

COMPETITION RULES

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- **Competition Rules** Council: 22.01.2009; 28.05.2009; 06.05.2010; 01.07.2010; 09.08.2011; 26.10.2011; 28.05.2012; 17.07.2012; 01.10.2012; 05.11.2012; 04.02.2013; 08.04.2013; 10.05.2013; 22.04.2014; 15.09.2014; 23.05.2016; 04.08.2016; 28.09.2017; 02.11.2017; 06.03.2018; 22.05.2018; 03.08.2018; 27.06.2019; 17.10.2019; 18.02.2020; 07.07.2020; 23.09.2020; 27.10.2020; 18.05.2021
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04.08.2025; 29.01.2026
AGM: 20.07.2013; 16.10.2025
EGM: 22.04.2014; 13.05.2015

MALTA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

COMPETITION RULES

1. Competitions of the Association

- (i) (a) The Executive Board of the Association is vested with full powers to establish the competitions to be organised by the Association.
- (b) The Executive Board is vested with full powers to establish the manner in which the competitions organised by the Association as decided upon by the Executive Board are run and managed.
- (c) Any matter not provided for in these rules shall be decided by the Executive Board as it may deem fit.
- (d) In the running and managing of the competitions and in deciding those other matters not be provided for by these rules, the Executive Board shall take into consideration the opinion of the Competitions Committee established under these rules.
- (ii) (a) In cases of urgency, the Bureau of the Association shall have the same powers of the Executive Board.
- (b) In those instances when the Bureau, takes a decision in virtue of the provisions of para. (ii)(a) above, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Executive Board during the first sitting of the Executive Board after the decision.
- (iii) (a) Clubs and their players and/or technical staff shall be obliged to comply with any operational obligations related to the staging of the match including any obligations towards the official broadcaster or any of the officials responsible for the organisation of the match.
- (b) Such obligations shall be circulated to clubs at the beginning of the competition in the form of a document that governs the operational aspects of a competition.

Introduced:
27-07-21

2. Guarantee Deposit and Penalties for Exiting a Competition

- (i) Clubs taking part in any of the competitions of the Association may be called upon by the Executive Board to make a guarantee deposit which shall be refunded when the Clubs making the deposit would have completed their fixtures, discharged all their liabilities and paid the fines inflicted upon them by the Association.
- (ii) Clubs which had applied to take part in a competition and later withdraw their participation from such competition prior to the commencement of such competition shall be fined. In the case of exiting the competition prior to the draws of such competition, the Club shall be penalised with a fine amounting to between one hundred euro (€100) and three hundred euro (€300). In the case of exiting the competition after the draws but prior to the commencement of the competition, the Club shall be penalised with a fine amounting to between three hundred euro (€300) and five hundred euro (€500). In establishing the fine, due consideration shall be given to the importance of the competition concerned.

3. Rules of Competitions

- (i) The Executive Board shall establish the particular rules governing the competitions of the Association before the first Monday in June prior to the coming season. Unless any additions and/or alterations are made, rules governing particular competitions shall remain in force from one season to the other.
- (ii) Additions and/or alterations to these Competition Rules and to rules of particular competitions made after the first Monday in June shall not come into force at least until the end of the coming or the current football season, as the case may be.
- (iii) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-para. (ii) above, in the case of existing competitions, rules which in any way may affect promotion and/or relegation issues shall not come into force at least until the commencement of the second football season following the coming or current football season, as the case may be.
- (iv) The provisions of sub-clauses (ii) and (iii) above shall not apply if the Executive Board, in very serious and exceptional circumstances, decides otherwise. In doing so, the Executive Board shall give utmost priority to safeguard the integrity of competitions.

Amended:
17-05-22

4. Draws of Competitive Matches

- (i) The Executive Board is vested with full powers to lay down the procedure to be adopted in the draws of the matches of all the competitions of the Association.

- (ii) The Executive Board shall fix the date and time of the draws, which must be as early as possible before the commencement of a competition.
- (iii) The General Secretary of the Association shall have the duty to inform the Clubs taking part in a competition of the date and time fixed for the draws and the place where the draws shall be held. He shall also cause such information to be sent to the mass media.

5. Fixtures of Competitive Matches

- (i) All competitive matches shall, as a rule, be played on the day and at the time fixed by the Executive Board. Fixture lists shall be issued under the authority of the Executive Board and shall be circulated to all those interested as soon as possible after having been completed.
- (ii) Alterations to fixtures may be made by the General Secretary of the Association only for a serious and grave cause. However, the General Secretary shall not entertain any request based on medical grounds for an alteration in the fixture list.
- (iii) Decisions of the Executive Board or the General Secretary regarding fixture lists and alterations thereto are final and binding and no Club, official or player shall have any right to claim any compensation for any expense, loss or damage sustained as a result of such decisions.

6. When Matches are Played

- (i) As a rule, competitive matches shall be played on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. However, when necessary, competitive matches shall also be played during the other days of the week.
- (ii) Clubs which are taking part in UEFA Competitions for Clubs shall not be obliged to play other first team competitive matches three (3) days prior to or after their UEFA competitive match.
- (iii) Clubs whose competition fixtures clash with National Team International matches, including Beach Soccer and Futsal National Teams, whether competitive or friendly, both at Senior or Youth level, for which players of these Clubs have been selected or included in any National Team Squad, have the right to apply to the Executive Board for a postponement of their fixtures if the number of such selected players is more than two (2). Such applications are to be made in writing and must reach the General Secretary of the Association at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the match requiring postponement if by that time their player/s have already been selected for National Team duties or included in any National Team Squad. In all other cases, an application shall be made as soon as the Club is informed of the selection by the Association. Rule 5 (iii) is also applicable to such changes.

7. Sequence Principle

In the case of competitions for the first team of a Club and which are played on a league basis, the sequence principle shall be compulsory only during the last three matches of each team in the competition concerned and this unless the Executive Board for a serious and just reason decides otherwise.

8. Medical Tests for Players

- (i) The Association shall have the right to establish that, prior to taking part in a competitive football match directly organized by the Association, all registered players must undergo a medical test, as specified by the Association from time to time, attesting that they are medically fit to play football.
- (ii) By the end of July of each year the Association shall circulate to its Member Clubs all the relevant information regarding the medical test which their players will be requested to undergo during that current season. The Member Clubs will also be informed about the procedure that has to be adhered to.

*Amended:
18-02-20
04-08-25*

- (iii) Once the player would have undergone the medical test as specified by the Association such player shall have the duty to file with the Association the Medical Clearance Form, duly signed by a medical doctor. The medical test will remain valid for a period of twelve (12) months starting on that date when the medical test is carried out. The ECG of the player must also be filed with the Medical Clearance Form.

*Amended:
04-08-25*

- (iv) If, prior to a particular match, a player does not have an active Medical filed with the Association, such a player will not be eligible to participate in that match.
- (v) If, after a football match directly organized by the Association, it is proved by the Association that a player included in the Referee's Match Report did not have a valid Medical Clearance Form filed with the Association, such player shall be referred to the Disciplinary Commissioner of the Association.

*Amended:
04-08-25*

- (vi) Without prejudice to any another sanction, the Disciplinary Commissioner shall suspend the player for one (1) match. Moreover, such player shall remain suspended until he files a valid Medical Clearance Form with the Association. The Club of the player shall be fined one hundred euro (€100). In the case of a repeated offence in the same season the Club of the player shall be fined five hundred euro (€500) on every occasion.

*Amended:
23-06-21*

8A. Provision of staff certified in first-aid by Clubs during Competitive Matches

- (i) Clubs are obliged to ensure that at their competitive matches at least one person from the non-playing technical staff those listed on the match sheet is certified in first aid.
- (ii) The Club must also ensure that such person indicated on the match list as provided in the preceding provision is effectively present throughout the entire competitive match.
- (iii) A Club which fails in its duty to provide said certified person shall be fined by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association between fifty euro (€50) and one hundred and twenty-five euro (€125) on the first instance during the season and between ninety (€90) and two hundred euro (€200) on each and every subsequent instance during the same season.

9. Who may play in Competitive Matches Organised by the Association

- (i) Only "bona fide" players are permitted to play in competitive matches.
- (ii) A "bona fide" player is any amateur or professional player who:
 - (a) is registered to play in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association and with those of FIFA; and
 - (b) is not under a suspension which renders him ineligible to play; and
 - (c) is otherwise, in accordance with the rules, regulations, bye-laws and decisions of the Association and those of FIFA, eligible to play in a competitive match in which he takes part.

*Amended:
18-05-21*

- (iii) (a) (i) In the case of competitions organised by the Association, only male players are permitted to play in those competitions organised for male players whilst only female players are permitted to play in those competitions organised for female players. However, in Youth Football Competitions, Youth Football Festivals, Youth Tournaments and Fun Football for Youth players, female players may also participate in competitions organised for male players up till the level of Under 15.

- (ii) In the case of competitions for male players, a player shall not be eligible to play for the senior team of his club prior to his sixteenth (16th) birthday.

*Amended:
27-06-19
18-05-21
05-06-23*

- (b) In the case of matches of competitions organised for the Senior Team of Member Clubs, the participation of players, who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association, with a team for any match shall be as follows:

- (i) (a) Not more than eight (8) players on the field of play, during that time in the match when the ball is in play, in the case of matches of competitions organised for the Senior Team of Premier Division Clubs and in the case of matches of the Competitions where the Senior Teams of Premier Division Clubs take part. Provided that the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed eleven (11).

Provided further that the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed the number of players who have formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association listed on the same Official Match Report Form and present at the time the match kicks-off.

- (b) If such number of players exceeds the number prescribed by this sub-article, both on the field of play or on the Official Match Report Form, then all players on the Official Match Report Form shall be deemed ineligible to play.

*Amended:
07-07-20
18-05-21
05-06-23
03-06-26*

- (ii) (a) Not more than three (3) players, on the field of play, during that time in the match when the ball is in play, in the case of matches of competitions organised for the Senior Team of Challenge League Clubs. Provided that the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed four (4).

Provided further that an additional player can be added to the Official Match Report Form, to a total of five (5) players, when such player is eligible to play in the Youth League during the same season. Youth League Player shall mean those players under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season.

- (b) If such number of players exceeds the number prescribed by this sub-article, both on the field of play or on the Official Match Report Form, then all players on the Official Match Report Form shall be deemed ineligible to play.

*Amended:
07-07-20
18-05-21
05-06-23*

- (iii) For Senior Teams of Clubs participating in National League 1, the following shall apply:

- i) Where two (2) Non-Homegrown Players are on the Field of Play, the Club must have:

*Amended:
09-08-22
05-06-23
28-05-24
24-09-24
03-06-26*

- At least one (1) Homegrown Player on the Field of Play and one (1) Homegrown Player on the bench who are under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season; or
- At least two (2) Homegrown Player on the Field of Play who is under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season.

ii) Where one (1) Non-Homegrown Player is on the Field of Play, the Club must have at least one (1) Homegrown Player on the Field of Play who is under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season.

Provided that, this requirement ceases to apply where such player/s is/are on the field of play is sent off by the referee.

Provided that the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed two (2). Provided further that where one of such players is eligible to play in the Youth League, the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed three (3).

(b) (i) Not more than one (1) player on the field of play, during that time in the match when the ball is in play, in the case of matches of competitions organised for the Senior Team of Clubs of the National League 2.

Provided that the number of such players listed on the Official Match Report Form for such matches shall not exceed two (2).

*Amended:
03-06-26*

Provided that, for a Club to field such player, the Club must have at least one (1) Homegrown Player who is under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season.

This requirement ceases to apply where such player/s is/are on the field of play is sent off by the referee.

*Amended:
03-06-26*

(ii) Without prejudice to the preceding Article (b)(i) above, for the purposes of the National Cup only, the limits provided in Article 9(iii)(b)(iii)(a) shall apply.

(c) If such number of players exceeds the number prescribed by this sub-article, both on the field of play or on the Official Match Report Form, then all players on the Official Match Report Form shall be deemed ineligible to play.

*Introduced:
22-05-18;
amended:
27-06-19*

(iv) Not more than four (4), on the field of play, during that time in the match when the ball is in play, in the case of matches of competitions organised for Senior Women clubs. If such number of players exceeds the number prescribed by this sub-article, both on the field of play or on the Official Match Report Form, then all players on the Official Match Report Form shall be deemed ineligible to play.

*Amended:
02-11-17;
27-06-19
05-06-23*

(v) Not more than two (2) players, on the field of play, during that time in the match when the ball is in play, in the case of matches of competitions organised for teams other than the Senior Team of Clubs. If such number of players exceeds the number prescribed by this sub-article, then all players on the Official Match Report Form shall be deemed ineligible.

For the purpose of these regulations, the expression, ‘forming part of the Youth Sector of the Association’, means that a player has been duly registered with the Association and duly registered with any Member Club and/or Club affiliated with the Gozo Football Association for at least four (4) seasons, including the season during which the first registration with a Member Club or Club affiliated to the Gozo Football Association was made, and who during each of such four (4) seasons was eligible to take part with his Club in the youth and/or junior competitions organised by the Association and/or The Youth Football Association and/or the Gozo Football Association and/or the Gozo Youth Football Association.

*Amended:
03-06-26*

For the purpose of these regulations, the expression ‘eligible to play in the Youth League during the same season’ means that a player is eligible to play in the Youth League as established in the Rules Governing Competitions specifically players under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season.

Provided that the limitations envisaged by these regulations in relation to players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association shall not apply to those players who although they did not form part of the Youth Sector of the Association, are players who in accordance with the FIFA rules and regulations, are qualified to represent the Association in a FIFA or UEFA Competition for national teams.

*Amended:
09-07-24*

Provided further that whenever such qualification is obtained during the season, the eligibility of such player shall be considered as that of a homegrown player as of the start (first day) of the next registration window following the date of the certificate of citizenship obtained.

- (c) If a player takes part in a competitive match in breach of any of these provisions, such a player shall be deemed to be 'non bona fide' for the purpose of such a match.
- (iv) In so far as the registration of a player is concerned, a player will still be considered as a "bona fide" one for all intents and purposes of a competition if within seven (7) days of the filing by a Club of the registration of such player with the Secretariat of the Association, the Secretariat would not have notified such Club that there is an irregularity in such registration and/or in the document/s or with regards to missing documents, provided that such registration has not been declared invalid by the Executive Board.
- (v) In the case that the Secretariat of the Association informs in writing the Club registering the player, even after the lapse of the seven (7) days mentioned in sub-clause (iv) above, that an irregularity exists in such registration and/or in the documents filed with such registration and/or that documents which needed to be produced for the validity of the registration are missing and nevertheless such player takes part in a competitive match, such player shall be deemed to be a 'non bona fide player' if his registration is invalid in itself and/or because there is an irregularity in the documents accompanying it and/or because it lacks the necessary documents. If the defects in the registration may be corrected but such defects are not corrected within two (2) days of the notification to the Club or if the defects may not be corrected, the General Secretary shall at the first opportunity bring this matter to the attention of the Executive Board for the formal cancellation of such registration. Nevertheless, during the period between the notification to the Club and the formal cancellation of the registration by the Executive Board, the player will still be considered as a 'non bona fide' player.
- (vi) In the case of protest made by a Club, the Club against which the protest has been made and which is proved to have made use of a "non bona fide" player shall be declared to have lost the match and the protesting Club to have won the match. Furthermore, both the Club and the player(s) concerned shall be dealt with by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association unless disciplinary measures had already been decided upon by the Protests Board of the Association.
- (vii) In the case that no protest has been made by a Club with regards to a 'non bona fide' player who had taken part in a competitive match, the 'non bona fide' player and his Club shall still be subject to sanctions by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association. However, such sanctions shall not effect the result of the match and/or the points won or lost at such match.

Introduced: 18-05-21 **9A Limits on the registration of non-homegrown players**

- Amended:* 05-06-23 (i) Premier Division Clubs may not have registered with them at any one moment during the season more than fourteen (14) players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season. For the purposes of this sub-article, such players who are transferred on loan count with the number of such players of both the club of origin as well as the club taking the player on loan.

Provided that where a Club loans out one or more player(s) who has/have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who has/have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season, such Club may register up to sixteen (16) such players.

Introduced: 30-06-22
Amended: 16.10.25
Provided further that Member Clubs that have qualified in UEFA Club Competitions shall not incur any disciplinary sanctions throughout the season for registering players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association, and who have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season, in excess of what is provided in this sub-article.

- (ii) (a) Challenge League Clubs may not have registered with them at any one moment during the season more than four (4) players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season. For the purposes of this sub-article, such players who are transferred on loan count with the number of such players of both the club of origin as well as the club taking the player on loan.
- (b) Where one of such players is eligible to play in the Youth League, a Challenge League Club may have registered with it up to five (5) such players.
- (c) Without prejudice to sub-article (b), where a Club loans out player(s) who has/have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who has/have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season, such Club may register an equivalent number of additional players, corresponding to the number of such players loaned out, provided that such registered players shall not exceed three (3).

Amended: 03-06-26

- (iii) National League Clubs may not have registered with them at any one moment during the season more than

Amended: 27-07-21
03-06-26

two (2) players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association. Provided that players who are still eligible to play in the Youth League during the same season shall not count with such players.

For the purposes of this sub-article, such players who are transferred on loan count with the number of such players of both the club of origin as well as the club taking the player on loan.

- (iv) Any player who has not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who has attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season who is registered in excess of the limits established in this Article shall be deemed to be a 'non bona-fide' player.

Amended: **9B Squad Lists**

*27-07-21
05-06-23
29-01-26
03-06-26*

- (i) (a) In the case of the Senior Team of Premier Division Clubs, and in relation to all their competitive matches throughout the season, only those players, whether professional or amateur, included in the Club's Squad List shall be eligible to play in such competitive matches.
- (b) A Club's Squad List for the purposes of the Premier Division shall include a maximum of twenty-eight (28) professional players. If such number of players exceeds twenty-eight (28), then all players on the Club's Squad List shall be deemed ineligible to play.

Provided that a minimum number of four (4) such professionals shall be players who have formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association, as defined in these Regulations.

Provided that the status of players who have attained twenty-two (22) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season must be that of professional, as defined in Article 2 of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (Section IV). In default, such players shall be deemed to be 'non bona-fide' for the purposes of Article 9 above.

*Introduced:
30-06-22
Amended:
05-06-23*

Provided further that such Squad List shall not contain more than fourteen (14) players who have not formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association and who have attained eighteen (18) years of age before the 1st of January prior to the commencement of the season. In default, all players on the Club's Squad List shall be deemed ineligible to play

- (ii) (a) In the case of the Senior Team of Challenge League Clubs, and in relation to all their competitive matches throughout the season, only those players, whether professional or amateur, included in the Club's Squad List shall be eligible to play in such competitive matches.
- (b) A Club's Squad List for the purposes of the Challenge League shall include the following minimum number of professional players:
- at least eight (8) players in Season 2026/27;
 - at least ten (10) players from Season 2027/28 onwards.

*Amended:
17-05-22;
31-05-22
03-06-26*

Provided that the number of professional players shall not exceed twenty (20) professional players. The number of professional players can be increased to 22 players subject that a minimum of two (2) players on the Squad List are club-grown.

Provided that the Clubs that are promoted from the National League 1 shall be entitled to register a minimum of:

- at least five (5) professional players in Season 2026/27;
- at least eight (8) professional players from Season 2027/28.

Provided that at least five (5) of such professionals shall be players who have formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association, as defined in these Regulations.

Notwithstanding the above, Clubs may opt to keep their Amateur License in their first season following promotion to the Challenge League as established in the Rules Governing Member Clubs, and for such season only, they shall be entitled to register players according to such license status.

For the purposes of this sub-article, 'club-grown' means that a player has been duly registered with the same Member Club submitting the Squad List for at least four (4) seasons, including the season during which the first registration with such Member Club was made, and who during each of such four (4) seasons was eligible to take part with his Club in the youth and/or junior competitions organised by the Association and/or The Youth Football Association.

*Amended:
03-06-26*

If the number of professional players on the list does not reach the minimum, or exceeds twenty (20), or twenty-two (22) professional players, as the case may be, then all players on the Club's Squad List shall be deemed ineligible to play.

*Amended:
03-06-26*

- (iii) (a) In the case of the Senior Team of National League Clubs, and in relation to all their competitive matches

throughout the season, only those players whether professional or amateur, included in the Club's Squad List shall be eligible to play in such competitive matches.

- (b) A Club's Squad List for the purposes of the National League shall not exceed twenty (20) professional players. Players who are eligible to participate in the Youth League during the same season, specifically those who are under nineteen (19) years of age before the first day of January prior to the commencement of the season, shall be excluded from the number of Professional Players on the Squad List.

Amended:
29-01-26

A Club Squad list shall be submitted in the form prescribed by the General Secretary by not later than the first competitive match of the season. In relation to professional players, without prejudice to sub-articles 9A, 9B(i)(b) and 9B(ii)(b) above, and provided that the limitations therein are observed, the list can be amended until five (5) working days following the end of the summer transfer window. It can be amended again during the January transfer window and by not later than five (5) working days following the end of the January transfer window.

Provided that, without prejudice to sub-articles 9A, 9B(i)(b) and 9B(ii)(b) above, and provided that the limitations therein are observed, clubs may add players beyond five (5) working days following the end of the summer transfer window or the January transfer window, as the case may be, only in the following cases:

- (a) where the registration of a player requires an international transfer certificate which, despite having been requested in time, is received by the Association later than such deadline, as envisaged in Art 2.1.6 of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (Section IV);
- (b) where a club registers an out-of-contract professional player;
- (c) to add or remove amateur players who have formed part of the Youth Sector of the Association.

10. Proof of Qualification

- (i) If the Executive Board has any doubt as to the qualification of any player who has taken part in a competition, or as to the qualification of a player who is going to take part in a competition, or as to whether such player is an amateur or a professional player, it shall have the power to call upon such player and/or the Club for which he has played or for the Club with which he is registered to play, to prove that such a player was or is qualified to take part in a competition and/or that the real status of such player conforms to the status which appears in his registration.

In such an investigation, the burden of proving the player's qualification and/or that the player's status conforms to that shown in the player's registration shall rest with the Club and the player.

- (ii) If it is found out that a player who has taken part in a competition was not qualified to take part, both the Club and the player shall be sanctioned by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association notwithstanding that the Club may have already been penalised with loss of points in connection with a competitive match due to the non-eligibility of such a player to take part but only in case that such player and/or Club would not have already been sanctioned by the Protests Board of the Association.
- (iii) If it is found out that a player is not qualified to take part in a competition, such player shall be officially declared by the Executive Board as a "non bona fide player" and shall be disqualified from taking part in such competition.
- (iv) If it is found out that the real status of a player does not conform with the status which appears in his registration, both the Club and the player shall be sanctioned by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association.
- (v) The failure on the part of the Association to conduct any inquiry as mentioned in para. (i) above, shall not prejudice any question relating to the qualification and/or the status of a player.

11. Disqualification

- (i) The competent bodies of the Association have the power to disqualify from any competition any player who is found guilty of a breach of any of the Rules of the Association.
- (ii) The Executive Board or the other competent bodies of the Association have the power to disqualify from any competition any Club who is found guilty of a breach of any of the Rules of the Association.

12. Clubs to play all Competitive Matches

- (i) Every Club must play all its competitive matches unless expelled, disqualified or suspended by the Executive Board or by another competent body of the Association.
- (ii) During a competitive match, each team must be accompanied by an approved Committee Member of the team of such Club. Furthermore, such Committee Member must effectively stay on the Reserves' Bench

throughout the whole duration of the match. Failure to abide by this rule shall be considered as an offence and shall be dealt with as the Executive Board may deem fit.

13. Clubs must play at Full Strength

- (i) Every Club shall play all its competitive matches at its full strength, unless a just and grave cause impedes it from so doing.
- (ii) If a Club fails to give a satisfactory explanation for not playing at full strength when called upon by the Executive Board to account for such a matter, the Executive Board shall refer such matter to the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association to deal with such club in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association.
- (iii) The Executive Board shall not give its permission to a team of a Club to go abroad if, during the period of the team's stay abroad, the team is involved or may likely be involved in a local competitive match.

14. Top Friendly Matches which interfere with Competitive Matches

*Amended:
07-07-20*

First Teams of Clubs taking part in the Premier Division and the Challenge League of the National League of the Association shall not play friendly matches in any stadium/ground open to the public, whether on payment or not, on the afternoon of days fixed for competitive matches of any of the competitions of the Association and home international competitive matches at Senior, Youth or Club level.

15. Unplayed and/or Discontinued Competitive Matches

- (i) If a Club fails to play any match in a competition or if a competitive match, after it has started, cannot be continued either because the number of players in any one team falls below the required minimum number of players or because one of the teams either abandons the field of play or, after the half-time interval, fails to take the field to play, the Club of such team shall:
 - (a) be considered to have lost the match and the other Club shall be considered to have won the match if it has no fault for the match not having been played; and
 - (b) incur a minimum fine, as follows:
 - (i) First Team Proper:
 - Premier Division - Two thousand euro (€2000)
 - Challenge League - One thousand euro (€1000)
 - National Amateur League - Five hundred euro (€500)
 - (ii) Reserves Team - One hundred euro (€100)
 - (iii) Under 21 Team - One hundred euro (€100)
 - (iv) Youth Team - Fifty euro (€50)
 - (v) Women's Team - Fifty euro (€50)
 - (vi) Other Competitions - Fifty euro (€50)
 - (c) be held responsible for all expenses, damages and losses; and
 - (d) be further dealt with by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association. If in the opinion of the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association an unplayed or discontinued fixture may damage the interests of a third party Club, the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association, in dealing with the Club/s for such an unplayed fixture, shall consider this factor as a major aggravating circumstance.
- (ii)
 - (a) If a team fails to play two (2) matches in the same competition run on a league basis, such team may be removed from that competition.
 - (b) In such a case the Club of the team shall be penalized with a minimum fine which shall correspond to the minimum fine which a team incurs for an unplayed fixture multiplied by the number of remaining matches of such team in that competition. Furthermore, such Club shall lose its right to any sponsorship money attached to the competition concerned.
- (iii)
 - (a) If in the opinion of the referee a match cannot be played or is abandoned due to inclement weather or due to lack of light, the decision of the referee, in so far as that match itself is concerned, shall be final.
 - (b) When a match is played on natural grass, in the case of inclement weather, the referee's decision that

*Amended:
07-07-20*

a match may be played shall be subject to the decision of the Stadium Manager.

- (c) When the match is played under artificial light and a power failure or any other defect in the lighting system occurs, the referee alone shall decide what amount of time he must wait to see whether the power may be restored or the defect corrected so that he may be able to have the match played or resumed. However, before deciding that the match cannot be played or resumed, the referee shall consult the Stadium Manager and the Match Inspector, if one had been appointed for that match, to take their opinion into consideration.
- (iv) If a competitive match cannot be played or falls short of its stipulated duration due to circumstances which are not attributable to any of the clubs concerned the match shall be played on another date.

Provided that when the match is played on such other date, the match shall resume from the point in time of the match in which the match was abandoned or discontinued, and the remaining match time must be played.

In such a circumstance the following shall apply:

- (a) The Official Match Report Form may contain any of the eligible players who are duly registered with the club of the two participating teams when the match was abandoned or discontinued, irrespective of whether they were actually on the Official Match Report Form for the abandoned or discontinued match, with the exception of players substituted or sent off during the abandoned or discontinued match as well as players suspended for the abandoned or discontinued match;
- (b) The players who were in play at the time the match was abandoned or discontinued may not be included on the Official Match Report Form as substitutes when the match is resumed;
- (c) Any sanctions imposed before the match was abandoned or discontinued remain valid for the remainder of the match;
- (d) Single yellow cards imposed before the match was abandoned or discontinued are not carried forward to any other matches before the abandoned or discontinued match is completed;
- (e) Players sent off during the abandoned match cannot be replaced and the number of players in the starting line-up remains as it was when the match was abandoned or discontinued;
- (f) Players who were suspended following a match played after the abandoned or discontinued match in question can be included on the Official Match Report Form, unless such players were suspended for a period of time;
- (g) The teams can make only the number of substitutions to which they were still entitled when the match was abandoned or discontinued;
- (h) The match must restart on the same spot where the abandoned or discontinued match action occurred (ex. free-kick, throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, penalty, etc.). If the match was stopped during the normal flow of the game, a dropped ball on the spot where it was abandoned or discontinued shall be used to restart.
- (v) In the case of abandoned or discontinued matches, and such matches have not been abandoned or discontinued due to inclement weather or due to lack of light, any such match shall not count for the purpose of gaining any advantage from such a match, such as goals scored or points gained, unless the competent bodies of the Association declare such match valid and the result of the match at the time of abandonment or discontinuation is to stand. Furthermore, in the case of played matches subsequently declared null and void by the competent authorities of the Association, any such match shall not count for the purpose of gaining any advantage from such match, such as goals scored or points gained provided that such match had been played during the same season during which such a decision was taken.

16. Decisions to Play Postponed Matches and to Replay Matches

If a competitive match is postponed and it is decided that it must be played or in the case that a match is decided to be replayed in consequence of a breach of rules, the defaulting Club shall not receive any share of the proceeds of the replayed match without the authorisation of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall give such an authorisation only in special circumstances. If consent is not given, the share due to such Club shall devolve to the Association.

17. Belated or Non-Commencement of a Match

- (i) In the case that a team, without sufficient reason to the satisfaction of the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association fails to turn up on the field of play at the appointed time of the match, but the match is nevertheless played, or fails, after the half-time interval, to turn up on the field of play on time as stipulated in the Laws of the Game and/or in the particular rules of the competition concerned, but the match is nevertheless continued, or without sufficient reason to the satisfaction of the Control and Disciplinary Board

of the Association, in any other manner such team, either causes the delay of the start of the match at the appointed time of the match or causes the delay of the second half of the match on time as stipulated in the Laws of the Game and/or in the particular rules of the competition concerned, its Club shall be liable to a fine as follows:

*Amended:
07-07-20*

- (a) In the case of the first team of a:
 - Premier Division Club - a minimum of fifty euro (€50) and a maximum of two hundred euro (€200);
 - Challenge League Club - a minimum of fifty euro (€50) and a maximum of one hundred and fifty euro (€150);
 - National Amateur League Club - a minimum of fifty euro (€50) and a maximum of one hundred euro (€100);
- (b) In the case of any other team - minimum of twenty-five euro (€25) and a maximum of fifty euro (€50).

While imposing a fine, the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association shall take into consideration the amount of time that had lapsed from the appointed time of the match, or the start of the second half of extra-time, whichever is the case.

Furthermore, in the case of a live broadcast of a match, the Club shall be liable to pay those damages which the Association may incur due to such delay.

- (ii) (a) If on the lapse of ten (10) minutes from the official scheduled kick-off time of the match or, if on the lapse of ten (10) minutes of the expiry of the half-time interval of fifteen (15) minutes, one or both teams fail to turn up on the field of play ready to start or continue the match, as the case may be, or in the case that although both teams are on the field of play but in the opinion of the referee the match cannot start or re-start after the half-time interval due to a cause attributable to one or to both teams, the referee shall abandon the match and shall forward a detailed written report forthwith to the General Secretary of the Association.
- (b) The referee is the sole arbiter to decide as to whether the ten (10) minutes from the official appointed time have elapsed. His decision shall be final.
- (c) If both teams are present on the field of play and, although one or both teams is/are of the opinion that the match should not be played, the referee still decides that the match shall be played, both teams shall be obliged to play. However, if one or both teams deems that the match should not have commenced, it/they shall have the right to inform the referee and the opposing team in writing that it/they was/were playing the match under protest, stating the reason or reasons. The referee shall forward such protest together with the Official Match Report.
- (d) If a team plays a match under protest and such team loses the match or the match ends in a draw, the Protests Board of the Association may award a win to such team or it may order a replay if in its opinion the match should not have been played. If the Protests Board decides to award a win to the protesting team the provisions of Rule (i) (a) above shall apply to the other team. Any decision of the Protests Board shall be final and binding.

*Amended:
03-08-18
17-10-19*

18. Official Match Report Form

- (i) (a) In the case of a match of the first team of a Club, the Clubs taking part in the match are fill in the official Report Form. Except where provided otherwise, such Match Report Form shall be submitted online in a manner defined by the General Secretariat of the Association.
- (b) Besides the name and surname and the number of the players and of the other authorised persons entitled to sit on the Reserves' Bench, all the other information required in the official Report Form must be correctly indicated on the Report Form. Furthermore, the Report Form shall be validated and submitted by the authorised club official. However, should the other information in the official Report Form, at the exclusion of the name and surname of the player, be incorrect or incomplete, but such player is still clearly identified as being the actual player appearing on the form, then such player shall not be deemed to be ineligible to play.
- (c) The official Report Form shall be filled in a way as to indicate clearly who are the players starting the match and who are the reserved players.
- (d) The numbers on the official Report Form must correspond with the number shown on the jerseys worn by the players.
- (e) The responsible Official of the team must submit the Match Report Form and hand a printed copy to the referee of the match or to any of his assistants. In the case of the first team of a Club, this must be done at least sixty (60) minutes prior to the commencement of the match, and in the case of any

other team, this must be done at least thirty (30) minutes before the commencement of the match.

- (ii) (a) After the Official Match Report Form has been submitted, no further changes may be made to the lists of players or to the lists of the other persons authorized to sit on the Reserves' Benches. However, if anything in the Form needs to be corrected, including the replacement of any player, this may only be done until the kick-off. Such a correction or change must be in writing and made in triplicate. These three copies must be signed by the Captain or Club Official of the Team making the change or correction and shall give them to the referee of the match. The referee shall sign all the three copies, shall keep the original to attach to the Official Match Report Form and shall give a copy to each of the Teams' Captains.

*Amended:
23-09-20*

- (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-clause (a) above, a player who prior to the start of the match has been indicated as one of the players on the Official Match Report Form and such a player is sent off by the referee prior to kick-off, such player may not be replaced either on the Official Match Report Form or in any in any other manner whatsoever. However, such a player may be substituted as long as he is replaced by one of the named substitutes on the Official Match Report Form. Such a substitution will not count as one of the allowed substitutions that may be made during the match.
- (c) The referee has the authority to send off a player prior to kick-off as from the moment that he enters the field of play to start the match. This authority shall continue until the end of the match, including the half-time interval of the match, extra time and kicks from the penalty mark. Furthermore, as from the moment that the referee arrives in the precincts of the stadium until he leaves the precincts of the stadium, he has the duty to report to the Association any kind of incident which may come to his knowledge.

- (iii) (a) Players, including substitute players, whose name does not appear on the Official Report Form or about whom written information has not been given to the Referee in terms of Rule 19 (ii) (a), shall be ineligible to play.

*Amended:
18-05-21*

- (b) A maximum of nine (9) substitute players may be included in the list mentioned in para. (i) (a) above.
- (c) Clubs which, during a match, make use of players whose name does not appear on the list mentioned in para. (i) (a) above, even in the case that such Club has forfeited the points of a won or a drawn match due to the fact that such a player or players have been declared ineligible, shall be fined one hundred and twenty-five euro (125) for each such player.
- (d) Clubs which, during a match, make use of players whose number does not correspond with the number indicated on the list shall be fined seventy-five euro (€75) for each such player.
- (e) Clubs which contravene the provisions of para. (iii) (c) or (d) above shall be fined seventy-five euro (€75) for each player.

- (iv) (a) Before, during or after a competitive match a Club shall not allow any person to enter those areas of the stadium or ground which are reserved for players unless such person is the Club's President or the Club's Representative on the Executive Board of the Association or unless such a person's particulars are fully and correctly indicated in the Official Match Report Form of that competitive match.

- (b) During a competitive match a Club shall not allow any person to sit or stay in the vicinity of the Reserves' Bench unless such person's particulars are fully and correctly indicated in the Official Match Report Form of that competitive match.

- (c) A Club shall not include in the Official Match Report Form of a competitive match any person who is serving a suspension inflicted by the Association or whose qualification to sit on the Reserves' Benches is not in accordance with the Rules of the Association.

- (d) A Club which is found guilty of having committed an offence under paras (iv) (a) or (b) or (c) above shall be fined for every such person:

Two hundred and fifty euro (€250) in the case of a competitive match of the first team of the Club;
and

Seventy-five euro (€75) in the case of a competitive match of any other team of the Club.

- (v) (a) In so far as authorised persons, except players, entitled to enter those areas of the stadium or ground which are reserved for players, and to sit on the Reserves' Benches are concerned, these shall be from amongst those whose name the Club would have sent to the General Secretary of the Association and who would have been approved to enter those areas of the stadium or ground which are reserved for players and to sit on the Reserves' Benches. However, a person who is registered as a player with the Association shall not be authorised to enter such areas and/or to sit on the Reserves' Benches except in his capacity as a player of the Club which is taking part in a competitive match or unless he is authorised by the Association to act as a coach of the team of the Club which is taking part in a competitive match. In the absence of the Club President, one of the Club's Vice-Presidents can access such restricted areas in his stead.

- (b) The Executive Board shall establish the maximum number and the qualification which authorised persons must have to be entitled sit on the Reserves' Benches.
- (c) A Person who is approved to sit on the Reserves' Benches and who is either suspended by any authority within the Association from exercising this function or who is condemned by a judicial authority from entering any football stadium, must return to the General Secretary of the Association any document which so authorises him. Any such documents must be returned within two (2) days of the decision even in the case that such person intends to appeal or has actually entered an appeal from any such decision. Failure to return such documents within the mentioned time limit shall be considered as an offence.
- (vi) (a) Unless the Executive Board decides otherwise, the Club Secretary must furthermore provide the Captain of the Team with a players' list in quadruplicate. The information in these lists must correspond with the information given in the official Report Form. These lists shall be handed to the Referee together with the official Report Form duly filled in and signed.
- (b) The Referee shall immediately hand one copy of each list to the Captain of the opposing team and a copy to one of his assistant referees for handing to the representative of the Press. After the match, the Referee shall send a copy of each list to the General Secretary of the Association, together with the official Report Form of the match. The Referee shall keep the remaining copies for his perusal.
- (vii) Knowingly giving false information in an official Report Form of a match or in the other lists to be handed to the referee is considered as a very serious offence and the Club and any person who is found guilty of this offence shall be dealt with by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association.

19. Checking of Identity

- (i) (a) Players mentioned in the official Report Form are obliged to have with them the M.F.A. Identity Card or the Government's Identity Card or a valid passport. Other authorised persons are obliged to have with them the M.F.A. Identity Card. In the case of the Management Committee Members of a Club, the M.F.A. Identity Card attesting their membership to the Management Committee of the Club concerned shall be used whilst in the case of other authorised persons the M.F.A. Identity Card authorising such persons to sit on the Reserves' Benches for that Club shall be used.
- (b) The Captain of a Team shall have the right to ask the Referee to check the identity of the players of the opposing team. In such a case the referee shall be assisted by his assistant referees.
- (c) The referee shall have the right to check the identity of any or all players mentioned in the official Report Form.

Identification of players may be made through
 - (a) the M.F.A. Identity Card; or
 - (b) the Government Identity Card; or
 - (c) a valid Passport; or
 - (d) personal acquaintance.
- (ii) (a) The Referee must check the identity and the qualification of all authorised persons who have been indicated on the Official Match Report Form. For this purpose the Referee may be assisted by the Assistant Referees and/or Fourth Official. Such identification shall be made through the M.F.A. Identity Card or through personal acquaintance. However, in the case that identification is made through personal acquaintance, the referee must indicate this fact in the Official Match Report Form.
- (b) If the Referee cannot ascertain the identity of any such person he shall exclude such person from sitting on the Reserves' Bench.
- (c) If it results that a person who was allowed to be on the Reserves' Bench was not authorised to do so, such person shall be suspended from all football activities for a period of three (3) months and his Club shall be fined the sum of one hundred and twenty-five euro (€125) for every such unauthorised person. However, if such person was serving a suspension which excludes him from sitting on the Reserves' Bench, he shall be suspended from all football activities for a period of one (1) year. If, when such suspension is inflicted, such person is still serving his original suspension, the new suspension will start to run on the day following that on which his original suspension expires.
- (iii) In the case where a player's identity could not be ascertained because he does not produce his M.F.A. Identity Card or the Government Identity Card or a valid passport, such player and his Club shall be fined seventy-five euro (€75) each.
- (iv) In the circumstances mentioned in para. (iii) above, in the case of a protest, complaint, charge or investigation, the burden of proof as to the identity of a player taking part in a match shall rest with the player and his Club.

20. Dress of Players and Other Authorised Persons on the Reserves' Benches

- (i) No reserve players shall be admitted to sit on the Reserves' Benches unless they are wearing a football jersey and shorts and/or a tracksuit.
- (ii) The Referee shall exclude from the Reserves' Benches any of the other authorised persons if in his opinion they are not decently attired.
- (iii) If the circumstances so dictate, the referee may order both the players and the other authorised persons to wear attire which is different in colour from the colour of the jerseys used by the players of both teams.

21. Powers and Duties of the Referee in connection with Players and other Persons Authorised to Sit on the Reserves' Benches

- (i) The Referee shall not allow a player to take part in a match both in the case that such a player is not included in the Official Match Report Form, except in the case that written notice about such a player has been given to the Referee in terms of Rule 19 (ii) (a), as well as in the case that a such player has been sent off by the Referee either prior to kick-off or during the match, including during the half-time. Furthermore, the Referee shall not allow any player or other person to sit on the Reserves' Benches or to station himself on the touch line where there are no Reserves' Benches, both in the case that such a player or other person is not included in the Official Match Report Form, except in the case that written notice about such player or other person has been given to the Referee in terms of Rule 19 (ii) (a), as well as in the case that such a player or other person has been sent off by the referee either prior to kick-off or during the match, including during half-time.
 - (ii) The Referee is entitled not to start a match or to abandon the match if the match has started if more than seven (7) players from each team and more than the number fixed by the Executive Board of other authorised persons are sitting on the Reserves' Bench or are stationed on the touch line where there is no Reserves' Bench.
 - (iii) The Referee is entitled not to start a match or to abandon the match if the match has started if he becomes aware that any player on the field of play or any other player or person sitting on the Reserves' Benches, or where there are no Reserves' Benches, who is staying on the touch line, is not included in the Official Match Report Form provided that he informs Captain of the Team concerned about this infringement and this notwithstanding such infringement persists. In case of doubt, the Referee shall check the identity of such persons by asking for the official Identity Card issued by the General Secretary of the Association or the government's Identity Card. In this duty, the Referee may ask the assistance of his assistant referees.
 - (iv) The Referee shall make a report if no Committee Member or another authorized person as hereunder mentioned of the Club of a team taking part in the match fails to stay on the Reserves' Bench throughout the whole duration of a competitive match. In the case of competitive matches of Youth or Women's Competitions a person approved by the General Secretary of the Association may substitute a Committee Member on the Reserves' Bench. In such case, the person authorized by the General Secretary to sit on the Reserves' Bench shall for all intents and purposes be deemed to be a Committee Member for the purpose of such a match.
- Amended: 23-02-21*
- (v)
 - (a) Where there is a Reserves' Bench, the reserve players and other authorised Persons shall remain seated on their bench throughout the whole of the match and must conduct themselves at all times in a responsible manner.
 - (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of para. (a) above, where there is a technical area marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game, only one person at a time from amongst the persons designated as Head Coach or Assistant Coach have the authority to convey technical instructions to the players from the technical area.
 - (c) In any other case when the need arises for any person to act otherwise, this may only be done with the permission of the Referee.
 - (vi)
 - (a) Where there are no Reserves' Benches, the authorised persons who may station themselves on the touch line, must in no way interfere with play and must conduct themselves at all times in a responsible manner. The referee's decision on this matter is final.
 - (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of para. (a) above, only one person from amongst the persons designated as Head Coach or Assistant Coach may give technical instructions to the players from a distance of not less than one metre from the touch-line.
 - (vii) Reserve players may, where it is possible, warm up outside the touchline, provided the Referee does not object and provided they do not interfere with play.

Introduced: 17-05-22 **21A. Head Injury Procedure**

- (i) In the event of a suspected concussion, the referee will stop the game to allow the injured player to be

assessed by the team doctor. Players should remain calm during the situation and not interfere with the assessment.

- (ii) The assessment should in principle not take more than three minutes unless a serious incident requires the player to be treated on the field of play or immobilised on the field for immediate transfer to hospital.
- (iii) If the assessment cannot be made after the three minutes and/or a suspicion for a concussion arises, the player should not be allowed to continue playing.
- (iv) A player suffering a head injury that requires assessment for a potential concussion will only be allowed to continue playing after the assessment, on specific confirmation by the team doctor to the referee of the player's fitness to do so.
- (v) The decision remains entirely with the team doctor. Coaches, referees, and players are not allowed to interfere in the assessment and decision of the doctor.

*Amended:
28-09-17*

22. Provision of Ball-Boys by Clubs during Competitive Matches

- (i) Clubs are obliged to provide at their competitive matches such number of ball-boys as the Executive Board may decide in order that these will render their service during such matches. The Executive Board may also establish a fee to be paid for such service. This fee shall be deemed to be a match expense.
- (ii) Unless otherwise decided by the General Secretary of the Association, the Club which, in accordance with the official fixtures-list of competitive matches is deemed to be playing home, shall be obliged to provide the ball-boys. If the General Secretary decides otherwise, such decision shall be indicated in the official fixtures-list and/or by means of a separate letter addressed and sent to the Club at least one week before the match.
- (iii) The ball-boys must be between eight (8) and sixteen (16) years.
- (iv) The Club must also assign a leader to accompany the ball-boys on their duties. The leader must be at least eighteen (18) years old. The leader must be accredited by the Association and must show his accreditation as and when required by the Stadium Management and the Match Officials.
- (v) The leader must ensure that the ball-boys under his care are well instructed in their duties and about their correct and appropriate behaviour in the stadium.
- (vi) The Club must ensure that the ball-boys arrive at the stadium of the match at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the official scheduled kick-off time of the match.
- (vii) The leader shall be supplied by the Stadium Management with a number of balls for use during the match. After the match, the leader must return the balls to the Stadium Management. In the case that the leader returns less balls than the amount supplied to him/her, he/she must make a written report to the Stadium Management explaining the shortfall. In the case of lack of an appropriate explanation, the leader and the Club will be held responsible for the shortfall. Such a case shall be treated as a loss of the ball/s by the Club concerned.
- (viii) The leader must ensure that during the match the ball-boys are properly attired in a tracksuit of the same colour/s. The Stadium Management may supply the ball-boys with an overall to distinguish the colour/s of the tracksuits from the colour/s worn by the players.
- (ix) The leader must ensure that during the match the ball-boys are properly stationed around the field of play to supply the players or the referee, as the case may be, with a ball when one is needed as quickly as possible. In so doing, the ball-boys must only supply one ball at a time. The leader must also ensure that during the match, the ball-boys act independently of their Club and that they behave correctly and appropriately at all times towards the Match Officials, the players, the spectators and any other person exercising a function during the match.
- (x) The Club providing the ball-boys and their leader shall be responsible for the correct and appropriate behaviour of the ball-boys as from the moment that these enter the stadium's restricted areas until they leave such areas as well as for their proper attire, service and correct and appropriate behaviour during the match.
- (xi) A Club which fails in its duty to provide ball-boys properly attired and/or a leader at all or fails to provide the required number of ball-boys in the proper age-limit or fails to provide the ball-boys and/or their leader on time shall be fined by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association between fifty euro (€50) and one hundred and twenty-five euro (€125) depending on the gravity of the case on the first instance during the season and between ninety (€90) and two hundred euro (€200) depending on the gravity of the case on each and every subsequent instance during the same season.
- (xii) A Club whose ball-boys fail to act correctly in their duties and/or otherwise fail to behave in a correct and appropriate manner shall be fined by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association a maximum of two

hundred and fifty euro (€250) depending on the gravity of the case, whilst the leader shall either be suspended for a period of time or shall be definitely removed from acting as a leader of ball-boys depending on the gravity of the case.

23. Fair-Play Ceremony Prior to the Start of Competitive Matches

- (i) Prior to the start of each competitive match organised by the Association a Fair Play Ceremony will be held.
- (ii) The Fair Play Ceremony will be held in accordance with those directives that the Executive Board may give from time to time. The Executive Board may give different directives for different categories of matches.
- (iii) A person, who fails to take part in the Fair Play Ceremony as stipulated in the directives, shall together with his Club be guilty of the offence of bringing the Game into disrepute. In such a case, besides those sanctions that may be meted out against the person concerned and his Club by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association, for the purpose of the Regulations for the Fair Play Awards And The Fair Play Trophies, the MFA Secretariat shall deduct five (5) points from the Club's tally.

24. Laws of the Game

- (i) All competitive matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the decisions of the International Football Association Board.
- (ii) When the Laws of the Game and/or the decisions of the International Football Association Board give discretion to a National Football Association to depart from such Laws or decisions, then these Competition Rules and, when these rules so permit, the particular rules of a competition, shall apply.

25. Decisions of the Referee

- (i) Decisions of the Referee of a match on points of fact connected with the match shall be final and conclusive.
- (ii) A referee is not entitled to impede a player from taking part in a competitive match because, in his opinion, such player is ineligible to play either because he is not duly registered or because he is under a suspension to play.
- (iii) On any question of interpretation of the Competition Rules or of the Laws of the Game by the referee of a match, a protest may be lodged in accordance with the relevant provisions contained in the M.F.A. Statute. Matters concerning the Laws of the Game shall be deemed to be matters of a technical nature.

26. Clubs Responsible to provide adequate Balls

- (i)
 - (a) Except in the case of Premier Division League matches proper where the ball of the match is provided by the Association, each Club must provide the Referee with at least one ball which must be in accordance with the Laws of the Game.
 - (b) The Executive Board may determine that besides in Premier Division League matches the ball of the match is provided by the Association. Such decision shall be subject to the payment of the relative expenses by the Clubs concerned.
- (ii) Any Club which fails to provide adequate balls to the Referee shall incur a minimum fine of fifty euro (€50). In his report the referee must state clearly the reason/s why he considered the ball/s to be inadequate.
- (iii) If both Clubs in a competitive match fail to provide the Referee with adequate balls, the Referee shall not start the match and if the match has started but could not continue due to the lack of an adequate ball he shall abandon the match. In such a case, both Clubs shall be held responsible for the match not having been played or for the abandonment, as the case may be, shall be declared to have lost the match and shall be further dealt with in accordance with Rule 15 of these rules.

27. Number of Players

- (i) A match shall be played by two (2) teams, each consisting of not more than eleven (11) players, including the goalkeeper, provided that the match shall not be played if less than nine (9) players, including the goalkeeper, in any one team are present on the field of play at the start of the match.
- (ii) The rule regarding the minimum number of players in para. (i) above does not necessarily apply to the Reserves League, the Under 21 League or to Youth leagues. The minimum number of players in a team in these competitions shall be in accordance with the particular rules of the competition concerned if different from the number mentioned in para. (i) above.
- (iii) The Referee shall abandon the match if in any one team there are fewer than seven (7) players who are taking part. Players who are temporarily absent from the field of play with the referee's permission shall be included in the minimum number of players required.
- (iv) One of the players in a team shall be named the Captain of the Team. The Captain must wear a distinguishing

sign.

*Amended:
03-08-18
07-07-20
10-09-20
18-05-21*

28. Substitutes during a Match

Up to five of the substitutes listed on each team's match sheet may take part in the match. Exceptionally, a sixth substitute listed on the match sheet may take part in knockout matches exclusively during extra time. Each team may use a maximum of three stoppages in play to make substitutions (one additional stoppage in extra-time can be used). Substitutions made before the start of the match, during half-time, between the end of normal playing time and extra time, and at half-time during extra time do not reduce the number of stoppages in play that can be used. A player who has been substituted may take no further part in the match.

- (i) The manner in which a substitution takes place shall be in accordance with Law III of the Laws of the Game.
- (iv) Players substituting others must have different numbers from the other players in the team of the substituted players on the field of play and from those substituted.

29. Clubs' Colours and Players' Equipment

- (i)
 - (a) Before the first day in July, each Club shall register with the Secretariat of the Association two (2) totally different sets of colours for jerseys, shorts and stockings, which will be used by the Club for its teams' competitive matches during the season.
 - (b) The Association shall inform the Clubs concerned of the other Clubs' first and second set of colours of the equipment mentioned in sub-clause (a) above.
 - (c) Failure by a Club to inform the Association of the two different sets of colours of jerseys, shorts and stockings within the time-limit mentioned in sub-clause (a) above, shall render the Club liable for all the consequences if, in the opinion of the referee, the match cannot be played because of a clash of colours.
- (ii) When the colours of the two teams are alike or similar, the team of the Club which is mentioned first in the fixtures' list (home team), shall change colours so as not to clash with any colours as those normally worn by the opponents.
- (iii) When the colours of any team are predominantly black or dark blue and clash with the black colours to be used by the Match Officials, such team must change its colours.
- (iv)
 - (a) The colour or colours of the jersey worn by the goalkeepers must be distinguishable from the colour or colours of the jerseys worn by the players of both teams.
 - (b) If the colour/s of the players' jerseys of any team or those of the goalkeeper's jersey clash with the colour of the jersey intended to be used by the referee and/or his assistants, the referee and/or his assistants must wear a jersey which is predominantly black or dark blue in colour.
- (v) All the players in a team, including the goalkeeper and the substituted players, must have different numbers on the back of the jerseys. These numbers must have a size of, at least, twenty-five centimeters (25 cm) and must be clearly visible to the Referee and his assistants, to the spectators and to the representatives of the media present for the match. Furthermore, in competitive matches in which the senior team of a Club takes part, the jersey worn by players and that worn by the goalkeeper, must have the same number which appears on the back of the jersey appearing also on the front of the jersey. Alternatively, the front of the shorts worn by a player and that worn by the goalkeeper must have the same number which appears on the back of the player's jersey or goalkeeper's jersey. In each case, the size of this number must be at least ten centimeters (10 cm). In particular, in the case that the players of a team use a striped jersey, the number at the back of the jersey must be placed on a plain patch and the colour of the number must be of a different colour from that of the patch.
- (vi) The basic compulsory equipment of a player shall consist of:
 - (a) A jersey or shirt with sleeves - if undergarments are worn, the colour of the sleeve must be the same main colour as the sleeve of the jersey or shirt.
 - (b) Shorts - if undershorts or tights are worn, they must be of the same main colour as the shorts.
 - (c) Stockings - if tape or similar is applied externally it must be the same colour as that part of the stocking it is applied to.
 - (d) Shinguards and footwear.
- (vii)
 - (a) Players shall not be allowed to take part in a match if they have earrings or ear-studs or if in the opinion of the referee they have on their person any other object (including objects worn for medical

reasons) which may constitute a danger to themselves or to other players. Long finger-nails may be considered as constituting a danger to the player himself and/or the other players.

- (b) When a match is to be played on an artificial grass surface, players shall not be allowed to take part if they are wearing footwear which does not consist of shoes which are adequate to the type of football turf in use. The Executive Board may issue mandatory directives in this regard.
- (viii) If the Referee, after having acted in accordance with the provisions of Law IV of the Laws of the Game, deems that due to the failure on the part of any one team or of both teams to comply with any of the provisions in paras. (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) above, the match cannot take place or the match is abandoned, the defaulting Club/s shall be held responsible for the match not having been played or for having been abandoned. The defaulting Club shall be declared to have lost the match and the other Club shall be considered to have won the match if it has no fault for the match not having been played or for having been abandoned. The defaulting Club/s shall be further dealt with in accordance with Rule 15 of these Rules.
- (ix) If a Club or player does not comply with the provisions in paras. (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) above but the match is nevertheless played, the defaulting Club and in the case of an infringement of the provisions of paras. (vi) and (vii) any player in default, shall incur a maximum fine of seventy-five euro (€75) each for each infringement.
- (x) Players must not reveal undershirts which contain slogans or advertising. A player removing his jersey to reveal slogans or advertising will be cautioned.

30. Advertising on Players' Attire and Referees' Attire

- (i)
 - (a) The use of advertising on the players' jerseys is permitted provided that there are not more than two adverts on the front and not more than one advert on the back of the jersey, provided that each advert shall not exceed four hundred (400) square centimetres in area and provided that in the case of the advert on the back of the jersey the provisions of para. (iv) of rule 30 are complied with. Furthermore, players may also carry a small advert on one or both of the sleeves of their playing jersey, provided that all the jerseys of the same team are identical.
 - (b) Advertising is permitted only on the players' jerseys. It may not be worn on shorts, stockings and footwear.
 - (c) Before a Club may make use of advertising on its jerseys during competitive matches it must submit a sample jersey with the advertising to the General Secretary of the Association for his approval.
 - (d) If the General Secretary of the Association withholds his approval, the Club may refer the matter to the Executive Board for its decision.
- (ii) The use of the trade mark of the manufacturer of a maximum size of sixteen square centimeters (16cm²) and the emblem of the Club on the players' jerseys during competitive matches is also permitted.
- (iii)
 - (a) Referees and assistant referees may have on their equipment the manufacturer's trade mark of a maximum size of sixteen square centimeters (16cm²).
 - (b) Referees and assistant referees are not permitted to have any other advertising on their attire unless authorised by the Executive Board of the Association and only in strict accordance with the decision of the Executive Board.
- (iv) The Executive Board may authorise the use of other marks on players' attire.
- (v) Infringements of the above provisions shall be dealt with by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association except in the case of the match officials whilst in the case of the match officials infringements to this rule shall be dealt with by the Referees Board of the Association.

31. Duration of a Match

- (i) Competitive matches shall be of ninety (90) minutes duration, forty-five (45) minutes each way. However, exception may be made in the case of the Reserves League, the Under 21 League, the Youth League and the Women's Football League in which case the duration may be of seventy (70) minutes, thirty-five (35) minutes each way.
- (ii) Where by the particular rules of a competition extra time needs to be played, the duration of extra time shall be thirty (30) minutes, fifteen (15) minutes each way. However, where the duration of normal time is seventy (70) minutes only, the duration of extra time shall be twenty (20) minutes, ten (10) minutes each way.
- (iii) The Referee is the sole judge of any allowance time to make up for lost time through accident or any other cause. The decision of the Referee on this matter is final and binding on everyone concerned and cannot be impugned in any way.

- (iv) In the case of competitive matches where there is a Fourth Official who has been provided with an electronic device to show the substitutions made during the match, the referee shall at the end of the normal time for each half indicate to the Fourth Official the amount of time he intends to add on to the normal time. The Fourth Official shall inform the spectators of such time by using the electronic device or fixed number/s. Between the time that the referee indicates the time he intends to add on and the time when the Fourth Official actually informs the spectators of such added time the referee may indicate to the Fourth Official a new time to be added on. The Fourth Official must show the latter time. In any case, this is only an administrative procedure in favour of the spectators and in the event that the referee and/or the Fourth Official fail to follow this procedure or if they follow this procedure in a wrong manner no protest may be lodged.

32. Cautions and Expulsions during a Competitive Match

- (i) When during a competitive match the Referee decides to give an official caution to a player, he must do so by showing such player the “Yellow Card”.
- (ii) When in a competitive match the Referee decides to send a player off the field of play, he must do so by showing such player the “Red Card”.
- (iii) When in a competitive match the Referee decides to send a player off the field of play for a second cautionable offence, he must first show him the “Yellow Card” and immediately afterwards show him the “Red Card”.
- (iv) When the Referee of a competitive match decides to give an official caution to a club Official whose name is written on the Official Match Report Form or decides to send off such an official from the precincts of the field of play, he must do so by showing such player the “Red Card” to such official.
- (v)
 - (a) When a player or an official has been sent off the field of play by the Referee, such player or official must, without undue delay, go outside the precincts of the field of play, and may not return to the precincts of the field of play.
 - (b) If a player or an official fails to abide by the provision of sub-clause (a) above, he shall be guilty of an offence.
 - (c) If a player or an official who has been sent off the field of play for having committed an offence, and whilst going towards the outside of the precincts of the field of play or if he has remained within the precincts of the field of play or returns to the precincts of the field of play he commits another offence either on the field of play or within the precincts of the field of play, the penalty for such other offences shall be doubled.
- (vi) When the Referee sends off a player from the field of play or sends off a reserve player or a Club Official from the precincts of the field of play, the Referee shall be entitled not to re-start the match until such a player or official actually leaves the precincts of the field of play. If the Referee deems that such a player or official is refusing to leave the field of play or the precincts of the field of play without undue delay, he shall have the right to abandon the match after duly warning the Team Captain of such a player or official that he would abandon the match if such a player or official does not leave forthwith the field of play and/or the precincts of the field of play.

33. Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark

Besides the playing of extra-time after the end of normal playing time to determine the winner of a match in the case that the rules governing the competition concerned provides for extra-time to be played, taking of kicks from the penalty mark is the only other obligatory method to determine the winning team in a match in the case that such match which is required to determine a winning team ends in a draw after normal playing time or extra-time, as the case may be.

Procedure of Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark:

- (i) **The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.**
- (ii) The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.
- (iii) The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
- (iv) Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks.
- (v) The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- (vi) If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.

- (vii) If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- (viii) A goalkeeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute provided his team has not used the maximum number of substitutes permitted under the competition rules.
- (ix) With the exception of the foregoing case, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time where appropriate, are eligible to take kicks from the penalty mark.
- (x) Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- (xi) An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- (xii) Only the eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- (xiii) All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle.
- (xiv) The goalkeeper who is the team-mate of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.
- (xv) Unless otherwise stated, the relevant rules, the FIFA Laws of the Game and International F.A. Board Decisions apply when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- (xvi) If at the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents and the team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. Any player thus excluded may not participate in kicks from the penalty mark.
- (xvii) Before the start of kicks from the penalty mark, the referee must ensure that an equal number of players from each team remains within the centre circle and they shall take the kicks.

34. Points in Competitive Matches played on a League Basis

In competitive matches played on a league basis, three (3) points shall be gained for a win, one (1) point shall be gained for a draw and no points shall be gained for a loss.

Whenever, for any reason whatsoever, a club has less points in the final classification table than those deducted as a result of disciplinary measures, those points which could not be deducted as a result of disciplinary measures, those points which could not be deducted during the same season shall be recorded as deficit points in the initial classification table of the league competition in the following season, even if the club is relegated.

35. Deciding Matches

- I. If during or at the end of a Competition which is played on a league basis the Rules governing that particular Competition do not specify what should happen in the case that two (2) teams finish on equal points in a way that it cannot be determined which of them has won the League and/or the Championship and/or the Section or is the Runner-up of the League or Section and/or has won promotion or has obtained the third and/or fourth and/or subsequent position in case that it is needed to establish officially such position/s or is relegated or shall play in a Relegation Pool, a deciding match shall be played between them and the winner shall be determined as the highest placed team between them.
- II. (i) If during or at the end of a Competition which is played on a league basis the Rules governing that particular Competition do not specify what should happen in the case that three (3) or more teams finish on equal points in a way that it cannot be determined which of them has won the League and/or the Championship and/or the Section or is the Runner-up of the League or the Section and/or has won promotion or has obtained the third and/or the fourth and/or a subsequent position in case that it is needed to establish officially such position/s or is relegated or shall play in a Relegation Pool, a Placing-List shall be compiled between all the teams which had finished on equal points and this by following the under mentioned criteria in the following order:
 - (a) the highest number of points in the direct encounters;
 - (b) in case of equal number of points in the direct encounters, the best goal difference in the direct encounters;
 - (c) in case of equal number of points and same goal difference in the direct encounters, the highest

number of goals scored in the direct encounters;

- (d) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters, the best goal difference in the League or Section;
 - (e) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters and same goal difference in the league, the highest number of goals scored in the League or Section; and
 - (f) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the League or Section, the drawing of lots.
- (ii) After such above mentioned Placing-List has been worked out and unless otherwise specified in other parts of this rule:
- (a) for the purpose of determining the highest placed team, the top two (2) teams of the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the winner shall be determined as the highest placed team;
 - (b) for the purpose of determining the lowest placed team/s to be relegated or to play in a Relegation Pool:
 - in the case of one (1) team to be relegated or to play in a Relegation Pool, the bottom two (2) teams in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the loser shall be relegated or play in the Relegation Pool as the case may be;
 - in the case of two (2) teams to be relegated or to play in a Relegation Pool, the bottom team in the Placing-List shall be relegated or play in a Relegation Pool, as the case may be, and the two (2) teams immediately preceding such team in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the loser shall be relegated or play in the Relegation Pool as the case may be;
 - in the case of three (3) teams to be relegated or to play in a Relegation Pool, the bottom two (2) teams in the Placing-List shall be relegated or shall play in a Relegation Pool, as the case may be, and the two teams immediately preceding such two (2) teams in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the loser shall be relegated or play in the Relegation Pool as the case may be.
- III. (i) If at the end of a Competition which is played on a league basis and the Rules governing that Competition do not specify what should happen in case that four (4) or more teams finish on equal points and it is needed to establish three (3) or four (4) places at the same time, a Placing-List shall be compiled between all the teams which finished on equal points and this by following the criteria mentioned in Clause II sub-clause (i) above.
- (ii) After the Placing-List has been worked out, the first two (2) teams in such Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them to establish the highest placed team amongst them and the winner shall be determined as the first placed team whilst the next highest two (2) teams in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them to determine the third placed team amongst them and the winner shall be determined as the third placed team.
- (iii) If it is needed to establish more than four (4) places at the same time, the same procedure mentioned in sub-clauses (i) and (ii) above shall be followed. In this case the number of deciding matches shall depend on the number of places which have to be determined at the same time.
- IV. For the sole purpose of determining the placing of teams in a pre-established Fixture-List in a competition which is played on a league basis, and the Rules governing that particular competition do not specify what should happen in the case that two (2) or more teams finish on equal points, no deciding matches shall be played and the placing of the teams for this purpose only, shall be decided by following the under mentioned criteria in the following order:
- (a) the highest number of points in the direct encounters;
 - (b) in case of equal number of points in the direct encounters, the best goal difference in the direct encounters;
 - (c) in case of equal number of points and same goal difference in the direct encounters, the highest number of goals scored in the direct encounters;
 - (d) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters, the best goal difference in the League or Section;
 - (e) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters and same goal difference in the league, the highest number of goals scored in the League

or Section; and

- (f) in case of equal number of points, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the direct encounters, same goal difference and same number of goals scored in the League or Section, the drawing of lots.
- V.
- (i) In case that a Competition is played on a league basis with different phases, if three (3) or more teams finish with equal number of points at the end of the Second and/or Final Phase of the Competition and their positions as stipulated in clauses II, III, and IV above need to be established, in the compilation of the Placing-List all the matches played so far by the teams concerned in the different phases of the Competition, including scheduled matches between the two (2) teams which were not played or were abandoned due to the fault of one (1) of the teams concerned, shall be taken into account.
 - (ii) In case that at the end of a Competition played on a league basis which involves the promotion of two (2) teams to a higher division and three (3) or more teams finish at the top with an equal number of points in the final Classification Table, the team placed first in the Placing-List shall be declared the winner and/or Champion of the League or Section and the teams placed as second and third in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them after which the winner shall be declared the runner-up of the League or Section and is therefore promoted.
 - (iii) In case that at the end of a Competition played on a league basis which involves the promotion of only one (1) team to a higher division and the two (2) next highest teams qualify to play in the Promotion Play-Offs:
 - (a) If three (3) teams finish at the top with an equal number of points in the final Classification Table, the teams placed in the first two places in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the winner shall be declared the Champion of the League or Section and is promoted to a higher division whilst the loser shall be declared the runner-up of the League or Section.
 - (b) If four (4) or more teams finish at the top with an equal number of points in the final Classification Table, the teams placed in the first two places in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them and the winner shall be declared the winner and/or Champion of the League or Section and is promoted to a higher division and the loser shall be declared the runner-up of the League or Section whilst the teams placed as third and fourth in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them after which the winner shall be declared the third placed team of the League or Section and the loser the fourth placed team of the League or Section.
 - (c) If three (3) or more teams finish in the second place with an equal number of points in the final Classification Table, the team placed first in the Placing-List shall be declared the runner-up of the League or Section and the teams placed as second and third in the Placing-List shall play a deciding match between them after which the winner shall be declared the third placed team of the League or Section and the loser the fourth placed team of the League or Section.
- VI.
- (i) Deciding matches mentioned in this Rule shall be played as soon as possible after the necessity arises and as may be decided by the Executive Board.
 - (ii)
 - (a) In such deciding matches, if at the end of normal time the result is still a draw, extra-time shall be played in accordance with Rule 32 of these Regulations.
 - (b) If after the end of extra-time the result is still a draw, kicks from the penalty-mark shall be taken in accordance with the Laws of the Game and in accordance with the provisions of Rule 34 of these Rules.

36. Despatch of the Official Match Report

- (i)
 - (a) Immediately after a competitive match, with the exception of the Youth, Women and Member Association matches, the Referee of such a match shall include all that needs to be reported in accordance with the Laws of the Game, any such other information, which is required by the Rules of the Association and such other information, which is required by the official Report Form provided by the Association.
 - (b) Such information must be handed to the Referee Observer who will then scan this information from the same venue which the match was held to the Match Operations Department of the Association.
 - (c) In the case of Youth, Women and Member Association matches, the referee of such match after including all that needs to be reported in accordance with the Laws of the Game, any such other information, which is required by the Rules of the Association and such other information, which is required by the official Report Form provided by the Association must mail the report to the General Secretary of the Association not later than twenty four (24) hours after such match. However, in the case of a match which requires an automatic replay and in the case of matches played on Mondays or

Tuesdays, such information must reach the General Secretary of the Association on the same day of the match.

- (ii) Failure by the Referee to comply with the provisions of para. (i) above shall be considered as a very serious offence.
- (iii) On receipt of the scanned Match Reports the Secretariat of the Association shall forward the report to the Clubs concerned to their email address registered with the Association.
- (iv) In the case of Youth and Women matches, the Secretariat of the Association shall, as early as practicable after having received the Official Match reports send a copy of the report to the Clubs concerned.

37. General Secretary to keep Record

The General Secretary of the Association shall keep a record of all competitive matches played. This record shall include the name of the players taking part, the name of those players who were cautioned and/or expelled and the results of the matches, both at half-time and at full-time.

38. Protests and Complaints in connection with Competitive Matches

Protests and complaints in connection with competitive matches are to be made in accordance with the relevant provisions contained in the M.F.A. Statute.

39. Recording of a three nil (3 - 0) Result

When the Executive Board or any other a competent Board or Committee of the Association, for any reason whatsoever, awards the points of a match to any team, a result of three (3) goals to nil (3 - 0) shall be recorded unless a better result has been obtained on the field of play by the team to which the match has been awarded.

40. Cups and Trophies which belong to the Association

- (i) Cups and trophies which are presented to Clubs and which are still the property of the Association shall not be used outside the Club premises in any activity which is not a sports activity without the prior consent of the Executive Board.
- (ii) A Club which acts in contravention of the provisions of para. (i) above shall be severely dealt with by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association.

41. Discontinued Participation by Clubs

- (i) When a Club has, for any reason whatsoever, discontinued its participation in a competition, then:
 - (a) if the competition is run on a league basis, the points gained or lost are to be expunged from the league table if the discontinuing Club has not played at least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of its matches. If the discontinuing Club has played one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) or more of its matches, then the points gained or lost are to stand and the points of the remaining matches shall be given to its opponents; and
 - (b) if the competition is run on a knock-out basis, its opposing Club in the draw shall pass on to the next round of the competition.
- (ii) In any case, except in the case of a Club which has been removed or suspended by the Association, the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association shall deal with the discontinuing club in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association.

42. Removed and Disbanded Clubs

Clubs removed from a competition for misconduct or for any other cause, and Clubs which have been disbanded, shall not be allowed to re-enter a competition during the same football season. Furthermore, such Club shall lose any sponsorship money attached to any competition in which it was taking part prior to removal or disbandment.

43. Doping

- (i) Prohibited substances and techniques shall be those as are annually established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and which come into effect on the 1st day of January in each year.
- (ii) The Executive Board, with the aim of discouraging players from taking, and/or making use of, prohibited substances and/or techniques, as well as with the aim of discouraging Clubs and other persons from aiding or encouraging players to take, and/or to make use of, prohibited substances and/or techniques, shall decide on appropriate regulations for the control and testing of players who are either preparing themselves to take part in competitive matches to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association or who had taken part in a competitive match played under the jurisdiction of the Association, in order to check whether these are taking or had taken, and/or are making or had made use of, any prohibited substance and/or technique; to

punish those players found guilty of committing such an abusive act or acts; and to punish those Clubs and other persons who are found guilty of having aided or encouraged such players to take, and/or make use of, any such prohibited substance and/or technique.

- (iii) Any player who is preparing himself to take part in matches to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association or who had taken part in a competitive match played under the jurisdiction of the Association, shall be deemed to have given to the Association, his unconditional consent to the Association to:
 - (a) carry out on his person, during preparation or immediately after the end of a competitive match, either by itself or through the services of an Agency contacted by the Association, any doping tests in such a manner as may be established, including the taking of blood samples;
 - (b) report to the Executive Police any evidence which shows that such a player had taken or made use of, a substance and/or technique which, besides contravening MFA regulations, contravenes also Maltese law;
 - (c) report to FIFA any positive result for a prohibited substance and/or technique and of any suspension inflicted by the Association upon him for the world-wide extension by FIFA of a such suspension; and
 - (d) make public any positive result for a prohibited substance and/or technique and the punishment inflicted upon him by the Association.
- (iv) Any Club and any other person who falls under the jurisdiction of the Association shall be deemed to have given his unconditional consent to the Association to:
 - (a) provide the Executive Police with any evidence which shows that such a Club or such other person had aided or encouraged a player, who is preparing to take part in competitive matches to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association or who had taken part in a competitive match played under the jurisdiction of the Association, to take a substance and/or to make use of a technique, which besides contravening the MFA regulations, contravenes also Maltese law;
 - (b) report to FIFA any suspension inflicted by the Association upon such a Club or such other person for having aided or encouraged a player who was preparing to take part in competitive matches to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association or who had taken part in a competitive match played under the jurisdiction of the Association, to take and/or to make use of, a prohibited substance and/or technique, for the world-wide extension by FIFA of any such suspension; and
 - (c) make public any punishment inflicted by the Association upon such a Club or such other person for having aided or encouraged a player who was preparing himself to take part in competitive matches to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association or who had taken part in a competitive match played under the jurisdiction of the Association, to take and/or to make use of, a prohibited substance and/or technique.

44. Presentation of Trophies and Medals in Connection with Competitions Organised by the Association

- (i) The presentation of trophies and medals held in a stadium in connection with competitions organised by the Association shall be made in accordance with such directives as the Executive Board or the Executive Board may give. All persons subject to the jurisdiction of the Association shall abide by such directives.
- (ii) Any person who fails to abide by such directives or any person who attempts to disrupt such directives shall be suspended for one (1) year by the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association. In this case a suspended sentence shall not be applicable.

45. Official Bereavement during Competitive Matches

- 1. Bereavement during Competitive Matches shall be observed only in the following cases and in the following manner:
 - (a) in the case of death of:
 - (i) a Member or an ex-Member of the M.F.A. Executive Board;
 - (ii) an active referee;
 - (iii) the President of Malta or an ex-President of Malta;
 - (iv) the Prime Minister;
 - (v) the Sports Minister;
 - (vi) the Leader of the Opposition;
 - (vii) the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
 - (viii) in the case of a National Disaster:-

In all grounds and stadia, one minute silence prior to the start of each match, and where flags are normally flown, these shall be flown at half-mast, on the same day of death or on the first day after the death when there are competitive matches.

- (b) in the case of death of a President of a Club:-

In the ground or stadium where competitive matches of that Division (of the Club whose President has died) are normally played, one minute silence prior to the start of each match in that Division, and where flags are normally flown, these shall be flown at half-mast, on the same day of death or on the first day after his death on which football is played in that ground or stadium.

- (c) in the case of death of an active player, Club Committee and Technical Staff Member:-

One minute silence prior to the match of that Club on the same day of death or the first match of that Club after the death.

- (d) on every other case authorised in writing by the General Secretary of the Association and in the manner authorised.

2. In order that bereavement can be observed in the cases mentioned in paras. 1 (b) and (c) above, the President or the Secretary of the Club concerned shall make, as early as possible before the time fixed for the match/es, an official request in writing to the General Secretary of the Association or to the Manager of the ground/stadium where the match is to be held.
3. Any other request shall be made in writing to the General Secretary of the Association.
4. (i) Bereavement shall not be allowed by a referee if he is not given instructions by the Ground Manager of by the person in charge of the Ground where the bereavement is to be observed.
(ii) The referee shall report on the Official Report Form whenever bereavement is observed prior to the start of a competitive match.
5. Anyone who authorises any bereavement or takes part in any bereavement during a competitive match which is not authorised as indicated in these regulations shall be considered guilty of an offence.

46. Breach of Rules

- (i) The competent bodies of the Association shall have the power to inquire into all matters relating to any breach of these rules by Clubs and any other person falling under the jurisdiction of the Association.
- (ii) (a) The competent bodies of the Association are empowered to require the attendance of the official delegates of Clubs and of any other person falling under the jurisdiction of the Association and may require the production of books, letters, correspondence and any other document belonging to Clubs and/or to any person who falls under the jurisdiction of the Association.
(b) The competent bodies of the Association may require that statements made before or submitted to it are confirmed on oath or confirmed by means of a solemn affirmation. Failure to confirm a statement on oath may be deemed to mean that the person making such statement is not telling the truth or the whole truth.
(c) If in the opinion of the a competent body of the Association a false declaration on oath or a false solemn affirmation has been made, the matter will be referred by the Association to the Executive Police so that criminal proceedings may be instituted against the person making such a false declaration.
- (iii) The Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association or such other body of the Association which in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association is empowered to take disciplinary action shall have the power to deal with offending Clubs and any other person falling under the jurisdiction of the Association.
- (iv) When the rules and regulations of the Association do not establish a specific punishment for a breach of rules, the Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association or such other body of the Association which in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association is empowered to take disciplinary action shall mete out punishments as it may deem fit. This power shall include that of removing or suspending for a definite or an indefinite period Clubs and any other person falling under the jurisdiction of the Association, the power to impose fines and the power to deduct points already gained or that may be gained in the current season or in subsequent seasons. However, in the case that Control and Disciplinary Board of the Association or such other body of the Association which in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Association is empowered to take disciplinary action deems that the penalty to be inflicted upon a Club should be the suspension or the removal of such Club, it shall abstain from taking further cognizance of the case and shall refer forthwith the matter to the Executive Board with a recommendation for suspension or removal for its decision.

47. Competitions Committee

- (i) The Association shall have a Competitions Committee which shall be competent to deal in a consulting capacity with all the competitions organised by the Association, including the calendar and the fixtures of the different competitions. It shall also be competent to make proposals to the Executive Board regarding

the creation of new competitions and the removal of existing ones and regarding changes to the Competition Rules of the Association and to the particular rules of the competitions organised by the Association.

- (ii) (a) The Competitions Committee shall be nominated by the Executive Board for a period of one year and shall be composed of a Chairman, at least one Vice-Chairman and of such other number of persons as the Executive Board may deem fit.
- (b) The Chairman of the Committee shall be an Officer of the Association whilst the Vice-Chairman or the First Vice-chairman, if more than one Vice-Chairman is nominated, shall be an Officer of the Association or a member of the Executive Board. Furthermore, the Committee shall include at least one Executive Board Member from each Division of the National League of the Association, a member of the Women's Football Committee, a member of the Futsal Committee and a member of the Amateur, Youth & Grassroots Committee.
- (c) The General Secretary of the Association or another member of the Secretariat of the Association shall act as the Secretary to the Committee. In case that the General Secretary of the Association is not acting as the Committee's Secretary he shall be an ex-ufficio member of the Committee.

Amended:
06-03-18
07-07-20

48. The Association's Awards

- (i) Every season, the Association shall draw up a list of awards, which shall be known as the 'MFA Awards' for individuals, such as players, coaches and club officials, and on a collective basis, such as teams or football clubs, for the current football season, which awards shall be presented to the winners in an official function organised by the Association at the end of that football season.
- (ii) The MFA Awards shall be governed by Section VIII of the MFA Regulations, namely the 'Regulations of the MFA Awards'. The said regulations shall define the list of the awards and the voting procedure, if any, for the granting of such awards.
- (iii) The Association may establish any number of awards to be granted as it may deem fit.
- (iv) Notwithstanding that the Association may establish any number of awards to be granted, it shall compulsorily grant the following awards as the minimum number of awards to be granted in any football season. These are:
 - a. The Footballer of the Year Award
 - b. The Best Player of the Challenge League
 - c. The Best Player of the National Amateur League
 - d. The Best Player of the Women's League
 - e. The Best Player of the Youth League
 - f. The Top-Scorer of the Premier Division
 - g. The Top-Scorer of the Challenge League
 - h. The Top-Scorer of the National Amateur League (overall) and its respective groups
 - i. The Top-Scorer of the Women's First Division League
 - j. The Top-Scorer of the Women's Second Division League
 - k. The Fair Play Award
- (v) The Association shall present any changes to the above list of awards for the approval of the Executive Board of the Association by not later than the last day of March of the relevant season.

Introduced:
17-08-21

49. Racist behaviour during matches

- (i) The Match Officials and the Venue Director, where applicable, together with the officer in charge of police at the venue, must prevent any racist or other discriminatory action being taken by spectators inside or in the immediate vicinity of the stadium (unacceptable levels of verbal provocation from spectators towards players or opposing fans, racist behaviour, provocative banners or flags, etc.).

Should such action arise, the Venue Director, once informed, must intervene over the public address system or have any offensive material removed.

Match personnel must draw the attention of the police to any serious acts of misconduct, including racist insults, so that offenders may be removed from the stadium should the police so decide.

- (ii) (a) When the referee becomes aware (in particular if he is informed by the Venue Director or by the Referee Observer through the fourth official) of racist behaviour (especially racist chants, insults and screams, banners, etc.) and if, in his opinion, this racist behaviour is of a strong magnitude and intensity, he shall, in application of Law 5 of the Game, stop the match and ask for an announcement to be made over the public address system requesting the public to immediately stop such racist behaviour. In the absence of a public address system, the referee shall inform the respective club officials listed on the match sheet who shall be responsible for communicating with their respective supporters.

The match may resume only after the announcement has been made or after such communication.

- (b) If the racist behaviour does not cease once the game has restarted (i.e., step 1 was ineffective), the referee shall suspend the match for a reasonable time period (for example 5 to 10 minutes) and request the teams to go to the dressing rooms. The Venue Director, the Referee Observer, and the fourth official, where and as applicable, shall assist the referee in determining whether the racist behaviour has ceased following step 1.

During this time period, the referee shall again ask for an announcement to be made over the public address system requesting the public to immediately stop such racist behaviour and warning them that this may even result in the match being abandoned. In the absence of a public address system, the referee shall inform the respective club officials listed on the match sheet who shall be responsible for communicating with their respective supporters.

During this suspension, the referee shall consult with the Venue Director, the Referee Observer, and the officer in charge of police at the venue, where and as applicable, on the possible next steps, in particular the possibility to abandon the match.

- (c) If the racist behaviour does not cease after the game has restarted (i.e. step 2 was ineffective), the referee shall, as a very last resort, definitively abandon the match. The Venue Director, the Referee Observer, and the fourth official, where and as applicable, shall assist the referee in determining whether the racist behaviour has ceased following step 2.

However, any decision by the referee to abandon a match in such circumstances shall only be taken after all other possible measures have been implemented and the impact of abandoning the match on the security of the players and the public has been assessed by means of a full and extensive consultation with the Venue Director, the Referee Observer, and the officer in charge of police at the venue. In principle, abandoning the match is subject to the agreement of all parties involved.

- (iii) Where any of the steps provided in sub-article (ii) above are taken, the referee, the Referee Observer, and the Venue Director shall report the matter which shall then be referred to the Control, Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

Where the match is suspended by the referee because of racist and/or discriminatory conduct, the match may be declared forfeit.