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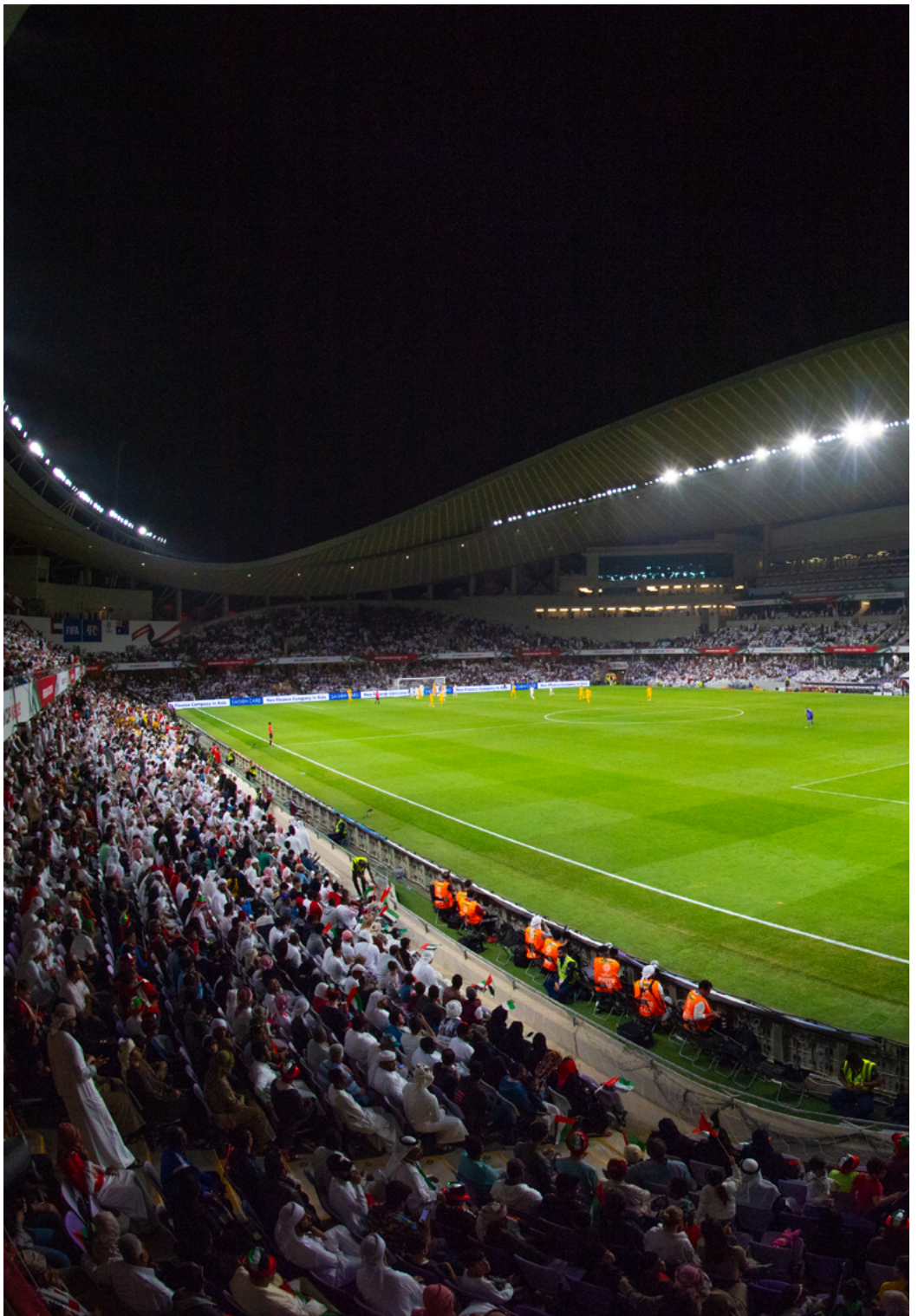
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# COMPETITION REGULATIONS

AFC ASIAN CUP 2023™





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## DEFINITIONS

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

Accommodation	Any location approved by the AFC which provides accommodation to the AFC Delegation, Team Official Delegations, AFC Commercial Rights Partner, and Commercial Affiliates.
Accreditation Card	Any physical item which is issued by the AFC and/or Organising Association which provides the recipient the right to access a Controlled Access Area (or part thereof) where the Controlled Access Area is under the control of the AFC or the Organising Association.
Advertising Rights	The right to promote brand and/or corporate names and/or products and/or services at and/or in relation to the Competition by whatever means available, whether existing now or to be developed in the future, whether at the Stadiums or Facility Areas or within the Controlled Access Areas, by in-stadium/out-stadium perimeter signage and other advertising, digital signage and screens, closed circuit television, equipment usage or other methods and through printed matter (including digitally delivered printed matter) such as programmes, posters, letterheads, press releases, newsletters and Tickets, and subject to any AFC regulations, the right to display such advertising on the clothing or footwear worn, or on any equipment used, carried or transported by officials (including for the avoidance of doubt Match Officials), medical and security staff, ball kids, player escorts, flag bearers and/or photographers. The display of the name and/or logo of the bona fide supplier of clothing on the strip of the uniforms of the officials are also included. For the avoidance of doubt, advertising on the strip of Participating Players is excluded, other than where it is the trademark of the bona fide manufacturer and is in accordance with any FIFA and/or AFC regulations. Similarly, branding on any equipment, goods and/or services used in connection with the Competition, save where supplied by a Commercial Affiliate, may only include customary branding of the bona fide manufacturer.
AFC	Asian Football Confederation.
AFCAS	The AFC Administration System, the AFC's online competition management and registration system.
AFC Commercial Rights Partner	The entity appointed by the AFC for the sale of Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) and the provision of services in relation thereto.
AFC Committee	Any Committee of the AFC as constituted in accordance with the AFC Statutes.

AFC Delegation	(i) AFC staff; (ii) Match Officials; (iii) other officials appointed by the AFC; (iv) AFC Committee members; and (v) AFC guests.
AFC Marks	All design marks, slogans, designations, names, logos, insignia, emblems or devices (in any application) owned and/or controlled by the AFC (in any language) relating to the AFC itself, but excluding the Competition Marks.
AFC Organising Committee for the Asian Cup 2023 or AFC Organising Committee	The Standing Committee of the AFC which is responsible for the organisation of the Competition and related matters in accordance with the AFC Statutes and AFC Organisation Regulations.
AFC Website	The official website of the AFC (currently <a href="http://www.the-afc.com">http://www.the-afc.com</a> ), including without limitation all other domains or official media platforms and channels created and/or owned by the AFC (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc).
Away Goals Rule	At the end of the second Match played in a knockout home and away format, if the Participating Teams have scored the same number of goals across both Matches, the Participating Team which has scored the higher number of goals away from home shall be declared the winner.
Broadcast Partner	Any entity, including the Host Broadcaster, which has been granted the Media Rights to the Competition.
Champion	The Participating Team that wins the final Match of the Competition.
Clean Stadium	A Stadium or Official Training Site, whether inside, in the air space above or the outer perimeter, delivered to the AFC at a prescribed time, that is free from: (i) any advertising and commercial signage of any kind, whether on any stadium infrastructure, staff uniforms, accreditations, fences, equipment or elsewhere; (ii) third party agreements relating to the use and operation of the Stadium (or part thereof); and/or (iii) Stadium or venue naming rights.
Commercial Affiliate	Any entity which has been granted the right to exercise and exploit the Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) in respect of the Competition.
Commercial Rights	Advertising Rights, Concession Rights, Hospitality Rights, Image Rights, Media Rights, Merchandise Rights, Promotional Rights, Sponsorship Rights, Travel and Tour Rights and any other rights of a commercial nature relating to the Competition.

Competition	The AFC Asian Cup 2023™, which includes without limitation, all Matches as set out in the Match Schedule, all qualifying Matches, all activities on the Field of Play (other than Matches), opening ceremonies, presentation or closing ceremonies, press conferences or Official Functions connected therewith.
Competition Data	Any and all information related to the Competition, including fixture lists, Image Rights, information and/or statistics about the Participating Teams and/or Participating Players, information and/or statistics about their participation and/or performance in the Competition, Match analysis, Referee decisions, and any other information in relation to the Competition.
Competition Marks	All design marks, slogans, designations, names, logos, insignia, emblems, mascot or devices (in any application) owned and/or controlled by the AFC (in any language) relating to the Competition.
Competition Website	The official website of the Competition (if any) with a dedicated URL including without limitation all other domains or official media platforms and channels of the Competition created and/or owned by the AFC (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc).
Complimentary Tickets	Tickets which are supplied without charge.
Concession Rights	Sampling, vending, display and other distribution methods and payment methods connected therewith for and of products or services, including pourage rights at the Stadiums and Facility Areas.
Controlled Access Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) any Stadium;</li> <li>(ii) any Official Training Site;</li> <li>(iii) any official hotel (public areas being excepted), subject to and to the extent agreed in any executed hotel agreement;</li> <li>(iv) any official exclusion zone encircling a Stadium on a Match day;</li> <li>(v) any official parking area, accreditation centre, International Broadcast Compound, and/or hospitality area;</li> <li>(vi) the venue of any Official Function;</li> <li>(vii) any official AFC fan park;</li> <li>(viii) Facility Areas; and/or</li> <li>(ix) any other location and/or facility designated by the AFC as a Controlled Access Area, associated to the Competition to which access is permitted only to those in possession of an Accreditation Card, Ticket, and/or other officially-sanctioned entry permit.</li> </ul>
Digital Media	Any digitalised media (including the AFC Website and any related Competition Website) created by AFC in relation to the Competition, including but not limited to any mobile website, mobile application (app), online video channel, data product, photo-sharing account, social media account, and any further form of digital media developed herewith.



Extra Time	Two (2) equal periods of additional time which shall be played in accordance with these Regulations should there be no winner at the conclusion of a Match.
Facility Areas	The location of Official Functions, ceremonies, press centres, ticket offices, Competition hotels, media areas (including without limitation areas used for viewing of any public exhibition), sponsor village areas (including without limitation "AFC fan park" areas, and areas used for the activation of the Commercial Rights), official hospitality areas (including without limitation areas used for the exploitation of the Hospitality Rights), and information centres controlled by or on behalf of the AFC and used in connection with the Competition whether at the Stadium or elsewhere at the Venues.
Field of Play	The area described in Law 1 of the Laws of the Game issued by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) and administered by FIFA.
FIFA	The Federation Internationale de Football Association.
Finals	The Final Stage of the Competition, split into the Group Stage and Knockout Stage.
Football Association	The controlling body for football within a country or territory recognised by the AFC.
Force Majeure	Any event affecting the performance or any provision of these Regulations arising from or attributable to acts, events, omissions or accidents which are beyond the reasonable control of a party, and shall include but not be limited to abnormally inclement weather, flood, lightning, storm, fire, explosion, earthquake, structural damage, epidemic or other natural disaster, failure or shortage of power supplies, war, terrorist action, military operations, riot, crowd disorder, strike, lock-outs or other industrial action, or civil commotion.
Group Stage	The first stage of the Finals held in accordance with these Regulations.
Hospitality Rights	The opportunity to offer and sell hospitality and entertainment services at the Venues or within the Controlled Access Areas in combination with the Tickets whether such facilities are in boxes, marquees or otherwise, but excluding those non-commercial functions and facilities reserved for AFC and/or Organising Association officials and its guests not forming part of the Commercial Rights.
Host Broadcaster	The party appointed, to ensure and provide the production of broadcast signals of the Matches and other events of the Competition, and the provision of all related services in accordance with the Media Rights granted to it.
Host City	Any city and/or identifiable metropolitan area in which any Match is staged.
Image Rights	The right to use still and/or moving images and/or representations of Participating Teams, Participating Players, Participating Officials, Match Officials, and other officials forming part of the Competition.

International Competition	An international football competition organised by the AFC in conjunction with other continental football confederations and/or by FIFA in conjunction with other continental football confederations.
Kicks from the Penalty Mark	"Kicks from the Penalty Mark" as described in the Laws of the Game.
Knockout Stage	The second stage of the Finals held in accordance with these Regulations.
Laws of the Game	The laws of association football issued by the IFAB.
Match	A football match in its entirety (including a replayed and/or deferred football match, Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark) which takes place as part of the Competition in accordance with the Match Schedule. For the avoidance of doubt, a match formally commences when the Stadium is officially opened to spectators and formally concludes when the Stadium is officially closed to spectators.
Match Officials	Any individual appointed to officiate a Match in the Competition in the role of the Referee, Assistant Referee, Fourth Official, Video Assistant Referee (VAR), Assistant Video Assistant Referee (AVAR), Referee Assessor and any other match official stipulated in the Laws of the Game.
Match Schedule	The official schedule which sets out, without limitation, the dates and times on which Matches will be played, the Stadiums at which the Matches will be played, and the names of the Participating Teams.
Media	Any individual granted a media Accreditation Card by the AFC.
Media Rights	The right and license to produce, edit and/or transmit, for intelligible reception throughout the world in any language and in any format, and on any platform including film, fixed media, Digital Media, games, internet, public exhibition, radio, mobile, and television, a visual, audio-visual, and/or audio signal and/or image or recording (including without limitation the basic feed, multi feeds, additional feeds, audio feeds, a feed incorporating Competition Data, world feed, and unilateral feeds) of the Competition, and all interview activities and action during and forming part of the Competition including Official Functions and the Image Rights by any and all means of transmission distribution, exhibition and reception, now existing or hereinafter developed including but not limited to analogue, digital, satellite cable and interactive communication
Media Rights (cont.)	systems, on a live, delayed, and unlimited repeat basis, in full or in part (including without limitation by way of clips and/or highlights and/or support programmes and/or magazine shows and/or news access), and all rights to exploit any and all commercial opportunities (including for example broadcast sponsorship and commercial airtime opportunities) arising from and/or in connection with such rights.

<b>Member Association</b>	A Football Association which is a member of the AFC.
<b>Merchandise Rights</b>	The right granted to Commercial Affiliates for the use and exploitation of the Competition Marks and/or official designation in the manufacture, packaging, distribution, and sale of goods and services of all kinds, including items of equipment (i.e. footballs), clothing, coins, medals, games (electronic or otherwise), other collectibles and premiums related to the Competition.
<b>Official Function</b>	Any event which is officially organised or sanctioned by the AFC in connection with the Competition. For the avoidance of doubt, this expressly includes, without limitation, all matches and/or events held at Official Training Sites, the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony, any AFC gala dinner, lunch, or banquet, cultural events, official press conferences, and launch events.
<b>Official Training Site</b>	Any site designated by the Organising Association and approved by the AFC for use by the Participating Teams throughout the duration of the Competition for training purposes.
<b>Organising Association</b>	A Member Association approved by the AFC to organise, stage, and host Matches in the Qualifiers or the Finals.
<b>Participating Member Association</b>	A Member Association whose representative team participates in the Competition.
<b>Participating Official</b>	Any official who is registered to participate in the Competition.
<b>Participating Player</b>	Any player who is registered to participate in the Competition.
<b>Participating Team</b>	Any representative team affiliated to a Participating Member Association.
<b>Premiums</b>	Any promotional item (including packaging, labelling, and/or containers thereof) which incorporates a mark and/or logo of the AFC and/or the Competition, and which is distributed free of charge or via prize competitions.
<b>Promotional Rights</b>	Any rights to produce and/or distribute official publications, official suppliers, official products, sales promotion including but not limited to the right to organise promotional competitions (including without limitation any sweepstakes or lotteries) and to make awards and give prizes, official music rights, the right to use an official designation and all other promotional, marketing and/or other rights of commercial value in regard to the Competition.
<b>Proprietary Interests</b>	Without limitation, intellectual property, copyright and analogous rights, trademark rights, moral rights, performing rights, personality rights, and all remedies available under the applicable laws of unfair competition comprised in the Commercial Rights.
<b>Qualifiers</b>	The Qualifying Stage of the Competition
<b>Regulations</b>	These Competition Regulations.

Sponsorship Rights	<p>The right, in any and all media, throughout the world, and in all languages, to promote an association between the Competition and certain products, services, and/or brands, and shall include (by way of illustration only) the exclusive right to exercise rights of association with the Competition, including without limitation the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) use an official designation;</li> <li>(ii) use the AFC Marks and/or applicable Competition Marks on branded products and/or product packaging (including Premiums, and in relation to the Competition Marks only on items for retail sale) and/or advertising;</li> <li>(iii) receive commercial programme Tickets; and</li> <li>(iv) receive broadcast sponsorship opportunities in connection with broadcasts of a Match or Official Function.</li> </ul>
Stadium	<p>Any stadium at which a Match is played. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the entire premises (to the extent that a valid Accreditation Card or Ticket is required in order to gain access) of a stadium facility inside the outer stadium perimeter fence and (on Match days and any day on which any official training takes place within the stadium), the aerial space above such stadium premises;</li> <li>(ii) parking facilities;</li> <li>(iii) VIP and hospitality areas (including any hospitality village);</li> <li>(iv) the Media tribune;</li> <li>(v) concession areas;</li> <li>(vi) commercial display areas;</li> <li>(vii) buildings;</li> <li>(viii) the Field of Play;</li> <li>(ix) any broadcast compound or stadium media centre;</li> <li>(x) any stands; and,</li> <li>(xi) any areas beneath the stands.</li> </ul>
Team Official Delegation	<p><u>1. Competition systems played in a home and away format</u></p> <p>The final-registered delegation of a Participating Team for each Match of the relevant stage of the Competition subject to the limits set out in the competition regulations.</p> <p><u>2. Competition systems played in a centralised format</u></p> <p>The final-registered delegation of a Participating Team for the duration of the relevant stage of the Competition subject to the limits set out in the competition regulations.</p>
Ticket	<p>A pass providing access to a venue for the purpose of attending either a Match, official training, or Official Function.</p>

<b>Ticketing</b>	All operational measures to provide Tickets to all spectators of every Match and for Official Functions of the Competition allowing them to enter the Stadium or a Venue. Ticketing shall include the management of the operation necessary for the production, sale, distribution, delivery and payment of the Tickets of the Competition.
<b>Travel and Tour Rights</b>	The right to organise and/or sub-license official travel and tour activities in relation to the Competition, which travel and tour activities shall, for the avoidance of doubt, include the provision of Tickets to a Match and/or Official Function of the Competition.
<b>Venue</b>	The Host City and immediate surrounding area in which a Stadium is located.

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

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



## SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

### 1. AFC Asian Cup 2023™

- 1.1. The AFC stages the AFC Asian Cup™ comprising a Qualifying Stage (“Qualifiers”) and Final Stage (“Finals”) once every four (4) years.
- 1.2. These Regulations govern the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the AFC, Organising Associations, Member Associations, Participating Teams, Participating Players and Participating Officials taking part in the Competition.
- 1.3. These Regulations and all related directives, decisions, guidelines, and circulars issued by the AFC shall be binding upon all parties participating and involved in the preparation, organisation, and hosting of the Competition.
- 1.4. The AFC Competition Operations Manual (“Manual”) forms an integral part and shall be read in conjunction with these Regulations. The Manual shall be binding upon all parties participating and involved in the preparation, organisation, and hosting of the Competition. Failure to adhere to any matter set out in the Manual may lead to the imposition of sanctions as set out in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code. In the event of any discrepancy between these Regulations and the Manual, these Regulations shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.
- 1.5. Any rights and Proprietary Interests associated with the Competition that are not granted by these Regulations and/or specific agreements to any Organising Association or Participating Member Association shall vest in the AFC.
- 1.6. Any reference to the AFC Statutes and to AFC and FIFA regulations refer to those valid at the time of application.

### 2. The Asian Football Confederation

- 2.1. The AFC Organising Committee for the Asian Cup 2023 (“AFC Organising Committee”) shall be responsible for organising the Competition in accordance with the AFC Statutes. The AFC General Secretariat shall carry out the necessary administrative work in support of the AFC Organising Committee.
- 2.2. The responsibilities of the AFC shall include, but are not limited to:
  - 2.2.1. supervising general preparations and deciding on the Competition format, the draws, and the entries to the Competition;
  - 2.2.2. determining the Match Schedule (*cf.* Article 11);
  - 2.2.3. selecting Stadiums for the Competition (*cf.* Article 14);

- 2.2.4. appointing Match Officials for each Match;
- 2.2.5. choosing the official football and stipulated technical material;
- 2.2.6. approving the choice of the WADA-accredited laboratories that will carry out doping analyses (*cf.* Article 46);
- 2.2.7. reporting cases where appropriate to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (*cf.* Article 49);
- 2.2.8. replacing Participating Teams that have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 6);
- 2.2.9. dealing with cases of abandoned Matches or cancelled Matches (*cf.* Articles 12 and 13);
- 2.2.10. dealing with cases of Force Majeure (*cf.* Article 58);
- 2.2.11. providing insurance coverage for the AFC Delegation appointed to any Match from the time of their departure from their home Member Association to their departure from the Venue; and
- 2.2.12. dealing with any other aspect of the Competition that is not the responsibility of any other body pursuant to these Regulations or the AFC Statutes (*cf.* Article 59).
- 2.3. All decisions made by the AFC Organising Committee and/or AFC General Secretariat in relation to the Competition are final and binding and not appealable.
- 2.4. All decisions made by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in relation to the Competition are subject to the operation of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

### 3. Organising Associations

- 3.1. The principal obligations and responsibilities of any Organising Association are stipulated in the (where relevant) Organising Association Agreement (“OAA”), these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars.
- 3.2. Each Organising Association shall undertake, at its own cost, to:
  - 3.2.1. observe all obligations set out in the (where relevant) OAA, these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars and all applicable national and supra-national laws;
  - 3.2.2. perform each of its obligations and exercise each of the rights granted to it as host, in connection with the hosting, staging and organisation of the Competition in accordance with professional standards;

- 3.2.3. assist and coordinate with Member Associations on all arrangements relating to the Competition in agreement with the AFC;
  - 3.2.4. negotiate with and/or lobby the appropriate government bodies and/or local authorities to assist for the successful hosting, staging and organising of the Competition;
  - 3.2.5. obtain all applicable and relevant licenses, permits, grants and authorisations as may be required to fulfil its obligation in relation to the hosting, staging and organising of the Competition;
  - 3.2.6. comply with the AFC's instructions on the provision of key services, facilities, equipment and infrastructure at each Stadium;
  - 3.2.7. provide the necessary assistance and support to the AFC, AFC Commercial Rights Partner and Commercial Affiliates in relation to the use and exploitation of the Commercial Rights and all Proprietary Interests of the AFC and the protection and enforcement of rights in relation thereto;
  - 3.2.8. procure all necessary insurance policies which shall provide coverage for all risks relating to the hosting, staging and organising of the Competition and name the AFC as a co-insured;
  - 3.2.9. obtaining all clearances and executing all required documentation to enable the free and unfettered exercise and exploitation of Commercial Rights and clearance of all products, equipment or materials relating to the exploitation of the Commercial Rights of the Competition; and
  - 3.2.10. guarantee safety and security at the Stadium.
- 3.3. Each Organising Association shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend the AFC, the AFC Commercial Rights Partner, its Commercial Affiliates as well as their officers, members, agents, auxiliary persons, representatives, and employees from and against all liabilities, obligations, damages, losses, claims, demands, recoveries, deficiencies, costs or expenses (including without limitation all costs and expenses for finding and contracting with another Organising Association able and willing to stage the Competition and/or all attorneys' fees and expenses) which such parties may suffer or incur in connection with, resulting from, or arising out of any breach by the Organising Association (including its officers, directors, representatives, auxiliary persons, employees or agents) or any act or omission of the Organising Association (including its officers, directors, representatives, auxiliary persons, employees or agents) in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement.

## 4. Participating Member Associations

- 4.1. The principal obligations and responsibilities of each Participating Member Association are stipulated in the Participating Team Agreement ("PTA"), these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes, and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars.

- 4.1.1. Each Member Association that has entered the Competition must submit a PTA.
- 4.1.2. The PTA shall be completed and submitted to the AFC not later than the deadline provided by the AFC.
- 4.1.3. Failure to submit the PTA to the AFC by the deadline shall result in the non-participation of the relevant Member Association.
- 4.2. Each Participating Member Association shall ensure as a condition of its participation in the Competition that every member of its Team Official Delegation for each Match is aware of and agrees to comply with the PTA.
- 4.3. Each Participating Member Association shall undertake to:
  - 4.3.1. observe all obligations set out in the PTA, these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes, and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars, and applicable national and supra-national laws;
  - 4.3.2. comply with the Laws of the Game laid down by the IFAB;
  - 4.3.3. accept that all the administrative, disciplinary and refereeing matters connected with the Competition shall be settled by the AFC in compliance with these Regulations;
  - 4.3.4. field their strongest team throughout the Competition;
  - 4.3.5. observe the principles of Fair Play;
  - 4.3.6. ensure the good conduct of its Team Official Delegation and of any person carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the Competition, which includes but is not limited to their arrival on the territory of any Organising Association until their departure;
  - 4.3.7. accept all arrangements made by any Organising Association in agreement with the AFC;
  - 4.3.8. ensure that Participating Players and Participating Officials attend and participate in all official activities and events, including without limitation any team arrival meeting, match coordination meeting, press conferences, and other media and marketing activities in accordance with the instructions issued by the AFC;
    - 4.3.8.1. failure to attend and/or fully participate in any official activity or event shall result in the Participating Member Association being fined at least USD10,000; and
    - 4.3.8.2. the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions in its discretion.

- 4.3.9. provide to the AFC, free of charge, prior to the Competition, any photographs, audio/visual materials and/or information regarding the Participating Member Association, Participating Team, Participating Player and/or Participating Officials including without limitation statistics and historical information and any further information as requested by the AFC;
- 4.3.10. link the official URL for the Competition on its official website; and
- 4.3.11. not establish any digital, media or social media platform without the involvement and express approval of the AFC.
- 4.4. Each Participating Member Association shall, at its own expense, be solely responsible throughout the Competition for:
  - 4.4.1. the procurement of insurance coverage of its Team Official Delegation which shall include without limitation hospital and surgical insurance, travel insurance, and/or sports equipment insurance for all Matches;
  - 4.4.2. all other necessary insurance policies, which must provide an appropriate guaranteed sum for injury and damage to persons, objects, and property, and correspond with the specific circumstances of the Participating Member Association's participation in the Competition. The AFC must be notified of all insurance policies, and may request copies of any and all policies at its discretion;
  - 4.4.3. payment of incidental expenses and for any costs incurred by its Team Official Delegation (*cf.* Article 47);
  - 4.4.4. payment of any costs of extending the stay of any member of its Team Official Delegation in any Organising Association (*cf.* Article 47);
  - 4.4.5. obtaining visas to enter the territory of any Organising Association no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match at that Venue. This includes all costs related to the visa application process; and
  - 4.4.6. payment of all taxes, fees, duties and any other costs related to the importation and/or exportation of equipment, merchandise and/or goods to be used for the Competition.
- 4.5. Each Participating Member Association shall indemnify, defend, and hold the AFC and all of its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents, and all other auxiliary persons free and harmless against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, claims, actions, fines, and expenses (including reasonable legal expenses) of whatsoever kind or nature resulting from, arising out of, or attributable to, any non-compliance with these Regulations by the Participating Member Association, their Team Official Delegation, their affiliates and any third-parties contracted to the Participating Member Association.



- 4.6. It is acknowledged that one or more Participating Member Associations may qualify directly for one or more International Competitions as a result of their performance in the Competition. Where applicable, each such Participating Member Association undertakes to participate in the relevant International Competition(s).
- 4.7. Participating Member Associations are not authorised to represent the AFC or the Competition without the prior written approval of the AFC.
- 4.8. All Participating Players and Participating Officials are encouraged to attend the AFC Annual Awards in the relevant calendar year if they are nominated for an award.
- 4.9. Each Participating Member Association shall ensure that any decision made by the AFC relating to its duties and responsibilities is enforced immediately.

## 5. Entry

### Qualifiers

- 5.1. The AFC shall determine the Member Associations who are eligible to participate in the Qualifiers.
- 5.2. Eligible Member Associations must complete a PTA and submit it to the AFC in accordance with Article 4 to confirm their entry into the Qualifiers.
- 5.3. All decisions by the AFC Organising Committee regarding entry to the Qualifiers for the Competition are final and binding and not appealable.

### Finals

- 5.4. Twenty-four (24) Member Associations shall participate in the Finals of the Competition by virtue of:
  - 5.4.1. qualifying through the Preliminary Joint Qualification for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and AFC Asian Cup 2023™;
  - 5.4.2. qualifying through the Qualifiers; and/or
  - 5.4.3. being the Organising Association; and/or
  - 5.4.4. being invited by the AFC to participate in the Finals.

## 6. Withdrawal from the Competition

- 6.1. All Participating Member Associations undertake that their Participating Teams shall play all of their Matches in the Qualifiers and, if relevant, all of their Matches in the Finals until elimination.

- 6.2. Without limitation, any Participating Member Association that (for any reason):
- 6.2.1. informs the AFC in writing that it does not intend to or is unable to report to a Venue and/or for a Match;
  - 6.2.2. fails to report to a Venue and/or for a Match;
  - 6.2.3. refuses or fails to continue a Match;
  - 6.2.4. leaves the Stadium prior to the completion of a Match;
  - 6.2.5. is excluded, suspended or banned by any competent body from participating in the Competition (or any stage of the Competition) at any time after the draw for the Competition (or stage, as appropriate); or
  - 6.2.6. is excluded, suspended or banned by any competent body from participating in any Match in the Competition at any time after the relevant Match has been scheduled,

shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition.

- 6.3. Subject to Articles 6.5 to 6.8, the AFC Organising Committee shall be responsible for making the necessary decisions where a Participating Member Association withdraws from the Competition at any stage, whether before or after commencement of the Qualifiers or Finals (as applicable), and shall be entitled to take any action it considers appropriate in such circumstances, including without limitation regarding whether or not to change the technical regulations (cf. Section 4) and/or the competition system (cf. Article 7) and, where applicable, the means of effecting such change(s).
- 6.4. The AFC Organising Committee shall be responsible for determining events of Force Majeure in connection with any withdrawal and shall, subject to Articles 6.5 to 6.8, be entitled to take any action it considers appropriate in such circumstances. Any Participating Member Association that wishes to put forward a case of Force Majeure for the consideration of the AFC Organising Committee must do so in writing (with supporting evidence) no later than thirty (30) days after the date of its withdrawal. The AFC General Secretariat may put forward cases of Force Majeure for the consideration of the AFC Organising Committee at any time at its discretion.
- 6.5. In the event that a Participating Member Association withdraws from the Competition at any stage, whether before or after commencement of the Qualifiers or Finals (as applicable), the Competition shall continue with the remaining Participating Member Associations and Matches without any replacement.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Article 6.5 shall apply in all instances and is applicable even in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Organising Committee.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the AFC General Secretariat may, at its discretion, put forward a request to replace the relevant Participating Member Association and, where applicable, the means of effecting such replacement, for the consideration of the AFC Organising Committee, in which case the AFC Organising Committee shall be entitled to take a decision in the matter.

- 6.6. Any Participating Member Association that withdraws from the Qualifiers or Finals after it has commenced (as applicable) shall have all its Matches cancelled and considered null and void. All points and goals in those Matches shall not be taken into consideration when determining the final rankings in a group pursuant to Article 7.3.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Article 6.6 shall apply in all instances and is applicable even in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Organising Committee.

- 6.7. Any Participating Member Association that has been considered to have withdrawn from the Competition at any stage whether before or after commencement of the Qualifiers or Finals (as applicable), shall be:

6.7.1. disqualified from participating in the next edition of the AFC Asian Cup; and

6.7.2. where relevant, disqualified from participating in any tournament organised under Article 4.6, if qualification has been attained.

This Article 6.7 is not applicable in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Organising Committee, but shall apply in all other instances.

- 6.8. Where any Participating Member Association fails to comply with Article 6.1 and withdraws from the Competition at any stage, the case shall be referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

In this regard, any Participating Member Association that withdraws from:

6.8.1 the Qualifiers, before it has commenced, shall be fined:

6.8.1.1 at least USD10,000 if its withdrawal occurred thirty (30) days or more before its first Match in the Qualifiers; or

6.8.1.2 at least USD20,000 if its withdrawal occurred less than thirty (30) days before its first Match in the Qualifiers.

6.8.2 the Qualifiers, after it has commenced, shall be fined at least USD50,000.

6.8.3 the Finals, before it has commenced, shall be fined:

6.8.3.1 at least USD30,000 if its withdrawal occurred thirty (30) days or more before its first Match in the Finals; or

6.8.3.2 at least USD50,000 if its withdrawal occurred less than thirty (30) days before its first Match in the Finals.

6.8.4 the Finals, after it has commenced, shall be fined at least USD100,000.

In addition, in all instances, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall order the relevant Participating Member Association to return to the AFC any subsidy that has been paid in support of its participation in the Competition (or, if not yet paid, to forfeit its right to that subsidy) and to pay compensation for any and all damages or losses suffered by, where applicable, the other Participating Member Associations, the AFC, the AFC Commercial Rights Partner, Commercial Affiliates and the Organising Associations. The amount of compensation shall be determined by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

This Article 6.8 is not applicable in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Organising Committee, but shall apply in all other instances.

6.9. All decisions of the AFC Organising Committee under Articles 6.3 to 6.5 shall be final and binding and not appealable.

## SECTION 2 : COMPETITION SYSTEM AND MATCH SCHEDULE

### 7. Competition System

- 7.1. The Competition shall consist of:
  - 7.1.1. Qualifiers, comprising the Playoff Round and Final Round;
  - 7.1.2. Finals, comprising the Group Stage and Knockout Stage.
- 7.2. The AFC Organising Committee shall decide upon the format of the competition system. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.
- 7.3. Should the competition system involve groups of several teams, the ranking in each group shall be determined in accordance with Article 1 of the Manual and in descending order as follows:
  - 7.3.1. higher number of points obtained in all group Matches;
  - 7.3.2. if two (2) or more Participating Teams are equal on points, the following criteria are applied to determine the ranking (in descending order):
    - Head-to-Head criteria
      - 7.3.2.1. higher number of points obtained in the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;
      - 7.3.2.2. superior goal difference from the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;
      - 7.3.2.3. higher number of goals scored in the group Matches played among the Participating Teams in question;
      - 7.3.2.4. higher number of goals scored away from home in the group Matches played between the Participating Teams in question (only applicable for the Qualifiers);
    - Tiebreaker
      - 7.3.2.5. if, after having applied the Head-to-Head criteria, two (2) or more Participating Teams still have an equal ranking, the Head-to-Head criteria shall be reapplied exclusively to the Matches between the Participating Teams in question to determine their final rankings. If this procedure does not lead to a decision, the Group Results criteria shall apply;
    - Group Results criteria
      - 7.3.2.6. superior goal difference from all group Matches played;



- 7.3.2.7. higher number of goals scored from all group Matches played;
  - 7.3.2.8. Kicks from the Penalty Mark if only two (2) Participating Teams still have an equal ranking and have played their last group Match against each other;
  - 7.3.2.9. the lower score calculated according to the number of yellow and red cards received in the group Matches (Appendix 1 of the Manual); or
  - 7.3.2.10. the drawing of lots.
- 7.4. Should the competition system require the best-ranked Participating Teams from among different groups to advance, the rankings shall be determined by the method set out at Appendix 2 of the Manual.

## 8. Qualifiers

- 8.1. Each round of the Qualifiers shall be conducted in accordance with the competition system set by the AFC Organising Committee.
  - 8.2. For the sake of completeness, the Qualifiers shall commence after the completion of the Preliminary Joint Qualification for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and AFC Asian Cup 2023™ which are governed by the Regulations for the FIFA World Cup 2022™ Preliminary Competition.
- Qualifiers (Playoff Round)
- 8.3. There shall be **one (1)** round played in a knockout format.
    - 8.3.1. Each Participating Team shall play its opponent twice, once at home and once away.
    - 8.3.2. The eligible Participating Teams shall be drawn to play each other, including the order of the Matches.
  - 8.4. The Participating Team which scores the higher aggregate of goals over the two (2) legs shall be declared the winner.
    - 8.4.1. If the Participating Teams score the same number of goals, the Away Goals Rule shall apply.
    - 8.4.2. If no result is produced, Extra time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark (if required) shall be played at the end of second leg in accordance with Article 10.
  - 8.5. At the conclusion of the **Qualifiers (Playoff Round)**:
    - 8.5.1. each winner shall qualify for the Qualifiers (Final Round); and
    - 8.5.2. each loser shall **be eliminated**.

### Qualifiers (Final Round)

- 8.6. The Qualifiers (Final Round) shall consist of twenty-four (24) Participating Teams, drawn into six (6) groups of four (4) teams each.
- 8.7. Each Participating Team shall play against the other Participating Teams within its group **once, at a centralised venue (s)** in accordance with the Match Schedule.
- 8.8. The duration of Matches shall be played in accordance with the Manual.
- 8.9. At the conclusion of the Qualifiers (Final Round):
  - 8.9.1. the first-placed Participating Team in each group shall qualify for the Finals;
  - 8.9.2. **the five (5) best-ranked second-placed Participating Teams among all groups shall qualify for the Finals; and**
  - 8.9.3. all other Participating Teams shall be eliminated from the Competition.

## 9. Finals

- 9.1. The Finals shall commence after the completion of the Qualifiers and shall be played in a Group Stage, followed by a Knockout Stage.

### Group Stage

- 9.2. Twenty-four (24) Participating Teams shall be drawn into six (6) groups of four (4) teams each (*cf.* Article 5.4).
- 9.3. Each Participating Team shall play against the other Participating Teams within its group once in accordance with the Match Schedule.
- 9.4. The duration of Matches shall be played in accordance with the Manual.
- 9.5. At the conclusion of the Group Stage:
  - 9.5.1. the first-placed and second-placed Participating Team in each group, as well as the four (4) best third-placed Participating Teams among all groups, shall qualify for the Knockout Stage;
  - 9.5.2. all other Participating Teams shall be eliminated from the Competition.

### Knockout Stage

- 9.6. The Knockout Stage shall consist of the Round of 16, Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and Final, with each round conducted as single-leg knockout Matches.
- 9.7. Each round of the Knockout Stage shall be conducted in accordance with the Match Schedule.
- 9.8. The duration of Matches, including Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark (if required), shall be played in accordance with Article 10.

9.9. The sixteen (16) Participating Teams shall play the Round of 16 as follows:

R16-1: 2A vs 2C  
 R16-2: 1D vs 3rd from B, E, or F  
 R16-3: 1B vs 3rd from A, C, or D  
 R16-4: 1F vs 2E  
 R16-5: 1C vs 3rd from A, B, or F  
 R16-6: 1E vs 2D  
 R16-7: 1A vs 3rd from C, D, or E  
 R16-8: 2B vs 2F

For the avoidance of doubt, the above does not represent the chronological order in which the matches will be played.

9.10. The following table indicates the pairings in the Round of 16 for the qualified first-placed and third-placed Participating Teams.

(For example, if the Participating Teams finishing third in groups A, B, C and D qualify, the pairings shall be 1A vs 3C, 1B vs 3D, 1C vs 3A and 1D vs 3B).

Qualified	1A vs	1B vs	1C vs	1D vs
A B C D	3C	3D	3A	3B
A B C E	3C	3A	3B	3E
A B C F	3C	3A	3B	3F
A B D E	3D	3A	3B	3E
A B D F	3D	3A	3B	3F
A B E F	3E	3A	3B	3F
A C D E	3C	3D	3A	3E
A C D F	3C	3D	3A	3F
A C E F	3C	3A	3F	3E
A D E F	3D	3A	3F	3E
B C D E	3C	3D	3B	3E
B C D F	3C	3D	3B	3F
B C E F	3E	3C	3B	3F
B D E F	3E	3D	3B	3F
C D E F	3C	3D	3F	3E

- 9.11. The eight (8) winners in the Round of 16 shall play the Quarter Finals as follows:

QF1: Winner R16-1 vs Winner R16-2

QF2: Winner R16-3 vs Winner R16-4

QF3: Winner R16-5 vs Winner R16-6

QF4: Winner R16-7 vs Winner R16-8

For the avoidance of doubt, the above does not represent the chronological order in which the matches will be played.

- 9.12. The four (4) winners in the Quarter Finals shall play the Semi Finals as follows:

SF1: Winner Quarter Final 1 vs Winner Quarter Final 2

SF2: Winner Quarter Final 3 vs Winner Quarter Final 4

- 9.13. The two (2) winners in the Semi-Finals shall play the Final as follows:

Final: Winner Semi Final 1 vs Winner Semi Final 2

## 10. Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- 10.1. If no winner is determined at the end of normal playing time in:

10.1.1. the second leg of any tie in the Qualifiers (Playoff Round); or

10.1.2. any Match in the Finals (Knockout Stage),

Extra Time comprising two (2) fifteen (15) minute periods shall be played.

- 10.2. The Away Goals Rule shall not apply during or at the conclusion of Extra Time in any Match.
- 10.3. One (1) additional substitute may be used when a match goes into Extra Time (whether or not the team has already used the full number of permitted substitutes).
- 10.4. If no winner is determined at the end of Extra Time, Kicks from the Penalty Mark shall be taken in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the Manual.

## 11. Match Schedule

- 11.1. All Matches shall be played in accordance with the AFC Competitions Calendar. The dates are final and binding and not appealable.
- 11.2. The Match Schedule shall be determined following the official draws for the Qualifiers and Finals.
- 11.3. The AFC General Secretariat retains final discretion to amend the Match Schedule at any time.

## 12. Cancellation of Matches

- 12.1. For any Match which is cancelled as a result of Force Majeure, the AFC Organising Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
  - 12.1.1 Decisions made pursuant to Article 12.1 are final and binding and not appealable.
- 12.2. Any Match which is cancelled, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Organising Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the cancellation in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

## 13. Abandonment of Matches

- 13.1. For any Match which is abandoned as a result of Force Majeure, the AFC Organising Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
  - 13.1.1. Decisions made pursuant to Article 13.1 are final and binding and not appealable.
- 13.2. Any Match which is abandoned, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Organising Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the abandonment in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

## SECTION 3 : STADIUMS AND OFFICIAL TRAINING SITES

### 14. Stadiums

14.1. The Organising Association(s) shall ensure that all Matches in the Competition are played in Stadiums which meet the requirements defined in the AFC Stadium Regulations and any other applicable AFC regulations. The AFC General Secretariat may carry out stadium inspections at any time before and during the Competition to check whether the requirements are met.

14.2. The relevant Organising Association(s) shall ensure that no football matches and/or any other events or activities are held in any Stadium:

Qualifiers

14.2.1. during the period starting at least ten (10) days prior to each Match until one (1) day after the Match; and

Finals

14.2.2. during the period starting at least thirty (30) days prior to the opening Match until one (1) day after the completion of the final Match in the Stadium,

unless prior written permission has been obtained from the AFC.

14.3. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 14.2 shall be:

14.3.1. fined at least USD10,000; and

14.3.2. the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

14.4. Unless otherwise specified or directed by the AFC, the Stadiums shall be made available to the AFC for its exclusive use as follows:

Qualifiers

14.4.1. during the period starting at least five (5) days prior to each Match until one (1) day after the Match; and

Finals

14.4.2. during the period starting at least ten (10) days prior to the date on which the Stadium will first be used in connection with the Finals (such as the first Match or training session to be held in the Stadium, or other Competition-related event to be held in the Stadium prior to such Match or training session) until one (1) day after the last use of the Stadium in connection with the Finals.

## 15. Official Training Sites

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

15.1.1. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.1 shall be fined at least USD10,000.

15.1.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in addition to those provided for in Article 15.1.1.

### Qualifiers

15.2. Official Training Sites shall be made available at least two (2) days prior to each Match until the commencement of the Match. They shall not be used for any other purpose during this period, unless written permission has been obtained from the AFC.

15.2.1. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.2 shall be fined at least USD10,000.

15.2.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in addition to those provided for in Article 15.2.1.

### Finals

15.3. Official Training Sites shall be made available at least thirty (30) days prior to the first Match in the Venue until one (1) day after the last Match in the Venue. They shall not be used for any other purpose during this period, unless written permission has been obtained from the AFC.

15.3.1. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.3 shall be fined at least USD10,000.

15.3.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions in addition to those provided for in Article 15.3.1

15.4. Participating Teams must solely utilise Official Training Sites for any official training from four (4) days prior to their first Match.

## SECTION 4 : TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

### 16. Laws of the Game

- 16.1. All Matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game in force and as laid down by The International Football Association Board. In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, the English version shall be authoritative.
- 16.2. Each Match shall last ninety (90) minutes, comprising two (2) periods of forty-five (45) minutes, with a half-time interval of fifteen (15) minutes.
- 16.3. Only **five (5)** substitutes listed on a 'Match Starting List' may take part in a Match. Any Participating Player who has been substituted may take no further part in that Match.
- 16.4. The AFC may, at its discretion, decide to use football technologies in any Match or Matches in the Competition or in the Competition as a whole (including Goal-Line Technology (GLT), a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system or Electronic Performance and Tracking Systems (EPTS)) in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

### 17. Refereeing

- 17.1. If the Referee is prevented from carrying out his duties, such Referee shall be replaced by the Fourth Official. The same applies for either of the Assistant Referees if a Reserve Assistant Referee is not appointed.
- 17.2. A Video Assistant Referee (VAR) may assist the Referee to make a decision using replay footage in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Laws of the Game in force at the time of the Competition and as laid down by the IFAB.

### 18. Team Bench and Technical Area

- 18.1. A maximum of eleven (11) Participating Officials and a maximum of twelve (12) Participating Players are permitted to sit on the team bench during a Match, provided they are in possession of the appropriate Accreditation Card.

### 19. Footballs

#### Qualifiers

- 19.1. The footballs used in the Qualifiers shall be supplied by each Organising Association. The Organising Association shall supply the visiting Participating Team with the same football for its official training at the Stadium.
- 19.2. Participating Teams shall solely utilise the training footballs provided by the Organising Association for training and warming-up purposes.



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

Finals

- 19.4. The footballs used in the Finals shall be selected and supplied by the AFC.
- 19.5. Participating Teams shall solely utilise the footballs provided by the AFC for training and warming-up purposes.
- 19.6. Each Participating Member Association is responsible for any taxes and/or fees pertaining to the customs clearance of footballs delivered to it by the AFC.

## 20. Equipment

- 20.1. The AFC has the sole authority to approve the equipment (including kit) in accordance with the AFC Equipment Regulations.
- 20.2. Each Participating Member Association shall indemnify the AFC and hold the AFC harmless from any and all damages in the event that a conflict arises as a result of any endorsement deal existing between itself and its sponsor(s) which contravenes the AFC Equipment Regulations.

## SECTION 5 : TEAM OFFICIAL DELEGATION

### 21. Team Official Delegation

- 21.1. Each Participating Team shall ensure that no person in its Team Official Delegation or otherwise affiliated to it enters or is present on its team bus, in its team dressing room, on the Field of Play or in any other Controlled Access Area without being in physical possession of the necessary Accreditation Card which has been validly issued to such person.

#### Qualifiers

- 21.2. For each Match in the Qualifiers, Participating Teams shall register a Team Official Delegation, subject to the conditions set out below, comprising between eighteen (18) and twenty-three (23) Participating Players and eleven (11) Participating Officials.

- 21.2.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional nine (9) officials who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the eleven (11) Participating Officials included in the Team Official Delegation.

- 21.2.2. All costs related to the additional nine (9) officials shall be borne by the relevant Participating Member Association.

- 21.3. For each match in the Qualifiers, Participating Teams shall include following four (4) Officials in the registration list:

- 21.3.1. Head Coach;

- 21.3.2. Team Manager

- 21.3.3. Team Media Officer; and

- 21.3.4. Team Doctor

#### Finals

- 21.4. Participating Teams shall register a Team Official Delegation, subject to the conditions set out below, comprising between eighteen (18) to twenty-three (23) Participating Players and twenty (20) Participating Officials.

- 21.4.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional ten (10) officials who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the twenty (20) Participating Officials included in the Team Official Delegation.

- 21.4.2. All costs related to the additional ten (10) officials shall be borne by the relevant Participating Member Association.

- 21.5. Participating Teams shall include following five (5) Officials in the registration list:

- 21.5.1. Head Coach;
- 21.5.2. Team Manager
- 21.5.3. Team Media Officer
- 21.5.4. Team Doctor; and
- 21.5.5. Team Security Officer

## 22. Eligibility of Players

- 22.1. Each Participating Member Association shall ensure that all players:
  - 22.1.1. are duly registered with the AFC pursuant to these Regulations;
  - 22.1.2. hold the nationality of its country and are subject to its jurisdiction; and
  - 22.1.3. are eligible to participate for the representative team of the Member Association in accordance with the FIFA Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes.
- 22.2. Individuals who meet the criteria set out in Article 22.1 are eligible to participate in the Competition, subject to the provisions of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 22.3. The approval of the registration of a Participating Player by the AFC General Secretariat does not automatically provide for the eligibility of the Participating Player. Each Participating Member Association is responsible for fielding only eligible Participating Players. Failure to do so shall lead to the consequences stipulated in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 22.4. A Participating Player shall be deemed ineligible, without limitation, if:
  - 22.4.1. there is a violation of Article 22.1; or
  - 22.4.2. he participates in a Match contrary to a decision of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, these Regulations, or the operation of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code; or
  - 22.4.3. the AFC determines that any document submitted during registration is false.

## 23. Registration of Players

- 23.1. There are two (2) stages of player registration for the [Qualifiers \(Playoff Round\)](#) and three (3) stages [each](#) of player registration for [the Qualifiers \(Final Round\)](#) and the Finals:
  - [Qualifiers \(Playoff Round\)](#)
  - 23.1.1. Preliminary Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) Participating Players, with no maximum number;

23.1.2. Final Registration / Player Selection List: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players by latest ninety (90) minutes prior to each Match which identifies the starting eleven (11) and up to twelve (12) substitutes, comprising individuals registered in the Preliminary Registration.

### Qualifiers (Final Round) and Finals

23.1.3. Preliminary Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum fifty (50) Participating Players;

23.1.4. Final Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players comprising individuals registered in the Preliminary Registration;

23.1.5. Player Selection List: each Participating Team must submit a Player Selection List prior to each Match which identifies the starting eleven (11) and up to twelve (12) substitutes comprising individuals registered in the Final Registration.

23.2. All Participating Players will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC General Secretariat. Should a card be misplaced, the relevant Participating Team shall be required to pay USD1,000 as a replacement production fee.

23.3. Should the AFC not receive all required documents by the stipulated deadline, the Participating Member Association concerned shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 7.1) prior to its commencement and subject to Article 6.

## 24. Documents for Registration of Players

24.1. Participating Players must be registered via the AFCAS with the supporting documents set out in the Manual.

## 25. Preliminary Registration

### Qualifiers (Playoff Round)

25.1. Each Participating Team shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 24 via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match in the Qualifiers.

25.2. There is no allocation of jersey numbers during the Preliminary Registration for the Qualifiers.

25.3. If a Participating Team fails to register minimum eighteen (18) Participating Players, its Member Association shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 7.1) prior to its commencement and subject to Article 6.

25.4. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of four (4) goalkeepers in their Preliminary Registration.

- 25.5. Each Participating Team may add any Participating Players or replace any registered individual up to seven (7) days prior to each Match.

Qualifiers (Final Round) and Finals

- 25.6. Each Participating Team shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 24 via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the relevant stage of the Competition.
- 25.7. There is no allocation of jersey numbers during the Preliminary Registration.
- 25.8. Each Participating Team shall register minimum eighteen (18) and maximum fifty (50) Participating Players in the Preliminary Registration.
- 25.9. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of four (4) goalkeepers in their Preliminary Registration.
- 25.10. The Preliminary Registration may differ for each stage of the Competition.
- 25.11. The provisions of Article 25.3 shall apply equally to the Qualifiers (Final Round) and the Finals.
- 25.12. Once the Preliminary Registration has been received by the AFC and after the deadline has passed, under no circumstances shall Participating Teams be permitted to submit additional names or replace any registered individual, even if their quota of fifty (50) has not been met.

## 26. Final Registration

Qualifiers (Playoff Round)

- 26.1. The submission of the Final Registration for each Match shall be undertaken using the Player Selection List.
- 26.2. Each Participating Team shall submit a Final Registration of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players.
- 26.2.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Qualifiers (Playoff Round).
- 26.2.2. Numbers on the Participating Players' shirts must correspond with the numbers indicated on the Player Selection List (numbers 1-23 only). Jersey number 1 shall be reserved for a goalkeeper.
- 26.3. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Final Registration.

Qualifiers (Final Round)

- 26.4. Each Participating Team shall submit a Final Registration of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players.

- 26.4.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Qualifiers (Final Round).
- 26.4.2. The Participating Players must be assigned jerseys numbered 1-23. Jersey number 1 shall be reserved for a goalkeeper. Each Participating Player shall wear the same number allocated in the Final Registration during all Matches in the Qualifiers (Final Round).
- 26.4.3. Each Participating Team shall submit its Final Registration at the match coordination meeting of its first match in the Qualifiers (Final Round).
- 26.5. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Final Registration.
- 26.6. Once the Final Registration has been received by the AFC, Participating Teams may:
  - 26.6.1. replace any of the registered Participating Players up to six (6) hours prior to their first Match in the Qualifiers (Final Round); and/or
  - 26.6.2. replace any registered Participating Player that tests positive for COVID-19 (in accordance with the testing requirements set out by the AFC and the relevant authorities of the host country for the Qualifiers (Final Round)), and provided such positive test is proven to the comfortable satisfaction of the AFC up to six (6) hours prior to the Match in which it is intended that the replacement Participating Player will participate,subject to the below conditions:
  - 26.6.3. any replacement Participating Player must have been registered in the Preliminary Registration;
  - 26.6.4. replacement Participating Players shall only be allocated the vacated shirt numbers;
  - 26.6.5. to replace a Participating Player, a Participating Team must provide his Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Player in exchange;
  - 26.6.6. replacement Participating Players shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card; and
  - 26.6.7. for the avoidance of doubt, once a Participating Player has been replaced under Article 26.6.2, he may not subsequently play in the Qualifiers (Final Round).

### Finals

- 26.7. Each Participating Team shall submit a Final Registration of minimum eighteen (18) players and maximum twenty-three (23) Participating Players.
  - 26.7.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Finals.

- 26.7.2. The Participating Players must be assigned jerseys numbered 1-23. Jersey number 1 shall be reserved for a goalkeeper. Each Participating Player shall wear the same number allocated in the Final Registration during all Matches in the Finals.
- 26.7.3. Each Participating Team shall submit their Final Registration to the AFC by latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Finals.
- 26.8. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Final Registration.
- 26.9. Once the Final Registration has been received by the AFC, Participating Teams may:
  - 26.9.1. replace any of the registered Participating Players up to six (6) hours prior to their first Match in the Finals; and/or
  - 26.9.2. replace any registered Participating Player that tests positive for COVID-19 (in accordance with the testing requirements set out by the AFC and the relevant authorities of the host country for the Finals, and provided such positive test is proven to the comfortable satisfaction of the AFC) up to six (6) hours prior to the Match in which it is intended that the replacement Participating Player will participate,
 subject to the below conditions:
  - 26.9.3. any replacement Participating Player must have been registered in the Preliminary Registration;
  - 26.9.4. replacement Participating Players shall only be allocated the vacated shirt numbers;
  - 26.9.5. to replace a Participating Player, a Participating Team must provide his Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Player in exchange;
  - 26.9.6. replacement Participating Players shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card; and
  - 26.9.7. for the avoidance of doubt, once a Participating Player has been replaced under Article 26.9.2, he may not subsequently play in the Finals.

## 27. Player Selection List

- 27.1. Each Participating Team shall mark the starting eleven (11), including the team captain, and up to twelve (12) substitutes, on the "Player Selection List" via AFCAS.
  - 27.1.1. Each Participating Player who is marked on the Player Selection List must be available at the Player and Equipment Check undertaken by the AFC Match Commissioner on Match day.

- 27.2. Each Participating Team must submit their 'Player Selection List' using the AFCAS together with the 'Officials on the Substitution Bench' form with the names of the eleven (11) Participating Officials who shall be entitled to sit on the team bench to the AFC Match Commissioner by latest ninety (90) minutes prior to the commencement of each Match.

## 28. Registration of Officials

- 28.1. There shall only be one (1) registration period for Participating Officials for each of the Qualifiers and Finals.

### Qualifiers

- 28.2. Each Participating Team shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 29 via AFCAS by the deadline provided by the AFC.
- 28.3. Each Participating Team may nominate up to eleven (11) Participating Officials. Each Participating Team may also nominate an additional nine (9) officials in accordance with Article 21.
- 28.4. Up to eleven (11) officials may sit on the team bench for each Match. The following three (3) Participating Officials must be registered on the "Officials on the Substitution Bench" Form:
- 28.4.1. Head Coach;
- 28.4.2. Team Manager; and
- 28.4.3. Team Doctor.
- 28.5. Each Participating Team is entitled to register a 'Video Analyst' who shall be the only member of a Team Official Delegation entitled to record Matches in the Competition. This recording shall be strictly for technical purposes and should not interfere with Match operations or be utilised by any Broadcast Partner.
- 28.6. All Participating Officials (and additional officials) will be issued with an Accreditation Card. Should a card be misplaced, the relevant Participating Member Association shall be required to pay USD1,000 as a replacement production fee.
- 28.7. Should the AFC not receive all required documents by the stipulated deadline, the Participating Member Association concerned shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 7.1) prior to its commencement and subject to Article 6.
- 28.8. Once the registration of Participating Officials has been received by the AFC, Participating Teams may replace any of the listed Participating Officials up to seven (7) days before each Match [for the Qualifiers \(Playoff Round\)](#) and [at any stage with twenty-four \(24\) hours notice to the AFC for the Qualifiers \(Final Round\)](#), by submitting the documents set out in Article 29 in the AFCAS online registration, subject to the below conditions:



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

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

#### Finals

28.9. Each Participating Team shall submit via AFCAS online registration the supporting documents in accordance with Article 29 by the deadline provided by the AFC.

28.10. Each Participating Team may nominate twenty (20) Participating Officials. Each Participating Team may also nominate an additional ten (10) officials in accordance with Article 21.

28.11. Up to eleven (11) officials may sit on the team bench for each Match. The following three (3) Participating Officials must be registered on the “Officials on the Substitution Bench” Form:

28.11.1. Head Coach;

28.11.2. Team Manager; and

28.11.3. Team Doctor.

28.12. Each Participating Team is entitled to register up to two (2) ‘Video Analysts’ who shall be the only members of a Team Official Delegation entitled to record Matches in the Competition. This recording shall be strictly for technical purposes and should not interfere with Match operations or be utilised by any Broadcast Partner.

28.13. Once the registration of Participating Officials has been received by the AFC, Participating Member Associations may replace any of the listed Participating Officials at any stage with twenty-four (24) hours notice to the AFC by submitting the documents set out in Article 29 in the AFCAS online registration, subject to the below conditions:

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

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

28.14. The provisions of Article 28.7 shall equally apply to the Finals.

## 29. Documents for Registration of Officials

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

## SECTION 6 : MEDIA

### 30. Media Access

#### Qualifiers

- 30.1. Each Organising Association shall ensure that the AFC, the Host Broadcaster, and all Broadcast Partners have free access to the Stadium from five (5) days prior to each Match until one (1) day after each Match to allow for the resolution of any technical issues and for the assembly and/or disassembly of the relevant infrastructure required to execute the Media Rights.

#### Finals

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

### 31. Press Conferences

- 31.1. The Head Coach and minimum one (1) of the key Participating Players of each Participating Team must attend a pre-Match press conference for each Match in which they participate to be held at least one (1) day prior to the Match.
- 31.2. The Head Coach of each Participating Team and the Player of the Match must attend a post-Match press conference for each Match in which they participate, commencing no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the Match.
- 31.3. Any individual who fails to attend an obligatory press conference shall be fined at least USD10,000. The relevant Participating Team shall also be held liable in accordance with Article 4.3.8.
- 31.4. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 32. Mixed Zone

- 32.1. The Head Coach and all Participating Players shall pass through the Mixed Zone on their way from their team dressing room to their bus after each Match.
- 32.2. Any individual who fails to pass through the mixed zone shall be fined at least USD10,000. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to pass through the Mixed Zone in accordance with Article 4.3.8.
- 32.3. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 33. Interviews

- 33.1. If requested by the AFC, Participating Teams shall make their Head Coach and one (1) Participating Player available the day before each Match for an interview of up to ten (10) minutes, to be recorded by the Host Broadcaster or any other Broadcast Partner, any Commercial Affiliate and/or the AFC. All interview locations shall be designated by the AFC Media Officer or AFC General Coordinator.
- 33.2. If requested by the AFC, Participating Teams shall make their Head Coach available on Match day for an interview of not more than ninety (90) seconds at their point of arrival at the Stadium for the Match.
- 33.3. Any individual who fails to conduct an interview when requested shall be fined at least USD10,000. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct an interview when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8.
- 33.4. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 34. Flash Interviews

- 34.1. If requested by the AFC, any Participating Player (Maximum 3) and/or Participating Officials (Head Coach) shall participate in a 'flash interview' following each Match.
- 34.2. Any individual who fails to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested shall be fined at least USD10,000. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8.
- 34.3. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 35. Recording of Matches

#### Qualifiers

- 35.1. Any Organising Association that fails to provide three (3) copies of the Match recording to the AFC Match Commissioner immediately after the completion of each Match shall be fined at least USD5,000.
- 35.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

#### Finals

- 35.3. The AFC shall provide each Participating Team with relevant online link for them to view and download relevant footage of each Match in the Finals.

## SECTION 7 : TICKETING

### 36. General Requirements

- 36.1. Tickets, electronic or hard copy, shall include seat numbering and serial numbering, and only include AFC Marks, Competition Marks, and/or marks of Commercial Affiliates approved by the AFC.
- 36.2. The AFC reserves the right at its sole discretion to substitute the seating area or the gate entrance identified on the ticket with another, if deemed appropriate for security or technical reasons.

### 37. Terms and Conditions

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

#### Qualifiers

- 37.2. Each Organising Association shall determine for each of the Matches:

- 37.2.1. the total number of Tickets made available in a stadium in which a Match takes place;
- 37.2.2. the pricing of all Tickets;
- 37.2.3. the category of Tickets; and
- 37.2.4. the assignment of Stadium seats to Tickets.

#### Finals

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

### 38. Complimentary Tickets

- 38.1. Each Organising Association shall provide Complimentary Tickets to the AFC for each Match in the Competition as instructed by the AFC.
- 38.2. Each Organising Association shall provide the following Complimentary Tickets to each Participating Team competing at a Venue which it controls for each Match it participates in:

#### Qualifiers

- 38.2.1. two (2) VVIP Tickets;
- 38.2.2. five (5) VIP Tickets; and

- 38.2.3. twenty (20) Tickets of the next-best category;
- 38.2.4. Finals  
two (2) VVIP Tickets;
- 38.2.5. ten (10) VIP Tickets;
- 38.2.6. thirty (30) Tickets of the next-best category (as determined by the AFC); and
- 38.2.7. two (2) Tickets of the next-best category (as determined by the AFC) for all other Matches at the Venue not involving the relevant Participating Member Association.
- 38.3. The completion or submission of the ticket application form by the Participating Team does not guarantee the availability of Complimentary Tickets for the Participating Team.

### 39. Purchasable Tickets

- 39.1. Each Organising Association must make available at least eight percent (8%) of the net saleable capacity of a Stadium available exclusively to the supporters of each Participating Member Association, in a segregated, safe area to be determined by the AFC and the Organising Association.
- 39.2. The number of Tickets to be purchased must be declared by each Participating Member Association in accordance with the Ticketing timeline and guidelines issued by the AFC. Each Participating Member Association is responsible for all Tickets purchased, even if not utilised. The price of the Tickets shall not exceed the price of comparable Tickets that are sold to the general public in the Organising Association.
- 39.3. Each Organising Association shall provide the AFC Commercial Rights Partner with the opportunity to buy Tickets at face-value for each Match. The number of Tickets to be purchased must be declared at a time to be mutually agreed between the AFC Commercial Rights Partner and the Organising Association.

## SECTION 8 : COMMERCIAL

### 40. Commercial Rights

- 40.1. AFC is the owner of all the Commercial Rights emanating from the Competition as well as from any other related events coming under its jurisdiction, without any restrictions as to content, time, place and law. The AFC may grant the Organising Associations the Commercial Rights, in whole or in part, in accordance to the Manual which governs the rights, duties, and responsibilities of all parties regarding the Commercial Rights.
- 40.2. Each Organising Association shall use reasonable efforts in seeking political and administrative support from all local, regional and national governmental authorities including through the implementation of government guarantees and tabling of supplementary legislation for the effective exploitation and protection of the Commercial Rights.
- 40.3. Each Organising Association shall where requested by the AFC, procure at its own cost the registration of all Competition Marks and Competition Websites in its territory, at least two (2) months prior to the start of the Competition.
- 40.4. Each Organising Association shall appoint a reasonable number of personnel to assist the AFC in the conduct of its rights protection programme.

### 41. Clean Stadium

#### Finals

- 41.1. The Organising Association shall deliver all Stadiums and Official Training Sites as a Clean Stadium ten (10) days before the first Match at each Stadium or official training at each Official Training Site, until 24 hours after the final Match of the Competition.

### 42. Advertising and Branding

#### Finals

- 42.1. The Organising Association shall ensure that all relevant approvals are secured and unrestricted access for the placement and publishing of advertising or branding of the Competition shall be available to the AFC ten (10) days before the first Match at each Stadium or official training at each Official Training Site.

## SECTION 9 : SAFETY AND SECURITY

### 43. General Principles

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

## SECTION 10 : MEDICAL AND ANTI-DOPING

### 44. Pre-Competition Medical Assessment

- 44.1. Each Participating Team shall ensure that each Participating Player in its Preliminary Registration undergoes a Pre-Competition Medical Assessment (PCMA) at least thirty (30) days prior to the first Match of the Finals.
  - 44.1.1. Participating Players that have undertaken a PCMA for a FIFA competition may provide the AFC with the physician and player's declaration form originally provided to FIFA, provided that the PCMA was conducted within one (1) year of the Finals.
  - 44.1.2. The AFC shall provide all Participating Teams with the PCMA form setting out the necessary matters to be tested, which shall include testing to prevent players from experiencing sudden cardiac death during any Match.
  - 44.1.3. Each Participating Member Association must submit to the AFC latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Competition the following signed documents:
    - 44.1.3.1. *"Member Association Declaration of Agreement to the PCMA"*;
    - 44.1.3.2. for each Participating Player, the *"Player and Examining Physician Declaration for PCMA"*.
  - 44.1.4. Any player for whom the required documents are not provided is not eligible to be registered in the Final Registration for a Participating Team.
- 44.2. The AFC Medical Committee may, in its sole discretion, order any further medical evaluation of a Participating Player that it deems necessary. The cost of such further testing shall be borne by the AFC.

### 45. Facilities and Personnel

- 45.1. Each Organising Association shall provide a medical room and doping control room fully-equipped with all items stipulated in the Manual.
- 45.2. An Organising Association shall be fined:
  - 45.2.1. at least USD20,000 for failing to fully equip the medical room; or
  - 45.2.2. at least USD10,000 for failing to fully equip the doping control room; or
  - 45.2.3. at least USD40,000 for failing to fully equip both rooms.



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

## 46. Anti-Doping

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

## SECTION 11 : FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

### 47. Responsibilities

#### Qualifiers

- 47.1. Participating Member Associations shall settle all logistical costs among themselves. The following conditions shall apply to the Qualifiers:
- 47.1.1. The visiting Participating Team shall cover its international travel costs to the Venue or the nearest airport, as well as board, lodging costs and incidental expenses;
  - 47.1.2. The Organising Association shall cover domestic transport costs for the entire Team Official Delegation of the visiting Participating Team, subject to flight connections;
  - 47.1.3. The Organising Association shall pay for board and lodging in a high-standard hotel and domestic transport in the Host City for the Match Officials, the AFC Match Commissioner, and any other appointed AFC officials.
  - 47.1.4. The Participating Teams shall not be permitted to stay at the same hotel or at the hotel chosen for the AFC Delegation.
  - 47.1.5. Any disputes arising regarding financial provisions shall be resolved amongst the Participating Member Associations concerned but may be submitted to the AFC Organising Committee for a final decision.

#### Finals

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

#### Prize Money

- 47.3. Five percent (5%) of the prize monies from the Champion and runner-up shall be retained and allocated to the AFC Dream Asia Foundation to fund social responsibility activities proposed by the Champion and runner-up respectively. The Champion and runner-up will be required to submit their social responsibility activity proposal to the AFC within twelve (12) months from the date of the Final, failing which the allocated percentage shall be retained by the AFC for use at its discretion in support of the AFC's social responsibility activities.

## SECTION 12 : AWARDS

### 48. Trophy, Awards and Medals

- 48.1. The original trophy of the Competition shall be presented as a formality to the Champion during the prize presentation ceremony after the Final. Following the conclusion of the ceremony, the original trophy shall be returned to the AFC and remain in the possession of the AFC at all times. The Champion shall subsequently be awarded a replica by the AFC for its permanent possession.
- 48.2. The awards of the Competition shall be presented in accordance with the Manual.
- 48.3. The AFC shall award the following medals:
  - 48.3.1. fifty-three (53) medals to the Champion;
  - 48.3.2. fifty-three (53) medals to the runner-up; and
  - 48.3.3. commemorative medals for the Match Officials of the final Match.
- 48.4. The AFC Organising Committee may decide to introduce further awards.

## SECTION 13 : DISCIPLINARY

### 49. Disciplinary Measures

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

### 50. Good Conduct

- 50.1. Participating Member Associations are liable for the improper conduct of:
  - 50.1.1. any member of its Team Official Delegation; and/or
  - 50.1.2. any person affiliated to it and/or carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the Competition.
- 50.2. For any violation of Article 50.1, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue any sanction listed in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

### 51. Administrative Procedure

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

- 51.1.3.1. should the Chairman of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee not approve the compounded offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;
- 51.1.4. by agreeing to compound the offence, the party waives its right to request a motivated decision or appeal the sanction issued;
- 51.1.5. any sanction issued administratively comes into force immediately upon notification in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

## 52. Cautions and Expulsions

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

### Qualifiers

- 52.2. Any Participating Player or Participating Official who completes the Qualifiers (Playoff Round) having only received one (1) caution shall not carry-over that caution to the Qualifiers (Final Round).
- 52.3. Any Participating Player or Participating Official who completes the Qualifiers (Final Round) having only received one (1) caution shall not carry-over that caution to the Finals.
- 52.4. Any Participating Player or Participating Official who completes the Qualifiers (Final Round) with a match suspension as a result of receiving two (2) cautions imposed in different matches of the Qualifiers (Final Round) shall not carry-over that match suspension to the Finals.

### Finals

- 52.5. Any Participating Player or Participating Official who completes the Group Stage, Round of 16, and Quarter Finals having only received one (1) caution shall not carry-over that caution to the Semi Finals.

## 53. Protest

- 53.1. For the purpose of these Regulations, a protest is an objection of any kind related to any event and/or matter that has a direct effect on a Match.
- 53.2. Unless otherwise stipulated in these Regulations, to be considered valid, a protest must be:
  - 53.2.1. submitted in writing (using the appropriate Protest Form issued by the AFC General Secretariat) to the AFC Match Commissioner for the relevant Match within two (2) hours of the end of the relevant Match;
  - 53.2.2. followed up with a full written report (including a copy of the original Protest Form) which must be sent to the AFC General Secretariat within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of the relevant Match; and

- 53.2.3. accompanied by a non-refundable fee of USD500 (non-inclusive of any bank charges) which must be transmitted to the bank account nominated by the AFC General Secretariat within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of the relevant Match.
- 53.3. No protest shall be lodged relating to the Referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play. Such decisions are final and binding and not subject to appeal, unless otherwise stipulated in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code. The same applies for any potential issue concerning the use and/or operation of any goal-line technology (GLT) and/or video assistant referee (VAR) system.
- 53.4. Any protest which relates to the eligibility of a player to participate in the Finals must be submitted to the AFC General Secretariat no later than five (5) days before the day on which the opening Match of the Finals is scheduled to take place. To be considered valid, such a protest must be:
- 53.4.1. submitted in writing (in the form of a full written report); and
- 53.4.2. accompanied by a non-refundable fee of USD500 (non-inclusive of any bank charges), which must be transmitted to the bank account nominated by the AFC General Secretariat before the expiry of the aforementioned deadline.
- 53.5. If any of the formal requirements set out in Article 53.2 and/or 53.4 is not met, the relevant protest shall be disregarded. The AFC General Secretariat decides whether or not such formal requirements have been met. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.
- 53.6. Subject to Article 53.5 and any other exceptions set out in these Regulations, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the AFC Statutes and/or any other applicable AFC regulation, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall make decisions on protests. Should the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee determine that a protest is unfounded or irresponsible, it may impose a fine. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may transfer a protest to the AFC Organising Committee for its decision if it is deemed to be purely operational in nature.

## 54. Arbitration

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

## SECTION 14 : CLOSING PROVISIONS

### 55. Special Instructions

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

### 56. Decisions

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

### 57. Amendments

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

### 58. Force Majeure

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

### 59. Matters Not Provided For

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

### 60. Implementing Provisions

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

## 61. Enforcement

- 61.1. These Regulations were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 10 September 2020 and came into force immediately.
- 61.2. These Regulations were amended by the AFC Executive Committee on 18 October 2021 and such amendments came into force immediately. The relevant amendments are highlighted in these Regulations.
- 61.3. These Regulations were amended by the AFC Executive Committee on 21 April 2022 and such amendments came into force immediately. The relevant amendments are highlighted in these Regulations.
- 61.4. These Regulations were amended by the AFC Executive Committee on 10 May 2023 and such amendments came into force immediately. The relevant amendments are highlighted in these Regulations.

For the AFC Executive Committee

**Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa**  
President

**Datuk Seri Windsor John**  
General Secretary





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