR, they could be proud to have scored in two different matches for the first time in their tournament history.



Guam and Hong Kong for the pre-match photo

Group C featured just three teams and Chinese Taipei faced its toughest test in the opening match against Korea Republic, winning by a narrow 1-0 margin. Both teams then rolled past Kazakhstan which had yet to net its first goal of the competition. Chinese Taipei's 2 victories saw them finish first and join regulars Japan, China PR and DPR Korea in the Semi-finals.

The stakes in the third place match were even higher since the top three teams from the AFC tournament would qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup™ in 1999, which now served as the qualifying route for the Olympics instead of the Continental competitions. In their tight first match against Japan, the Koreans held on to a second minute goal from Kim Kum Sil and booked their place in the final. The second Semi-final was surprisingly one-sided as China PR brushed past Chinese Taipei 10-0. The engine in Chinese Taipei's motor had run out of gas, and they stalled in the third place match with Japan claiming the precious third FIFA World Cup berth and Sawa Homare the award for top scorer. The final was a rematch of the 3-1 group game, but DPR Korea could not solve the Chinese defensive puzzle and fell to two second-half goals from Liu Ailing. Together with Jin Yan, Ailing had scored 17 goals, which represented almost half (44%) of their team's tallies. Only Sawa Homare did better, scoring 12 times and accounting for more than one-third of Japan's goals. But China PR lived up to their AFC Women's Team of the Year award presented a few months prior.

Indeed, at the 1997 AFC Awards earlier that year, the Confederation had recognised the Steel Roses' technical

supremacy and awarded Ma Yuanan its Coach of the Year Award (one award covering both the men's and women's game). Ma fittingly won the 1997 Continental tournament in Guangzhou only a few months later. That city had long been a port on the maritime Silk Road, allowing Chinese influence to spread across the world for hundreds of years. Once again, the Pearl River delta poured Chinese savoir-faire into Asia and across the world through the country's undisputed football expertise embodied in Ma Yuanan and his players and enriched by their sixth consecutive Confederation title.



Homare Sawa on the ball against Chinese Taipei



DPR Korea and Japan for the pre-match photo



Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	9	3	0	0	31	0	31
India	6	2	0	1	13	1	12
Hong Kong	3	1	0	2	1	12	-11
Guam	0	0	0	3	0	32	-32

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	9	3	0	0	27	1	26
DPR Korea	6	2	0	1	23	4	19
Uzbekistan	3	1	0	2	2	17	-15
Philippines	0	0	0	3	2	32	-30

Group C	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Chinese Taipei	6	2	0	0	7	0	7
Korea Republic	3	1	0	1	11	1	10
Kazakhstan	0	0	0	2	0	17	-17

SEMIS

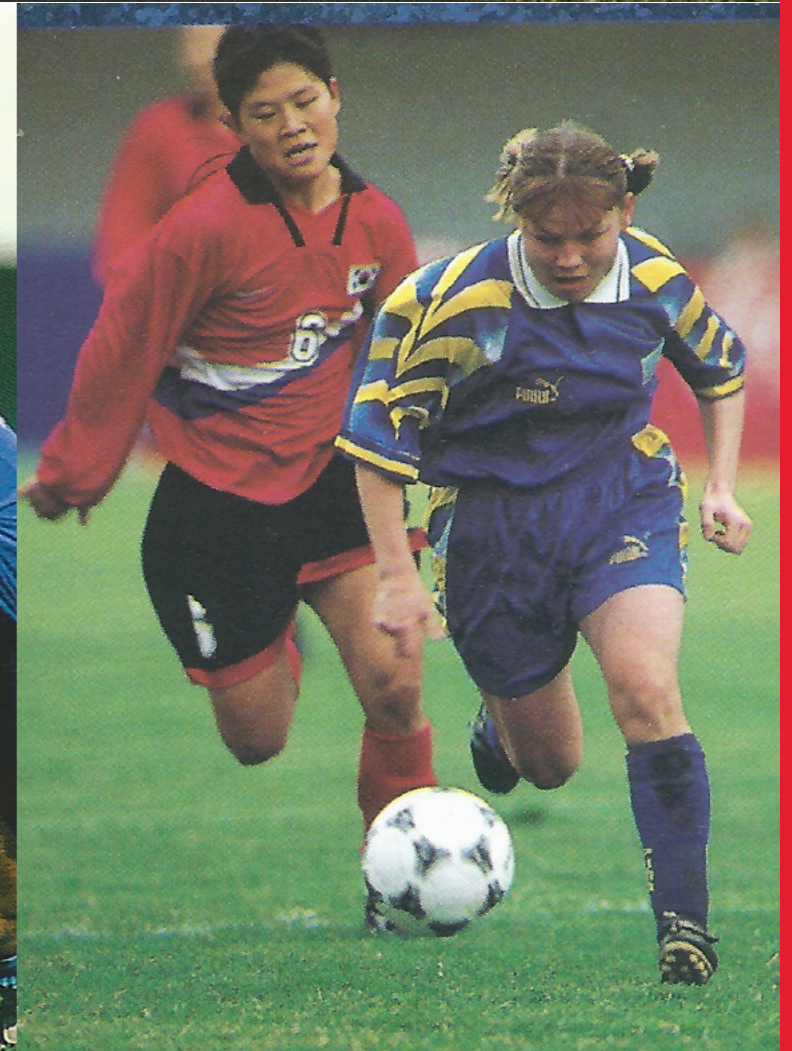
Chinese Taipei	TPE	0
China PR	CHN	10
Japan	JPN	0
DPR Korea	PRK	1

FINAL

China PR	CHN	2
DPR Korea	PRK	0

3rd/4th Place

Chinese Taipei	TPE	0
Japan	JPN	2



1999



1999 PHILIPPINES

Despite having been an early member of the Asian Ladies Football Confederation and playing in five tournaments, the Philippines had never hosted the event. This changed in 1999 as the archipelago nation welcomed the 12th Asian Women's Championship. It was to be the biggest competition since 1975 with 15 participating teams. Malaysia and Thailand returned after a two-year hiatus, Nepal was back for the first time in 10 years and Vietnam made its first appearance in the competition.

The 15 teams were divided into three groups of five teams each with 34 matches in total. Unsurprisingly, this was the edition with the highest number of goals at 223. Despite working out to an average of nearly 15 goals per team, nine of the 15 squads scored less than the average, with four teams scoring two goals or less in the entire competition. Once again, the average goal difference (between teams per match) was high at 5.9, albeit slightly down from 1997. This, however, illustrated an unbalanced competition on the whole. China PR topped the charts with 47 goals, emerging as the top-scoring team in its third straight tournament and an ever-consistent five times out of the last seven editions. Japan followed with 36 goals. The pleasant surprises were Korea Republic in third place with 33 goals in just four matches and third-time entrants Kazakhstan. The Central Asian team's attack that had remained scoreless in the two prior editions erupted with 16 goals over their four games.

The Iloilo Sports Complex welcomed Group A which comprised DPR Korea, Chinese Taipei, India, Malaysia and Vietnam. The two heavyweights logically finished first and second to qualify for the Semi-finals. They started off with a bang - the Koreans scoring seven goals past India and Chinese Taipei an impressive 16 goals against Malaysia. There was some respite for the two losing sides who faced each other in the second match, with India posting a 3-0 victory thanks to a brace from Tababi Devi (third and 78th minutes) and Sujata Khar scoring the final goal just five

minutes from full time. Malaysia scored their only goal of the tournament via a Norlelawati Ngah penalty in their next match, a 5-1 loss to DPR Korea. Vietnam could be proud of their tournament debut, winning two matches and scoring in all four, even against the mighty Koreans and Chinese Taipei.

Pan-ad Stadium in Bacolod hosted Group B. Being drawn in the same group as China PR, the recent silver medallists from the summer's FIFA Women's World Cup™ was big news for tiny Guam. They had a playing population of only several hundred players and even called in a pair of twins who took three weeks off from their university studies to join the national team. With excitement building, Guam held another celebrity fundraiser match to finance their trip so they could face the Chinese superstars. Guam's Kelly Hogan Malay noted that for a country like hers, opening their 1999 campaign against 'players of that stature, it's an incredible feeling and a great rush'. Guam held up well given the incredible difference in ability between the two sides and China PR only led 6-0 after 45 minutes. Even the end result, a 15-0 scoreline, was celebrated by the small island. But China PR was on another level, scoring 41 goals in four group matches and only conceding twice in their opener against Korea Republic. The Koreans dominated the rest of their matches and finished comfortably in second. Kazakhstan finished third with two impressive victories, their first in three appearances in the competition. It was also their last edition as the federation shifted to UEFA in 2002. Guam and Hong Kong, who finished fourth and fifth respectively, played a rematch of their meeting two years earlier. This time around, the Masakāda recorded their first AFC Women's Asian Cup™ victory and goals thanks to Taylor Dervish and Kelly Hogan Malay.



Sun Wen speeding away from Chinese Taipei in the final

Group C played their games at the Iloilo Sports Complex. Japan opened by brushing past Thailand 9-0, while the hosts Philippines delighted their home support with a 5-0

victory over Nepal. Japan continued to breeze through their matches, winning all four and finishing first with 34 goals in their four group games. After a rough start, Thailand recovered to win against Nepal and the Philippines. For the host nation, who had started off so well, it was a frustrating next few days with narrow 1-0 losses to Uzbekistan and Thailand. Nepal, who had conceded 24 times going into their last match finally scored their first tournament goal against Uzbekistan. The Uzbeks were nearly the Cinderella story of 1999, recovering quickly after their opening loss to Japan and proceeding to win their three remaining matches. They finished with nine points, on par with Korea Republic, and impressed everyone in only their third appearance in the competition.



The Nepal team returns for the first time since 1986

The Semi-finals dangled Asian bragging rights in front of the same quartet that had battled this stage of the tournament in every edition since 1991, save for a Korean swap in 1995. Even with no qualification for any other tournaments on the line, the matches were hotly contested. Chinese Taipei had faced Japan in the Semi-finals three times since 1989, winning just once. With two goals in a three-minute span midway through the first half, Chinese Taipei booked its place in the final. China PR overcame DPR Korea 3-0 in the other game.

The third place match came first and was only the third meeting between Japan and DPR Korea in tournament history. They had met in a group phase in 1989 and the Semi-finals in 1997 but had never faced off for the bronze medal. It was a close match which finished 3-2 for the Koreans. Chinese Taipei, meanwhile, were making their fifth appearance in a final in nine tournament editions. But in what was a rematch of 1989, China PR unceremoniously defeated their neighbours 3-0 to secure their record seventh consecutive title. The Steel Roses were once again the queens of Asian football.



Asian Women's Championship Philippines '99
 7th - 21st November 1999 Iloilo Sports Complex, Iloilo and Pana-ad Stadium, Bacolod

GROUP A - ILOILO Korea • India • Vietnam • Malaysia • Chinese Taipei
 GROUP B - BACOLOD China PR • Korea Rep. • Hong Kong • Guam • Kazakhstan
 GROUP C - ILOILO Japan • Thailand • Philippines • Nepal • Uzbekistan

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
DPR Korea	10	3	1	0	25	3	22
Chinese Taipei	10	3	1	0	23	2	21
Vietnam	6	2	0	2	9	16	-7
India	3	1	0	3	3	12	-9
Malaysia	0	0	0	4	1	28	-27

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	12	4	0	0	41	2	39
Korea Republic	9	3	0	1	30	5	25
Kazakhstan	6	2	0	2	16	15	1
Guam	3	1	0	3	2	34	-32
Hong Kong	0	0	0	4	0	36	-36

Group C	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	12	4	0	0	34	1	33
Uzbekistan	9	3	0	1	9	6	3
Thailand	6	2	0	2	6	10	-4
Philippines	3	1	0	3	5	8	-3
Nepal	0	0	0	4	1	30	-29

SEMIS

Chinese Taipei	TPE	2
Japan	JPN	0
China PR	CHN	3
DPR Korea	PRK	0

FINAL

Chinese Taipei	TPE	0
China PR	CHN	3

3rd/4th Place

DPR Korea	PRK	3
Japan	JPN	2



Huang Chun-lan congratulates Lin Chi-i on the goal that clinched Chinese Taipei's place in the 1999 Asian final.

2001





2001 CHINESE TAIPEI

In December 2001, the AFC Women's Championship returned to Chinese Taipei for the first time since 1977. Nearly all the teams returned from the prior edition save for Kazakhstan (who moved to UEFA) and Nepal. The competition also welcomed back Singapore for the first time since 1991. The 14 teams were divided into the standard three-group format but as one group comprised only four teams, the number of matches dropped from 34 to 30 in total.

Even considering the reduced number of matches, the teams collectively scored 197 goals during the competition. Proportionally, this was a small decrease in the overall average of 14.1 goals per team. Once again, however, the goals were hardly spread equally across all 14 teams. Rather, a small number of teams scored the lion's share and the average overall goal difference (between teams per match across the tournament) actually increased from 1999 to 6.2 between the winning and losing sides of each match. The rise in 2001 came close to the tournament's all time high goal difference posted just four years before.

This underlined an important overall competitive balance issue. On one hand, it was clearly essential to maintain an open tournament to increase participation across the Continent and develop the game. However, at the same time, having such unequal competition could also pose a threat to development and motivation. To wit, DPR Korea set a new tournament record for team goals with 53 in their five matches. But in the group phase alone they scored 48 times, and 47 of those came in three games against developing Member Associations. China PR were not far behind with 40 goals over the competition, the next closest were regulars Japan and Chinese Taipei. On the opposite end of the spectrum were Malaysia with zero goals, Guam with just one and Hong Kong and Singapore with two each.



The three groups split their matches between Chungshan Stadium and Taipei Municipal Stadium. Group A saw Korea Republic win its four matches. Hosts Chinese Taipei won all their matches except for a 1-0 loss to the Koreans. Thailand revived some of their winning ways of the past with a strong opening 4-0 performance over Malaysia and a narrow 1-0 victory over India. The Malaysians struggled even more than the previous tournament and this time went home without scoring once. India finished on a better note, scoring three in their final match.

Group B included DPR Korea, who dominated their first two matches by scoring 19 and 24 goals respectively, the highest margin of victory since the tournament began 26 years earlier. Japan also started at full strength with a pair of 14-0 and 11-0 wins. When the two heavyweights met it was the final match for the Koreans, who left no chance for error and took first place with yet another Ri Kum Suk goal (the prolific scorer would net a tournament-high 15 times). Despite still being competition newcomers, Vietnam found their rhythm and for the second time finished third in their group by winning two matches. Even if Singapore notched

DPR Korea dethrones China PR for its first title

their first victory in the tournament since the 1980s, it was still tough for them as they conceded a competition record of 47 goals. Guam also struggled, finishing bottom of the group and scoring only once. After all 10 group matches were played, the Koreans topped the group and Japan narrowly took second, swiping the Semi-final berth from Chinese Taipei thanks to a minuscule goal difference advantage.

In the final group of four teams, China PR unsurprisingly took top spot by winning all four matches and scoring 31 times. Uzbekistan continued their strong form, finishing second and only losing once to leaders China PR. Hong Kong notched their one victory at the expense of the Philippines, who left the tournament having scored just once.



Sawa Homare dribbling through the Korean defense

As usual, the Semi-finals saw four teams from the 'club of five', which had booked every single Semi-final spot since 1991. Instead of Chinese Taipei, however, it was DPR Korea and Korea Republic who each drew one of their mighty East Asian neighbours. The Japanese bested Korea Republic 2-1 with goals from Yayoi Kobayashi in the 10th minute and a dramatic winner from Mio Otani in the 89th. In the other match, DPR Korea started well by scoring two first half goals, only to see Sun Wen pull one back just before the break to give China PR a glimmer of hope. But it was not to be for coach Ma Yaunan's side as Jin Pyol Hui scored her third goal in the 65th minute to deprive China PR of an eighth consecutive final. The Koreans had accomplished what no one else had done since 1986; the Steel Roses had entered the competition that year and had not missed a single final. But all good things come to an end and goalscorer Jin underlined the Korean's team effort: "Sure, I scored the goals but we wouldn't have won if it wasn't for the defence."

In their first ever third place match, China PR emphatically

defeated Korea Republic 8-0, leaving no doubt in everyone's mind that they were still a force to be reckoned with. Newcomer Bai Lili, who had only played once in the group phase, started the match and scored four times. She recalled how 'at that time... the China PR women's team was experiencing changes, the old generation to the new'. Indeed, a new era was dawning, one in which China PR was not the only dominant team.

In the final, the crowd gathered knowing they would see a new winner for the first time since 1983. Ri Kum Suk, whose goals had been instrumental in kicking off DPR Korea's campaign, scored the first goal in the 68th minute before Ri Un Gyong netted the all-important second to put the game beyond the reach of the Japanese. With that, the all-red DPR Korea team lifted their first AFC trophy. The official magazine, Football Asia headline said it all, celebrating 'The New Face of Women's Football'.



Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Korea Republic	12	4	0	0	15	0	15
Chinese Taipei	9	3	0	1	24	1	23
Thailand	6	2	0	2	5	9	-4
India	3	1	0	3	3	13	-10
Malaysia	0	0	0	4	0	24	-24

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
DPR Korea	12	4	0	0	48	0	48
Japan	9	3	0	1	28	2	26
Vietnam	6	2	0	2	11	7	4
Singapore	3	1	0	3	2	47	-45
Guam	0	0	0	4	1	34	-33

Group C	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	9	3	0	0	31	0	31
Uzbekistan	6	2	0	1	9	11	-2
Hong Kong	3	1	0	2	2	15	-13
Philippines	0	0	0	3	1	17	-16

SEMIS

China PR	CHN	1
DPR Korea	PRK	3
Japan	JPN	2
Korea Republic	KOR	1

FINAL

DPR Korea	PRK	2
Japan	JPN	0

3rd/4th Place

China PR	CHN	8
Korea Republic	KOR	0



AFC
WOMEN'S
CHAMPIONSHIP
March-April 2001

THE NEW FACE OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Korea DPR have ended China's run of seven consecutive AFC Women's Championship titles and stamped a new name on the trophy for the first time in 15 years.

words Nick McCormack
photos AML/Shot

Throughout the game China were their familiar all-conquering selves. They dominated from Pu Wei's fifth-minute opener all the way through to Han Duan's second in the space of a minute, just before Ri Hong-sil's whistle ended Korea Republic's torment. But the celebrations at the end of their crushing 8-0 victory were somewhat muted, and as the medals were hung around the necks of the players, a few of them seemed to be forcing their smiles.

For China, bronze medals don't feel too comfortable. Ma Yuanan's side went to Chinese Taipei to maintain their domination of the Asian women's game. They headed back to the mainland having had the mantle of 'queens of continental football' not so much taken but wrenched from their grasp by Korea DPR.

The records will show that the competition was won due to Ri Kum-suk and Ri Un-gyong's goals in their hard-fought 2-0 defeat of Japan in the final. However, it's their semi-final victory over China that will live long in the memory – and which will stand as a symbol of hope for all those who have been overwhelmed by the seven-time champions for the past 15 years.

2003

A large, bold, red number '2003' is centered on a dark blue background. Behind the number is a stylized white line-art representation of a soccer ball, showing curved panels and lines that create a sense of depth and movement.

the Semi-finals in 1991, China PR had never met Korea Republic at this stage of the competition. Japan and DPR Korea had played one Semi-final back in 1997 when the Koreans won 1-0 and reached their second final. Even though they had already qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup™, China PR was desperate to return to the final, having missed out two years earlier. The other three teams were intent on reaching the final to punch their FIFA Women's World Cup™ ticket. Korea Republic had yet to reach a final, having been stopped twice in the previous four editions at the Semi-finals. Japan had reached two prior championship matches and were looking to finally claim the title that had eluded them in 1995 and 2001. DPR Korea, however, were too strong for Japan with Ri Kum Suk scoring twice in a 3-0 victory while Korea Republic were made to wait again by China PR for their first trip to an Asian final.



Guam playing their fourth straight tournament

The third place match was the first time Japan and Korea Republic had fought each other for the bronze medal. The loser had to face a FIFA Women's World Cup™ playoff, so the match had a great deal on the line. Thanks to an 18th minute goal by Hwang In Sun, Korea Republic attained their best finish in an Asian women's competition and qualified for their first FIFA Women's World Cup™. In a tense final that went all the way to extra-time, Ri Kum Suk scored from a penalty to send the DPR Korea team into championship ecstasy for the second consecutive time.

The 30 matches produced 184 goals, less than two years earlier, with champions DPR Korea netting 50 times or 27% of all goals. Only one team finished without scoring a goal, and four teams managed at least two goals in their matches. This meant that the overall goal average difference dropped to 5.4, which was still high and illustrated a significant imbalance in the level of competition. A consistent 57% of teams scored at least six goals during the tournament; one had to go back to the 10th edition of the tournament in 1995 to find fewer teams scoring as many goals. While the competition was tighter than in 2001, a massive change was in the works and the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ was about to enter a new era.



Kelly Hogan Malay's jersey (Guam)

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
DPR Korea	10	3	1	0	45	2	43
Korea Republic	10	3	1	0	20	2	18
Thailand	6	2	0	2	6	21	-15
Hong Kong	3	1	0	3	2	24	-22
Singapore	0	0	0	4	0	24	-24

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	12	4	0	0	34	0	34
Myanmar	7	2	1	1	11	8	3
Chinese Taipei	7	2	1	1	7	7	0
Philippines	3	1	0	3	2	26	-24
Guam	0	0	0	4	2	15	-13

Group C	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
China PR	9	3	0	0	29	0	29
Vietnam	6	2	0	1	6	9	-3
India	3	1	0	2	7	14	-7
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	3	2	21	-19

SEMIS

Japan JPN 0

DPR Korea PRK 3

China PR CHN 3

Korea Republic KOR 1

FINAL

DPR Korea PRK 2 AET

China PR CHN 1 AET

3rd/4th Place

Japan JPN 0

Korea Republic KOR 1

2006

The image features the year '2006' in large, white, rounded numerals against a dark green background. The numbers are filled with a pattern of thin, parallel yellow lines. Behind the numbers, there are several yellow line-art shapes: a series of horizontal lines at the top, and several curved, overlapping lines at the bottom, suggesting a stylized soccer ball or a dynamic motion graphic.



AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP

2008

A large, bold, red number '2008' is centered on a yellow background. Behind the number is a stylized white line-art representation of a soccer ball, showing curved panels and a central crest area.





AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN



AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP VIETNAM 2008

CHAMPIONS

AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP

2010

2014

points with Australia, with whom they shared a draw in their opening match and which saw Caitlin Foord become the youngest goalscorer of the edition at 19 years of age. The Matildas beat Jordan and then squeezed out the hosts in a closely-contested final group match. They went ahead late in the first half thanks to a rare indirect free kick from inside the penalty area which saw the entire Vietnamese team form a wall practically on the goal line. Both teams fought through gusts of torrential wind and rain, with Nguyen Thi Hoa nearly equalising midway in the second-half as their opponents continued to push. Australia scored the crucial second goal in the 90th minute when Katrina Gorry picked up the ball off a goal kick and turned one defender around before unleashing an absolute screamer from more than 25 metres.

In Group B, Korea Republic and China PR swept through their matches without conceding a goal. Myanmar struggled in their three games, but the team did field the tournament's two youngest players, 17-year-olds May Saba Phoo and Nilar Win, who gained valuable experience at the highest level of Asian football. In China PR's opening match against Thailand, Steel Roses forward Yang Li scored four goals, an edition record for most goals by a player in a single match and one that would last the length of the competition. The group was settled after the first two matches with China PR and Korea Republic on six points each. The two leaders drew their last match to qualify for the Semi-finals.



Korea Republic's Song Su Ran holding off an opponent

As Jordan and Myanmar headed home, fans turned out in droves for the fifth place match between hosts Vietnam and Thailand. The 18,000 fans – a record for the competition's recent history – provided an incredible atmosphere and encouraged their women until the dying moments. The home supporters were rewarded with a simply stunning 25-metre left-foot blast from substitute Nguyen Thi Tuyet Dung that smashed down under the

crossbar and left Thai keeper Waraporn Boonsing a simple spectator. The red-shirted Vietnamese team pushed and could have benefitted from a late penalty and another chance that inched by the far-right post, but it was not to be and Thailand held on for a respectable fifth place finish.

The Semi-finals were close matches and despite not conceding any goals in the group stage, China PR and Korea Republic were both defeated by similar 2-1 scorelines. The China PR match saw Nadeshiko Japan striker Homare Sawa become the oldest goalscorer of the tournament. Teammate Azusa Iwashimizu was the difference maker, scoring the decisive goal dramatically in the 122nd minute. In the other match, Australia's Katrina Gorry launched another trademark missile to open proceedings in the 47th minute. After a penalty for the Koreans, Australia scored their second off a free kick whipped in from a difficult angle. As a result of the Semi-finals, China PR and Korea Republic found themselves in the third place match which had its own drama: an early own goal and the game winner in added time. Two forwards, Korea Republic's Park Eun Sun and China PR's Yang Li, shared the title for top scorer of the tournament with six goals each.



Jordan's Yasmeen Khair and teammates Enshirah Alhyasat and Ayah Faisal Al-Majali

Australia went into the final having fielded the tournament's youngest players (with an average age of 22.6 years) while opponents and reigning world champions Japan were on the opposite end of the spectrum (25.7 years). Played on a hot and humid evening, the teams delighted a 10,000-strong crowd in a match that ended with Japan defender Azusa Iwashimizu scoring the winning goal. At age 35, legend Homare Sawa was the oldest player to take the field – her career had kicked off even before several of her Australian opponents were born and for the third tournament in a row, Norio Sasaki was the only coach to field every player on the squad at least once. In their fifth tournament final, Japan were a real team in the full sense of the word, and the world champions closed the 2014

AFC Women's Asian Cup™ by being crowned Continental champions for the first time as arguably the best team in the world.

Group A	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Japan	7	2	1	0	13	2	11
Australia	7	2	1	0	7	3	4
Vietnam	3	1	0	2	3	7	-4
Jordan	0	0	0	3	2	13	-11

Group B	Points	W	D	L	GS	GA	DIF
Korea Republic	7	2	1	0	16	0	16
China PR	7	2	1	0	10	0	10
Thailand	3	1	0	2	2	12	-10
Myanmar	0	0	0	3	1	17	-16

China PR	CHN 1 (AET)
Japan	JPN 2 (AET)
Korea Republic	KOR 1
Australia	AUS 2

FINAL

Japan	JPN 1
Australia	AUS 0

3rd/4th Place

Korea Republic	KOR 1
China PR	CHN 2

Fifth Place Play-Off

Vietnam	VIE 1
Thailand	THA 2





AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP VIETNAM 2014



CHAMPIONS



AFC
WOMEN'S
ASIAN CUP
VIETNAM 2014

2018



 AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP JORDAN 2018

 **JAPAN** vs **AUSTRALIA** 

20 APRIL 2018
Amman International Stadium

FINAL





AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP JORDAN 2018



From left to right: Patrice Impelido (Philippines), Sunisa Srangthaisong (Thailand), Wu Haiyan (China PR), Stephanie Al-Naber (Jordan), Saki Kumagai (Japan), Lydia Williams (Australia), Cho So Hyun (Korea Republic), Dang Thi Kieu Trinh (Vietnam)



AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP JORDAN 2018

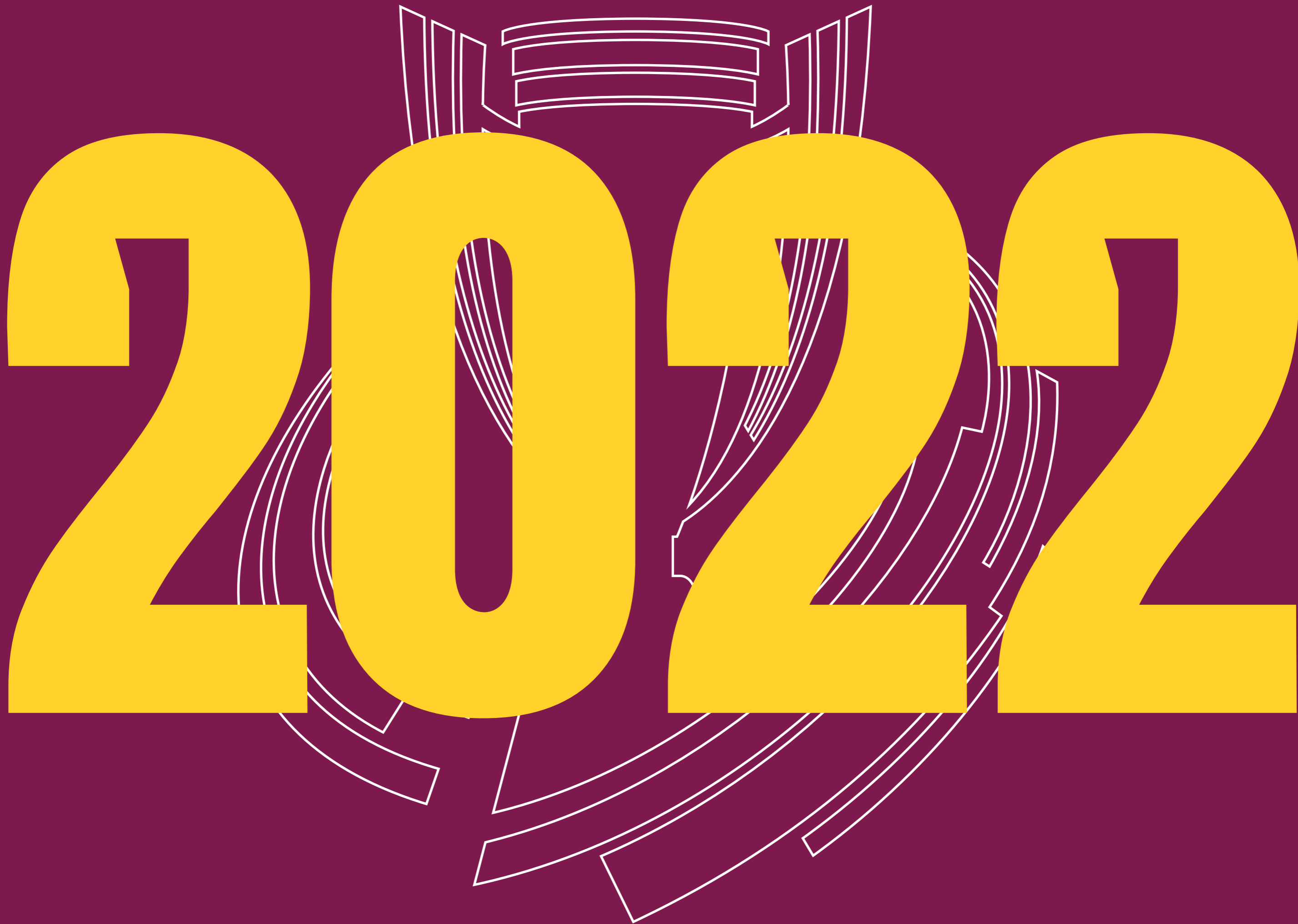


AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP AFC WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP



AFC WOMEN'S
ASIAN CUP
JORDAN 2018









CHAMPIONS

AFC **WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP™** INDIA 2022

OUR GOAL FOR ALL

A large, light blue outline of the AFC Women's Asian Cup trophy is centered in the background. The trophy features a central pedestal with a bowl on top, flanked by two curved, wing-like structures. The word "TROPHIES" is written in large, bold, red capital letters across the center of the trophy.

TROPHIES

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While every effort has been made to cross-check sources and provide the most accurate history of the competition to date, the sheer breadth of sources (and regularly in contradiction) made for difficult decisions. In a number of cases, simple things like match results were not consistent between the AFC's statistical records, archival evidence, newspapers or RSSSF. In these cases, as with the spelling of non-English language names which often appear differently in English, the authors made every attempt to be as accurate as possible. The choice to use the most commonly found spellings in English means that some spellings may be at variation with original languages. The full methodology and notes on the limitations will be included in a separate appendix along with the full match results, details and player lists. All standings and points calculations were made using the point-system in place at the time (2 points for a win until the 1995 edition when it changed to 3 points). All MA names are listed as they are today following the AFC's style conventions.

Any remaining errors are the authors' alone and will be gladly corrected in a subsequent version. Indeed, we hope that this book will actually stimulate more research and that readers, ex-players, former coaches and administrators will uncover more material lost to recent memory and can contribute more material for a future version of the fascinating history of Asian women's football.

IMAGE CREDITS

The AFC would like to thank the following sources for sharing these images and allowing the courtesy to reproduce them in this book.

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