



ENTRY MANUAL

AFC CLUB COMPETITIONS 2017-2020



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Entry Manual for AFC Club Competitions 2017-2020

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DEFINITIONS

All terms and phrases, unless otherwise stated herein shall bear the same meaning as ascribed in the AFC Statutes and relevant Competition Regulations, unless the context indicates otherwise.

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

- (a) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;
- (b) the feminine gender shall include the masculine and vice-versa;
- (c) reference to natural persons shall include any legal person or corporation;
- (d) references to the AFC shall include its successors and permitted assigns and, in relation to the availability of the Commercial Rights, its respective Member Associations and AFC Committees;
- (e) reference to the AFC Commercial Rights Partner or Official Licensees shall include where advised by the AFC, its successors, and permitted assigns and, in relation to the exercise and exploitation of the Commercial Rights.

SECTION 1: AFC COMPETITIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Entry Manual for AFC club competitions 2017-2020 (**Entry Manual**) governs entry into the AFC Champions League (**ACL**) and AFC Cup (**ACC**) (collectively, **AFC Club Competitions**) for the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 sporting seasons.
- 1.2. This Entry Manual sets out the mechanism for allocating slots to Member Associations (**MA**s) and their eligible clubs to participate in the AFC Club Competitions.
- 1.3. Any reference to the AFC Statutes and to AFC and FIFA regulations refer to those valid at the time of application.

SECTION 2: AFC MEMBER ASSOCIATION RANKING

2. Applicability to 2017-2020 Seasons

- 2.1. The AFC Club Competitions Ranking is a technical ranking which ranks each MA from 1-47 on the basis of their sporting results over the previous four (4) years.
- 2.2. In November 2016, the AFC shall publish the 2016 AFC Club Competitions Ranking.
 - 2.2.1. The MAs ranked 1-12 in each geographic ranking (*cf* Article 4) are eligible to participate in the ACL in the 2017 and 2018 seasons.
 - 2.2.2. The MAs ranked from 7 and below in each geographic ranking (*cf* Article 4) are eligible to participate in the ACC in the 2017 and 2018 seasons.
- 2.3. In November 2017, the AFC shall publish the 2017 AFC Club Competitions Ranking.
 - 2.3.1. The MAs ranked 1-12 in each geographic ranking (*cf* Article 4) are eligible to participate in the ACL in the 2019 and 2020 seasons.
 - 2.3.2. The MAs ranked from 7 and below in each geographic ranking (*cf* Article 4) are eligible to participate in the ACC in the 2019 and 2020 seasons.

3. Formula for Calculation

- 3.1. The formula for determining the AFC Club Competitions Ranking for the 2017 and 2018 sporting seasons is set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2. The formula for determining the AFC Club Competitions Ranking for 2019 and 2020 sporting seasons is set out at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.3. The calculations determined by the AFC Club Competitions Ranking are final and binding and not appealable.

SECTION 3: SLOT ALLOCATION

4. Geographical Ranking - ACL

- 4.1. Following the determination of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking, the MAs shall be split into a geographical ranking in accordance with the zones identified in the AFC Statutes.
- 4.1.1. MAs from the West Zone, South Zone and Central Zone shall form the “West Asia” ranking.
- 4.1.2. MAs from the East Zone and ASEAN Zone shall form the “East Asia” ranking.
- 4.1.3. For sporting reasons, the AFC General Secretariat may reallocate an MA from the “West” ranking to the “East” ranking and vice-versa.
- 4.2. MAs in each geographic ranking shall be allocated the following position and slots on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking:

Rank	ACL		
	Group Stage	Preliminary / Playoff Stage	Note
1	3	1	*Clubs that lose in the ACL Preliminary / Playoff Stage shall be eliminated from AFC club competitions for that sporting season
2	3	1	
3	2	2	
4	2	2	
5	1	2	
6	1	1	
7		1	*Clubs that lose in the ACL Preliminary / Playoff Stage shall enter the ACC Group Stage
8		1	
9		1	
10		1	*If a club advances to the ACL Group Stage, the next eligible club from the relevant MA will join the ACC Group Stage.
11		1	
12		1	
Total	12	9+6	*Each zone in the ACL Playoff Stage is awarded four (4) direct slots

5. Conditions Specific to ACL Slot Allocation

Number of MAs and distribution of direct and indirect slots

- 5.1. In principle, the top 12 MAs in each geographical ranking (on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking) shall be eligible to participate in the ACL.
- 5.2. MAs ranked 1-6 in each geographical ranking (on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking) are eligible to be granted direct slots for their clubs to participate in the ACL.
- 5.3. MAs ranked 7-12 in each geographical ranking (on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking) are eligible to be granted solely one (1) playoff slot for their clubs to participate in the ACL.

Maximum number of slots per MA

- 5.4. MAs shall be allocated a maximum of one third (1/3) of the total number of clubs in their national top division league. This figure includes direct slots and playoff slots.
 - 5.4.1. When determining the number of clubs in the national top division league of an MA, 'foreign' clubs shall not be considered.
 - 5.4.2. The AFC General Secretariat has sole discretion to determine whether a club shall be considered a 'foreign' club for the above purpose.
- 5.5. The maximum number of slots allocated to an MA shall be limited to four (4) even though it may have more than twelve (12) teams in its national top division league.
- 5.6. MAs shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) direct slots.

MAs ranked 1-6 that fail to fulfil any of the ACL Criteria

- 5.7. MAs ranked 1-6 in each geographical ranking (on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking) that fail to fulfil any of the ACL Criteria shall only be eligible to receive playoff slots.
- 5.8. The following redistribution shall occur should one (1) or two (2) MAs in the same geographical ranking fail to fulfil any of the ACL Criteria:
 - 5.8.1. the number of slots for the MA shall be wholly converted into playoff slots (e.g. 3+1 becomes 0+4);
 - 5.8.2. any direct slot(s) that were forfeited shall be redistributed to the highest eligible MA in the same geographical ranking, subject to the principles set out at Articles 5.4 to 5.6;
 - 5.8.3. should an MA ranked 3 or 4 be redistributed a direct slot, they shall have a playoff slot annulled which will not be redistributed (e.g. 2+2 becomes 3+1);

- 5.8.4. should an MA ranked 5 be redistributed two (2) direct slots, they shall have a playoff slot annulled which will not be redistributed (e.g. 1+2 becomes 3+1).
- 5.9. Should three (3) or more MAs in the same geographical ranking fail to fulfil any of the ACL Criteria, the AFC General Secretariat, taking into account all relevant sporting factors, shall decide upon the appropriate redistribution of direct slots.

MAs only allocated Playoff Slots

- 5.10. MAs allocated only playoff slots due to:
- 5.10.1. being ranked 7-12 in a geographical ranking; or
- 5.10.2. failing to meet the ACL Criteria and being subject to the operation of Article 5.7 to 5.9;
- must, as a minimum, meet the following:
- 5.10.3. Stadia requirements in the ACL Criteria;
- 5.10.4. Logistics, Visa, and Accommodation requirements in the ACL Criteria; and
- 5.10.5. their eligible club(s) should be licensed in accordance with Article 11.
- 5.11. Should an MA not meet the minimum conditions, their allocated playoff slot(s) shall be annulled.

6. Geographical Ranking – ACC

- 6.1. Following the determination of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking, the MAs shall be split into a geographical ranking in accordance with the five (5) zones identified in the AFC Statutes (i.e. West, South, Central, ASEAN and East).
- 6.1.1. For sporting reasons, the AFC General Secretariat may reallocate an MA from its affiliated zone ranking to another zone ranking.
- 6.2. MAs in each geographic ranking shall be allocated the following position and slots on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking:

Entries for West and ASEAN zones: three (3) groups of four (4) teams per zone

Rank	ACC		
	Group Stage	Preliminary / Playoff Stage	Note
1	2		*The rank in this table is provided after removing those MAs that have received direct slots to the ACL.
2	2		
3	2		
4	1	1	If after removal of those MAs there are any unallocated slots for the ACC, the AFC General Secretariat shall reallocate any direct slot(s) at its sole discretion to one (1) or more MAs from the same zone. Any unallocated playoff slot(s) shall be forfeited.
5	1	1	
6	1	1	
7		1	*The number of Preliminary Stage and Playoff Stage slots is subject to the number of entries from clubs that meet the ACC criteria
8		1	
9		1	
10		1	
11		1	
12		1	
Total	9	3+6	*West and ASEAN zones in the ACC Playoff Stage are awarded three (3) direct slots each

Entries for Central, South and East zones: one (1) group of four (4) teams per zone

Rank	ACC		
	Group Stage	Preliminary / Playoff Stage	Note
1	1	1	*The rank in this table is provided after removing those MAs that have received direct slots to the ACL.
2	1	1	
3	1	1	If after removal of those MAs there are any unallocated slots for the ACC, the AFC General Secretariat shall reallocate any direct slot(s) at its sole discretion to one (1) or more MAs from the same zone. Any unallocated playoff slot(s) shall be forfeited.
4		1	
5		1	*The number of Preliminary Stage and Playoff Stage slots is subject to the number of entries from clubs that meet the ACC criteria
6		1	
7		1	
8		1	
9		1	
10		1	
Total	3	3+7	*Central, South and East zones in the ACC Playoff Stage are awarded one (1) direct slot each

7. Conditions Specific to ACC Slot Allocation

Maximum number of slots per MA

- 7.1. MAs shall be allocated a maximum of one third (1/3) of the total number of clubs in their national top division league. This figure includes direct slots and playoff slots.
 - 7.1.1. When determining the number of clubs in the national top division league of an MA, 'foreign' clubs shall not be considered.
 - 7.1.2. The AFC General Secretariat has sole discretion to determine whether a club shall be considered a 'foreign' club for the above purpose.
- 7.2. The maximum number of slots allocated to an MA shall be limited to two (2) even though it may have more than six (6) teams in its national top division league.
- 7.3. MAs shall be limited to a maximum of two (2) direct slots.

MAs eligible to receive direct slots that fail to fulfil any of the ACC Criteria

- 7.4. MAs ranked 7-12 in each geographical ranking on the basis of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking that fail to fulfil any of the ACC Criteria shall only be eligible to receive playoff slots.
- 7.5. The following redistribution shall occur should one (1) or two (2) MAs in the same geographical ranking fail to fulfil any of the ACC Criteria:
 - 7.5.1. the number of slots for the MA shall be wholly converted into playoff slots (e.g. 1+1 becomes 0+2);
 - 7.5.2. any direct slot(s) that were forfeited shall be redistributed to the highest eligible MA in the same geographical ranking, subject to the principles set out at Article 7.1 to 7.3;
 - 7.5.3. should an MA with a direct slot be redistributed another direct slot, they shall have a playoff slot annulled which will not be redistributed (e.g. 1+1 becomes 2+0).
- 7.6. Should three (3) or more MAs in the same geographical ranking fail to fulfil any of the ACC Criteria, the AFC General Secretariat, taking into account all relevant sporting factors, shall decide upon the appropriate redistribution of direct slots.

MAs only allocated Preliminary or Playoff Slots

- 7.7. MAs allocated only Preliminary or playoff slots due to:
 - 7.7.1. being ranked 7 and below in their respective geographical ranking for MAs in the West and ASEAN zones; or

7.7.2. being ranked 4 and below in their respective geographical ranking for MAs in the Central, South and East zones; or

7.7.3. failing to meet the ACC Criteria and being subject to the operation of Article 7.4 to 7.6;

must, as a minimum, meet the following:

7.7.4. Stadia requirements in the ACC Criteria;

7.7.5. Logistics, Visa, and Accommodation requirements in the ACC Criteria; and

7.7.6. their eligible club(s) should be licensed in accordance with Article 11.

7.8. Should an MA not meet the minimum conditions, the playoff slot(s) shall be annulled.

SECTION 4: ACL CRITERIA

8. General Requirements

- 8.1. The matters set out in this Section are specific to entry to the ACL.
- 8.2. MAs must meet all of the following requirements (**ACL Criteria**) in order to obtain direct slots for their clubs to participate in the ACL:
 - 8.2.1. Technical Standard;
 - 8.2.2. Club Licensing System;
 - 8.2.3. Sport Integrity;
 - 8.2.4. Organisation of Professional Football League;
 - 8.2.5. Stadia; and
 - 8.2.6. Logistics, Visa, and Accommodation.
- 8.3. The AFC General Secretariat is responsible for determining whether an MA meets the ACL Criteria.

Criterion 1: Technical Standard

MA must be ranked 1-6 in the “West Asia” ranking or the “East Asia” ranking.

Criterion 2: Club Licensing System

	Criteria
2.01	(i) Club Licensing Administration within MA or League (ii) Appointed full-time Club Licensing Manager
2.02	Established First Instance Body and Appeal Body
2.03	National Club Licensing Regulations approved by the AFC
2.04	Regular Club Licensing workshop or education programme for clubs

Criterion 3: Sport Integrity

	Criteria
3.01	Integrity Officer appointed in MA
3.02	Regulations or equivalent document which regulates match manipulation
3.03	Reporting mechanism
3.04	Education seminar for players and team officials

Criterion 4: Organisation of Professional Football League

	Criteria	Pass	Note
4.01	Minimum number of matches per team in national top division (including league, cup tournament, and grand final if applicable)	Minimum 27	Includes cup matches
4.02	Duration of national top division (including league, cup tournament and grand final if applicable)	Minimum 8 months	MA should identify which competition is the national top division league and national cup competition

4.03	League format of national top division	Home and Away	Maximum two clubs can share the same stadium.
4.04	Education programme for referees	Yes	
4.05	Appointed referee assessor at matches	Yes	
4.06	Appointed match commissioner at matches	Yes	
4.07	Competition Regulations	Yes	
4.08	National regulations for the status and transfer of players	Yes	
4.09	National or league disciplinary code	Yes	
4.10	National or league security guidelines	Yes	
4.11	Appointed security officer at matches	Yes	
4.12	Accurate measurement of attendance and announcement of the figure at matches	Yes	
4.13	Highest decision making body of the league (or for league matters) and its members are from relevant stakeholders who reflect the interest of different parties (e.g. representatives from clubs, league, football association, independent organisation and/or individual)	Yes	
4.14	Full-time dedicated official who oversees operational matters for the league	Yes	
4.15	Dedicated management structure for league	Yes	
4.16	Audited profit and loss statement and balance sheet for the league	Yes	
4.17	Independent auditor for the league	Yes	

4.18	Centralised marketing for media rights	Yes	
4.19	Frequency of delivery of a certain type of contents of league matches and broadcasting of league match itself through TV and/or other available communication platform(s)	Yes	
4.20	Media opportunity to cover matches (on match days/non-match days)	Yes	

Criterion 5: Stadia

	Criteria	Pass	Note
5.01	Number of AFC-approved stadia of the clubs in national top division league	2 (MAs ranked 1-6 in each geographical ranking) or 1 (MAs ranked 7-12 in each geographical ranking)	Must comply with AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.

Criterion 6: Logistics, Visa and Accommodation

	Criteria
6.01	Easy visa obtain process
6.02	Daily international flights within respective geographical area ("West Asia" or "East Asia")
6.03	Simplified airport procedure, easy immigration/customs process
6.04	Well-established local transportation infrastructure
6.05	Teams and official hotels of suitable standard

SECTION 5: ACC CRITERIA

9. General Requirements

- 9.1. The matters set out in this Section are specific to entry to the ACC.
- 9.2. MAs must meet all of the following requirements (**ACC Criteria**) in order for their clubs to participate in the ACC:
 - 9.2.1. Technical Standard;
 - 9.2.2. Club Licensing System;
 - 9.2.3. Sport Integrity;
 - 9.2.4. Organisation of Professional Football League;
 - 9.2.5. Stadia; and
 - 9.2.6. Logistics, Visa, and Accommodation.
- 9.3. The AFC General Secretariat is responsible for determining whether an MA meets the ACC Criteria.

Criterion 1: Technical Standard

MA must be ranked from 7 and below in the “West Asia” ranking or the “East Asia” ranking.

Criterion 2: Club Licensing System

	Criteria
2.01	(i) Club Licensing Administration within MA or League (ii) Appointed full-time Club Licensing Manager
2.02	Established First Instance Body and Appeal Body
2.03	National Club Licensing Regulations approved by the AFC
2.04	Regular Club Licensing workshop or education programme for clubs

Criterion 3: Sport Integrity

	Criteria
3.01	Integrity Officer appointed in MA
3.02	Regulations or equivalent document which regulates match manipulation
3.04	Reporting mechanism
3.05	Education seminar for players and team officials

Criterion 4: Organisation of Professional Football League

	Criteria	Pass	Note
4.01	Existing National top division (including league, cup tournament and grand final if applicable)	Yes	MA should identify which competition is the national top division league and national cup competition
4.02	League format of national top division	Home and Away	
4.03	Operational Referee department	Yes	

4.04	Appointed match commissioner at matches	Yes	
4.05	Competition Regulations	Yes	
4.06	National regulations for the status and transfer of players	Yes	
4.07	National or league disciplinary code	Yes	
4.08	National or league security guidelines	Yes	Appointed security officer at matches
4.09	Highest decision making body of the league (or for league matters) and its members are from relevant stakeholders who reflect the interest of different parties (e.g. representatives from clubs, league, football association, independent organisation and/or individual)	Yes	
4.10	Dedicated management structure for league	Yes	
4.11	Audited profit and loss statement and balance sheet for the league	Yes	
4.12	Media opportunity to cover matches (on match days/non-match days)	Yes	

Criterion 5: Stadia

	Criteria	Pass	Note
5.01	Number of AFC-approved stadia of the clubs in national top division league	1 only	Must comply with AFC Stadium Regulations and AFC Safety and Security Regulations.

Criterion 6: Logistics, Visa and Accommodation

	Criteria
6.01	Easy visa obtain process

6.02	Daily international flights within respective geographical area (“West Asia” or “East Asia”)
6.03	Simplified airport procedure, easy immigration/customs process
6.04	Well-established local transportation infrastructure
6.05	Teams and official hotels of suitable standard

SECTION 6: CLUB ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN AFC COMPETITIONS

10.Club Eligibility

- 10.1. To be eligible to participate in AFC Competitions, a club must:
- 10.1.1. be awarded a licence in accordance with Article 11;
 - 10.1.2. meet sporting criteria in accordance with Article 12.
- 10.2. The requirement to be awarded a license in order to participate in the ACC shall commence with the AFC Cup 2018.

11.Club Licensing Criteria

- 11.1. MAs are required to implement a National Club Licensing System, consistent with the AFC Club Licensing Regulations, for all the teams within their national top division league.
- 11.1.1. For the purposes of this Article, all capitalised terms are consistent with the terms utilised in the AFC Club Licensing Regulations.
- 11.2. Clubs that meet the sporting criteria set out in Article 12 must have received a License from the relevant national Licensor. Should a club that meets the sporting criteria fail to receive a License, Article 12.5 applies, subject to the operation of Articles 5.4 to 5.6 (for ACL) or Articles 7.1 to 7.3 (for ACC), read together with Article 12.6.
- 11.3. Where an MA has less licensed clubs than slots allocated to it:
- 11.3.1. any direct slot(s) shall be redistributed in accordance with Article 5.8 (for ACL) or Article 7.5 (for ACC); and
 - 11.3.2. any playoff slots shall be annulled.

Extraordinary Application

- 11.4. Where an eligible club has not acquired a License from the relevant national Licensor, either through:
- 11.4.1. having undertaken a national licensing process which is not approved by the AFC or lower/not equivalent to the one applicable for top division clubs; or

11.4.2. not having undertaken a national licensing process because it belongs to a division other than the national top division league (e.g. a second division club who wins the national knockout cup),

the relevant MA may apply, pursuant to the AFC Club Licensing Regulations, for that eligible club to undertake an AFC Extraordinary Application.

11.5. Based on the AFC Extraordinary Application, the AFC Entry Control Body may grant a License to the eligible club, such license being limited to the specific club and season for which it is issued.

11.6. MAs who do not have an approved national licensing process shall be limited to requesting an AFC Extraordinary Application on behalf of each relevant club only once.

11.6.1. This provision incorporates and includes all requests undertaken in previous seasons.

11.6.2. This provision does not apply to clubs in the category described at Article 11.4.2 above.

11.7. The process shall be undertaken in accordance with Annex 4 of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations.

AFC Entry Control Body

11.8. The AFC Club Licensing Regulations set out which matters relating to the club licensing criteria may be lodged or appealed before the AFC Entry Control Body. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.

12.Sporting Criteria

12.1. To meet the sporting criteria, a club must have earned one (1) of the following (which shall be utilised in descending order for seeding purposes for any draw):

12.1.1. winner of the national top division league;

12.1.2. winner of the national knock-out cup;

12.1.3. runner-up of the national top division league;

12.1.4. third-place of the national top division league.

12.2. Where an MA has more than one (1) national knock-out cup, it shall inform the AFC and its clubs of the 'national knock-out cup' for the purposes of Article 12.1.

- 12.3. Where an MA does not have a national knock-out cup, the sporting criteria in Article 12.1 are amended accordingly:
- 12.3.1. winner of the national top division league;
 - 12.3.2. runner-up of the national top division league;
 - 12.3.3. third-place of the national top division league;
 - 12.3.4. fourth-place of the national top division league.
- 12.4. Where the winner of the national knock-out cup also meets the sporting criteria through its finishing position in the national top division league:
- 12.4.1. if the winner of the national top division league, it shall be the first seed. The runner-up of the national top division league shall be the second seed. The third-place of the national top division league shall be the third seed. The fourth-place of the national top division league shall be the fourth seed;
 - 12.4.2. if runner-up in the national top division league, it shall be the second seed. The third-place of the national top division league shall be the third seed. The fourth-place of the national top division league shall be the fourth seed;
 - 12.4.3. if third-place in the national top division league, it shall be the second seed. The runner-up of the national top division league shall be the third seed. The fourth-place of the national top division league shall be the fourth seed.
- 12.5. Where a club that meets the sporting criteria does not receive a license, the club which finished in the next highest position in the national top division league which is licensed shall replace it, subject to the operation of Articles 5.4 to 5.6 (for ACL) or Articles 7.1 to 7.3 (for ACC), read together with Article 12.6.
- 12.6. Only clubs whose final finishing position in the national top division league is in the top fifty percent (50%) of the number of teams that participated on its first match-day are eligible to meet the sporting criteria.
- 12.6.1. For the avoidance of doubt, in a national top division league of (e.g.) twelve (12) teams, only the top six (6) are eligible to participate in AFC Competitions on the basis of their finishing position.
 - 12.6.2. For the avoidance of doubt, if the same national top division league commenced the season with twelve (12) teams, but only ten (10) completed the full season for whatever reason, the top six (6) are eligible to participate in AFC Competitions on the basis of their finishing position.

- 12.6.3. For the avoidance of doubt, when calculating the number of teams that participated on the first match-day of a national top division league, 'foreign clubs' shall not form part of that number.
- 12.7. This Article shall only take into consideration the national top division league and national knock-out cup competitions ending in the national sporting season immediately preceding the AFC Competitions.
- 12.7.1. Where there was no national top division league and/or national knock-out cup competition(s) held in the national sporting season immediately preceding the AFC Competitions, the AFC General Secretariat shall decide which national sporting season (if any) the sporting criteria shall apply to.

Clubs directly or indirectly involved in match manipulation

- 12.8. If, on the basis of all the factual circumstances and information available to the AFC, the AFC concludes to its comfortable satisfaction that a club has been directly and/or indirectly involved, since the entry into force of Article 73.6 of the AFC Statutes on 8 June 2010 (or its future equivalents), in any activity aimed at arranging or influencing the outcome of a match at national or international level, such club shall be declared ineligible to participate in AFC Competitions. Such ineligibility is effective for only one (1) football season.
- 12.8.1. When making this administrative decision, the AFC can rely on, but is not bound by, a decision of a national or international sporting body, arbitral tribunal or state court.
- 12.8.2. The AFC can refrain from declaring a club ineligible to participate in the competition if the AFC is comfortably satisfied that the impact of a decision made in connection with the same factual circumstances by a national or international sporting body, arbitral tribunal or state court has already had the effect to prevent that club from participating in an AFC Competition.
- 12.8.3. Where a club is declared ineligible, it is considered to have not met the sporting criteria. Accordingly, the club that finished in the next highest position in the national top division league and is licensed shall replace it, subject to the operation of Articles 5.4 to 5.6 (for ACL) or Articles 7.1 to 7.3 (for ACC), read together with Article 12.6.
- 12.9. The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.
- 12.9.1. In addition to the administrative measure of declaring a club ineligible, the AFC may, if the circumstances so justify, initiate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

MA allocated more slots than clubs who meet sporting criteria

- 12.10. Should an MA, as a result of the operation of Article 11.6, have more slots allocated to it than clubs which meet the sporting criteria, its vacant slots shall be redistributed or annulled in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 5.8 (for ACL) or Article 7.5 (for ACC).

MA allocated more slots than one third (1/3) of national top division league

- 12.11. Should an MA have more slots allocated to it than the number of clubs it is permitted to enter in the AFC Competitions, its vacant slots shall be redistributed or annulled in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 5.8 (for ACL) or Article 7.5 (for ACC).

Eligible club refuses to enter AFC Competition

- 12.12. If an eligible club refuses to enter an AFC Competition, despite being licensed and meeting the sporting criteria, the slot allocated to its MA shall be annulled, regardless of whether it is a direct slot or playoff slot.

Control or influence of clubs

- 12.13. To ensure the integrity of an AFC Competition:

- 12.13.1. no participating club may, either directly or indirectly:

- 12.13.1.1. hold or deal in the securities or shares of any other participating club;
- 12.13.1.2. be a member of any other participating club;
- 12.13.1.3. be involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of any other participating club; or,
- 12.13.1.4. have any power whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other participating club;

- 12.13.2. no one may simultaneously be involved, either directly or indirectly, in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of more than one (1) participating club;

- 12.13.3. no individual or legal entity may have control or influence over more than one (1) participating club, such control or influence being defined in this context as:

- 12.13.3.1. holding a majority of the shareholders' voting rights;
- 12.13.3.2. having the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the club;

12.13.3.3. being a shareholder and alone controlling a majority of the shareholders' voting rights pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders of the club; or

12.13.3.4. being able to exercise by any means a decisive influence in the decision-making of a club.

Control or influence determined prior to commencement of AFC Competition

12.14. In the event that the AFC determines, prior to the commencement of an AFC Competition, that there exists a breach of the eligibility criteria in Article 12.13, only one (1) of the breaching clubs may be admitted, in accordance with the following (in descending order):

12.14.1. the eligible club which is affiliated to the MA with the higher ranking in the AFC MA Ranking; or

12.14.2. if affiliated to the same MA, the eligible club which is the higher seed.

12.15. The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.

12.15.1. Where a club is declared ineligible, it is considered to have not met the sporting criteria. Accordingly, the club that finished in the next highest position in the national top division league and is licensed shall replace it, subject to the operation of Articles 5.4 to 5.6 (for ACL) or Articles 7.1 to 7.3 (for ACC), read together with Article 12.6.

12.15.2. In the event that AFC Entry Control Body determines that the scenario in Article 12.14.2 has occurred, a *prima facie* breach of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations has occurred and the matter shall also be referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

Control or influence determined during AFC Competition

12.16. In the event that the AFC determines, during an AFC Competition, that there exists (or has come into existence) a breach of the eligibility criteria in Article 12.13:

12.16.1. the participating clubs shall be permitted to complete the AFC Competition;

12.16.2. the participating clubs shall be declared ineligible to participate in AFC Competitions for the following two (2) seasons.

12.17. The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.

12.17.1. Where a club is declared ineligible, it is considered to have not met the sporting criteria. Accordingly, the club that finished in the next highest position in the national top division league and is licensed shall replace it, subject to the operation of Articles 5.4 to 5.6 (for ACL) or Articles 7.1 to 7.3 (for ACC), read together with Article 12.6.

12.17.2. In the event that AFC Entry Control Body considers that such violation involves dishonest conduct, the matter shall also be referred to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.

13.Appeal

13.1. Any administrative decision by the AFC Entry Control Body to refuse the admission of a club to an AFC Competition made in accordance with this Entry Manual may be lodged exclusively and directly with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (**CAS**) in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body, and entry forms submitted to the AFC General Secretariat.

13.2. Appeals shall be subject to the following conditions, without limitation, which are reflected in the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body:

13.2.1. the language of arbitration shall be English;

13.2.2. the matter shall be heard by three (3) arbitrators;

13.2.3. the appeal shall be subject to an expedited procedure; and

13.2.4. any hearings (if required) shall be undertaken at the CAS Alternate Hearing Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

SECTION 7: ADMINISTRATION

14. Draw Mechanism

- 14.1. The draw mechanism for the AFC Competitions shall be published in advance of any draw.

15. Disciplinary Measures

- 15.1. All disciplinary measures in relation to this Entry Manual shall be undertaken in accordance with the current AFC Statutes, AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code, and any relevant AFC circular.

16. Decisions

- 16.1. All decisions made in accordance with this Entry Manual, except where expressly identified otherwise, are final and binding and not appealable in accordance with the AFC Statutes.

17. Amendments

- 17.1. The AFC reserves the right to make amendments to any part of this Entry Manual for any reason whatsoever. Such amendments shall be duly communicated to the MAs and clubs where appropriate.

18. Matters not provided for

- 18.1. Matters not provided for in this Entry Manual shall be decided by the AFC Competitions Committee. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

19. Closing Provisions

- 19.1. The AFC General Secretariat is entrusted with the operational management of the AFC Competitions and is therefore entitled to make decisions and adopt the detailed provisions necessary for implementing this Entry Manual.

20.Enforcement

- 20.1. This Entry Manual was ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 3 July 2017 and came into force immediately.

For the AFC Executive Committee

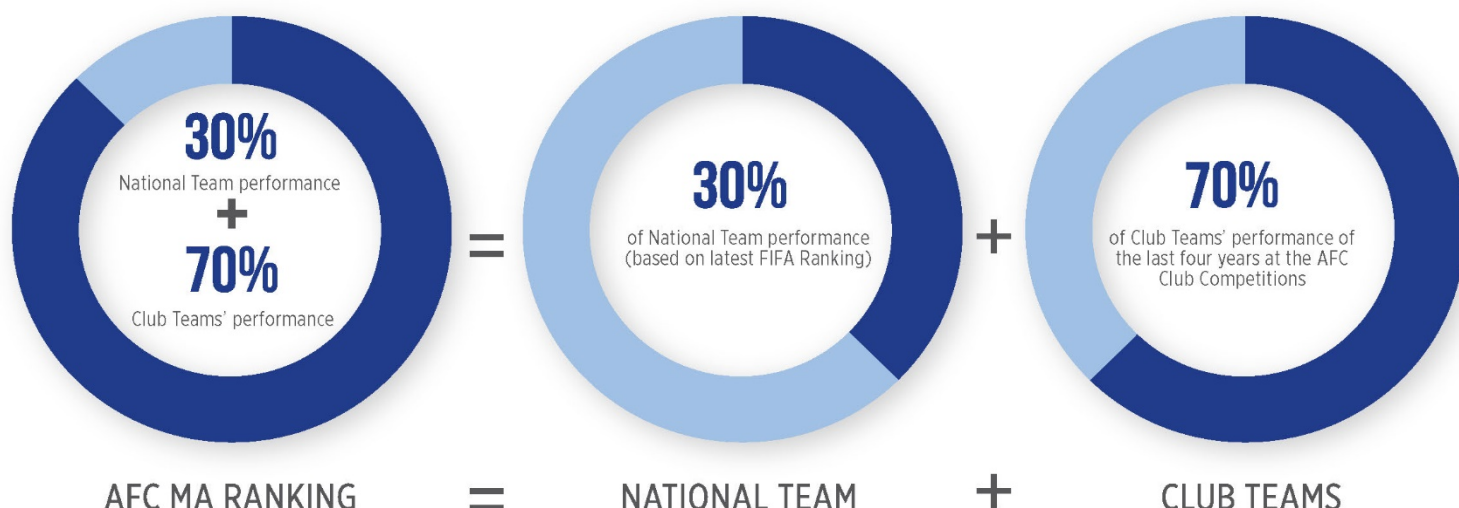
President:

Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa

General Secretary:

Dato' Windsor John

Principles of the AFC Member Association Ranking System



How the points are calculated?

Based on the performance of last four years of National Teams and Club Teams at the AFC Club Competitions



Latest FIFA Men's Ranking total points would identify the national Team performance



The following points to be given to AFC Championship League Match results:

- 3 points for 'WIN', 1 point for 'DRAW' and 0 point for 'LOSE'
- 3 additional points to be given to each club that advances to the next round (from Group Stage to Round of 16 / Round of 16 to Quarter-Finals / Quarter-Finals to Semi-Finals / Semi-Finals to Final)
- Preliminary Stage and Playoff matches will not be counted
- In case MA has more than 1 club, then average points of clubs will be the final points for the respective MA



The following points to be given to AFC Cup Match results:

- 3 points for 'WIN', 1 point for 'DRAW' and 0 point for 'LOSE'
- 3 additional points to be given to each club that advances to the next round (from Group Stage to Round of 16 / Round of 16 to Quarter-Finals / Quarter-Finals to Semi-Finals / Semi-Finals to Final)
- Preliminary Stage and Playoff matches will not be counted
- In case MA has more than 1 club, then average points of clubs will be the final points for the respective MA

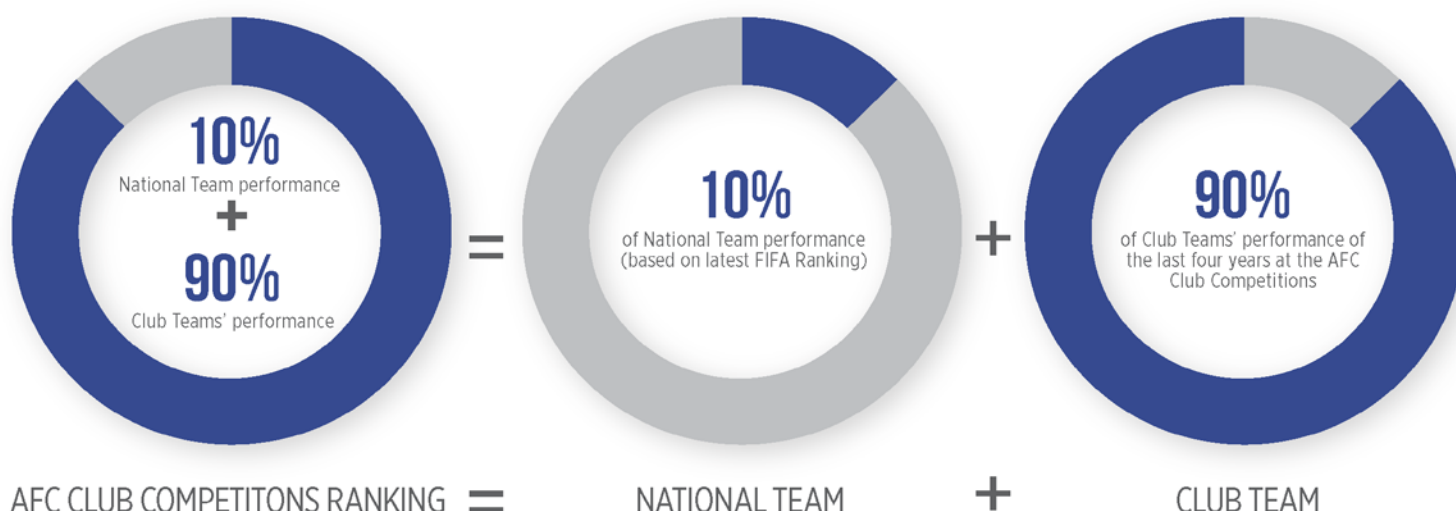
1 AFC Cup point is equivalent to 1/3 of the AFC Champions League point

The MA ranked number 1 in the National Team Ranking will receive full marks (i.e. 30 points). The other MAs will receive points proportionally less (based on the number of points obtained in the FIFA Ranking) compared to the MA ranked number 1.

The MA ranked number 1 in the Club Teams' performance will receive full marks (i.e. 70 points). The other MAs will receive points proportionally less (based on the number of points obtained from the results of Club Teams at the AFC Club Competitions) compared to the MA ranked 1.

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Principles of the AFC Club Competitions Ranking System



How the points are calculated?

Based on the performance of last four years of National Teams and Club Teams at the AFC Club Competitions



Latest FIFA Men's Ranking total points would identify the national Team performance



The following points to be given to AFC Championship League Match results:

- 3 points for 'WIN', 1 point for 'DRAW' and 0 point for 'LOSE'
- 3 additional points to be given to each club that advances to the Knockout Stage
- ACL Preliminary 1 & 2 and Playoff Stage - Bonus points for entry 0.3, each win (except by Penalty kick) 0.3 and each draw 0.15
- In case MA has more than 1 club in the Group Stage, then average points of clubs will be the final points for the respective MA



The following points to be given to AFC Cup Match results:

- 3 points for 'WIN', 1 point for 'DRAW' and 0 point for 'LOSE' in the Group Stage
- 3 additional points to be given to each club that advances to the Knockout Stage
- AFC Cup Preliminary 1 & 2 and Playoff Stage - Bonus points for entry 0.3, each win (except by Penalty kick) 0.3 and each draw 0.15
- AFC Cup (West/Central/South/East) 4.8 points for each WIN and 1.6 points for each DRAW in the Knockout Stage
- AFC Cup (ASEAN) 2.67 points for each WIN and 0.89 points for each DRAW in the Knockout Stage
- In case MA has more than 1 club in the Group Stage, then average points of clubs will be the final points for the respective MA
- 1 AFC Cup point is equivalent to 1/3 of the AFC Champions League point

The MA ranked number 1 in the National Team Ranking will receive full marks (i.e. 10 points). The other MAs will receive points proportionally less (based on the number of points obtained in the FIFA Ranking) compared to the MA ranked number 1.

The MA ranked number 1 in the Club Teams' performance will receive full marks (i.e. 90 points). The other MAs will receive points proportionally less (based on the number of points obtained from the results of Club Teams at the AFC Club Competitions) compared to the MA ranked 1.

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