



# AFC DISCIPLINARY AND ETHICS CODE

2019 Edition



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# AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code

2019 Edition



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# DEFINITIONS

In this AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, capitalised terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context specifically indicates otherwise:

<b>AFC</b>	The Asian Football Confederation.
<b>AFCAS</b>	The AFC Administration System, the AFC's online competition management and registration system.
<b>Club</b>	A professional club or an amateur club which participates in a league or competition under the auspices of a Football Association.
<b>Code</b>	This AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.
<b>FIFA</b>	The Fédération Internationale de Football Association.
<b>Football Association</b>	The controlling body for football within a country or territory recognised by the AFC.
<b>Intermediary</b>	A natural or legal person who, for a fee or free of charge, represents Players and/or Clubs in negotiations with a view to concluding an employment contract or represents Clubs in negotiations with a view to concluding a transfer agreement.
<b>International Match</b>	A Match between two (2) teams affiliated to or representing different Football Associations.
<b>Match</b>	<p>A football, futsal, or beach soccer match in its entirety (including a replayed and/or deferred match, extra time and penalty kicks).</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, a Match formally commences when the Stadium is officially opened to spectators and formally concludes when the Stadium is officially closed to spectators.</p>

<p><b>Match Officials</b></p>	<p>Individually or collectively, any individual appointed to one of the following roles in relation to any aspect of a Match:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Referees (separately defined below);</li> <li>(ii) Head of Delegation;</li> <li>(iii) General Coordinator;</li> <li>(iv) Match Commissioner;</li> <li>(v) Referee Assessor;</li> <li>(vi) Media Officer;</li> <li>(vii) Security Officer;</li> <li>(viii) Medical Officer;</li> <li>(ix) Technical Analyst; and,</li> <li>(x) any other official designation which the AFC deems to be required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Official</b></p>	<p>All office bearers and members of AFC committees, managers, coaches, trainers, Match Officials, medical officials, staff and any other person responsible for technical, medical and/or administrative matters in the AFC, Member Associations, leagues or Clubs, as well as other persons obliged to comply with the AFC Statutes (except Players and Intermediaries).</p>
<p><b>Player</b></p>	<p>A professional or amateur football, futsal, or beach soccer player licensed with a Member Association.</p>

<b>Referee</b>	Any individual appointed to officiate a Match in the role of referee, assistant referee, fourth official, fifth official, or timekeeper.
<b>RRA</b>	Referee review area.
<b>Stadium</b>	<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 team practice session takes place within the stadium), the aerial space above such stadium premises;</li> <li>(ii) parking facilities;</li> <li>(iii) VIP and hospitality areas (including any hospitality village);</li> <li>(iv) the media tribune;</li> <li>(v) concessions areas;</li> <li>(vi) commercial display areas;</li> <li>(vii) buildings;</li> <li>(viii) the field of play;</li> <li>(ix) any broadcast compound or stadium media centre;</li> <li>(x) any stands; and,</li> <li>(xi) any areas beneath the stands.</li> </ul>

<b>VAR</b>	Video assistant referee(s).
<b>VOR</b>	Video operation room.

For the purposes of this Code, and provided the context so permits:

- (a) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;
- (b) the masculine gender shall include the feminine 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.

# PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

## 1. Objectives

- 1.1. The principle objective of this Code is to ensure that the objectives of the AFC as set out in Article 2 of the AFC Statutes are respected.
- 1.2. This Code:
  - 1.2.1. describes infringements;
  - 1.2.2. determines the sanctions incurred for any infringement; and
  - 1.2.3. regulates the organisation, functions, and procedures of the judicial bodies responsible for making decisions regarding any infringement.

## 2. Scope of application: jurisdiction

- 2.1. This Code applies to:
  - 2.1.1. every Match organised by the AFC;
  - 2.1.2. every function or course organised by the AFC;
  - 2.1.3. every friendly International Match and international competition requiring authorisation from the AFC;
  - 2.1.4. if a Match Official is harmed physically or otherwise;
  - 2.1.5. if the statutory objectives of the AFC are breached, especially with regard to forgery, corruption and doping;
  - 2.1.6. any other football-related activity within Asia not directly related to a Match;
  - 2.1.7. any activity of an individual bound by this Code outside of their official function in football which constitutes unethical behaviour; and
  - 2.1.8. any breach of AFC regulations that does not fall under the jurisdiction of any other body.

### **3. Scope of application: natural and legal persons**

- 3.1. The following natural and legal persons are subject to and bound by this Code:
  - 3.1.1. Member Associations;
  - 3.1.2. members of Member Associations, and their affiliates;
  - 3.1.3. Clubs;
  - 3.1.4. Officials;
  - 3.1.5. Players;
  - 3.1.6. Match Officials;
  - 3.1.7. Intermediaries;
  - 3.1.8. anyone elected and/or assigned by the AFC to exercise a function;
  - 3.1.9. anyone with an authorisation from the AFC (in particular, with regard to a Match, competition, function, course, or other event organised by the AFC);
  - 3.1.10. any candidate in an AFC election; and
  - 3.1.11. spectators.
- 3.2. In the event that an individual bound by this Code ceases to serve in his function during proceedings, the judicial body shall remain competent to render a decision.
- 3.3. In the event that an individual bound by this Code ceases to serve in his function, the AFC may conduct an investigation and present the case to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may suspend the proceedings or make a substantive decision.

## **4. Scope of application: time**

- 4.1. This Code applies to infringements that have occurred after it has come into force.
- 4.2. This Code applies to infringements that have occurred prior to it coming into force if this Code is equally favourable or more favourable to the perpetrator of the facts. In other cases, the version of the Code in force at the time of the infringement is applicable.
- 4.3. Rules governing procedure apply immediately upon the Code coming into force, regardless of the timing of the infringement.

# CHAPTER ONE: SANCTIONS

## **Section 1: Types of sanctions**

### **5. Culpability**

- 5.1. Unless otherwise specified, the principle of strict liability applies.
- 5.2. Therefore, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed intentionally, recklessly, and/or negligently.

### **6. Attempt**

- 6.1. Acts amounting to attempt are punishable.
- 6.2. In the case of acts amounting to attempt, the judicial body may reduce the sanction envisaged for the actual infringement accordingly. It will determine the extent of the mitigation as it sees fit. Should a fine be imposed it shall not go below the general lower limit (cf. Article 11).

## **7. Involvement**

- 7.1. Anyone who intentionally takes part in committing an infringement, either as instigator or accomplice, may be sanctioned.
- 7.2. The judicial body will take into account the degree of guilt of the party involved and may reduce the sanction envisaged for the actual infringement accordingly. Should a fine be imposed it shall not go below the general lower limit (cf. Article 11).

## **8. Sanctions applicable to individuals**

- 8.1. The following sanctions may be imposed on individuals:
  - 8.1.1. warning;
  - 8.1.2. fine;
  - 8.1.3. caution;
  - 8.1.4. expulsion;
  - 8.1.5. suspension for a specific number of Matches or for a specific period of time;
  - 8.1.6. ban from team dressing room and/or team bench;
  - 8.1.7. ban from entering a Stadium;
  - 8.1.8. ban on taking part in any football-related activity;
  - 8.1.9. withdrawal of a title or award;
  - 8.1.10. confiscation; and
  - 8.1.11. social work.

## **9. Sanctions applicable to Member Associations and Clubs**

9.1. The following sanctions may be imposed on Member Associations and Clubs:

9.1.1. warning;

9.1.2. fine;

9.1.3. full or partial Stadium closure;

9.1.4. order to play a Match on neutral territory;

9.1.5. ban on playing in a particular Stadium;

9.1.6. annulment of the result of a Match;

9.1.7. disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition;

9.1.8. defeat by forfeit;

9.1.9. deduction of points (for a current or future competition);

9.1.10. relegation to a lower division;

9.1.11. order that a Match be replayed;

9.1.12. withdrawal of a title or award;

9.1.13. confiscation;

9.1.14. withholding of revenues from an AFC competition;

9.1.15. prohibition on registering new Players in AFC competitions;

9.1.16. restriction on the number of Players that a Club may register for participation in AFC competitions;

9.1.17. withdrawal of a licence to participate in AFC competition; and

9.1.18. social work.

## 10. Warning

10.1. A warning is a reminder of the substance of a disciplinary rule allied with the threat of a sanction in the event of a further infringement.

## 11. Fine

11.1. A fine is issued in US dollars (USD). Any fine shall be paid in USD.

11.2. Any fine issued shall be:

11.2.1. not less than USD500 or in the case of a competition subject to an age limit not less than USD250; and

11.2.2. not more than USD1,000,000.

11.3. The judicial body that imposes the fine decides the terms and time limits for payment.

11.4. Member Associations are jointly and severally liable for the payment of fines imposed on any affiliated individual or Club.

11.5. Clubs are jointly and severally liable for the payment of fines imposed on any affiliated individual.

11.6. The fact that an individual subject to a fine has ceased their role at their affiliated Club or Member Association or that a Club subject to a fine has ceased to exist or be affiliated to its Member Association does not cancel out joint and several liability.

## 12. Caution

12.1. A caution (yellow card) is a warning from the Referee to an individual during a Match to sanction minor infringements as set out in Law 12 of the Laws of the Game (cf. Article 46).

12.2. Two (2) cautions received during the same Match incur an expulsion (indirect red card) and automatic suspension from the next Match in the same competition (cf. Article 13.5). The two (2) cautions that caused the expulsion are rescinded.

12.3. If an individual receives a caution in two (2) separate Matches of the same AFC competition, he is automatically suspended from the next Match in that competition unless the competition regulations provide otherwise. Such suspension to be served before any other suspension.

12.3.1. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may exceptionally depart from or amend this rule before the start of a particular competition.

12.3.2. Any such decision is final and binding and not appealable.

12.4. If a Match was abandoned and is to be replayed in full, any caution issued during that Match shall be annulled. If a Match was abandoned, in particular for reasons of force majeure, and it recommences at the minute at which play was interrupted, any caution imposed before the Match was abandoned remains valid for the remainder of the Match. If the Match is not to be replayed, the cautions received by the teams shall be upheld.

12.5. Cautions issued in a Match that is subsequently forfeited shall not be annulled.

12.6. If an individual is guilty of a sending-off offence (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game) and receives a direct red card, any other caution he previously received in the same Match is upheld.

## **13. Expulsion**

13.1. An expulsion is the order given by the Referee to someone to leave the field of play and its surroundings, including the team bench and the technical area, during a Match. The individual who has been sent off may enter the stands unless he is serving a Stadium ban.

13.2. Expulsion takes the form of a red card for individuals. The red card is regarded as direct if it sanctions a sending-off offence (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game); it is regarded as indirect if it is the result of an accumulation of two (2) cautions.

13.3. A Player who has been sent off:

13.3.1. shall stay in the team dressing room or the doping control room, accompanied by a chaperone, until the names of the Players selected for the doping test are communicated. The Player may be allowed to sit in the stands, provided his integrity and security are safeguarded, he is not picked for doping control and is no longer wearing his football equipment; and

13.3.2. is not entitled to attend the post-Match press conference or any other media activity held in the Stadium.

13.4. An Official who has been sent off:

- 13.4.1. may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided his security and integrity are safeguarded;
  - 13.4.2. shall not enter the dressing room, tunnel or technical area including the team bench;
  - 13.4.3. shall not communicate with or contact anyone involved in the Match by any means whatsoever; and
  - 13.4.4. is not entitled to attend the post-Match press conference or any other media activity held in the Stadium.
- 13.5. An expulsion automatically incurs suspension from the subsequent Match, even if imposed in a Match that is later abandoned and/or forfeited. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may extend the duration of the suspension.

## 14. Match suspension

- 14.1. A Match suspension is a ban on taking part in a future Match and on attending it in the area immediately surrounding the field of play.
- 14.2. A Player who is suspended in accordance with Article 14.1:
- 14.2.1. is automatically banned from the team dressing room(s), tunnel and technical area including the team bench;
  - 14.2.2. may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided his security and integrity are safeguarded; and
  - 14.2.3. shall not attend the post-Match press conference or any other media activity held in the Stadium.
- 14.3. An Official who is suspended in accordance with Article 14.1:
- 14.3.1. is automatically banned from the team dressing room(s), tunnel and technical area including the team bench;
  - 14.3.2. may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided his security and integrity are safeguarded;
  - 14.3.3. shall not be permitted to communicate with or contact any person involved in the Match by any means whatsoever for the duration of a Match; and
  - 14.3.4. shall not attend the post-Match press conference or any other media activity held in the Stadium except the pre-Match press conference held on Match day-1.

- 14.4. If the suspension is to be served in terms of Matches, only those Matches actually played count towards execution of the suspension. If a Match is abandoned, cancelled or forfeited, the suspension is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended individual belongs is not responsible for the facts that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeit of the Match.
- 14.5. If a suspension is combined with a fine, the suspension may be prolonged until the fine has been paid in full.
- 14.6. A suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a Match is retroactively forfeited because a Player took part in a Match despite being ineligible (cf. Article 56). This also applies to the suspension imposed on the Player who took part in the Match despite being ineligible.

## **15. Ban from team dressing room and/or team bench**

- 15.1. A ban from the team dressing room deprives an individual of the right to enter a team dressing room(s) and the area immediately surrounding the field of play.
- 15.2. A ban from the team bench deprives an individual of the right to sit on the team bench before, during, and after a Match.
- 15.3. These sanctions may be combined.

## **16. Stadium ban**

- 16.1. A Stadium ban prohibits an individual from entering a specific Stadium.
- 16.2. An individual may be banned from more than one (1) Stadium concurrently.

## **17. Ban on taking part in any football-related activity**

- 17.1. A ban from taking part in any kind of football-related activity prohibits an individual from any involvement in Asian football.
- 17.2. This includes without limitation:
- 17.2.1. attending any Match in any AFC competition or competition organised by a Member Association;
  - 17.2.2. participating in any Match in any AFC competition or competition organised by a Member Association;

17.2.3. attending or participating in any training activities connected to any Club affiliated to a Member Association or representative team of a Member Association;

17.2.4. conducting any administrative duties connected to football, futsal, or beach soccer on behalf of a Club affiliated to a Member Association, a Member Association, or member of a Member Association; and

17.2.5. attending any function or course related to football, futsal, or beach soccer, whether hosted by the AFC, a Member Association, or member of a Member Association.

## **18. Full or partial Stadium closure**

18.1. A Member Association or Club may be ordered to play a future Match with a full or partial Stadium closure.

18.1.1. The judicial body shall order a partial Stadium closure in terms of percentage (e.g. 50% closure).

18.1.2. Any partial Stadium closure shall not affect the allocation of tickets for away teams or the provision of an away team supporters' area.

18.2. In the case of a Member Association, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played by its representative team.

18.2.1. The judicial body shall identify which representative team of the Member Association the order shall be carried out against.

18.2.2. The order may be carried out in Matches for a different representative team of the Member Association than that during whose Match the misconduct which gave rise to the order occurred.

18.3. In the case of a Club, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played in AFC or domestic competitions.

## **19. Playing a Match on neutral ground**

19.1. A Member Association or Club may be ordered to play a Match on neutral ground.

19.2. In the case of a Member Association, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played by its representative team. Such Match (or Matches) shall not be played on the territory of the Member Association.

19.2.1. The judicial body shall identify which representative team of the Member Association the order shall be carried out against.

19.2.2. The order may be carried out in Matches for a different representative team of the Member Association than that during whose Match the conduct which gave rise to the order occurred.

19.3. In the case of a Club, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played in AFC or domestic competitions. Such Match (or Matches) shall not be played on the territory of the Member Association to which the Club is affiliated, but may be played on the territory of the Member Association to which the opponent Club is affiliated.

## **20. Ban on playing in a particular Stadium**

20.1. A ban on playing in a particular Stadium deprives the representative team of a Member Association or a Club of the right to play in a particular Stadium.

20.2. In the case of a Member Association, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played by its representative team.

20.2.1. The judicial body shall identify which representative team of the Member Association the order shall be carried out against.

20.2.2. The order may be carried out in Matches for a different representative team of the Member Association than that during whose Match the conduct which gave rise to the order occurred.

20.3. In the case of a Club, this sanction shall apply to a future Match (or Matches) to be played in AFC or domestic competitions.

## **21. Annulment of the result of a Match**

21.1. An order that the result of a Match be annulled means that the result reached on the field of play is disregarded.

## **22. Disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition**

- 22.1. A Member Association or Club may be disqualified from taking part in a competition in progress.
- 22.2. A Member Association or Club may be excluded from a future competition.
- 22.3. These sanctions may be combined.

## **23. Relegation to a lower division**

- 23.1. A Club may be relegated to a lower division in its domestic competition.

## **24. Deduction of points**

- 24.1. A Member Association or Club may have points deducted in a competition in progress.
- 24.2. A Member Association or Club may have points deducted in a future competition.
- 24.3. These sanctions may be combined.

## **25. Forfeit**

- 25.1. A team sanctioned with a forfeit is considered to have lost the relevant Match 3-0 in football, 5-0 in futsal or 10-0 in beach soccer. If the goal difference at the end of the relevant Match is less favourable to the team at fault, the result on the field of play is upheld.

## **26. Order that a Match be replayed**

26.1. A Match may be ordered replayed if it could not take place or could not be played in full due to the behaviour for which a representative team of a Member Association or Club is liable.

## **27. Withdrawal of a title or award**

27.1. An order to return benefits received in particular sums of money and specific objects (e.g. trophies).

## **28. Confiscation**

28.1. A confiscation order shall result in a specific object (e.g. monies, sports equipment) to be provided to the AFC.

## **29. Withholding of revenues**

29.1. An order to withhold revenues is the forfeiture of any revenues owed as a result of participation and/or success in a competition.

## **30. Prohibition on registering new Players in AFC competition**

30.1. A prohibition on registering new Players in AFC competition shall result in the relevant team not being permitted to register any new, additional, or replacement Players within a current and/or future registration period identified in the relevant competition regulations.

## **31. Restriction on the number of Players that a Club may register for participation in AFC competitions**

31.1. A restriction on the number of Players that a Club may register for participation in AFC competitions shall result in the Club being permitted to register a number of Players in an AFC competition which is less than the maximum identified in the relevant competition regulations.

## **32. Withdrawal of licence to participate in AFC competition**

32.1. An order for withdrawal of a licence to participate in AFC competition is an annulment of a decision of a club licensing authority in a Member Association to award a licence to a Club to participate in a future AFC competition.

## **33. Social Work**

33.1. An individual, Club, or Member Association may be ordered to undertake social work as directed by the judicial body.

# **Section 2: Common rules relating to sanctions**

## **34. Suspension of implementation of sanctions**

34.1. The judicial body may suspend or partially suspend the implementation of a sanction.

34.2. By suspending or partially suspending the implementation of a sanction, the judicial body subjects the party sanctioned to a probationary period of between one (1) year and four (4) years.

34.3. If a party benefiting from a suspended sanction commits another infringement during the probationary period, the suspension is automatically revoked and the sanction applied; it is added to the sanction pronounced for the new infringement.

34.4. In the case of anti-doping rule violations, this Article is not applicable.

## **35. Time sanctions: calculation of time limit**

35.1. The duration of a time sanction can be interrupted by rest periods during or between seasons.

## **36. Centralisation of sanctions**

36.1. Records of cautions, expulsions and Match suspensions are stored in AFCAS.

36.1.1. Following each Match, the AFC shall confirm in writing any disciplinary decisions undertaken by the Referee to the Member Association or Club concerned.

36.1.2. In the case of centralised final competitions, the AFC shall confirm in writing any disciplinary decisions undertaken by the Referee to the relevant Team Manager.

36.2. This communication serves only as a notice of confirmation: sanctions (cautions, expulsions, automatic Match suspensions) have an immediate effect on subsequent Matches even if the letter of confirmation reaches the Member Association, Club or relevant Team Manager later than a Match in which a suspension is to be carried out.

## **Section 3: Carrying over and cancelling cautions and Match suspensions**

### **37. Carrying over cautions**

37.1. Cautions received during a competition are not carried over to another competition.

37.2. Cautions are carried over from one stage to the next in the same competition unless the competition regulations provide otherwise. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may exceptionally depart from this before the start of a particular competition.

37.3. Upon its own initiative or upon request, the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may cancel cautions that have not resulted in an expulsion so as to restore the balance among several teams that have not played the same number of Matches during the first round of a competition, or in other exceptional circumstances.

37.3.1. This may only be undertaken once in any competition.

37.3.2. Any such decision is final and binding and not appealable.

## 38. Carrying over Match suspensions

- 38.1. As a general rule, every Match suspension is carried over from one stage to the next in the same competition.
- 38.2. Unless otherwise decided by a judicial body, a Match suspension pronounced in terms of Matches in relation to a sending-off pronounced on an individual outside of a competition (separate Match(es)) or not served during the competition for which they were intended (elimination or the last Match in the competition) is carried over as follows:
- 38.2.1. AFC competitions for representative teams: to the representative team's next Match in AFC or FIFA competition in the same category of football;
- 38.2.2. AFC competitions subject to an age limit: to the representative team's next Match in the same age group in AFC or FIFA competition in the same category of football. Where the suspension cannot be served in the same age group, it shall be carried over to a higher age category in AFC or FIFA competition in the same category of football;
- 38.2.3. AFC club competitions: to the individual's next official Club Match in a continental competition in the same category of football;
- 38.2.4. Friendly Matches: shall be carried over to the representative team's next friendly Match; and
- 38.2.5. Non-official competitions for representative teams: if the regulations of such competitions refer to the Code, to the representative team's next Match in AFC or FIFA competition in the same category of football.
- 38.3. If a representative team is hosting a final competition and is not required to participate in qualifying Matches and its next official Match in AFC or FIFA competition is in that final competition, any Match suspension pronounced in accordance with Article 38.2 shall be carried over to the representative team's next friendly Match in the same category of football.
- 38.4. In no case may a Match suspension resulting from several cautions issued to an individual in different Matches of the same competition be carried over to another competition.
- 38.5. A Match suspension that has to be carried over to another competition must be served by the individual concerned, regardless of whether the status of that person has changed in the meantime – e.g. from Player to Official or vice versa.

## **Section 4: Determining the sanction**

### **39. General rules**

- 39.1. The judicial body pronouncing the sanction determines the type and extent of the disciplinary measures to be imposed in accordance with the objective and subjective elements of the offence, taking account of both aggravating and mitigating circumstances.
- 39.2. Sanctions may be limited to a geographical area or to one (1) or more specific categories of Match or competition.
- 39.3. Disciplinary measures can be reduced or increased by the judicial body on the basis of the circumstances of the specific case.
- 39.4. For the avoidance of any doubt, the judicial body may, even where a minimum sanction is identified in the Code or relevant AFC regulations, choose to impose a sanction lower or higher than the minimum and/or of a different nature to the minimum after having considered all of the relevant circumstances in accordance with Article 39.3.
- 39.5. In addition to disciplinary measures, the judicial bodies may issue directives stipulating the manner in which a disciplinary measure must be carried out, including the date and conditions on which the disciplinary measure is to take effect.

### **40. Recidivism**

- 40.1. Recidivism is an aggravating circumstance. Unless otherwise specified, the judicial body may increase a sanction as it sees fit if an infringement has been repeated.
- 40.2. Subject to Articles 40.3 and 40.4, recidivism occurs if another offence of a similar nature is committed by the same defendant after notification of the previous decision within:
- 40.2.1. one (1) year of the previous offence if that offence was punished with a suspension of up to two (2) Matches; and
  - 40.2.2. three (3) years of the previous offence in all other cases.
- 40.3. There is no time limit for recidivism if the previous offence was related to Match-manipulation or corruption.
- 40.4. This Article is not applicable to repeated anti-doping rule violations which are governed by the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.

## **41. Concurrent infringements**

41.1. Where more than one (1) infringement has been committed as a result of the same misconduct, the sanction shall be based on the most serious infringement, and increased as appropriate depending on the specific circumstances.

## **42. Limitation period for prosecution**

42.1. Infringements committed during a Match cannot be prosecuted after a lapse of two (2) years.

42.2. The prosecution of anti-doping rule violations is subject to the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.

42.3. Prosecution for Match-manipulation (cf. Article 66) or corruption (cf. Article 68) is not subject to a limitation period.

42.4. All other infringements cannot be prosecuted after a lapse of ten (10) years.

## **43. Commencement of limitation period**

43.1. The limitation period runs as follows:

43.1.1. from the day on which the perpetrator committed the infringement;

43.1.2. if the infringement is recurrent, from the day on which the most recent infringement was committed;

43.1.3. if the infringement lasted a certain period, from the day on which it ended; and

43.1.4. the limitation period, when applicable, shall be interrupted where criminal proceedings are formally opened against a person bound by this Code during such proceedings.

## **44. Completion of limitation period**

44.1. The limitation period is completed if the AFC commences proceedings before it has expired.

## **45. Limitation period for the enforcement of sanctions**

45.1. The limitation period for the enforcement of sanctions is five (5) years.

45.2. The limitation period begins on the day on which the decision comes into force.

# CHAPTER TWO: OFFENCES

## Section 1: Disciplinary decisions made by the Referee

### 46. Minor infringements punishable by a caution

46.1. A Player is cautioned by the Referee during a Match if he commits any of the following offences (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and Article 12 of the Code), without limitation:

46.1.1. unsporting behaviour;

46.1.2. dissent by word or action;

46.1.3. persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game;

46.1.4. delaying the restart of play;

46.1.5. failure to retreat the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in;

46.1.6. entering or re-entering the field of play without the Referee's permission;

46.1.7. deliberately leaving the field of play without the Referee's permission;

46.1.8. entering the RRA; and

46.1.9. excessively using the 'review' (TV screen) signal.

46.2. An Official is cautioned by the Referee during a Match if he commits any of the following offences (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and Article 12 of the Code), without limitation:

46.2.1. clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area;

46.2.2. delaying the restart of play by their team;

46.2.3. deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational);

46.2.4. dissent by word or action including:

- 46.2.4.1. throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects;
  - 46.2.4.2. gestures which show a clear lack of respect for the Match Official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping;
  - 46.2.5. entering the RRA;
  - 46.2.6. excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card;
  - 46.2.7. excessively showing the TV signal for a VAR 'review';
  - 46.2.8. gesturing or acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner;
  - 46.2.9. persistent unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warning offences, cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game); and
  - 46.2.10. showing a lack of respect for the game.
- 46.3. Where an offence is committed and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

## **47. Serious infringements punishable by an expulsion**

- 47.1. A Player is sent off by the Referee if he commits any of the following offences (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and Article 13 of the Code), without limitation:
- 47.1.1. serious foul play;
  - 47.1.2. violent conduct;
  - 47.1.3. biting or spitting at an opponent or any other person;
  - 47.1.4. denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area);
  - 47.1.5. denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the Player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick;
  - 47.1.6. using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures;
  - 47.1.7. receiving a second caution in the same Match; and
  - 47.1.8. entering the VOR.

- 47.2. An Official is sent off by the Referee if he commits any of the following offences (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and Article 13 of the Code), without limitation:
- 47.2.1. delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a Player;
  - 47.2.2. deliberately leaving the technical area to:
    - 47.2.2.1. show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a Match Official;
    - 47.2.2.2. act in a provocative or inflammatory manner;
  - 47.2.3. entering the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner;
  - 47.2.4. deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play;
  - 47.2.5. entering the field of play to:
    - 47.2.5.1. confront a Match Official (including at half-time and full-time);
    - 47.2.5.2. interfere with play, an opposing Player or Match Official;
  - 47.2.6. entering the VOR;
  - 47.2.7. physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing Player, substitute, Official, Match Official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, competition official etc.);
  - 47.2.8. receiving a second caution in the same Match;
  - 47.2.9. using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures;
  - 47.2.10. using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment; and
  - 47.2.11. violent conduct (e.g. elbowing, punching, kicking).
- 47.3. Where an offence is committed and the offender cannot be identified, the senior team coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

## 48. Sanction for serious infringements punishable by an expulsion

48.1. Including the automatic suspension incurred in accordance with Article 13.5, any recipient of a direct expulsion shall be issued a Match suspension as follows:

- 48.1.1. one (1) Match for denying the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity;
- 48.1.2. at least one (1) Match for deliberately receiving a yellow or red card, e.g. in order to be suspended for an upcoming Match and to ultimately have a clean record;
- 48.1.3. at least two (2) Matches for serious foul play;
- 48.1.4. at least one (1) Match for using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures or indulging in unsporting behaviour towards an opponent or person other than a Match Official (subject to Articles 50, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60);
- 48.1.5. at least three (3) Matches or at least two (2) months for violent conduct towards an opponent or person other than a Match Official (e.g. elbowing, punching, kicking);
- 48.1.6. at least six (6) Matches or at least four (4) months for biting or spitting at an opponent or a person other than a Match Official;
- 48.1.7. one (1) Match for entering the VOR;
- 48.1.8. one (1) Match for delaying the restart of play by the opposing team;
- 48.1.9. at least one (1) Match for deliberately leaving the technical area to act in a provocative or inflammatory manner and/or entering the field of play to interfere with play or an opposing Player (cf. Articles 47.2.2.2 and 47.2.5.2);
- 48.1.10. at least one (1) Match for entering the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner;
- 48.1.11. at least one (1) Match for deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play; and
- 48.1.12. one (1) Match for using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment.

48.2. A fine of at least USD1,000 shall be imposed in all cases.

48.3. If a judicial body exercises its jurisdiction in accordance with Article 79.1.1 of the Code, the individual shall be considered to be a recipient of a direct expulsion and, subject to the circumstances, Article 48.1 and 48.2 may apply.

## **49. Sanction for serious infringements punishable by an expulsion undertaken against Match Officials**

49.1. Including the automatic suspension incurred in accordance with Article 13.4, any recipient of a direct expulsion shall be issued a Match suspension as follows:

49.1.1. at least four (4) Matches or at least three (3) months for using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures towards a Match Official (subject to Articles 50, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60);

49.1.2. at least ten (10) Matches or at least six (6) months for violent conduct (e.g. elbowing, punching, kicking) undertaken towards a Match Official;

49.1.3. at least fifteen (15) Matches or at least twelve (12) months for biting or spitting at a Match Official;

49.1.4. at least two (2) Matches for acting with obvious intent to cause a Match Official to make an incorrect decision or supporting his error of judgement and thereby causing him to make an incorrect decision; and

49.1.5. at least one (1) Match for deliberately leaving the technical area to show dissent towards, or remonstrate with a Match Official and/or entering the field of play to confront a Match Official (including at half-time and full-time) or interfere with a Match Official (cf. Articles 47.2.2.1, 47.2.5.1 and 47.2.5.2).

49.2. A fine of at least USD5,000 shall be imposed in all cases.

49.3. If a body exercises its jurisdiction in accordance with Article 79.1.1 of the Code, the individual shall be considered to be a recipient of a direct expulsion and, subject to the circumstances, Article 49.1 and 49.2 may apply.

## Section 2: Offences

### 50. Bringing the game into disrepute

50.1. Any party whose conduct brings the game into disrepute has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** subject to the gravity of the offence.

50.2. Conduct that brings the game into disrepute includes without limitation:

50.2.1. insulting someone in any way;

50.2.2. violating the principles of fair play;

50.2.3. engaging in unsporting behaviour.

50.3. Where the individual cannot be identified, his affiliated Member Association or Club shall be held liable.

50.4. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

### 51. Brawl

51.1. Involvement in a brawl is an offence.

51.1.1. Any individual who has tried merely to prevent a brawl, shield others or separate those involved in a brawl, shall not be deemed to be involved in a brawl.

**Penalty:** for an individual, suspension of at least six (6) Matches or at least four (4) months;  
for a Member Association or Club, fine of at least USD10,000.

51.2. Notwithstanding Article 51.1.1, any individual who deliberately enters the field of play during a brawl regardless of culpable conduct has committed an offence.

**Penalty: suspension of at least two (2) Matches.**

51.3. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## **52. Damage to property**

52.1. Causing damage to property before, during, or after a Match is an offence.

52.2. Where property is damaged inside a team dressing room or team bench area, it is presumed that such damage was undertaken by an individual affiliated to the relevant team assigned to that team dressing room or team bench area. The party may produce evidence to rebut the presumption, which shall be determined on the balance of probabilities.

52.3. Where the individual cannot be identified, his affiliated Member Association or Club shall be held liable.

**Penalty: for an individual, fine of at least USD1,000 plus cost of damage caused;  
for a Member Association or Club, fine of at least USD2,000 plus cost of damage caused.**

52.4. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 53. Team misconduct

53.1. If any team conducts itself improperly (for example, if individual disciplinary sanctions are imposed by the Referee on either five (5) or more Players or a combination of six (6) or more Players and Officials in case of football during a Match, or three (3) or more Players or a combination of four (4) or more Players and Officials in the case of futsal or beach soccer during a Match), disciplinary measures may also be taken against the Member Association or Club concerned.

**Penalty:** fine of USD600 per expulsion and USD300 per caution, unless specified differently within the Competition Regulations or Disciplinary Circular (cf. Article 143).

53.2. Any team where several individuals threaten or harass Match Officials or other persons during a Match has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** fine of at least USD6,000.

53.3. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 54. Inciting hatred and violence

54.1. Anyone who publicly incites others to hatred or violence has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** for a Player, Official or individual in a team delegation  
Match suspension of at least fifteen (15) Matches or at least twelve (12) months; and  
fine of at least USD3,000 (at least USD15,000 in aggravated cases).

for any other individual  
ban on all football-related activity for at least twelve (12) months; and  
fine of at least USD3,000 (at least USD15,000 in aggravated cases).

for a Member Association of Club  
fine of at least USD15,000 (at least USD30,000 in aggravated cases); and  
any other sanctions as listed in the Code.

54.2. The offence is aggravated where the infringement is committed using the mass media, social media, or if it takes place on a Match day in or around a Stadium.

54.3. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 55. Provoking the general public

55.1. Anyone who provokes the general public during a Match has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** for a Player, Match Official or individual in a team delegation  
**suspension of two (2) Matches; and fine of at least USD3,000.**

for any other individual  
**ban on all football-related activity for at least thirty (30) days; and fine of at least USD3,000.**

for a Member Association of Club  
**fine of at least USD15,000.**

55.2. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 56. Ineligibility

56.1. If a Player is fielded in a Match despite being ineligible, an offence has been committed.

**Penalty:** for a Member Association or Club  
**forfeit of the Match; and fine of at least USD1,000.**

for a Player  
**fine of at least USD1,000.**

56.2. If a team fields more than one (1) Player who is ineligible in a Match, the fine shall be multiplied by the number of ineligible Players who participated in the relevant Match.

56.3. If the offence is discovered after the completion of a competition, the judicial body may additionally order that the team be excluded from a future competition or the deduction of points from a future competition.

56.4. The offence is aggravated in cases of age-fraud.

**Penalty:**     **forfeit of the Match (if applicable);  
fine of at least USD2,500;  
(if applicable) withdrawal of title or awards; and/or  
disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion  
from a future competition.**

## 57. Abandonment

57.1. If a team refuses to play a Match or to continue playing one which has begun, it has committed an offence.

**Penalty:**     **forfeit of the Match; and  
fine of at least USD10,000.**

57.2. In serious cases, the offence is aggravated.

**Penalty:**     **forfeit of the Match; and  
fine of at least USD10,000; and  
disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion  
from a future competition.**

## 58. Discrimination

58.1. Anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, skin colour, gender, disability, language, age, physical appearance, religion, political opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation, or ethnic, national, or social origin has committed an offence.

**Penalty:**     **for an individual:**  
**ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least six (6)  
months; and  
fine of at least USD10,000.**

**for a Club or Member Association:**  
**an order to play a Match with no or a limited number of spectators;  
and fine of at least USD10,000.**

58.2. The offence is aggravated where several persons from the same Club or Member Association simultaneously commit the offence.

**Penalty:** for a Club or Member Association:  
fine of at least USD20,000; and order to play at least one (1) future Match without spectators; and deduction of three (3) points for the current or future competition; or (in the case of a Match or competition in which no points are awarded) disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition.

58.3. The offence is aggravated where supporters of a team commit the offence.

**Penalty:** for a Club or Member Association:  
fine of at least USD25,000; and deduction of three (3) points or playing one or more Matches without spectators or a ban on playing in a particular Stadium or the forfeiting of a Match or expulsion from a competition or relegation to a lower division or a combination of the above-mentioned sanctions may be imposed on the Member Association or Club concerned.

for a spectator:  
Stadium ban of at least two (2) years.

58.4. In any other type of aggravated offence, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 59. Threats

59.1. Anyone who intimidates a Match Official with serious threats has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** fine of at least USD2,000; and suspension of at least two (2) Matches.

59.2. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 60. Coercion

60.1. Anyone who uses violence or threats to pressure a Match Official into taking certain action or to hinder him in any other way from acting freely has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** fine of at least USD2,000; and  
suspension of at least two (2) Matches.

60.2. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 61. Forgery and Falsification

61.1. Anyone who, in football-related activities:

61.1.1. forges a document; or

61.1.2. falsifies an authentic document; or

61.1.3. uses a forged or falsified document,

has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** for a Player:  
fine of at least USD5,000; and  
suspension of at least six (6) Matches.

for any other individual:  
fine of at least USD5,000; and  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least  
twelve (12) months.

61.2. A Member Association or Club may be held jointly liable for an offence committed by any affiliated individual.

**Penalty:** fine of at least USD10,000; and  
(in appropriate circumstances) disqualification from a competition  
in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition.

61.3. Where the individual cannot be identified, his Member Association or Club shall be held liable for the offence.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD20,000; and disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition.**

61.4. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## **62. Doping**

62.1. The commission of any Anti-Doping Rule Violation as pronounced within the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations in force at the relevant time is an offence.

**Penalty: in accordance with the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.**

## **63. Failure to respect decisions**

63.1. Anyone who fails to:

63.1.1. pay a sum of money in full or part, even though instructed to do so by a body, a committee or an instance of AFC or a subsequent CAS appeal decision; or

63.1.2. comply with a non-financial decision passed by a body, a committee or an instance of AFC or a subsequent CAS appeal decision; or

63.1.3. respect the disciplinary decision of a Referee to expel him from a Match, has committed an offence.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD3,000.**

63.2. The non-compliant party will be granted a final deadline by the judicial body in which to pay the amount or comply with the non-financial decision.

63.3. Anyone who fails to comply with a final deadline issued by a judicial body as set out in this Article has committed an aggravated offence.

**Penalty:** for an individual:  
**ban on football-related activity for at least six (6) months (first offence);**  
**ban on football-related activity for at least twelve (12) months (repeat offences).**

for a Club or Member Association:  
**deduction of points from a current or future competition (first offence);**  
**disqualification from a current competition or expulsion from a future competition (second offence).**

63.4. The non-compliant party will be granted another final deadline by the body in which to pay the amount or comply with the non-financial decision. Failure to comply shall result in the offence pursuant to Article 63.3 being committed again.

63.5. Any appeal against a decision passed in accordance with this Article shall be directly lodged with CAS.

## **64. Organisation of Matches**

64.1. Any Member Association or Club that fails to fulfil any of its obligations relating to the organisation of Matches has committed an offence.

**Penalty:** **fine of at least USD5,000.**

64.2. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

64.3. A Member Association or Club that hosts Matches is responsible for order and security both in and around the Stadium before, during, and after Matches. They are liable for incidents of any kind and may be subject to disciplinary measures and directives. In particular, it shall:

- 64.3.1. assess the degree of risk posed by matches and notify the AFC bodies of those that are especially high-risk;
- 64.3.2. comply with and implement existing safety rules (e.g. FIFA and AFC regulations, national laws, international agreements) and take every safety precaution demanded by circumstances before, during and after the Match and if incidents occur;
- 64.3.3. ensure the safety of Match Officials, Players and Officials of the visiting team during their stay;
- 64.3.4. keep local authorities informed and collaborate with them actively and effectively; and
- 64.3.5. ensure that law and order is maintained in the Stadium and immediate surroundings and that Matches are organised properly.

## **65. Liability for spectator conduct**

65.1. Improper conduct undertaken by spectators is an offence.

65.1.1. Improper conduct includes, without limitation, violence towards persons or objects, letting off incendiary devices, throwing missiles, the use of laser pointers or similar electronic devices, the use of insulting, religious and political messages or images in any form, uttering insulting words or sounds, causing a disturbance during national anthems, flying of drones and/or invading the field of play or other restricted areas.

65.1.2. The home Member Association or home Club is liable for improper conduct among spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight.

65.1.3. The visiting Member Association or visiting Club is liable for improper conduct among its own group of spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight. Supporters occupying the away sector of a Stadium are regarded as the visiting Member Association or visiting Club supporters, unless proven to the contrary.

**Penalty: please refer to Appendix 1.**

65.2. For the avoidance of doubt, the liability described in Articles 65.1.2 and 65.1.3 includes Matches played on neutral territory.

## 66. Unlawfully influencing Match results

66.1. Anyone who directly or indirectly, by an act or an omission, unlawfully influences or manipulates the course, result or any other aspect of a Match and/or competition or conspires or attempts to do so by any means has committed an offence.

66.1.1. The requesting or support of any such influence or manipulation, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, shall fall within the scope of Article 66.1.

66.1.2. There is no influence or manipulation if the individual intends to obtain or secure an advantage exclusively within the context of a Match.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD30,000; and  
a ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least five (5) years.**

66.2. In the case of an aggravated offence, the ban on taking part in any football-related activity shall be a life ban.

66.3. The Club or Member Association to whom the individual is affiliated may be also held jointly and severally liable for any offence committed pursuant to Article 66.1.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD50,000; and/or  
disqualification from a current competition or exclusion from a future competition; and  
(where applicable) withdrawal of a title or award.**

66.4. The provision to anyone of special knowledge or otherwise not publicly available information that may impact on the integrity of any football Match or competition, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, is an offence.

66.4.1. The requesting or support of any such provision, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, shall fall within the scope of Article 66.4.

**Penalty: for a Player:  
fine of at least USD2,000; and  
suspension of at least two (2) Matches.**

**for any other individual:  
fine of at least USD1,000; and  
suspension of at least one (1) Match; or  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least one (1)  
month.**

66.5. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

66.6. Association in a professional or sports-related capacity with an individual who has violated Article 66.1 or found in a criminal, disciplinary, or professional proceeding to have engaged in conduct which would have constituted a violation of Article 66.1 is an offence.

66.6.1. The disqualifying status of such individual shall be whichever is longer of:

66.6.1.1. the sanction issued due to a violation of Article 66.1; or

66.6.1.2. the criminal, disciplinary, or professional sanction imposed; or

66.6.1.3. five (5) years from the date of the criminal, disciplinary, or professional sanction imposed.

66.6.2. The association with a front or intermediary of an individual described in Article 66.6 of this Code shall be considered to be an association with that individual for the purposes of Article 66.6.

66.6.3. Anybody charged with an offence pursuant to Article 66.6 shall bear the burden of proving that their association with any individual described in Article 66.6 is not in a professional or sports-related capacity.

**Penalty: for an individual:  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least two (2) years.**

**for a Club or Member Association:  
fine of at least USD10,000; and  
disqualification from a competition in progress and/or exclusion from a future competition.**

66.7. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

66.8. Everyone bound by this Code who fails to cooperate fully with the AFC at all times in its efforts to combat such behaviour and report to the secretariat of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee immediately any approach in connection with activities and/or information directly or indirectly related to the possible manipulation of a football Match or competition incompatible with Article 66 of this Code has committed an offence.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD15,000; and/or  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least two (2) years.**

## **67. Obligations of Member Associations and Clubs**

67.1. Member Associations and Clubs shall:

67.1.1. actively vet the age of Players shown on the identity cards they produce at competitions that are subject to age limits;

67.1.2. ensure that no-one is involved in their management who is under prosecution for action unworthy of such a position (e.g. doping, corruption, forgery) or who has been convicted of a criminal offence in the past five (5) years; and

67.1.3. bear the responsibility of monitoring the cautions and/or suspensions received by its Players and Officials and to ensure that all Players and Officials registered and or fielded during a competition are eligible to play.

67.2. Failure to adhere to any of these obligations is an offence. The judicial body may order any of the sanctions as set out in this Code as it sees fit in the circumstances.

## 68. Corruption

68.1. Anyone who offers, promises or grants an unjustified advantage to a body or judicial body of the AFC, a Match Official, a Player or an Official on behalf of himself or a third party in an attempt to incite a violation of AFC regulations or obtain any other improper advantage has committed an offence.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD20,000; and  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least three (3) years; and  
confiscation of the assets involved in committing the infringement.**

68.2. Anyone who solicits or accepts an unjustified advantage from an individual seeking to incite a violation of AFC regulations or obtain any other improper advantage, regardless of whether that advantage materialises, has committed an offence.

**Penalty: fine of at least USD20,000; and  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least three (3) years; and  
confiscation of the assets involved in committing the infringement.**

68.3. The instruction of an intermediary or related party to offer, promise, grant, solicit, or accept an unjustified advantage shall fall within the scope of Article 68.1 or Article 68.2.

68.4. For either offence, where the offence is aggravated, the ban on taking part in any football-related activity shall be a life ban.

68.5. For either offence, in the case of a repeated offence, the ban on taking part in any football-related activity shall be a life ban.

## 69. Betting

69.1. Making any bets in relation to any Match or competition is an offence.

69.1.1. The requesting or support of any such betting, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, shall fall within the scope of Article 69.1.

**Penalty:**    **for a Player:**  
**fine of at least USD1,000; and/or**  
**suspension of at least one (1) Match.**

**for any other individual:**  
**fine of at least USD1,000; and**  
**suspension of at least one (1) Match; or**  
**ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least one (1) month.**

69.2. The provision to anyone of special knowledge or otherwise not publicly available information that is relevant to betting on any Match or competition, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, is an offence.

69.2.1. The requesting or support of any such provision, whether for one's own gain or for the gain of others, shall fall within the scope of Article 69.2.

**Penalty:**    **for a Player:**  
**fine of at least USD1,000; and/or**  
**suspension of at least one (1) Match.**

**for any other individual:**  
**fine of at least USD1,000; and**  
**suspension of at least one (1) Match; or**  
**ban on taking part in any football-related activity for at least one (1) month.**

69.3. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

## 70. Integrity of Conduct

- 70.1. A party must use due care and diligence in fulfilling their duties.
- 70.2. A party must act with the highest degree of integrity, and particularly when making decisions, they must act with impartiality, objectivity, independence and professionalism.
- 70.3. A party must refrain from any act involving fraud or corruption.
- 70.4. A party must not act in a manner likely to tarnish the reputation of Asian football.
- 70.5. A party or its representative(s) must not, directly or indirectly, solicit, accept or offer any form of remuneration or commission, nor any concealed benefit or service of any nature, when negotiating deals of any kind when performing their duties.
- 70.6. A party may only give or receive tokens of consideration or friendship of nominal value, in accordance with prevailing local customs.
- 70.6.1. Such tokens may not lead to the impartiality and integrity of the party, the AFC, or Asian football being called into question.
- 70.6.2. Any other form of token, object or benefit shall constitute a gift which shall not be accepted. Receipt of any such token, object, or benefit shall be immediately reported to the AFC.
- 70.6.3. For the avoidance of doubt, the giving and receiving of cash is not permitted.
- 70.6.4. For hospitality shown to a party, as well as those accompanying them, a sense of measure must be respected.
- 70.7. A party must avoid any situation that could lead to a conflict of interest.
- 70.7.1. When performing an activity for the AFC or before being elected or appointed, a party bound by this Code shall disclose any personal interests that could be linked with their prospective activities.
- 70.7.2. Conflicts of interest arise if the party bound by this Code has, or appear to have, private or personal interests that could detract from their ability to perform their duties with integrity in an independent and purposeful manner. Private or personal interests include gaining any possible advantage for other parties bound by this Code, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.
- 70.7.3. A party bound by this Code shall not perform their duties in cases with an existing or potential conflict of interest. Such conflicts shall be immediately disclosed to the AFC.

- 70.8. A party must respect the physical and mental integrity of others and must refrain from all forms of verbal, physical and mental abuse.
- 70.8.1. Harassment of any nature (including sexual harassment) is forbidden.
- 70.8.2. Harassment may be verbal, mental and/or physical in nature.
- 70.8.3. Harassment can take many forms, and includes systematic, hostile and repeated acts perpetrated for a considerable duration, which are intended to isolate or ostracise a person and affect the dignity of the person.
- 70.8.4. Sexual harassment can involve unwelcome sexual advances that are not solicited or invited.
- 70.8.5. Any assessment of harassment is based on whether a reasonable person would consider the relevant conduct to be undesirable and/or offensive (as the case may be).
- 70.8.6. Threats, the promise of advantages and coercion are particularly prohibited.
- 70.8.7. The harassment of minors shall be considered an aggravating factor.
- 70.9. Failure to adhere to any of these obligations is an offence.

**Penalty: for physical or mental abuse:  
fine of at least USD10,000; and  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity for a minimum of two (2) years.**

**for sexual exploitation or abuse, or in other serious cases:  
fine of at least USD 20,000; and  
ban on taking part in any football-related activity may be pronounced for a minimum of ten (10) years.**

## 71. Good Governance and Resources

- 71.1. A party must refrain from utilising football resources for non-football and/or inappropriate purposes.
- 71.1.1. Football resources includes without limitation development monies or prize monies provided by the AFC to a Member Association or Club.

71.2. A party must ensure, where the AFC provides financial support to a Member Association or Club and where appropriate in accordance with their official role, that the use of these resources is clearly demonstrated in annual financial accounts.

71.2.1. The AFC may request and subject any such accounts to an independent audit by an expert of its choice.

71.3. A party must ensure that the promotion of their candidature for office in any Asian football election shall not denigrate the character of any other candidate.

71.3.1. AFC sponsors and AFC marketing partners are not permitted to support or promote any candidature for office. The relevant candidate shall be held liable for any support or promotion of their candidature for office by such third parties.

71.4. Failure to adhere to any of these obligations is an offence. The judicial body may order any of the sanctions as set out in this Code as it sees fit in the circumstances.

## **72. Duty of neutrality, loyalty, and confidentiality**

72.1. A party must ensure that in dealings with government institutions, national and international organisations, associations and groupings, they remain politically neutral.

72.2. Everyone bound by this Code has a fiduciary duty to the AFC.

72.3. A party must ensure that information of a confidential nature divulged to them while performing their duties shall be treated as confidential or secret if such information is given with the understanding or communication of confidentiality.

72.4. Failure to adhere to any of these obligations is an offence. The judicial body may order any of the sanctions as set out in this Code as it sees fit in the circumstances.

## 73. Duty to report any infringement

73.1. Without prejudice to Article 66.8, everyone bound by this Code has a duty to report to the AFC, without undue delay and unprompted, any conduct of a third-party incompatible with this Code or any other AFC regulation.

73.2. The failure to comply with the duty to report conduct incompatible with this Code or any other AFC regulation is an offence.

**Penalty:** subject to the gravity of the incompatible conduct that was not reported.

73.3. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

# CHAPTER THREE: ORGANISATION

## Section 1: Jurisdiction

### 74. General rule

74.1. The scope of the jurisdiction of the AFC is set out in Article 2 of this Code. The judicial bodies shall be competent to investigate, prosecute and sanction conduct within the scope of application of this Code.

74.2. With regard to friendly International Matches requiring authorisation from the AFC but not organised by the AFC (cf. Article 2), the relevant Member Association is responsible for enforcing sanctions against infringements that are undertaken by its Clubs, Players, Officials, and spectators.

74.2.1. If requested, the sanctions passed may be extended to have effect at confederation level (cf. Article 135).

74.2.2. The AFC may investigate, prosecute and sanction serious infringements within the scope of application of this Code that fall under the jurisdiction of Member Associations or other sports organisations if deemed appropriate in a specific case and if the relevant Member Association or other sports organisation fails to prosecute serious infringements within three (3) months from the infringement becoming known to the AFC.

74.3. With regard to international competitions requiring authorisation from the AFC but not organised by the AFC (cf. Article 2), the Member Association and/or sports organisation that organise such competitions are responsible for enforcing sanctions imposed against infringements committed in their area of jurisdiction.

74.3.1. If requested, the sanctions passed may be extended to have effect at confederation level (cf. Article 135).

74.3.2. The AFC may investigate, prosecute and sanction serious infringements within the scope of application of this Code that fall under the jurisdiction of Member Associations or other sports organisations if deemed appropriate in a specific case and if the relevant Member Association or other sports organisation fails to prosecute serious infringements within three (3) months from the infringement becoming known to the AFC.

74.4. With regard to domestic Matches or competitions, the Member Association and/or sports organisation that organise such Matches or competitions are responsible for enforcing sanctions imposed against infringements committed in their area of jurisdiction.

74.4.1. If requested, the sanctions passed may be extended to have effect at confederation level (cf. Article 135).

74.4.2. The AFC may investigate, prosecute and sanction serious infringements within the scope of application of this Code that fall under the jurisdiction of Member Associations or other sports organisations if deemed appropriate in a specific case and if the relevant Member Association or other sports organisation fails to prosecute serious infringements within three (3) months from the infringement becoming known to the AFC.

74.5. Member Associations and other sports organisations shall notify the AFC of any serious infringements of the statutory objectives of the AFC that occur within their area of jurisdiction.

## 75. Referee

- 75.1. Decisions taken by the Referee on the field of play are final and generally may not be reviewed by the judicial bodies.
- 75.2. In certain circumstances, the jurisdiction of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may be enlivened (cf. Article 79).
- 75.3. In cases where a decision by the Referee involves an obvious error (such as mistaking the identity of the person penalised), the judicial bodies may only review the disciplinary consequences of that decision. In cases of mistaken identity, disciplinary proceedings may, in accordance with this Code, be opened only against the person who was actually at fault.
- 75.4. A protest against a caution or a sending-off from the field of play after two cautions is admissible only if the Referee's error was to mistake the identity of the player.
- 75.5. The provisions of this Code relating to protests against Match results affected by a Referee's decision that was an obvious violation of a rule remain applicable.

## 76. Judicial bodies

76.1. The judicial bodies of the AFC (cf. Articles 19 and 57 of the AFC Statutes) are the:

76.1.1. AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee;

76.1.2. AFC Appeal Committee; and

76.1.3. AFC Entry Control Body (which is governed by the AFC Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body and this Code, where appropriate).

## 77. Court of Arbitration for Sport

- 77.1. Certain decisions passed by the AFC Appeal Committee may be appealed before the Court of Arbitration for Sport if such appeal is in accordance with the relevant Articles of the AFC Statutes and this Code.

# Section 2: AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

## 78. General jurisdiction

- 78.1. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee is authorised to sanction any breach of AFC regulations which does not come under the jurisdiction of another body.

## **79. Specific jurisdiction**

79.1. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee is responsible for:

79.1.1. sanctioning serious infringements which have escaped the Match Officials' attention;

79.1.2. rectifying obvious errors in the Referee's disciplinary decisions;

79.1.3. extending the duration of a Match suspension incurred automatically by a sending-off (cf. Article 13.5); and

79.1.4. pronouncing additional sanctions, such as a fine.

## **80. Jurisdiction of the chairperson or member ruling alone**

80.1. The chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee or a member designated by the chairperson, may make the following decisions alone:

80.1.1. suspend a person for up to four (4) Matches or for up to three (3) months;

80.1.2. pronounce a fine of up to USD15,000;

80.1.3. rule on a request to extend a sanction (cf. Article 135);

80.1.4. settle disputes arising from objections to members of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (cf. Article 88);

80.1.5. pronounce, alter and annul provisional measures (cf. Article 130);

80.1.6. in urgent cases on request, refer a case directly to the AFC Appeal Committee for its decision;

80.1.7. rule on any protest received pursuant to any competition regulations;

80.1.8. cases arising under Article 37; and

80.1.9. cases arising under Article 104.

## **Section 3: AFC Appeal Committee**

### **81. Jurisdiction**

81.1. The AFC Appeal Committee is responsible for deciding appeals against any decision of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee that AFC regulations do not declare as final or referable to another body.

### **82. Jurisdiction of the chairperson or member ruling alone**

82.1. The chairperson of the AFC Appeal Committee or a member designated by the chairperson may make the following decisions alone:

82.1.1. decide on appeals against decisions passed by the chairperson or member of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee acting alone so long as such appeals are admissible (cf. Articles 80 and 122);

82.1.2. decide on appeals against provisional measure decisions passed by the chairperson or member of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee acting alone (cf. Articles 80 and 130);

82.1.3. decide on appeals against a decision to extend a sanction (cf. Article 140);

82.1.4. decide on appeals in urgent cases or protest cases;

82.1.5. resolve disputes arising from objections to members of the AFC Appeal Committee (cf. Article 88); and

82.1.6. pronounce alter and annul provisional measures (cf. Article 130).

## **Section 4: Common rules for the judicial bodies**

### **83. Composition**

83.1. The AFC Congress elects the chairperson, deputy chairperson(s), and members of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee and the AFC Appeal Committee for a period of four (4) years on the recommendation of the AFC Executive Committee.

83.2. The chairperson and deputy chairperson of each judicial body shall have legal qualifications. The members of each judicial body shall have legal qualifications or related experience.

### **84. Meetings**

84.1. The secretariat shall call the number of members deemed necessary to each meeting.

84.2. Subject to Article 80, meetings are deemed valid if at least three (3) members are present.

84.3. The chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in their absence the longest-serving member, shall chair each meeting and pass the decisions that this Code empowers the chairperson to take.

### **85. Secretariat**

85.1. The AFC General Secretariat provides the judicial bodies with a secretariat and the necessary support, infrastructure and staff.

85.2. The AFC General Secretary appoints the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries who shall be legally trained.

85.3. The secretariat takes charge of the administrative work and writes the minutes and decisions of the meetings.

85.4. The secretariat manages the case files. The decisions passed and the relevant files shall be kept for at least ten (10) years.

## **86. Independence**

- 86.1. The judicial bodies pass their decisions entirely independently; in particular, they shall not receive instructions from any other body.
- 86.2. A member of another AFC body may not stay in the meeting room during the judicial bodies' deliberations unless they have explicitly summoned him to attend.

## **87. Incompatibility of office**

- 87.1. The members of the judicial bodies shall not belong either to the AFC Executive Committee or any AFC Standing Committee.

## **88. Withdrawal**

- 88.1. Members of the judicial bodies must recuse themselves from matters where there are serious grounds for questioning their impartiality.
- 88.2. This applies, without limitation, in the following cases:
- 88.2.1. if the member has a direct interest in the outcome of the matter;
  - 88.2.2. if the member is associated with any of the parties;
  - 88.2.3. if the member has the same nationality as the party implicated or any party central to the matter; and
  - 88.2.4. if the member has already dealt with the case under different circumstances.
- 88.3. Members who decline to participate in a meeting on any of the above grounds shall notify the chairperson immediately.
- 88.4. Parties may raise an objection to any member they believe to be biased.

88.5. The chairperson shall decide on any claim of bias. If an objection is raised concerning the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in his absence, the longest-serving member present, shall decide on such claim. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

88.6. Proceedings that have involved someone whom the chairperson has ordered not to participate will be considered null and void.

## **89. Confidentiality**

89.1. The members of the judicial bodies shall ensure that everything disclosed to them during the course of their duty remains confidential (including the facts of cases, the contents of any deliberations and all decisions taken).

89.2. Only the contents of those decisions already notified to the addressees may be made public. This includes, without limitation, publishing such decisions online. Where appropriate, such decisions shall be redacted.

89.3. Any person who is required to participate in or is subject to a disciplinary investigation or disciplinary proceedings must keep such information confidential at all times, unless the chairperson of the judicial body explicitly stipulates otherwise in writing. Any breach of such duty may be sanctioned.

89.4. In the event of a breach of this Article by a member of a judicial body, the relevant member shall be suspended from the relevant judicial body until the next AFC Congress.

## **90. Exemption from liability**

90.1. Neither the members of the judicial bodies nor the secretariat may be held liable for any action or omission relating to any disciplinary procedure conducted pursuant to this Code.

# CHAPTER FOUR: PROCEDURE

## Section 1: Time limits

### 91. Calculation of time limits

- 91.1. Time limits to which a party who has directly received a document shall adhere commence the day after receipt of the relevant document.
- 91.2. Time limits to which persons other than the Member Associations shall adhere commence on the day after receipt of the relevant document by the Member Association responsible for forwarding it.
- 91.3. If the last day of the time limit coincides with a public holiday in the place of domicile of the party required to comply, the time limit will expire on the next day that is not a public holiday.
- 91.4. In urgent cases, the chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee or the AFC Appeal Committee (as appropriate) may shorten any deadlines under this Code.
- 91.5. If a time limit is not observed, the defaulter loses the procedural right in question.

### 92. Compliance with time limits

- 92.1. Compliance occurs if the action required has been carried out before expiry of the time limit.
- 92.2. If the action required is the submission of a document, such document must be submitted to the relevant body no later than midnight on the last day of the time limit.
- 92.3. Parties shall submit documents by electronic mail (and, at their discretion, also by courier).
- 92.4. In the case of appeals, the appeal fee (cf. Article 125) is considered to be paid in time if the payment is irreversibly made to the nominated AFC account by midnight on the last day of the time limit.
- 92.5. Unless otherwise stated, any reference to a time and/or date in any communication or document issued by the AFC or any judicial body in connection with this Code shall be considered to be a reference to the time and/or date in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## **93. Pause of time limits**

93.1. Time limits are paused:

93.1.1. during the period two (2) days before the AFC Congress up to two (2) days after;

93.1.2. during the period two (2) days before the first Match up to two (2) days after the final Match of the AFC Asian Cup (Finals). The only exception shall be for facts arising during the AFC Asian Cup (Finals) and facts which have occurred before but which may have repercussions on the AFC Asian Cup (Finals); and

93.1.3. during the period when AFC House is officially closed. The exact dates of the closure will be announced to the Member Associations via circular.

93.2. Special provisions may apply in certain circumstances.

## **94. Extension of time limits**

94.1. Time limits that have been set by the secretariat or the chairperson may be extended, upon request. The time limits fixed in this Code shall not be extended.

94.2. Any requests made under Article 94.1 must be made before expiry of the relevant time limit.

94.3. A time limit shall not be extended more than twice and, the second time, only in exceptional circumstances.

94.4. Any decision to extend or not extend a time limit is final and binding and not appealable.

## **Section 2: Right to be heard**

### **95. Right to be heard**

95.1. A party shall be given the opportunity to be heard before any decision is passed.

95.2. A party may, without limitation:

95.2.1. refer to the file;

95.2.2. present their argument in fact and in law;

95.2.3. request production of proof;

95.2.4. be involved in the production of proof; and

95.2.5. obtain a reasoned decision.

95.3. Special provisions may apply in certain circumstances.

### **96. Restrictions**

96.1. The right to be heard may be restricted in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances shall be determined by the chairperson.

96.2. Special provisions may apply in certain circumstances.

## **Section 3: Evidence**

### **97. Types of evidence**

97.1. Any type of evidence may be produced.

97.2. The following categories of evidence, without limitation, are inadmissible:

97.2.1. evidence that violates human dignity; and

97.2.2. evidence in a language other than English that is not accompanied by a certified translation.

97.3. The following categories of evidence, without limitation, are admissible:

97.3.1. reports from Match Officials;

97.3.2. testimonial or oral declarations from the parties and witnesses;

97.3.3. expert opinions; and

97.3.4. audio or video recordings.

### **98. Witnesses**

98.1. Witnesses shall tell the absolute and whole truth and shall answer the questions put to them to the best of their knowledge and judgement.

98.2. It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure the appearance of the witnesses requested by them and to pay all costs and expenses in connection with their appearance.

### **99. Anonymous participants in proceedings**

99.1. When an individual's testimony could endanger his life or put him or his family or close friends in physical danger, the chairperson may order at the request of the AFC that:

99.1.1. the person not be identified in the presence of the parties;

99.1.2. the person not appear at the hearing; and

99.1.3. all or some of the information that could be used to identify the person be included only in a separate, confidential case file.

99.2. In view of all the circumstances and in particular if no other evidence is available to corroborate the testimony of the relevant person and if it is technically possible, the chairperson may exceptionally order, on his own initiative or at the request of one of the parties, that:

99.2.1. the voice of the relevant person be distorted;

99.2.2. the face of the relevant person be masked;

99.2.3. the relevant person be questioned outside the hearing room; and

99.2.4. the relevant person be questioned in writing through the chairperson.

99.3. Disciplinary measures shall be imposed on anyone who reveals the identity of any person granted anonymity under this provision or any information that could be used to identify such person.

## **100. Identification of anonymous participants in proceedings**

100.1. To ensure their safety, persons granted anonymity shall be identified behind closed doors in the absence of the parties.

100.2. This identification shall be conducted by the chairperson of the judicial body alone, the deputy chairperson and/or all the members (in attendance at the relevant meeting) of the judicial body together, and shall be recorded in minutes containing the relevant person's personal details.

100.3. These minutes shall not be communicated to the parties.

100.4. The parties shall receive a brief notice which:

100.4.1. confirms that the relevant person has been formally identified; and

100.4.2. contains no details that could be used to identify such person.

## **101. Evaluation of proof**

- 101.1. The judicial bodies will have absolute discretion regarding the admissibility of proof and its evaluation.
- 101.2. They may, in particular, take account of the parties' attitudes during proceedings, especially the manner in which they cooperate with the judicial bodies and the secretariat.
- 101.3. The standard of proof shall be to the comfortable satisfaction of the members, bearing in mind the seriousness of the allegation which is made.
- 101.4. The relevant standards of proof in relation to Anti-Doping Rule Violations are set out in the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.

## **102. Match Officials' reports**

- 102.1. Facts contained in Match Officials' reports (and in any supplementary reports and correspondence, and supporting evidence such as photographs and videos, submitted by the Match Officials) are presumed to be accurate.
- 102.2. Proof of the inaccuracy of the contents of a Match Officials' report may be provided.
- 102.3. If there is any discrepancy in the reports from the various Match Officials and there are no means of resolving the different versions of the facts, the Referee report is considered authoritative regarding incidents that occurred on the field of play and the Match Commissioner report is considered authoritative regarding incidents that took place outside the field of play.

## **103. Burden of proof**

- 103.1. The burden of proof regarding disciplinary infringements rests on the AFC.
- 103.2. The burden of proof in the case of a protest rests on the protesting party.
- 103.3. Any party claiming a right on the basis of an alleged fact shall carry the burden of proving that fact. During the proceedings, the party shall submit all relevant facts and evidence of which the party is aware at that time, or of which the party should have been aware by exercising due care.

103.4. The relevant evidentiary burdens in relation to Anti-Doping Rule Violations are set out in the AFC Anti-Doping Regulations.

## **104. Collaboration**

104.1. Everyone subject to this Code is obliged to collaborate to establish facts if requested by the secretariat. In particular, they shall comply with requests for information.

104.2. The chairperson of the judicial body, upon the application of the secretariat, may impose a fine of up to USD5,000 or a ban on football-related activity of up to two (2) months, on anyone who is dilatory in responding to a request for collaboration.

104.2.1. The chairperson may hear any such application *ex parte*.

104.3. If the parties fail to collaborate, especially if they ignore the stipulated time limits, the judicial bodies will reach a decision on the case using the file in their possession.

## **Section 4: Oral hearings, deliberations and decision**

### **105. Request for oral hearing**

105.1. As a general rule, there are no oral hearings and meetings of the judicial bodies are conducted in private (i.e. without the presence of the Defendant), with the judicial body deciding on the basis of the file.

105.2. A party may request for an oral hearing. The chairperson shall decide on any such request subject to Articles 80 and 82. This decision is final and binding and not appealable.

105.3. For the avoidance of doubt, no meeting, oral hearing and/or deliberations of a judicial body shall be held in public.

### **106. Procedure for oral hearing**

106.1. The chairperson decides on the procedure of any oral hearing.

106.2. Once the hearing of evidence has ended, the chairperson allows the person against whom proceedings are being conducted a final opportunity to speak.

106.3. The oral hearing terminates with this closing statement.

## **107. Deliberations**

- 107.1. The judicial bodies deliberate privately (i.e. without the presence of the Defendant).
- 107.2. If an oral hearing has occurred, it will immediately be followed by the confidential deliberations of the judicial bodies.
- 107.3. Deliberations are conducted without interruption, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 107.4. The chairperson decides in which order the various questions will be submitted for deliberation.
- 107.5. The members present express their opinions in the order set out by the chairperson, who always speaks last.
- 107.6. The Secretary or Deputy Secretaries have consultative powers only.

## **108. Form of Meetings**

- 108.1. The secretariat may arrange the deliberations and decision-making (and where necessary, oral hearings) to be conducted via in-person meeting, telephone conference, video conference or any other method.
- 108.2. The secretariat takes minutes in each meeting.

## **109. Decision**

- 109.1. Subject to Articles 80 and 82, decisions are passed by a simple majority of the members present and eligible to vote.
- 109.2. Every member present shall vote.
- 109.3. If votes are equal, the chairperson has the casting vote.

## 110. Form and content of the decision

110.1. Without prejudice to the application of Article 111 below, the decision contains:

- 110.1.1. the composition of the committee;
- 110.1.2. the names of the parties;
- 110.1.3. a summary of the facts;
- 110.1.4. the grounds of the decision;
- 110.1.5. the provisions on which the decision was based;
- 110.1.6. the terms of the decision; and
- 110.1.7. notice of the channels for appeal.

110.2. The decisions are signed by the Secretary or a Deputy Secretary.

## 111. Decision without grounds

111.1. The judicial bodies may decide not to communicate the grounds of a decision and instead communicate only the terms of the decision. At the same time, the parties shall be informed that they have ten (10) days from receipt of the terms of the decision to request, in writing, the grounds of the decision, and that failure to do so will result in the decision becoming final and binding and not appealable.

111.2. The request for the grounds of a decision does not affect the enforcement of the decision, which shall take effect as soon as it is notified, with the exception of orders to pay a sum of money.

111.3. If a party requests the grounds of a decision, such grounds will be communicated to the parties in full, written form. The time limit to lodge an appeal, where applicable, begins upon receipt of the grounds of decision. Only the parties to which a decision is addressed can request the grounds.

111.4. Any appeal lodged before notification of the grounds of a decision is regarded exclusively as a request for such grounds.

## **112. Notification of decision**

112.1. All parties are notified of the decisions.

112.2. Decisions and other documents intended for Players, Clubs and Officials are addressed to their affiliated Member Association on condition that it immediately forwards the relevant decisions and documents to the parties concerned.

112.2.1. In the event that the documents were not also or solely sent to the party concerned, these documents are considered to have been communicated properly to the ultimate addressee the day after communication of the documents to the Member Association (cf. Article 91). Failure by the Member Association to comply with the aforementioned instruction may result in disciplinary proceedings being undertaken against it in accordance with this Code.

## **113. Form of notification**

113.1. Decisions shall be communicated by facsimile, email and/or registered letter to be legally binding.

113.2. The parties and Member Associations must ensure that their contact details (e.g. address, telephone number and email address) are valid and kept up to date at all times.

## **Section 5: Miscellaneous**

### **114. Representation and legal representation**

114.1. A party may be legally represented.

114.2. If a party is not required to appear personally, they may be represented or legally represented.

114.3. Parties are free to choose their own representation and legal representation.

114.4. In all cases, parties must provide written authorisation to be represented or legally represented.

## **115. Language**

115.1. The language used in all proceedings shall be English.

115.2. The judicial bodies may use the services of an interpreter. The costs of interpretation shall be borne by the party requiring the interpreter.

## **116. Obvious errors**

116.1. A judicial body may rectify any mistakes in calculation or any other obvious errors in its decisions at any time.

## **117. Costs and expenses**

117.1. Costs and expenses related to proceedings may be imposed by the judicial body on the unsuccessful party, unless otherwise stipulated in this Code.

117.2. The costs of proceedings before the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall be borne by the AFC, except in protest cases, when they shall be borne by the unsuccessful party.

117.3. If no party is sanctioned, the costs and expenses shall be borne by the AFC. Should a party generate unnecessary costs on account of its conduct, costs may be imposed upon it, irrespective of the outcome of the proceedings.

117.4. The judicial body that rules on the substance of the matter decides how costs and expenses shall be allocated and the relevant amounts are stipulated by the chairperson. These decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

## **118. Enforcement of decisions**

118.1. Decisions come into force as soon as they are notified.

## **Section 6: Procedural rules specific to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee**

### **119. Commencement**

119.1. Disciplinary proceedings may be opened by the AFC administration:

119.1.1. *ex officio*;

119.1.2. on the basis of official reports;

119.1.3. where a protest has been lodged in accordance with the relevant competition regulations;

119.1.4. at the request of the AFC President, AFC Executive Committee, or the AFC General Secretary;

119.1.5. on the basis of documents received from a public authority; or

119.1.6. where a complaint has been filed.

119.2. Any person or body may report any conduct considered incompatible with AFC regulations. Such complaints shall be made in writing.

119.3. Match Officials are obliged to report infringements which have come to their notice.

### **120. Investigation**

120.1. Prior to the opening of disciplinary proceedings, the secretariat shall carry out the necessary preliminary investigation *ex officio* on the basis of the information received pursuant to Article 119.

120.2. If the secretariat deems that there is no *prima facie* case, it may close the preliminary investigation without opening disciplinary proceedings.

- 120.3. If the secretariat deems that there is a *prima facie* case, it shall open disciplinary proceedings.
- 120.3.1. The secretariat may offer an administrative resolution with the party prior to the opening of disciplinary proceedings and subject to the relevant competition regulations.
- 120.3.2. If accepted by the party, such administrative resolution must be subsequently approved by the chairperson of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee or by a member designated by the chairperson and recorded by the AFC.
- 120.3.3. Should the chairperson not approve the administrative resolution, disciplinary proceedings shall be opened.
- 120.3.4. The secretariat shall have the authority to hire or appoint external resources to assist in any investigation.
- 120.4. The secretariat shall inform the party that disciplinary proceedings have been opened.
- 120.5. Once the investigation has been completed, and the secretariat deems that there is a case, it shall forward charges of misconduct and the full case file to the party and provide the party with an opportunity to be heard.
- 120.5.1. The content of the full case file may be restricted in accordance with Article 96.
- 120.6. Once the investigation has been completed, and the secretariat deems that there is no case, disciplinary proceedings shall be closed.
- 120.6.1. Disciplinary proceedings may be closed, if, among other reasons, the parties reach an agreement or a party declares bankruptcy.
- 120.6.2. If disciplinary proceedings have been closed, the secretariat may reopen the investigation if new facts or evidence are discovered within the limitation period for prosecution.
- 120.7. The Secretary or Deputy Secretaries shall prosecute the case on behalf of the AFC before the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.
- 120.7.1. The secretariat shall have the authority to hire or appoint external counsel to prosecute the case on behalf of the AFC.

## **121. Procedural rules for the chairperson or member acting alone**

121.1. The procedural rules governing the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee apply in the same way whenever the chairperson or member decides alone.

## **Section 7: Procedural rules specific to the AFC Appeal Committee**

### **122. Appeal**

122.1. An appeal may be lodged to the AFC Appeal Committee against any decision passed by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, except:

122.1.1. where the sanction imposed is:

122.1.1.1. a warning;

122.1.1.2. a suspension for less than three (3) Matches or of up to two (2) months (with the exception of doping-related decisions);

122.1.1.3. a fine of less than USD5,000 imposed on a Member Association or a Club;

122.1.1.4. a fine of less than USD2,500 imposed on all other legal or natural persons; or

122.1.2. those decisions:

122.1.2.1. passed in compliance with Article 63 of this Code; or

122.1.2.2. which this Code sets out are final and binding.

122.2. No appeal is admissible if a party does not request the issuance of a grounds of decision in accordance with Article 111.

122.3. If the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee combines disciplinary measures, an appeal is admissible if at least one of the disciplinary measures imposed exceeds the above limits. In this case, the AFC Appeal Committee will only be entitled to examine the sanctions that exceed the above limit.

## **123. Standing to appeal**

123.1. Anyone who:

123.1.1. has been a party to the proceedings before the first instance; or

123.1.2. has a legally protected interest justifying amendment or cancellation of the decision, may lodge an appeal to the AFC Appeal Committee.

123.2. Member Associations may appeal against decisions sanctioning any party affiliated to it. They shall have the written agreement of the party concerned.

123.3. Clubs may appeal against decisions sanctioning their Players or Officials. They shall have the written agreement of the party concerned.

## **124. Time limit for appeal**

124.1. Any party intending to appeal must inform the AFC Appeal Committee of its intention to do so in writing within three (3) days of notification of the grounds of the decision.

124.2. Within five (5) days of expiry of the time limit for the declaration of appeal, the appellant must file, in writing, the appeal brief and pay the appeal fee. This must contain the appellant's requests, an account of the facts, evidence, a list of the proposed witnesses (with a brief summary of their expected testimony) and the appellant's conclusions. The appellant is not authorised to produce further written submissions or evidence after the deadline for filing the appeal brief.

124.3. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal is not admitted.

124.4. In urgent cases, the chairperson may shorten the deadline for the submission of the reasons for appeal.

124.5. Any Member Association receiving a petition of appeal from any party affiliated to it shall forward it immediately to the AFC Appeal Committee.

## **125. Appeal fee**

- 125.1. All appeals shall be accompanied by an appeal fee of USD1,000 (non-inclusive of bank charges). The appeal fee shall be transmitted to the nominated AFC account before the expiry of the time limit for submitting the appeal brief (cf. Article 124.2).
- 125.2. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal is not admitted.
- 125.3. This amount will be reimbursed to the appellant if successful or partially successful. Costs and expenses payable by an appellant who is not successful are deducted from this amount. Any remaining amount is reimbursed. If the appeal fee is insufficient, the appellant will be ordered to pay the difference.
- 125.4. If the appeal is considered to be improper, costs and expenses shall be paid in addition to the appeal fee.

## **126. Effects of appeal**

- 126.1. An appeal results in the case being reviewed de novo by the AFC Appeal Committee.
- 126.2. An appeal does not have a suspensive effect except with regard to orders to pay a sum of money.

## **127. Procedural rules for the chairperson or member acting alone**

- 127.1. The procedural rules governing the AFC Appeal Committee apply in the same way whenever the chairperson or member decides alone.

## **128. Body of last instance**

- 128.1. The AFC Appeal Committee rules, in principle, as a body in the last instance.
- 128.2. The right is reserved for an appeal to be made to the Court of Arbitration for Sport as set out in Article 129.

## Section 8: Court of Arbitration for Sport

### 129. Right to appeal

129.1. The AFC Statutes stipulate which decisions passed by the judicial bodies may be appealed before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

129.2. The relevant competition regulations may contain further stipulations.

## Section 9: Provisional measures

### 130. Request

130.1. Upon request, the chairperson of a judicial body or a member designated by the chairperson may provisionally pronounce, alter, or revoke a sanction:

130.1.1. if an infringement appears to have been committed;

130.1.2. a decision on the main issue cannot be taken early enough; and

130.1.3. in an emergency.

130.2. In similar circumstances, the chairperson may issue other provisional measures at his discretion, especially to ensure compliance with a sanction already in force.

130.3. A request to provisionally pronounce, alter, or revoke a sanction issued by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall be lodged:

130.3.1. only after receipt of the grounds of the decision (cf. Article 111);

130.3.2. simultaneously with an intention to appeal (cf. Article 124); and

130.3.3. within the same time limit for the submission of an intention to appeal (cf. Article 124).

130.4. Any provisional measure pronouncing, altering, or revoking a sanction issued by the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee shall be automatically annulled if the simultaneous appeal fails to be admitted or is withdrawn.

## **131. Procedure**

- 131.1. The chairperson shall make his decision based on the evidence available at the time.
- 131.2. The chairperson is not obliged to hear the parties.

## **132. Decision**

- 132.1. The chairperson delivers his decision immediately.
- 132.2. That decision shall be implemented immediately.

## **133. Duration**

- 133.1. Provisional measures may not be valid for longer than ninety (90) days.
- 133.2. This period may be extended only by up to ninety (90) days.
- 133.3. If a sanction has been pronounced provisionally, the duration shall be offset against any final sanction.

## **134. Appeal**

- 134.1. An appeal against a decision regarding provisional measures may be lodged before the chairperson of the AFC Appeal Committee or a member designated by the chairperson.
- 134.2. The time limit for lodging the appeal is three (3) days commencing from the notification of the decision.
- 134.3. The reasons for appeal shall be sent to the AFC within the same time limit.
  - 134.3.1. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal is not admitted.
- 134.4. The appeal fee of USD1,000 (non-inclusive of bank charges) shall be transmitted to the nominated AFC account within the same time limit.
  - 134.4.1. If this requirement has not been complied with, the appeal is not admitted.

134.4.2. This amount will be reimbursed to the appellant if successful or partially successful. Costs and expenses payable by an appellant who is not successful are deducted from this amount. Any remaining amount is reimbursed. If the appeal fee is insufficient, the appellant will be ordered to pay the difference.

134.5. The appeal shall not have a suspensive effect.

## **Section 10: Extension of sanction to have effect at confederation level**

### **135. Request**

135.1. If an infringement is serious (in particular, but not limited to, offences involving discrimination, threats, coercion, forgery and falsification and unlawfully influencing Match results), a Member Association or other organising sports body shall request the AFC to extend the sanctions they have imposed to have effect at confederation level.

135.1.1. Any doping-related legally binding sanction imposed by another international sports association, national anti-doping organisation or any other state body that complies with fundamental legal principles shall automatically be adopted by the AFC and, provided that the requirements described hereunder are met, may in principle be extended by the AFC to have effect at confederation level.

135.2. The request shall be submitted in writing and enclose a certified copy of the decision. It shall show the name and address of the person who has been sanctioned and that of the Member Association and/or (if relevant) Club concerned.

135.3. If the judicial bodies discover that Member Associations and other sports organisations have not requested a decision to be extended to have effect at confederation level, they may pass a decision without a request.

## **136. Conditions**

136.1. The request for sanctions to be extended will be approved if:

136.1.1. the person sanctioned has been cited properly;

136.1.2. the person sanctioned has had the opportunity to state their case (with the exception of provisional measure decisions);

136.1.3. the decision has been communicated properly;

136.1.4. the decision complies with AFC regulations; and

136.1.5. the decision complies with fundamental legal principles.

## **137. Procedure**

137.1. The chairperson makes his decision, in principle, without negotiations or hearing any of the parties, using only the file.

137.2. The chairperson may exceptionally decide to orally hear the parties concerned.

## **138. Decision**

138.1. The chairperson is restricted to ascertaining that the conditions of Article 136 have been fulfilled. The chairperson may not review the substance of the decision.

138.2. The chairperson either grants or refuses the request to have the sanction extended.

## **139. Effect**

139.1. An extended sanction has the same effect in each Member Association as if it had imposed the sanction.

139.2. If a decision that is not yet final in a legal sense is extended to have effect at confederation level, any decision regarding extension shall always be based on the content of the current decision and subject to any decision on appeal.

## **140. Appeal**

- 140.1. An appeal against a decision extending a sanction to have effect at confederation level may be lodged before the AFC Appeal Committee.
- 140.2. The provisions of Articles 123 to 128 shall apply, subject to Article 140.3 below.
- 140.3. The grounds for appeal shall only refer to the conditions for extension set out in Articles 135 and 136.
- 140.4. It is inadmissible to question the substance of the extended decision.

## **Section 11: Review of decisions**

### **141. Review**

- 141.1. A review may be requested after a legally binding decision has been passed if a party discovers facts or proof that would have resulted in a more favourable decision and that, even with due diligence, could not have been produced sooner.
- 141.2. A request for review shall be made within ten (10) days of discovering the reasons for review.
- 141.3. The limitation period for submitting a request for review is one (1) year after the enforcement of the decision.
- 141.4. The decision on the request for review shall be made by the chairperson of the judicial body who made the legally binding decision. This decision is final and binding and not appealable.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ENFORCEMENT

### **142. Scope of the Code, omissions, custom, doctrine and jurisprudence**

142.1. This Code governs every subject to which the text or the meaning of its provisions refers.

142.2. If there are any omissions in this Code, the judicial bodies will decide in accordance with legal custom or, in the absence of legal custom, in accordance with rules they would lay down as if they were acting as legislators.

142.3. The judicial bodies shall draw upon precedents already established by sports doctrine and jurisprudence.

### **143. Specific disciplinary rules**

143.1. Specific disciplinary rules may be introduced for the duration of a final AFC competition. They may depart from the rules stipulated within this Code.

143.2. Such rules shall be communicated to the participating teams in accordance with the relevant competition regulations.

### **144. AFC Statutes**

144.1. To the extent that this Code is inconsistent with the AFC Statutes, the AFC Statutes shall prevail.

## 145. Adoption

145.1. The AFC Executive Committee ratified this Code in Hong Kong, on 1 December 2019.

145.2. This Code comes into force on 16 December 2019.

For the AFC Executive Committee

**Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa**  
President

**Dato' Windsor John**  
General Secretary

## Transitory Provisions

1. The term of all current chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and members of the judicial bodies appointed by the AFC Executive Committee for the term 2019-2023 shall be served until the AFC Congress in 2023.

# APPENDIX 1: SCALE OF FINES FOR SPECTATOR MISCONDUCT

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- 1.1. This scale of fines is to be read in accordance with Article 65 of the Code.
- 1.2. This scale relates to non-aggravated, first-time offences.
- 1.3. An offence is aggravated, without limitation, where:
  - 1.3.1. the number of objects utilised or persons involved (as appropriate) in the commission of the offence is higher than the corresponding highest number in the penalty section below;
  - 1.3.2. an object utilised to commit the offence strikes a Player, Official, Match Official, or any other individual in attendance at a Match;
  - 1.3.3. the offence involves an attempt to physically harm an individual;
  - 1.3.4. as a result of the offence, an individual is physically harmed;
  - 1.3.5. as a result of the offence, damage occurs to any object related to the Match;
  - 1.3.6. the offence involves an element of racism, nationalism, or any other type of discrimination in violation of Article 3 of the AFC Statutes; and
  - 1.3.7. it is not the first offence committed by the spectators affiliated to the relevant Member Association or Club.
- 1.4. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

<b>Improper Conduct</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>Letting off incendiary devices or fireworks</b>	USD5,000 (one device); USD10,000 (between two and five inclusive); USD20,000 (between six and ten inclusive).
<b>Flashing lasers</b>	USD2,000 per identified flash (maximum of five).
<b>Throwing missiles:</b>	
<b>Water bottle or aluminium can (fully or partially filled)</b>	USD5,000 (between one and ten inclusive);
<b>Water bottle or aluminium can (empty)</b>	USD3,000 (between one and ten inclusive);
<b>Stones</b>	USD5,000 (between one and five inclusive);
<b>Plastic/paper cups</b>	USD2,000 (between one and ten inclusive);
<b>Stadium seat (whole or part)</b>	USD5,000 (between one and ten inclusive);
<b>Any combination of the above</b>	USD5,000 (between one and ten inclusive).
<b>Displaying insulting, religious, or political messages or images in any form.</b>	USD2,000 per banner (maximum of five).
<b>Field of play invasion</b>	USD3,000 (one person); USD5,000 (between two and five persons).
<b>Flying of drones</b>	USD5,000 (one drone).
<b>Any other type of misconduct</b>	Subject to the gravity of the offence.

1.5. Where an offence results in the delay of the Match, the scale fine shall be compounded with an additional **USD1,000** per minute of delay.

## **APPENDIX 2: SCALE OF FINES FOR DELAY KICK-OFF OFFENCES**

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- 1.1. This scale of fines is to be read in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in competition regulations or the Competition Operations Manual.
- 1.2. This scale relates to non-aggravated, first-time offences.
- 1.3. An offence is aggravated, without limitation, where the delay:
  - 1.3.1. was caused by the failure of the necessary number of ambulances or medical staff being in place at the appropriate times;
  - 1.3.2. was caused by a floodlight failure;
  - 1.3.3. was caused by a security failure;
  - 1.3.4. was more than five (5) minutes in length;
  - 1.3.5. caused the AFC to suffer commercial losses; or
  - 1.3.6. is not the first offence committed by the relevant team.
- 1.4. Where the offence is aggravated, any further sanctions as listed in this Code may be imposed by the judicial body.

Delay	Penalty
<b>0:01 – 1:59 minutes</b>	USD1,000
<b>2:00 – 2:59 minutes</b>	USD1,500
<b>3:00 – 3:59 minutes</b>	USD2,000
<b>4:00 – 4:59 minutes</b>	USD2,500
<b>5:00 minutes ++</b>	Aggravated offence.





**Asian Football Confederation**

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

Tel : +603 8994 3388 | Fax : +603 8994 2689

**the-AFC.com**