



# COMPETITION REGULATIONS

AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025



**AFC U20  
ASIAN CUP™**



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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 grants 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 brands 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 crew, player escorts, flag bearers and/or photographers. The display of the name and/or logo of the bona fide supplier of clothing on the uniform strip of 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 Competitions Committee	The Standing Committee of the AFC which shall advise the Executive Committee on strategies and policies related to the competitions and matches in accordance with the AFC Statutes and all relevant regulations.

AFC Delegation	(i) AFC staff members; (ii) Match Officials; (iii) other officials appointed by the AFC; (iv) AFC Committee members; and (v) AFC guests.
AFC Marks	All design marks, slogans, designations, names, logos, insignia, emblems or devices (in any application) owned and/or controlled by the AFC (in any language) relating to the AFC itself but excluding the Competition Marks.
AFC Website	The 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).
Broadcast Partner	Any entity, including the Host Broadcaster, which has been granted the Media Rights (or any part thereof) 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); (iii) encumbrances that may affect the use and exploitation of Commercial Rights; and/or (iv) 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 U20 Asian Cup™ 2025, 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(s) 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 with 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	The AFC Website and any other authorised Competition Website, in addition to any 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 normal playing time.
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 Fédération 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 of any provision of these Regulations arising from or attributable to acts, events, omissions or accidents which are beyond the reasonable control of a party. This shall include, without limitation, abnormally inclement weather, flood, lightning, storm, fire, explosion, earthquake, structural damage, power supplies shortage/failure, war, terrorist action, military operations, riot, crowd disorder, strike, lock-outs or other industrial action, or civil commotion, epidemic or pandemic.
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 and persons 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.
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.
Manual	The AFC Competition Operations Manual which sets out the operational responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders in relation to the organising, hosting and staging of Matches and Competitions.

Match	A football match in its entirety (including a replayed and/or deferred football match, Extra Time and Penalties) 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 licence 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 systems, on a live, delayed and unlimited repeat basis, in full or in part (including without limitation by way of clips and/or highlights and/or support programmes and/or magazine shows and/or news access), and all rights to exploit any and all commercial opportunities (including for example broadcast sponsorship and commercial airtime opportunities) arising from and/or in connection with such rights.
Member Association	A Football Association which is a member of the AFC.
Merchandise Rights	The right granted to 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 (e.g. footballs), clothing, coins, medals, games (electronic or otherwise), other collectibles and Premiums related to the Competition.

Official Function	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, official draws, workshops and launch events.
Official Training Site	Any site designated by the Organising Association and approved by the AFC for use by the Participating Teams throughout the duration of the Competition for training purposes.
Organising Association	A Member Association approved by the AFC to organise, stage and host Matches in the Qualifiers or the Finals.
Participating Member Association	A Member Association whose representative team participates in the Competition.
Participating Official	Any official who is registered to participate in the Competition.
Participating Player	Any player who is registered to participate in the Competition.
Participating Team	Any representative team affiliated to a Participating Member Association.
Penalties	‘Penalties (penalty-shootout)’ as described in the Laws of the Game.
Premiums	Any promotional items (including packaging, labelling, and/or containers thereof) which incorporates a mark and/or logo of the AFC and/or any Competition Marks, and which may only be distributed free of charge or as prizes.
Promotional Rights	Any advertising and/or promotions which are carried out in connection with the Competition, Competition Marks, or other rights/opportunities granted by the AFC.
Proprietary Interests	Without limitation, intellectual property, copyright and analogous rights, trademark rights, moral rights, performing rights, personality rights, and all remedies available under the applicable laws of unfair competition comprised in the Commercial Rights.
Qualifiers	The qualifying stage of the Competition.
Regulations	These Competition Regulations.



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) concession areas;</li> <li>(v) commercial display areas;</li> <li>(vi) buildings;</li> <li>(vii) the Field of Play;</li> <li>(viii) the Media tribune;</li> <li>(ix) any broadcast compound;</li> <li>(x) the stadium media centre;</li> <li>(xi) the press conference room;</li> <li>(xii) the mixed zone;</li> <li>(xiii) any stands; and</li> <li>(xiv) any areas beneath the stands.</li> </ul>
Team Official Delegation	<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 these Regulations.</p>
Team Technical Seats	<p>The seats located in the stands behind the technical area with access to the Field of Play and team dressing rooms.</p>
Ticket	<p>A pass providing access to a Venue for the purpose of attending either a Match, official training or Official Function.</p>
Ticketing	<p>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.</p>

Travel and Tour Rights	The right to organise and/or sub-license official travel and tour activities in relation to the Competition, which travel, and tour activities shall, for the avoidance of doubt, include the provision of Tickets to a Match and/or Official Functions of the Competition.
Venue	The Host City and immediate surrounding area in which a Stadium is located.

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

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

## SECTION 1 | GENERAL PROVISIONS

### 1. AFC U20 Asian Cup™ 2025

- 1.1. The AFC stages the AFC U20 Asian Cup™ comprising a qualifying stage ("Qualifiers") and final stage ("Finals") once every two (2) years.
- 1.2. These Regulations govern the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the AFC, Organising 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 Manual forms an integral part of 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 the AFC and FIFA regulations refer to those valid at the time of application.

### 2. The Asian Football Confederation

- 2.1. The AFC Competitions 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 Competitions Committee.
- 2.2. The responsibilities of the AFC shall include, but are not limited to:
  - 2.2.1. supervising general preparations and deciding on the Competition format, the draws, and the entries to the Competition;
  - 2.2.2. determining the Match Schedule (*cf.* Article 11 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.3. selecting Stadiums for the Competition (*cf.* Article 14 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.4. appointing Match Officials for each Match;
  - 2.2.5. choosing and/or approving 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 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.7. reporting cases where appropriate to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (*cf.* Article 51 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.8. replacing Participating Teams that have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 6 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.9. dealing with cases of cancelled Matches or abandoned Matches (*cf.* Articles 12 and 13 of these Regulations);
  - 2.2.10. dealing with cases of Force Majeure (*cf.* Article 60 of these Regulations);
  - 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 61 of these Regulations).
- 2.3. All decisions made by the AFC Competitions Committee and/or AFC General Secretariat in relation to the Competition are final and binding and not appealable.
  - 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. Organising Associations shall undertake, at their own cost, to:
  - 3.2.1. observe all obligations set out in the (where relevant) OAA, these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars and all applicable national and supra-national laws;
  - 3.2.2. perform each of its obligations and exercise each of the rights granted to it as host, in connection with the hosting, staging and 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 and such other documents as requested by the AFC in relation to 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 a validly completed 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;
  - 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 its 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 conference, 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 USD2,500; and
    - 4.3.8.2. the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue further sanctions at 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 in connection with the Competition without the involvement and express written 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 of these Regulations);
  - 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 of these Regulations);
  - 4.4.5. obtaining visas to enter the territory of any Organising Association no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match in 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, subsidiaries, local organising committees 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, its Team Official Delegation, its 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 which 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 of these Regulations, to confirm their entry into the Qualifiers.
- 5.3. All decisions of the AFC Competitions Committee regarding entry to the Qualifiers for the Competition are final and binding and not appealable.

### Finals

- 5.4. Sixteen (16) Member Associations shall participate in the Finals of the Competition by virtue of:
  - 5.4.1. qualifying through the Qualifiers; or
  - 5.4.2. being the Organising Association; or
  - 5.4.3. 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 6.7 of these Regulations, the AFC Competitions 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 Competitions Committee shall be responsible for determining events of Force Majeure in connection with any withdrawal and shall, subject to Articles 6.5 to 6.7 of these Regulations, 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 Competitions 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 Competitions Committee at its discretion **at any time (provided that the case has not been referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee).**
- 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, Article 6.5 of these Regulations shall apply in all instances and is applicable even in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Competitions 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 Competitions Committee, in which case the AFC Competitions 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 of these Regulations.

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

- 6.7. 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:

- 6.7.1. the Qualifiers, before it has commenced, shall be fined:

- 6.7.1.1. at least USD10,000 if its withdrawal occurred thirty (30) days or more before its first Match in the Qualifiers; or
- 6.7.1.2. at least USD20,000 if its withdrawal occurred less than thirty (30) days before its first Match in the Qualifiers.
- 6.7.2. the Qualifiers, after it has commenced, shall be fined at least USD50,000;
- 6.7.3. the Finals, before it has commenced, shall be fined:
  - 6.7.3.1. at least USD25,000 if its withdrawal occurred thirty (30) days or more before its first Match in the Finals; or
  - 6.7.3.2. at least USD40,000 if its withdrawal occurred less than thirty (30) days before its first Match in the Finals.
- 6.7.4. the Finals, after it has commenced, shall be fined at least USD75,000;
- 6.7.5. may be disqualified from participating in the next edition of the AFC U20 Asian Cup™; and
- 6.7.6. where relevant, disqualified from participating in any tournament organised under Article 4.6 of these Regulations, if qualification has been attained.

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.

Article 6.7 of these Regulations is not applicable in cases of Force Majeure determined by the AFC Competitions Committee but shall apply in all other instances.

- 6.8. All decisions of the AFC Competitions Committee under Articles 6.3 to 6.5 of these Regulations 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; and

7.1.2. Finals, comprising the Group Stage and Knockout Stage.

7.2. The AFC Competitions 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;

Tiebreaker

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

Group Results criteria

7.3.2.5. superior goal difference from all group Matches played;

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

7.3.2.7. Penalties if only two (2) Participating Teams still have an equal ranking and have played their last group Match against each other;

- 7.3.2.8. the lower score calculated according to the number of yellow and red cards received in the group Matches (Appendix 1 of the Manual); or
  - 7.3.2.9. 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 in Appendix 2 of the Manual.

## 8. Qualifiers

- 8.1. The Qualifiers shall be conducted in accordance with the competition system set by the AFC Competitions Committee.
- 8.2. The Qualifiers shall consist of eligible Participating Teams drawn into groups depending on the number of Participating Teams, with each group played in a centralised league format.
- 8.3. Each Participating Teams shall play one (1) Match against each Participating Team within its group in accordance with the Match Schedule.
- 8.4. The ranking in each group shall be determined in accordance with Articles 7.3 and 7.4 of these Regulations.
- 8.5. At the conclusion of the Qualifiers:
  - 8.5.1. the best-ranked Participating Teams determined in accordance with the competition system shall qualify for the Finals; and
  - 8.5.2. 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 consist of a Group Stage, followed by a Knockout Stage.

### Group Stage

- 9.2. The Group Stage shall consist of sixteen (16) Participating Teams drawn into four (4) groups of four (4) teams each, with each group played in a centralised league format. The Participating Teams shall be designated as follows:

<u>Group A</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>Group C</u>	<u>Group D</u>
A1	B1	C1	D1
A2	B2	C2	D2
A3	B3	C3	D3
A4	B4	C4	D4

- 9.3. Each Participating Team shall play one (1) Match against each of the other Participating Teams within its group in accordance with the Match Schedule.



9.4. The ranking in each group shall be determined in accordance with Article 7.3 of these Regulations.

9.5. At the conclusion of the Group Stage:

9.5.1. the first-placed and second-placed Participating Team in each group shall qualify for the Knockout Stage; and

9.5.2. all other Participating Teams shall be eliminated from the Competition.

#### Knockout Stage

9.6. The Knockout Stage shall consist of the Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and Final, with each round played in a centralised knockout format.

9.7. For each round of the Knockout Stage, Participating Teams shall play one (1) Match in accordance with the Match Schedule.

9.8. The eight (8) Participating Teams that qualify from the Group Stage shall play the Quarter Finals as follows:

QF1: 1st A vs 2nd B

QF2: 1st B vs 2nd A

QF3: 1st C vs 2nd D

QF4: 1st D vs 2nd C

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

9.9. The four (4) winners of the Quarter Finals shall play the Semi Finals as follows:

SF1: Winner QF1 vs Winner QF3

SF2: Winner QF2 vs Winner QF4

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

9.10. The two (2) winners of the Semi Finals shall play the Final as follows:

Final: Winner SF1 vs Winner SF2

## 10. Extra Time and Penalties

10.1. If no winner is determined at the end of normal playing time in any Match in the Knockout Stage, Extra Time comprising two (2) periods of fifteen (15) minutes each shall be played. A short drinks break (which should not exceed one [1] minute) is permitted at the interval of half-time in Extra Time.

10.2. One (1) additional substitute and one (1) additional substitution opportunity may be used when a Match goes into Extra Time (whether or not the team has already used the full number of permitted substitutes).

- 10.3. If no winner is determined at the end of Extra Time, Penalties 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 Competition.
- 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 Competitions 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 of these Regulations are final and binding and not appealable.
- 12.2. Any Match which is cancelled, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Competitions Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the cancellation in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 12.3. If a Match cannot commence for any reason, the procedure described in Article 6 of the Manual shall be followed.

## 13. Abandonment of Matches

- 13.1. For any Match which is abandoned as a result of Force Majeure, the AFC Competitions Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
- 13.1.1. Decisions pursuant to Article 13.1 of these Regulations are final and binding and not appealable.
- 13.2. Any Match which is abandoned, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Competitions Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that has caused the abandonment in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 13.3. If a Match is stopped by the Referee for any reason, the procedure described in Article 7 of the Manual shall be followed.

## 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 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 at any Stadium:

#### Qualifiers

- 14.2.1. during the period starting at least seven (7) days prior to the first Match in the Stadium until one (1) day after the completion of the last Match in the Stadium; and

#### Finals

- 14.2.2. during the period starting at least fourteen (14) 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. Unless otherwise specified or directed by the AFC, the Stadiums shall be made available to the AFC for its exclusive use:

#### Qualifiers

- 14.3.1. during the period starting at least seven (7) days prior to the first Match in the Stadium until one (1) day after the completion of the last Match in the Stadium; and

#### Finals

- 14.3.2. during the period starting at least seven (7) 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 sessions to be held in the Stadium, or any 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.

- 14.4. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 14.2 or 14.3 of these Regulations shall be:

- 14.4.1. fined at least USD5,000; and

- 14.4.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 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 of these Regulations shall be fined at least USD5,000.

15.1.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

#### Qualifiers

15.2. Official Training Sites shall be made available at least seven (7) 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.

15.2.1. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.2 of these Regulations shall be fined at least USD5,000.

15.2.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

15.3. Participating Teams must solely utilise Official Training Sites for any official training from two (2) days prior to their first Match.

#### Finals

15.4. Official Training Sites shall be made available at least seven (7) 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.

15.4.1. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 15.4 of these Regulations shall be fined at least USD5,000.

15.4.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

15.5. 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 the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, the English version shall prevail.
- 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) of the substitutes listed on the 'Match Start List' may take part in the 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 twelve (12) Participating Players and a maximum of eight (8) Participating Officials are permitted to sit on the team bench during a Match, provided they are in possession of the appropriate Accreditation Card.
- 18.2. The Organising Association(s) shall ensure to secure a minimum of twenty (20) Team Technical Seats for each Participating Teams' additional Participating Players and Participating Officials who will not be seated on the team bench. For the avoidance of doubt, only Participating Players and Participating Officials from each Participating Team who are duly registered for the Competition are permitted to sit on the Team Technical Seats, provided they are in possession of the appropriate Accreditation Card.

### 19. Footballs

#### Qualifiers

- 19.1. The footballs used in the Qualifiers shall be selected and supplied by each Organising Association. The Organising Association shall supply each visiting Participating Team with the same football for its training throughout the period of its stay.

- 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 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. 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 up to eight (8) Participating Officials.

- 21.2.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional twelve (12) Participating Officials as part of its Team Official Delegation, who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the eight (8) Participating Officials referred to above.

- 21.2.2. All costs related to the additional twelve (12) Participating Officials shall be borne by the relevant Participating Member Association.

#### Finals

- 21.3. 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 up to twelve (12) Participating Officials.

- 21.3.1. Each Participating Team may nominate an additional eight (8) Participating Officials as part of its Team Official Delegation, who shall receive the same Accreditation Card as the twelve (12) Participating Officials referred to above.

- 21.3.2. All costs related to the additional eight (8) Participating Officials shall be borne by the relevant Participating Member Association.

- 21.4. The individuals registered for the Team Official Delegation for the Finals may differ from those registered for the Qualifiers.

### 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;

- 22.1.3. were born between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2009; and

- 22.1.4. are eligible to participate for the representative team of the Member Association in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Application of the FIFA Statutes.

- 22.2. Individuals who meet the criteria set out in Article 22.1 of these Regulations 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 mean that the Participating Player is eligible to participate in the Competition. 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 of these Regulations; 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 falsified or forged.

## 23. Registration of Players

- 23.1. There are three (3) stages of registration for the players in the Qualifiers and the Finals:
  - 23.1.1. Preliminary Registration: each Participating Team must submit a squad of minimum eighteen (18) and maximum fifty (50) Participating Players;
  - 23.1.2. 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;
  - 23.1.3. Player Selection List: each Participating Team must submit a 'Player Selection List' prior to each Match which identifies the starting eleven (11) and up to twelve (12) substitutes comprising individuals registered in the Final Registration.
- 23.2. All Participating Players registered in the Final Registration will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC General Secretariat.
- 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 prior to the commencement of the relevant stage and subject to Article 6 of these Regulations.

## 24. Documents for Registration of Players

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

## 25. Preliminary Registration

- 25.1. Each Participating Team shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 24 of these Regulations via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the relevant stage of the Competition, or as otherwise determined by the AFC.
- 25.2. There is no allocation of jersey numbers during the Preliminary Registration.
- 25.3. If a Participating Team fails to register a minimum of eighteen (18) Participating Players, its Member Association shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to the commencement of the relevant stage and subject to Article 6 of these Regulations.
- 25.4. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of four (4) goalkeepers in its Preliminary Registration.
- 25.5. No later than ten (10) days prior to its first Match of the respective group in the Qualifiers, each Participating Team may replace or add up to five (5) players for any reason provided that the maximum number of registered players is not exceeded.
- 25.6. No later than ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Finals, each Participating Team may replace or add up to five (5) players for any reason provided that the maximum number of registered players is not exceeded.
- 25.7. The provisions of Articles 25.1 to 25.4 of these Regulations shall apply equally to the Qualifiers and the Finals.
- 25.8. The individuals registered for the Preliminary Registration for the Qualifiers and the Finals may differ.

## 26. Final Registration

### Qualifiers

- 26.1. Each Participating Team shall submit via AFCAS a Final Registration of a minimum of eighteen (18) and a maximum of twenty-three (23) Participating Players. The Final Registration shall be submitted no later than ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the respective group in the Qualifiers.
  - 26.1.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Qualifiers.
  - 26.1.2. Participating Players must be assigned jerseys numbered 1 to 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.
  - 26.1.3. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in its Final Registration.

- 26.2. Once the Final Registration has been submitted to the AFC, Participating Teams may replace any of the registered Participating Players in the event of serious injury or illness. Participating Teams may request for such replacement(s) up until twenty-four (24) hours prior to their first Match in the relevant stage of the Competition. The request shall be approved by AFC upon receipt and acceptance of a written detailed medical assessment from Team Doctor; and

subject to the below conditions:

- 26.2.1. any replacement Participating Player must have been registered in the Preliminary Registration;
- 26.2.2. replacement Participating Players shall only be allocated the vacated shirt numbers;
- 26.2.3. to replace a Participating Player, a Participating Team must provide his Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Player in exchange;
- 26.2.4. replacement Participating Players shall only be eligible to participate in the relevant stage of the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

#### Finals

- 26.3. Each Participating Team shall submit via AFCAS a Final Registration of a minimum of eighteen (18) and a maximum of twenty-three (23) Participating Players. The Final Registration shall be submitted no later than ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the respective group in the Finals.
- 26.3.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Finals.
  - 26.3.2. The Participating Players must be assigned jerseys numbered 1 to 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.
  - 26.3.3. Each Participating Team must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers in their Final Registration.
- 26.4. The provisions of Article 26.2 of these Regulations shall apply equally to the Finals.

### 27. Player Selection List

- 27.1. Each Participating Team must submit via AFCAS the 'Player Selection List' by selecting the starting eleven (11), including the team captain and up to twelve (12) substitutes. The Player Selection List shall be submitted no later than ninety (90) minutes prior to the commencement of each Match.
- 27.1.1. Each Participating Player who is selected 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 shall submit via AFCAS the 'Officials on the Substitution Bench' list by selecting up to the eight (8) Participating Officials who shall be entitled to sit on the team bench, by latest ninety (90) minutes prior to the commencement of each Match.

## 28. Registration of Officials

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

### Qualifiers

- 28.2. Each Participating Team shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 29 via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the relevant stage of the Competition.
- 28.3. Each Participating Team may nominate a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of eight (8) Participating Officials. Each Participating Team may also nominate an additional twelve (12) Participating Officials in accordance with Article 21.
- 28.4. Each Participating Team must include the following three (3) Participating Officials in the registration list:

28.4.1. Head Coach;

28.4.2. Team Manager (who shall also act as the Team Media Officer in accordance with the Manual in the event that there is no dedicated Team Media Officer); and

28.4.3. Team Doctor.

- 28.5. Up to eight (8) Participating Officials may sit on the team bench for each Match. The following three (3) Participating Officials must be selected on the 'Officials on the Substitution Bench' list:

28.5.1. Head Coach;

28.5.2. Team Manager; and

28.5.3. Team Doctor.

- 28.6. Every Participating Member Association must designate a Team Safeguarding Officer responsible for handling all matters concerning the safety and well-being of players and Team Delegation during the Competition. This officer must be familiar with the AFC Child Safeguarding Policy. The role does not need to be exclusive and can be assigned to a Team Doctor or any other official.
- 28.7. Each Participating Team is entitled to register a 'Video Analyst' who shall be the only members of a Team Official Delegation entitled to record Matches in the relevant stage of the Competition using only one (1) lightweight amateur camera each. This recording shall be strictly for technical purposes and should not interfere with Match operations or be utilised by any Broadcast Partner.

- 28.8. All Participating Officials will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC General Secretariat.
- 28.9. 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 prior to the commencement of the relevant stage and be subjected to Article 6 of these Regulations.
- 28.10. 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 of these Regulations via AFCAS, subject to the conditions below:
- 28.10.1. to replace a Participating Official, a Participating Team must provide the official's Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Official in exchange; and
- 28.10.2. replacement Participating Officials shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

#### Finals

- 28.11. Each Participating Team may nominate a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of twelve (12) Participating Officials. Each Participating Team may also nominate an additional eight (8) Participating Officials in accordance with Article 21 of these Regulations.
- 28.12. Each Participating Team must include the following three (3) Participating Officials in the registration list:
- 28.12.1. Head Coach;
- 28.12.2. Team Manager; and
- 28.12.3. Team Doctor.

The provisions of Articles 28.2, 28.5 to 28.9 of these Regulations shall apply equally to the Finals.

### 29. Documents for Registration of Officials

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



## SECTION 6 | MEDIA

### 30. Media Access

- 30.1. Each Organising Association shall ensure that the AFC, AFC Commercial Rights Partners, Commercial Affiliates, the Host Broadcaster, and all Broadcast Partners have free access to each Stadium from ten (10) days prior to the first Match in the Stadium until one (1) day after the final Match in the Stadium 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.

### 31. Press Conferences

- 31.1. In the Qualifiers, there shall be no formal pre or post-Match press conferences. Upon request, the Head Coach from each Participating Team shall be available to the Media after the training session one (1) day before each Match in which they participate.
- 31.2. In the Finals, there shall be no formal pre or post-Match press conferences until the Quarter Finals. Upon request, the Head Coach from each Participating Team shall be available to the Media after the training session one (1) day before each Match in which they participate.
- 31.3. Pre and post-Match press conferences shall be held for the Semi Finals and the Final of the Competition. The Head Coach and one (1) of the key Participating Players of each Participating Team must attend the pre-Match press conference, to be held at least one (1) day prior to the relevant Match in which they participate. A post-Match press conference for the Semi Finals and the Final shall be held, commencing no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the relevant Match and shall be obligatory for the Head Coach of each Participating Team. If requested by the AFC, the Player of the Match for each Match must also attend the post-Match press conference.
- 31.4. Each Participating Member Association is responsible for the interpretation and translation of its Head Coach and relevant Participating Players into English. Interpretation and translation into the local language (if applicable) shall be the responsibility of the Organising Association.
- 31.5. Any individual who fails to attend an obligatory press conference shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team shall also be held liable in accordance with Article 4.3.8 of these Regulations. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 32. Mixed Zone

- 32.1. All Participating Players shall pass through the mixed zone on their way from their team dressing room to their bus after each Match. The Head Coach of each Participating Team is required to pass through the mixed zone only in the event that there is no post-Match press conference held after the Match.

- 32.2. Any individual who fails to pass through the mixed zone shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to pass through the mixed zone in accordance with Article 4.3.8 of these Regulations. 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/Match Commissioner.
- 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 USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct an interview when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8 of these Regulations. 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 and/or Participating Officials 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 USD2,500. The relevant Participating Team may be held liable for any failure to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8 of these Regulations. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

### 35. Recording of Matches

#### Qualifiers

- 35.1. Immediately after each Match, the relevant Organising Association shall provide four (4) copies of the full Match recording to the AFC Match Commissioner.
- 35.2. Any Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 35.1 of these Regulations shall be fined at least USD2,500. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

#### Finals

- 35.3. The AFC shall provide each Participating Team with the footage of its Matches 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 a Ticket with another, if deemed appropriate for security or technical reasons.
- 36.3. The Organising Association must ensure that access to the Stadium is granted to the AFC Delegation, Participating Teams' Team Official Delegation, AFC Commercial Rights Partner, Commercial Affiliates, Media and travelling supporters without any discrimination.

### 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.

- 37.3. The AFC may change the terms and conditions, and shall advise the Organising Association on any requirements relating to Ticket production, distribution and/or sales.

#### Finals

- 37.4. The AFC shall, in collaboration with each Organising Association, issue special Ticketing terms and conditions which are applicable to all Ticket holders.
- 37.5. The provisions of Article 37.3 of these Regulations shall apply equally to the Finals.

### 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:

38.2.1. two (2) VVIP Tickets for each Match it participates in;

38.2.2. five (5) VIP Tickets for each Match it participates in;

38.2.3. twenty (20) Tickets of the next-best category (as determined by the AFC) for each Match it participates in; and

38.2.4. 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 Team.

### 39. Purchasable Tickets

- 39.1. Each Organising Association must make available at least eight percent (8%) of the net saleable capacity of each Stadium available exclusively to the supporters of each Participating Member Association playing in a Match, in a segregated and safe area to be determined by the AFC General Secretariat 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 the Tickets are not utilised. The price of the Tickets shall not exceed the price of comparable Tickets that are sold to the general public in the relevant 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. The AFC is the owner of all Commercial Rights emanating from the Competition as well as from any other related events 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 with 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 to ensure the effective exploitation and protection of the Commercial Rights (including through the implementation of government guarantees and tabling of supplementary legislation).
- 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 relevant stage 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. Unless expressly notified to the contrary in writing in advance by the AFC, the Organising Association shall deliver all Stadiums and Official Training Sites as a Clean Stadium seven (7) days before the first Match at each Stadium or official training at each Official Training Site of the Competition, until one (1) day after the final Match of the Competition.

### 42. Advertising and Branding

#### Finals

- 42.1. Unless expressly notified to the contrary in writing in advance by the AFC, 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, the AFC Safety and Security Regulations, and the AFC Child Safeguarding Policy.
- 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 the AFC Safety and Security Regulations and the AFC Child Safeguarding Policy.
- 43.4. The Organising Association shall discharge the AFC and hold it harmless from all responsibility and relinquish any claim against the AFC and the members of its delegation for any damages resulting from any act or omission relating to the organisation of the Competition to the exclusion of damages caused by the AFC or the members of its delegation acting with intent or gross negligence.



## SECTION 10 | MEDICAL & ANTI-DOPING

### 44. Pre-Competition Medical Assessment

- 44.1. Each Participating Team shall ensure that each Participating Player 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 by latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Finals the following signed documents:
    - 44.1.3.1. 'Member Association Declaration of Agreement to the PCMA'; and
    - 44.1.3.2. for each Participating Player, the 'Player and Examining Physician Declaration for PCMA'.
  - 44.1.4. Any player for whom the required documents are not provided is not eligible to be registered in the Final Registration for a Participating Team.
- 44.2. The AFC Medical Committee may, in its sole discretion, order any further medical evaluation of a Participating Player that it deems necessary. The cost of such further testing shall be borne by the AFC.

### 45. Facilities and Personnel

- 45.1. Each Organising Association shall provide a medical room and a 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 at 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 of these Regulations); 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 at 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 the 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 during the official period of two (2) days prior to the first Match until one (1) day after the final Match:
  - 47.1.1. each visiting Participating Team shall cover its international and domestic travel costs to the Venue or the nearest airport, as well as incidental expenses;
  - 47.1.2. the Organising Associations shall pay for board and lodging in a high-standard hotel and domestic transport costs in the Venue for the entire Team Official Delegations of the visiting Participating Teams, subject to flight connections (*cf.* Articles 48 and 49 of these Regulations);
  - 47.1.3. the Organising Associations shall pay for board and lodging in a high-standard hotel and domestic transport costs in the Venue 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 chosen for the AFC Delegation; and
  - 47.1.5. any disputes arising regarding the financial provisions under this Article 47 shall be resolved amongst the Participating Member Associations concerned but may be submitted to the AFC Competitions Committee for a final decision.

#### Finals

- 47.2. Any financial payments to be made by the AFC in accordance with these Regulations shall be subject to all applicable laws, regulations, orders, by-laws, and international sanctions.
- 47.3. The Participating Teams shall cover their international and domestic travel costs to the Venue or the nearest airport, as well as incidental expenses.
- 47.4. The AFC and the Organising Association shall provide all other logistical arrangements in accordance with the OAA. Such arrangements shall be communicated to the Participating Teams by circular prior to the Finals.

### 48. Accommodation, Meals and Refreshments

- 48.1. From two (2) days prior to the first Match until one (1) day after the final Match of the Qualifiers, each Organising Association must provide at its own cost, for the Team Official Delegation of each visiting Participating Team:
  - 48.1.1. accommodation in an international four-star hotel for the Team Official Delegation (or a local four-star hotel if there are no international four-star hotels in the Venue), not exceeding thirty-one (31) persons, which shall comprise of eleven (11) double rooms and nine (9) single rooms. All rooms, where possible, shall be on the same floor;

- 48.1.2. one (1) empty room in the said hotel for the purposes of medical treatment;
- 48.1.3. one (1) empty room in the said hotel for the purposes of equipment storage;
- 48.1.4. one (1) meeting room in the said hotel (shared between two [2] Participating Teams) for the duration of the Competition equipped with a whiteboard and an LCD projector. The meeting room shall accommodate at least thirty-one (31) persons in a classroom layout setting;
- 48.1.5. three (3) meals per day (international buffet style) and one (1) additional light meal on Match day in a dedicated dining area for the Team Official Delegation;
- 48.1.6. minimum six (6) litres of water per person per day for the Team Official Delegation, as well as ice and refreshments;
- 48.1.7. daily laundry services (but no dry cleaning or pressing) for eight (8) pieces of kits (as defined in the AFC Equipment Regulations) per person per day for the Team Official Delegation; and
- 48.1.8. at least one (1) liaison officer proficient in English, and preferably the language of the Member Association.

#### 49. Domestic Transportation

- 49.1. From two (2) days prior to the first Match until one (1) day after the final Match of the Qualifiers, each Organising Association must provide at its own cost, for the Team Official Delegation of each visiting Participating Team:
  - 49.1.1. one (1) bus with a minimum of forty-five (45) seats; and
  - 49.1.2. one (1) multipurpose vehicle with a minimum of seven (7) seats,  
for transportation of the Team Official Delegation to training, Matches, Official Functions, and airport transfers within the Venue, and
  - 49.1.3. one (1) luggage truck for airport transfers, hotel transfers (if applicable) and Match day.

## SECTION 12 | AWARDS

### 50. Trophy, Awards and Medals

- 50.1. 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.
- 50.2. The following awards of the Competition shall be presented in accordance with the Manual:
  - 50.2.1. Most Valuable Player;
  - 50.2.2. Top Goal Scorer;
  - 50.2.3. Best Goalkeeper; and
  - 50.2.4. AFC Fair Play Award.
- 50.3. The AFC shall award the following medals:
  - 50.3.1. forty-three (43) medals to the Champion;
  - 50.3.2. forty-three (43) medals to the runner-up; and
  - 50.3.3. commemorative medals for the Match Officials of the Final.
- 50.4. The AFC Competitions Committee may decide to introduce further awards.

## SECTION 13 | DISCIPLINARY

### 51. Disciplinary Measures

- 51.1. 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.
- 51.2. 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 the latest.
- 51.3. All Participating Players agree to:
  - 51.3.1. respect the spirit of fair play, non-violence, and the authority of the Match Officials;
  - 51.3.2. behave accordingly; and
  - 51.3.3. refrain from doping.

### 52. Good Conduct

- 52.1. Each Participating Member Association is liable for the improper conduct of:
  - 52.1.1. any member of its Team Official Delegation; and/or
  - 52.1.2. any person affiliated to it and/or carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the Competition.
- 52.2. For any violation of Article 52.1 of these Regulations, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose any sanction listed in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

### 53. Administrative Procedure

- 53.1. 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:
  - 53.1.1. 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;
  - 53.1.2. if the offence is admitted, the AFC shall submit the compounded offence to the Chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for approval;
    - 53.1.2.1. should the party deny the offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;
  - 53.1.3. upon approval of the Chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, the sanction shall be notified and applied administratively by the AFC;



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

## 54. Cautions and Expulsions

- 54.1. 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

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

### Finals

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

## 55. Protest

- 55.1. 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.
- 55.2. Unless otherwise stipulated in these Regulations, to be considered valid, a protest must be:
  - 55.2.1. 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 final whistle or, if the relevant Match was cancelled or abandoned, within two (2) hours of the decision to cancel or abandon the Match (the "Protest Deadline");
  - 55.2.2. 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 Protest Deadline; and

- 55.2.3. accompanied by a non-refundable fee of USD1,000 (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 [Protest Deadline](#).
- 55.3. 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.
- 55.4. 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:
- 55.4.1. submitted in writing (in the form of a full written report); and
- 55.4.2. accompanied by a non-refundable fee of USD1,000 (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.
- 55.5. If any of the formal requirements set out in Article 55.2 and/or 55.4 of these Regulations 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.
- 55.6. Subject to Article 55.5 of these Regulations 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 Competitions Committee for its decision if it is deemed to be purely operational in nature.

## 56. Arbitration

- 56.1. Any dispute in connection with the Competition shall be promptly settled by negotiation.
- 56.2. 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.
- 56.3. 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. Any hearing, if required, shall take place at the CAS Alternate Hearing Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## SECTION 14 | CLOSING PROVISIONS

### 57. Special Instructions

- 57.1. The AFC and/or AFC Competitions Committee (as appropriate) shall, in conjunction with the Organising Associations, issue any instructions necessitated by special circumstances which might arise in the organisation of Matches.
- 57.2. These instructions shall form an integral part of these Regulations.

### 58. Decisions

- 58.1. 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.

### 59. Amendments

- 59.1. 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.

### 60. Force Majeure

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

### 61. Matters Not Provided For

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

### 62. Implementing Provisions

- 62.1. 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.

### 63. Enforcement

- 63.1. These Regulations were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 1 March 2024 and came into force immediately.
- 63.2. These Regulations were amended by the AFC Executive Committee on 25 June 2024 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





**ASIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION**

AFC House, Jalan 1/155B, Bukit Jalil, 57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

T: +603 8994 3388 | F: +603 8994 2689

**the-AFC.com**