



COMPETITION REGULATIONS

AFC WOMEN'S CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2023
INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT





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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, Commercial Rights Partner and Commercial Affiliates.
Accreditation Card	Any physical item which is issued by the AFC and/or Organising Association which provides the recipient the right to access a Controlled Access Area (or part thereof) where the Controlled Access Area is under the control of the AFC or the Organising Association.
Advertising Rights	The right to promote 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 by 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 is 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 Committee	Any Committee of the AFC as constituted in accordance with the AFC Statutes.
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 http://www.the-AFC.com), 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.).
AFC Women's Football Committee	The Standing Committee of the AFC which is responsible for matters relating to the Competition in accordance with the AFC Statutes and the AFC Organisation Regulations.
Broadcast Partner	Any entity, including the Host Broadcaster, which has been granted the Media Rights (or any part thereof) to 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.
Club	A professional club or an amateur club which participates in Leagues or competitions under the auspices of a Football Association.
Commercial Affiliate	Any entity which has been granted the right to exercise and exploit the Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) in respect to 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.
Commercial Rights Partner	The entity appointed (if any) for the sale of Commercial Rights (or any part thereof) and the provision of services in relation thereto.
Competition	The AFC Women's Club Championship 2023 Invitational Tournament, 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 Clubs 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, mascots 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"> (i) any Stadium; (ii) any Official Training Site; (iii) any official hotel (public areas being excepted), subject to and to the extent agreed in any executed hotel agreement; (iv) any official exclusion zone encircling a Stadium on a Match day; (v) any official parking area, accreditation centre, international broadcast compound, and/or hospitality area; (vi) the venue of any Official Function; (vii) any official AFC fan park; (viii) Facility Areas; and/or (ix) any other location and/or facility designated by the AFC as a Controlled Access Area, 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.
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.
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	Fédération Internationale de Football Association.
Final	The final Match of the Competition (if any) which determines the champion of the Competition.
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, lockouts or other industrial action, or civil commotion, epidemic or pandemic.
Group Stage	The first stage of the Competition 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 the 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 Clubs, Participating Players, Participating Officials, Match Officials and other officials and persons forming part of the Competition.

Kicks from the Penalty Mark	“Kicks from the Penalty Mark” as described in the Laws of the Game.
Knockout Stage	The second stage of the Competition (if any) held in accordance with these Regulations.
Laws of the Game	The laws of association football issued by the IFAB.
League	A professional league and/or amateur league which consists of a combination of Clubs within the territory of a Football Association and which is subordinate to and under the authority of that Football Association.
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 Kicks from the Penalty Mark) which takes place as part of the Competition in accordance with the Match Schedule. For the avoidance of doubt, a match formally commences when the Stadium is officially opened to spectators and formally concludes when the Stadium is officially closed to spectators.
Match Officials	Any individual appointed to officiate a Match in the Competition in the role of the Referee, Assistant Referee, Fourth Official, Video Assistant Referee (VAR), Assistant Video Assistant Referee (AVAR) 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 Clubs.
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 Clubs throughout the duration of the Competition for training purposes.
Organising Association	A Member Association approved by the AFC to organise, stage and host Matches in the Competition.
Participating Club	A Club which is approved by the AFC to participate 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.
Premiums	Any promotional items (including packaging, labelling and/or containers thereof) which incorporate any mark and/or logo of the AFC and/or any Competition Mark, 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.
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 rights to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) use an official designation; (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; (iii) receive commercial programme Tickets, and (iv) receive broadcast sponsorship opportunities in connection with broadcasts of a Match or Official Function.
Stadium	<p>Any stadium at which a Match is played. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the entire premises (to the extent that a valid Accreditation Card or Ticket is required in order to gain access) of a stadium facility inside the outer stadium perimeter fence and (on Match days and any day on which any official training takes place within the stadium), the aerial space above such stadium premises; (ii) parking facilities; (iii) VIP and hospitality areas (including any hospitality village); (iv) concession areas; (v) commercial display areas; (vi) buildings; (vii) the Field of Play; (viii) the media tribune; (ix) any broadcast compound; (x) the stadium media centre; (xi) the press conference room; (xii) the mixed zone; (xiii) any stands; and (xiv) any areas beneath the stands.
Team Official Delegation	<p>The final-registered delegation of a Participating Club for the duration of the relevant stage of the Competition subject to the limits set out in these Regulations.</p>
Ticket	<p>A pass providing access to a Venue for the purpose of attending either a Match, official training or Official Function.</p>
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:

- (i) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;
- (ii) the feminine gender shall include the masculine and vice-versa;
- (iii) reference to natural persons shall include any legal person or corporation;
- (iv) references to the AFC shall include its successors and permitted assigns, and where the context requires, the AFC Committees;
- (v) reference to the Commercial Rights Partner or Commercial Affiliates shall include, where advised by the AFC, their successors and permitted assigns; and
- (vi) 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 Women's Club Championship 2023 Invitational Tournament

- 1.1. The AFC stages the Competition for Participating Clubs.
- 1.2. The AFC shall determine the number of Participating Clubs at its sole discretion. The AFC shall select the Member Associations which are eligible to nominate their Clubs to participate in the Competition. Each of the selected Member Associations shall be entitled to nominate one (1) Club (the champion of its women's domestic top division league or, if the champion is not available, one [1] other Club, subject to the AFC's written approval) to participate in the Competition.
- 1.3. These Regulations govern the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the AFC, the Participating Clubs (as well as their Member Associations and Leagues), Organising Associations, Participating Players and Participating Officials taking part in the Competition.
- 1.4. 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 Matches in the Competition.
- 1.5. 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 Matches in 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.
- 1.6. Any rights and Proprietary Interests associated with the Competition that are not granted by these Regulations and/or specific agreements to any Organising Association, Member Association and/or any Participating Club shall vest in the AFC.
- 1.7. Any reference to the AFC Statutes and to AFC and FIFA regulations refer to those valid at the time of application.

2. The Asian Football Confederation

- 2.1. The AFC shall be responsible for organising the Competition in accordance with the AFC Statutes and shall carry out the necessary administrative work.
- 2.2. The responsibilities of the AFC shall include, but are not limited to:
 - 2.2.1. supervising general preparations and deciding on the Competition format, the draws, and the entries to the Competition;
 - 2.2.2. determining the Match Schedule (cf. Article 11);

- 2.2.3. selecting Stadiums for the Competition after consultation with the Organising Associations (*cf.* Article 14);
 - 2.2.4. appointing Match Officials and AFC Delegation 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 47);
 - 2.2.7. reporting cases where appropriate to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (*cf.* Article 50);
 - 2.2.8. replacing Participating Clubs that have withdrawn from the Competition (*cf.* Article 6);
 - 2.2.9. dealing with cases of cancelled Matches or abandoned Matches (*cf.* Articles 12 and 13);
 - 2.2.10. dealing with cases of Force Majeure (*cf.* Article 59);
 - 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 60).
- 2.3. All decisions made by the AFC Women's Football 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 List of Requirements ("LOR"), these Regulations, the Manual, the AFC Statutes and all other AFC regulations, directives, guidelines and circulars.
- 3.2. The Organising Association shall undertake, at its own cost, to:
 - 3.2.1. observe all obligations set out in the (where relevant) LOR, 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 Participating Clubs 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 prior to the Competition all applicable and relevant licences, 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, 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. obtain all clearances and execute all required documentation to enable the free and unfettered exercise and exploitation of Commercial Rights and clearance of all products, equipment or materials relating to the exploitation of the Commercial Rights of the Competition; and
 - 3.2.10. guarantee safety and security at the Stadium.
- 3.3. The Organising Association shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend the AFC, the 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 attorney fees and expenses) which such parties may suffer or incur in connection with, resulting from, or arising out of any breach by the Organising Association (including its officers, directors, representatives, auxiliary persons, employees or agents) or any act of 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 Clubs and Member Associations

- 4.1. The principal obligations and responsibilities of each nominated Participating Club and its 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 Participating Club that is nominated to participate in the Competition must submit a PTA.
 - 4.1.2. The PTA and other such documents as requested by the AFC in relation to the PTA shall be completed and submitted to the AFC via AFCAS in accordance with 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 Participating Club.
- 4.2. Each Participating Club 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 Club 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 latest 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 its 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 the Organising Association until their departure;
 - 4.3.7. accept all arrangements made by the 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 Club 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 Club, Participating Players 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 Club and its Member Association shall, at their 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 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 Club. 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 49);
 - 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 49);
 - 4.4.5. obtaining visas to enter the territory of an Organising Association no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match at the Venue. This includes all costs related to the visa application process;
 - 4.4.6. guaranteeing the safety and security at its Stadium; and
 - 4.4.7. 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 Club and/or its 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 Club and/or its Member Association, its Team Official Delegation, its affiliates and any third-parties contracted to the Participating Club and/or its Member Association.
- 4.6. No Participating Clubs are authorised to represent the AFC or the Competition without the prior written approval of the AFC.
- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. Each Participating Club and its Member Association shall ensure that any decision made by the AFC relating to its duties and responsibilities is enforced immediately.

5. Entry

- 5.1. The AFC shall invite Member Associations to nominate its representative Clubs to participate in the Competition.
- 5.2. Participating Clubs must complete a PTA and submit it to the AFC in accordance with Article 4 to confirm their entry into the Competition.
 - 5.2.1. The name and/or logo of a Participating Club shall not directly refer to the name and/or logo of any third-party entity, whether or not that third-party entity is a commercial partner or sponsor of the Participating Club.
 - 5.2.2. The AFC may grant an exception to Article 5.2.1 in case of particular hardship at the reasoned request of the Participating Club concerned. If so requested, the Participating Club must provide the AFC with the necessary evidence. Particular hardship includes, without limitation, the following:
 - 5.2.2.1. the name of the Participating Club is a pre-existing name with long-term use. The third-party entity must have been directly involved in the creation of the Participating Club itself (by financial or other means); or
 - 5.2.2.2. the Participating Club previously competed in an AFC competition utilising the name.
- 5.3. Participating Clubs are not permitted to change their name after the first Match in the Competition has been played.
- 5.4. All decisions of the AFC regarding entry to the Competition are final and binding and not appealable.

6. Withdrawal from the Competition

- 6.1. All Participating Clubs undertake that they shall play all their Matches in the Competition until elimination.
- 6.2. Without limitation, any Participating Club 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, the AFC Women's Football Committee shall be responsible for making the necessary decisions where a Participating Club withdraws from the Competition, whether before or after commencement of the Competition (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 Women's Football 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, be entitled to take any action it considers appropriate in such circumstances. Any Participating Club that wishes to put forward a case of Force Majeure for the consideration of the AFC Women's Football 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 Women's Football Committee at any time at its discretion.

- 6.5. In the event that a Participating Club withdraws from the Competition, whether before or after commencement of the Competition (as applicable), the Competition shall continue with the remaining Participating Clubs and Matches without any replacement.

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

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

- 6.6. Any Participating Club that withdraws from the Competition after it has commenced 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 8.3.

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

- 6.7. Where any Participating Club 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 all instances, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall order the relevant Participating Club 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 Clubs, the AFC, the Commercial Rights Partner, Commercial Affiliates and the Organising Association(s). The amount of compensation shall be determined by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

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

- 6.8. All decisions of the AFC Women's Football Committee under Articles 6.3 to 6.5 shall be final and binding and not appealable.

SECTION 2 | COMPETITION SYSTEM AND MATCH SCHEDULE

7. Competition System

- 7.1. The Competition shall be conducted in accordance with the competition system set by the AFC.
- 7.2. The AFC shall decide upon the format of the competition system. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.
- 7.3. Depending on the number of entries, or in the case of withdrawal or suspension of any Participating Clubs, the AFC may change the competition system and/or technical rules. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

8. Group Stage

- 8.1. The Group Stage shall consist of Participating Clubs divided into groups in accordance with the competition system set by the AFC, with each group played in a centralised league format.
- 8.2. Each Participating Club shall play one (1) Match against each of the other Participating Clubs in its group in accordance with the Match Schedule.
- 8.3. The ranking in each group shall be determined in accordance with Article 1 of the Manual and in descending order as follows:
 - 8.3.1. higher number of points obtained in all group Matches;
 - 8.3.2. if two (2) or more Participating Clubs are equal on points, the following criteria are applied to determine the ranking (in descending order):

Head-to-Head Criteria

- 8.3.2.1. higher number of points obtained in the group Matches played among the Participating Clubs in question;
- 8.3.2.2. superior goal difference from the group Matches played among the Participating Clubs in question;
- 8.3.2.3. higher number of goals scored in the group Matches played among the Participating Clubs in question;

Tiebreaker

- 8.3.2.4. if, after having applied the Head-to-Head criteria, two (2) or more Participating Clubs still have an equal ranking, the Head-to-Head criteria shall be reapplied exclusively to the Matches between the Participating Clubs 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

- 8.3.2.5. superior goal difference from all group Matches played;
- 8.3.2.6. higher number of goals scored from all group Matches played;
- 8.3.2.7. Kicks from the Penalty Mark if only two (2) Participating Clubs still have an equal ranking and have played their last group Match against each other;
- 8.3.2.8. the lower score calculated according to the number of yellow and red cards received in the group Matches (Appendix 1 of the Manual); and
- 8.3.2.9. the drawing of lots.

9. Final and/or Knockout Stage

- 9.1. Subject to Article 7, the AFC may decide to introduce a Final and/or Knockout Stage for the Participating Clubs. The relevant provisions for the Final and/or Knockout Stage shall be communicated by the AFC via a circular to the respective Participating Clubs and Member Associations.

10. Extra Time and Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- 10.1. If no winner is determined at the end of normal playing time in any Match in accordance with the competition system set by the AFC, Extra Time comprising two (2) periods of fifteen (15) minutes each shall be played.
- 10.2. Extra Time shall be played after an interval of five (5) minutes at the end of normal playing time. A short drink break (which should not exceed one [1] minute) is permitted at the interval of half-time in Extra Time.
- 10.3. One (1) additional substitute and one (1) additional substitution opportunity may be used when a Match goes into Extra Time (whether or not the Participating Club has already used the full number of permitted substitutes and opportunities).
- 10.4. If no winner is determined at the end of Extra Time, Kicks from the Penalty Mark shall be taken in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the Manual.

11. Match Schedule

- 11.1. All Matches shall be played in accordance with the AFC Competitions Calendar. The dates are final and binding and not appealable.
- 11.2. The Match Schedule shall be determined by the AFC General Secretariat.
- 11.3. The AFC General Secretariat retains the 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 Women's Football Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
 - 12.1.1. Decisions made pursuant to Article 12.1 are final and binding and not appealable.
- 12.2. Any Match which is cancelled, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Women's Football Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that 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 7 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 Women's Football Committee shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary.
 - 13.1.1. Decisions made pursuant to Article 13.1 are final and binding and not appealable.
- 13.2. Any Match which is abandoned, except in cases of Force Majeure recognised by the AFC Women's Football Committee, may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee against the relevant party that 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 8 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 all 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 Organising Association(s) shall ensure that no football matches and/or other events or activities are held at any Stadium 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 unless prior written permission has been obtained from the AFC. The Stadiums shall be delivered to the AFC for its exclusive use during this period.
- 14.3. Unless otherwise specified or directed by the AFC, the Stadiums shall be made available to the AFC for its exclusive use 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.
- 14.4. An Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 14.2 or 14.3 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 shall be fined at least USD5,000.
 - 15.1.2. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.
- 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 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 Clubs must solely utilise Official Training Sites for any official training from two (2) days prior to their first Match until their last Match of the Competition.

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. Five (5) of the substitutes listed on the 'Match Start List' may take part in the Match and each Participating Club shall have three (3) substitution opportunities in accordance with the Laws of the Game. 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/her 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. 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.

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.

19. Footballs

- 19.1. The footballs used in the Competition shall be selected and supplied by the AFC.
- 19.2. Participating Clubs shall solely utilise the training footballs provided by the Organising Association for official training and warming-up purposes.

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 Club 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. All Participating Players and Participating Officials of a Team Official Delegation will be issued with Accreditation Cards authorised by the AFC General Secretariat. Each Participating Club shall produce the Accreditation Cards for its Participating Players and Participating Officials using the materials provided by the AFC.
- 21.2. Each Participating Club 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.
- 21.3. Participating Clubs 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.
 - 21.3.1. Each Participating Club may nominate an additional four (4) 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.
 - 21.3.2. All costs related to the additional four (4) Participating Officials shall be borne by the relevant Participating Club.

22. Eligibility of Players

- 22.1. Each Participating Club shall ensure that all players:
 - 22.1.1. are duly registered with the AFC pursuant to these Regulations; and
 - 22.1.2. are duly registered by the Participating Club with its Member Association pursuant to its transfer rules and those set out in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.
- 22.2. Individuals who meet the criteria set out in Article 22.1 are eligible to participate in the Competition, subject to the provisions of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
- 22.3. Each Participating Club shall ensure to submit authentic documents for registration of its Participating Players.
- 22.4. 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 Club is responsible for fielding only eligible Participating Players in a Match. Failure to do so shall lead to the consequences stipulated in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

- 22.5. A Participating Player shall be deemed ineligible, without limitation, if:
- 22.5.1. there is a violation of Article 22.1; or
 - 22.5.2. she 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
 - 22.5.3. 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 Competition:
- 23.1.1. Preliminary Registration: each Participating Club must submit a squad of a minimum of eighteen (18) and a maximum of thirty-five (35) players;
 - 23.1.2. Final Registration: each Participating Club must submit a squad of a minimum of eighteen (18) and a maximum of twenty-three (23) Participating Players comprising individuals registered in the Preliminary Registration; and
 - 23.1.3. Player Selection List: each Participating Club 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. Should the AFC not receive all required documents by the stipulated deadline, the Participating Club concerned shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to its commencement and be subject to Article 6.

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. Player Status

- 25.1. Subject to Article 23.1, there shall be no limit on the number of foreign Participating Players that each Participating Club may register during the Preliminary Registration, however, each Participating Club may only select up to four (4) foreign Participating Players in the Player Selection List. In case more than three (3) foreign Participating Players are selected in the Player Selection List, then at least one (1) of these foreign Participating Players must hold the nationality of a Member Association.
- 25.2. A stateless Participating Player registered by a Participating Club shall be treated as a foreign Participating Player not holding the nationality of a Member Association unless it can be proven (to the AFC's satisfaction, at its sole discretion) that:

- 25.2.1. such Participating Player has validly participated in a match for a representative team of the Member Association to which the relevant Participating Club is affiliated (the "Local MA") in an official competition of any category or any type of football, in which case she shall be treated as a local Participating Player; or
 - 25.2.2. such Participating Player has validly participated in a match for a representative team of another Member Association which is not the Local MA in an official competition of any category or any type of football, in which case she shall be treated as a Participating Player holding the nationality of a Member Association.
- 25.3. Any Participating Player who has acquired a new nationality of a Member Association (e.g. through naturalisation) and wishes to participate in the Competition utilising that nationality must demonstrate, at least, one of the following:
- 25.3.1. that the nationality was acquired more than five (5) years before the date of the Participating Player's registration for the Competition; or
 - 25.3.2. that she is eligible to participate for the representative team of the relevant Member Association in accordance with the FIFA Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes.
- 25.4. Any Participating Player who is eligible to represent more than one (1) Football Association on account of her nationality of one (1) country (e.g. a player with a Chinese nationality may be eligible to represent three [3] different Member Associations) and wishes to participate in the Competition utilising the nationality of a Member Association must demonstrate one (1) of the following:
- 25.4.1. that she has participated in an official competition for a representative team of the relevant Member Association; or
 - 25.4.2. that she is eligible to participate for a representative team of the relevant Member Association in accordance with the FIFA Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes.
- 25.5. Any Participating Player who does not meet the relevant requirements stipulated above shall not be eligible to take part in the Competition utilising that nationality.
- 25.6. A Participating Player cannot change her nationality of registration for the duration of the Competition.
- 25.7. For the purposes of the contract of a Participating Player, her date of registration with a Participating Club shall be:
- 25.7.1. for Participating Players who transferred internationally to the Participating Club: the date of issuance of the International Transfer Certificate ("ITC") or the date of provisional registration with the Participating Club's Member Association pursuant to the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, submitted in accordance with Article 24; and

- 25.7.2. for Participating Players who transferred domestically to the Participating Club or are "homegrown" players: the official date of the contract submitted in accordance with Article 24.
- 25.8. An ITC or proof of the provisional registration shall only be accepted after the stipulated deadline of the Preliminary Registration has passed, where:
- 25.8.1. the Participating Club entered into a valid contract with the player prior to the stipulated deadline of the Preliminary Registration and submitted this to the AFC; and
- 25.8.2. a copy of the ITC or evidence to demonstrate that an ITC has been issued or proof of the provisional registration in accordance with the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players is submitted via AFCAS no later than seven (7) days prior to its first Match in the Competition.

26. Preliminary Registration

- 26.1. Each Participating Club shall submit the supporting documents in accordance with Article 24 via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the relevant stage of the Competition.
- 26.2. There is no allocation of jersey numbers during the Preliminary Registration.
- 26.3. If a Participating Club fails to register a minimum of eighteen (18) Participating Players by the stipulated deadline, it shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to its commencement and be subject to Article 6. Proof of submission by facsimile, courier and/or email will not be accepted.
- 26.4. Each Participating Club must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers (who shall only play as a goalkeeper) in its Preliminary Registration.
- 26.5. No later than seven (7) days prior to its first Match in the Competition, each Participating Club may replace or add up to five (5) Participating Players for any reason provided that the maximum number of registered players is not exceeded.

27. Final Registration

- 27.1. Each Participating Club shall submit a Final Registration squad of a minimum of eighteen (18) and a maximum of twenty-three (23) Participating Players.
- 27.1.1. The Final Registration may only be composed of those Participating Players registered in the Preliminary Registration for the Group Stage.
- 27.1.2. Participating Players must be allocated a playing number from 1 to 99. Playing number 1 shall be reserved for a goalkeeper. Each Participating Player shall wear the same playing number allocated in her first registration during all Matches in the Competition. Participating Players registered as replacements may only be allocated a new playing number.

- 27.1.3. Each Participating Club shall submit its Final Registration at the match coordination meeting of its first Match in the Group Stage.
- 27.1.4. Each Participating Club must register a minimum of three (3) goalkeepers (who shall only play as a goalkeeper) in its Final Registration.
- 27.2. Once the Final Registration has been received by the AFC, Participating Clubs may replace any of the registered Participating Players up to six (6) hours prior to their first Match in the Competition, subject to the conditions below:
 - 27.2.1. any replacement Participating Player(s) must have been registered in the Preliminary Registration;
 - 27.2.2. replacement Participating Players shall only be allocated the new available playing numbers;
 - 27.2.3. to replace a Participating Player, a Participating Club must provide her Accreditation Card to the AFC and shall receive the Accreditation Card of the replacement Participating Player in exchange; and
 - 27.2.4. replacement Participating Players shall only be eligible to participate in the relevant stage of the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

28. Player Selection List

- 28.1. Each Participating Club shall mark the starting eleven (11), including the team captain and up to twelve (12) substitutes on the "Player Selection List".
 - 28.1.1. Each Participating Club may register up to four (4) foreign Participating Players. In case more than three (3) foreign Participating Players are registered, then at least one (1) of these foreign Participating Players must hold the nationality of a Member Association.
- 28.2. Each Participating Club must hand its "Player Selection List" signed by the Head Coach or the Team Manager, together with the "Officials on the Substitution Bench" form with the names of the eight (8) Participating Officials who shall be entitled to sit on the team bench, to the AFC Match Commissioner at least ninety (90) minutes prior to the commencement of each Match.

29. Registration of Officials

- 29.1. There shall be one (1) registration period for Participating Officials for the Competition.
- 29.2. Each Participating Club shall submit its registration of Participating Officials and the supporting documents in accordance with Article 30 via AFCAS no later than thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the relevant stage of the Competition.
- 29.3. Each Participating Club may nominate a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of eight (8) Participating Officials. Each Participating Club may also nominate an additional four (4) Participating Officials in accordance with Article 21.

- 29.4. The registration list of Participating Officials must fulfil the following requirements:
- 29.4.1. at least one (1) person on the coaching staff shall be female (e.g. Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Fitness Coach, Goalkeeping Coach, etc.); and
 - 29.4.2. at least one (1) person on the medical staff shall be female (e.g. Team Doctor or Physiotherapist).
- 29.5. The Participating Clubs are also encouraged to have at least one (1) female member on their key administrative staff (e.g. Team Manager, Team Media Officer, etc.).
- 29.6. Each Participating Club must include the following two (2) Participating Officials in the registration list:
- 29.6.1. Head Coach; and
 - 29.6.2. Team Manager (who shall also act as the Team Media Officer in accordance with the Manual in case there is no dedicated Team Media Officer).
- 29.7. Up to eight (8) Participating Officials may sit on the team bench for each Match. The following two (2) Participating Officials must be registered on the "Officials on the Substitution Bench" form:
- 29.7.1. Head Coach; and
 - 29.7.2. Team Manager.
- 29.8. Each Participating Club is entitled to register up to two (2) "Video Analysts" who shall be the only members of a Team Official Delegation entitled to record Matches in the 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 or otherwise distributed.
- 29.9. The Team Manager and/or Team Media Officer (as applicable) of each Participating Club shall be responsible for coordinating all Participating Club and media-related matters with the AFC. They shall work in a full-time, exclusive capacity from two (2) days prior to each Match until one (1) day after the Match. They shall participate in all Official Functions related to Matches in the Competition, including without limitation the match coordination meeting and all press conferences.
- 29.10. Should the Participating Club nominate less than eight (8) Participating Officials on the 'Officials on the Substitution Bench' form, or the AFC does not approve the registration of any person(s) nominated, the number of Participating Officials permitted on the team bench shall reduce proportionately.
- 29.11. Should the AFC not receive all required documents by the stipulated deadline, the Participating Club concerned shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Competition prior to its commencement and be subject to Article 6. Proof of submission by facsimile, courier and/or email will not be accepted.

29.12. Once the registration of Participating Officials has been received by the AFC, Participating Clubs may replace any of the listed Participating Officials at any stage of the Competition with twenty-four (24) hours' notice to the AFC by submitting the documents set out in Article 30 via AFCAS. Such Participating Officials registered as replacements shall only be eligible to participate in the Competition after receiving their Accreditation Card.

30. Documents for Registration of Officials

- 30.1. Participating Officials must be registered via AFCAS with the supporting documents set out in the Manual.
- 30.2. Participating Officials on the coaching staff (e.g. Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Fitness Coach, Goalkeeping Coach, etc.) shall submit their coaching certificate (if any) via AFCAS.

SECTION 6 | MEDIA

31. Media Access

- 31.1. The AFC is the owner of all Media Rights emanating from the Competition as well as from any other related events coming under its jurisdiction, without any restrictions as to content, time, place and law. The AFC shall decide on the grant of Media Rights for the Competition.
- 31.2. Each Organising Association shall ensure that the AFC, Commercial Rights Partners, Commercial Affiliates, the Host Broadcaster, and all Broadcast Partners have free access to the Stadium from ten (10) days prior to the first Match in the Stadium until 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.
- 31.3. The Organising Association shall adhere to all instructions, directives and circulars issued by the AFC in relation to the grant and exercise of all Media Rights relating to the Competition.

32. Press Conferences

- 32.1. The Head Coach of each Participating Club must attend a pre-Group Stage press conference for each group in which they participate, to be held at least one (1) day prior to the first Match of their respective group.
- 32.2. If requested by the AFC, the Head Coach and one (1) of the key Participating Players must attend pre-Match press conferences for each Knockout Stage Match and/or Final in which they participate, to be held at least one (1) day prior to the Match. The AFC shall decide the final timing of the pre-Match press conference in the absence of an agreement on timing by the Participating Clubs.
- 32.3. The Head Coach of each Participating Club must attend a post-Match press conference for each Match in which they participate, commencing no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the Match. If requested by the AFC, the Player of the Match of each Match must also attend the post-Match press conference.
- 32.4. Each Participating Club is responsible for the interpretation and translation of any communication by its Head Coach and relevant Participating Players into English. Interpretation and translation into the local language of the host country (if applicable) shall be the responsibility of the Organising Association.
- 32.5. Any individual who fails to attend an obligatory press conference shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Club shall also be held liable for any failure to attend a press conference in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

33. Mixed Zone

- 33.1. All Participating Players of each Participating Club shall pass through the mixed zone on their way from their team dressing room to their bus after each Match. The Head Coach shall be required to pass through the mixed zone on the way from the team dressing room to the bus after each Match only in the event that there is no post-Match press conference held after the Match.
- 33.2. Any individual who fails to pass through the mixed zone shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Club may also be held liable for any failure to pass through the mixed zone in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

34. Interviews

- 34.1. If requested by the AFC, Participating Clubs 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, Commercial Affiliate and/or the AFC. All interview locations shall be designated by the AFC Media Officer or AFC General Coordinator/Match Commissioner.
- 34.2. If requested by the AFC, Participating Clubs 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.
- 34.3. Any individual who fails to conduct an interview when requested shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Club may also be held liable for any failure to conduct an interview when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

35. Flash Interviews

- 35.1. Participating Players and Participating Officials are not permitted to give interviews at the Stadium without the express permission of the AFC.
- 35.2. If requested by the AFC, a maximum of three (3) Participating Players and/or one (1) Participating Official from each Participating Club shall participate in a 'flash interview' following each Match.
- 35.3. Any individual who fails to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested shall be fined at least USD2,500. The relevant Participating Club may also be held liable for any failure to conduct a 'flash interview' when requested in accordance with Article 4.3.8. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

36. Recording of Matches

- 36.1. Immediately after each Match, the relevant Organising Association shall provide four (4) copies of the full Match recording to the AFC Match Commissioner.
- 36.2. Any Organising Association that fails to comply with Article 36.1 shall be fined at least USD2,500. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

SECTION 7 | TICKETING

37. General Requirements

- 37.1. Tickets, electronic or hard copy, shall include seat numbering and serial numbering, and only include AFC Marks, Competition Marks, and/or of Commercial Affiliates approved by the AFC.
- 37.2. 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.
- 37.3. The Organising Association must ensure that access to the Stadium is granted to the AFC Delegation, Team Official Delegation, Commercial Rights Partner, Commercial Affiliates, Media and travelling supporters without any discrimination.

38. Terms and Conditions

- 38.1. 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. The AFC shall provide a Ticket template design to the Organising Association(s).
- 38.2. The AFC shall, in collaboration with each Organising Association, issue special Ticketing terms and conditions which are applicable to all Ticket holders.
- 38.3. 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.

39. Complimentary Tickets

- 39.1. Each Organising Association shall provide Complimentary Tickets to the AFC for each Match in the Competition in the quantities and categories as requested by the AFC.
- 39.2. Each Organising Association shall provide the following Complimentary Tickets to each Participating Club competing at a Venue which it controls:
 - 39.2.1. two (2) VVIP Tickets for each Match the Participating Club participates in;
 - 39.2.2. five (5) VIP Tickets for each Match the Participating Club participates in;
 - 39.2.3. twenty (20) Tickets of the next-best category (as determined by the AFC) for each Match the Participating Club participates in; and
 - 39.2.4. 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 Club.

40. Purchasable Tickets

- 40.1. 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 Club playing in a Match, in a segregated, safe area to be determined by the AFC General Secretariat and the Organising Association.
- 40.2. The number of Tickets to be purchased must be declared by each Participating Club in accordance with the Ticketing timeline and guidelines issued by the AFC. Each Participating Club 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 by the relevant Organising Association.

SECTION 8 | COMMERCIAL

41. Commercial Rights

- 41.1. 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 shall decide on the grant of Media Rights for the Competition.
- 41.2. Each Organising Association shall use its best 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).
- 41.3. 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.
- 41.4. Each Organising Association shall appoint a reasonable number of personnel to assist the AFC in the implementation and enforcement of its rights protection programme.

42. Clean Stadium

- 42.1. Each Organising Association shall deliver the Stadium and Official Training Sites as a Clean Stadium seven (7) days before the first Match and official training at each Stadium and Official Training Site respectively, until one (1) day after the final Match of the Competition.

43. Advertising and Branding

- 43.1. Except where instructed or communicated otherwise by the AFC, each Organising Association shall ensure that all relevant permits and approvals are secured and unrestricted access for the placement and publishing of advertising or branding of the Competition at each Stadium, Official Training Site and/or such other location as advised by the AFC shall be available to the AFC ten (10) days before the first Match.

SECTION 9 | SAFETY AND SECURITY

44. General Principles

- 44.1. All matters relating to safety and security shall be undertaken in compliance with the AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.
- 44.2. Each Organising Association shall, in cooperation 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, Commercial Rights Partner, Commercial Affiliates, Media, spectators, and all goods brought in by the AFC, Team Official Delegations, Commercial Rights Partner, and Commercial Affiliates.
- 44.3. Each Organising Association shall issue a detailed security plan in the form of a binding agreement with, without limitation, the management of the Stadium, Official Training Site(s), and the Accommodation of the AFC Delegation and Team Official Delegations. This security plan shall be based upon the principles set out in the AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.
- 44.4. 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

45. Pre-Competition Medical Assessment

- 45.1. Each Participating Club and its Member Association shall ensure that each Participating Player undergoes a Pre-Competition Medical Assessment ("PCMA") at least thirty (30) days prior to its first Match of the Competition.
 - 45.1.1. Participating Players that have undertaken a PCMA for a FIFA or other AFC competition may provide the AFC with the physician and player's declaration form originally provided to FIFA or the AFC, provided that the PCMA was conducted within one (1) year of the Competition.
 - 45.1.2. The AFC shall provide all Participating Clubs and its Member Association 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.
 - 45.1.3. Each Participating Club and its Member Association must submit to the AFC, by latest ten (10) days prior to the first Match of the Competition, the following signed documents:
 - 45.1.3.1. 'Participating Club Declaration of Agreement to the PCMA'; and
 - 45.1.3.2. for each Participating Player, the 'Player and Examining Physician Declaration for PCMA'.
 - 45.1.4. Any player for whom the required documents are not provided is not eligible to be registered in the Final Registration for a Participating Club.
- 45.2. The AFC Medical Committee may, at 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.

46. Facilities and Personnel

- 46.1. Each Organising Association shall provide a medical room and doping control room fully equipped with all items stipulated in the Manual.
- 46.2. An Organising Association shall be fined:
 - 46.2.1. at least USD20,000 for failing to fully equip the medical room; or
 - 46.2.2. at least USD10,000 for failing to fully equip the doping control room; or
 - 46.2.3. at least USD40,000 for failing to fully equip both rooms.
 - 46.2.4. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

- 46.3. Each Organising Association shall provide all medical personnel and doping control personnel stipulated in the Manual.
- 46.4. An Organising Association shall be fined:
 - 46.4.1. at least USD10,000 for failing to provide all required doping control personnel;
or
 - 46.4.2. at least USD20,000 for failing to provide all required medical personnel.
 - 46.4.3. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may impose further sanctions at its discretion.

47. Anti-Doping

- 47.1. 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.
- 47.2. The AFC shall inform each Participating Club by means of a circular of the doping control procedure for the Competition.
- 47.3. 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.

48. Gender Verification

- 48.1. Gender verification is not mandatory for Participating Players to register for the Competition, however, recognising the possibility that such matters may be challenged or otherwise may require further investigation, the AFC reserves the right to take appropriate measures to determine the eligibility of a Participating Player at its sole discretion (including by ordering medical testing and/or procedures). Participating Players and Participating Clubs shall comply with the instructions of the AFC in this regard. Cases of non-compliance may be referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.
- 48.2. Strict confidentiality shall be observed in the conduct of such measures.

SECTION 11 | FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

49. Responsibilities

- 49.1. 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.
- 49.2. The Participating Clubs shall cover their international and domestic travel costs to the Venue or the nearest airport, as well as incidental expenses.
- 49.3. The AFC and the Organising Associations shall provide all other logistical arrangements in accordance with the LOR. Such arrangements shall be communicated to the Participating Clubs by circular prior to the relevant stage of the Competition.

SECTION 12 | DISCIPLINARY

50. Disciplinary Measures

- 50.1. All disciplinary measures in relation to the Competition shall be undertaken in accordance with the current AFC Statutes, AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, and all relevant AFC regulations and circulars.
- 50.2. The AFC may introduce new disciplinary rules and sanctions for the duration of the Competition. Such rules shall be communicated to the Participating Clubs and their Member Associations thirty (30) days before the first Match of the Competition at the latest.
- 50.3. Only Participating Players and Participating Officials may serve Match suspensions in the Competition. For the avoidance of doubt, this requires the registration of the relevant individual within a registration period in accordance with the deadlines set out in these Regulations.
- 50.4. All Participating Players agree to:
 - 50.4.1. comply with the provisions of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, in particular by respecting the spirit and principles of fair play, not engaging in violent behaviour, respecting the authority of the Match Officials, not making bets in connection with any Match and not engaging in any activities linked to the manipulation of Matches; and
 - 50.4.2. refrain from doping and comply with the provisions of the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.

51. Good Conduct

- 51.1. Participating Clubs are liable for the improper conduct of:
 - 51.1.1. Any member of its Team Official Delegation; and/or
 - 51.1.2. any person affiliated to it and/or carrying out duties on their behalf throughout the Competition.
- 51.2. For any violation of Article 51.1, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may issue any sanction listed in the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

52. Administrative Procedure

- 52.1. 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:

- 52.1.1. 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;
- 52.1.2. if the offence is admitted, the AFC shall submit the compounded offence to the Chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for approval;
 - 52.1.2.1. should the party deny the offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;
- 52.1.3. upon approval of the Chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, the sanction shall be notified and applied administratively by the AFC;
 - 52.1.3.1. should the Chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee not approve the compounded offence, the AFC shall open disciplinary proceedings;
- 52.1.4. by agreeing to compound the offence, the party waives its right to request a motivated decision or appeal the sanction issued; and
- 52.1.5. any sanction issued administratively comes into force immediately upon notification in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

53. Cautions and Expulsions

- 53.1. 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.
 - 53.1.1. Any Participating Player or Participating Official who completes the Group Stage having only received one (1) caution shall not carry over the caution to the next stage of the Competition.

54. Protest

- 54.1. 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.
- 54.2. Unless otherwise stipulated in these Regulations, to be considered valid, a protest must be:
 - 54.2.1. submitted in writing (using the appropriate Protest Form issued by the AFC General Secretariat) to the AFC Match Commissioner for the relevant Match within two (2) hours of the end of the relevant Match;
 - 54.2.2. followed up with a full written report (including a copy of the original Protest Form) which must be sent to the AFC General Secretariat within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of the relevant Match; and

- 54.2.3. 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 end of the relevant Match.
- 54.3. 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 to any potential issue concerning the use and/or operation of any goal-line technology (GLT) and/or video assistant referee (VAR) system.
- 54.4. Any protest which relates to the eligibility of a player to participate in the Competition must be submitted to the AFC General Secretariat no later than five (5) days before the day on which the opening Match of the Competition is scheduled to take place. To be considered valid, such a protest must be:
- 54.4.1. submitted in writing (in the form of a full written report); and
- 54.4.2. 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.
- 54.5. If any of the formal requirements set out in Article 54.2 and/or 54.4 are 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.
- 54.6. Subject to Article 54.5 and any other exceptions set out in these Regulations, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the AFC Statutes and/or any other applicable AFC regulations, 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 Women's Football Committee for its decision if it is deemed to be purely operational in nature.

55. Arbitration

- 55.1. Any dispute in connection with the Competition shall be promptly settled by negotiation.
- 55.2. In compliance with the AFC Statutes, Participating Clubs, 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.
- 55.3. Participating Clubs, 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 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 13 | CLOSING PROVISIONS

56. Special Instructions

- 56.1. The AFC and/or AFC Women's Football 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.
- 56.2. These instructions shall form an integral part of these Regulations.

57. Decisions

- 57.1. 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.

58. Amendments

- 58.1. 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.

59. Force Majeure

- 59.1. The AFC Women's Football Committee is the only body capable of declaring a Force Majeure event.

60. Matters Not Provided For

- 60.1. Matters not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the AFC Women's Football Committee. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

61. Implementing Provisions

- 61.1. 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.

62. Enforcement

- 62.1. These Regulations were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 1 September 2023 and came into force immediately.

For the AFC Executive Committee

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
President

Datuk Seri Windsor John
General Secretary





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