

2025

# Hong Kong Premier League Competition Regulations

2026

HKPL





HKFA



HONG KONG  
PREMIER LEAGUE



中银人壽  
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## Definitions

In these Regulations, the terms listed below have the following meanings (unless the context specifically indicates otherwise):

AFC	Asian Football Confederation
AFC Competition	The Competition organized by AFC
Auditors	Registered auditors appointed by a Participating Club to audit its accounts
CAS	Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland
Competition	The competition called the “2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League”, which shall include all Matches including any opening, presentation and closing ceremonies, press conferences or other Official Functions connected therewith.
Competition Regulations	HKFA promulgates the Competition rules implemented by the participating clubs
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFA Code of Ethics	FIFA’s Code of Ethics in force from time to time
FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players	FIFA’s Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players in force from time to time
Force Majeure	If by any reason of any event which could not reasonably have been prevented by any party including but not limited to any abnormally inclement weather, flood, lightning, storm, fire, explosion, earthquake, subsidence, structural damage, Government orders closure of competitions or training grounds due to pandemic or other natural physical disaster, failure or shortage of power supplies, war, military operations, riot, crowd disorder, strike, lock-outs or other industrial action, terrorist action, civil commotion and any legislation, regulation, ruling or omissions (including failure to grant any necessary permissions for reasons outside the control of either party) of any relevant government, court or any competent national or international authority
Head Coach	The Head Coach duly designated and nominated by a Participating Club to its playing team
HKFA	The Football Association of Hong Kong, China Limited, whose registered office is situated at 55 Fat Kwong Street, Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong

HKFA Constitution	The Articles of Association of the Football Association of Hong Kong, China Limited in force from time to time
HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee	The committee established by HKFA to investigate, inquire and issue sanctions
HKFA Appeal Committee	The committee established by HKFA to deal with appeal matters
HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code	The Disciplinary and Ethics Code of the Football Association of Hong Kong, China Limited in force from time to time
HKFA Referees Regulations	The Referees Regulations of the Football Association of Hong Kong, China Limited in force from time to time
Home Team	The playing team whose name first appears in respect of a Match of the Competition on the Competition's fixture list
Home Venue	The Participating Club plays its home matches at the venue, and it will be listed as the home team
Hong Kong Premier League Committee (HKPLC)	It is composed of the participating club(s) of Hong Kong Premier League
The International Football Association Board (IFAB)	The IFAB is the body responsible for enactment and amendment of the Laws of the Games
Match(es)	A football match forming part of the Competition
Official Functions	Any official event authorized in connection with the Competition including but not limited to press conferences, official dinners or lunches and banquets, and as otherwise advised by HKFA
Participating Club(s)	A club has its first team participating in the Competition
Person	Any natural person, legal entity, firm or unincorporated association
Player(s)	Any of the registered male players of the Participating Club
Premier League Club(s)	Those sports/football clubs which have applied to and been granted by HKFA to have its first team participating into the Competition in the 2025/26 Season

These Regulations	These regulations refer to the articles of this Competition Regulations
Refereeing Officials	The referee, assistant referees and 4th official duly appointed by HKFA to officiate at the Match (es). Video match officials (VMOs) will also be appointed for the match with the implementation of Video Assistant Referees (VAR) system.
Rules of HKFA	The “Rules of Association” of HKFA in force from time to time.
Season	A period starting from August to June the ensuing year.
Team Manager	The Team Manager duly designated and nominated by a Participating Club to its playing team.
Title Sponsor	The sponsor granted the right to have its agreed brand identity associated with name of the Competition.
Visiting Team	The playing team whose name last appears in respect of a Match of the Competition on the Competition’s fixture list.
Team Supporter	Supporter from the participating club, who is included but not limited to the fans club member, worn, customized or behaved to support a specific team, located at the assigned fans area or recognized as team supporter by HKFA/participating club.

## Interpretation

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

- (a) the words importing the singular number shall include the plural and vice versa;
- (b) the words importing any particular gender shall include all other genders;
- (c) references to statutory provisions shall be construed as references to those provisions as they may be amended or re-enacted;
- (d) the headings in these Regulations are for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation;
- (e) reference to persons shall include any legal person or corporation;
- (f) the provision of HKFA Constitution shall prevail in the event of any conflict with these Regulations, unless the context specifically indicates otherwise.

## Section A: General Provisions

1. Preambles
  - 1.1. HKFA organizes the Competition which is the top-tier football competition for participation of the first team of the Premier League Clubs.
2. Official Competition Name
  - 2.1. The Competition shall be officially called the “2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League”. HKFA reserves the rights to add the name of the Title Sponsor or to change the entire competition name into the name of the Title Sponsor.
3. Governance and Responsibility
  - 3.1. The Competition shall be wholly governed by HKFA, which may exercise its administrative and judiciary powers, and/or delegate Hong Kong Premier League Committee to response and perform the relevant competition work.
  - 3.2. All Participating Clubs and participants (including but not limited to the players, team officials, referees, competition staff) shall comply the articles of these Regulations.
  - 3.3. Unless otherwise stated in these Regulations, the current HKFA Constitution, rules, regulations, codes, guidelines, circulars or directives in force at the time of the Competition are binding for all parties participating and involving in the Competition (including but not limited to the players, team officials, referees or competition staff, etc).
  - 3.4. A Participating Club shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance of its officials and players with the relevant laws of Hong Kong, including but not limited to those relating to immigration and employment, in order to take part in the Competition. Failure to do so shall be regarded a breach of these Regulations (Art. 72).
  - 3.5. Participating Club shall be bound by and comply with the following:
    - 3.5.1 Law of the Game;
    - 3.5.2 HKFA Constitution, rules, regulations, codes, guidelines, circulars and directives, including the regulations of the Hong Kong Premier League Committee (upon approved by HKFA);
    - 3.5.3 these Regulations;
    - 3.5.4 the statutes and regulations of FIFA;
    - 3.5.5 the statutes and regulations of AFC.Each of the above documents will be revised from time to time.
  - 3.6. The Participating Club needs to establish communication based on sincerity in any matters related to the competition and in their interactions with HKFA or other Participating Clubs.

- 3.7. All Participating Clubs and their related parties (including but not limited to directors, officials, employees and agents) shall not in an unfair manner criticize, disparage, discredit or otherwise impugn HKFA, other Participating Clubs or their related parties (including but not limited to their directors, officials, employees and agents). Any person who fails to comply with these article shall be deemed to have violated the Code of Ethics of HKFA, and the relevant incident shall be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.
4. The Responsibility of Discloser
  - 4.1. Upon reasonable request by HKFA, participating clubs must disclose detailed information about their owners and directors, as well as contracts and sources of income for officials and players. The detailed information and data must comply with the requirements of the Club Licensing Regulations.
  - 4.2. Participating clubs must prepare independent audited accounts and make these data public. If requested by HKFA, the accounts must be submitted to HKFA. The detailed information and data must comply with the requirements of the Club Licensing Regulations.

## Section B: Participating Clubs

5. The Participating Club and the Membership with HKFA
  - 5.1. A Participating Club must be a properly constituted/ incorporated/registered as a legal entity in Hong Kong.
  - 5.2. A Participating Club must be either a Voting Member or a Non-Voting Member of HKFA as defined in the Rules of HKFA. If a participating club delegates a third party to execute the exercise of right of its club, its participating member must perform and fulfill the commitments and responsibilities of its club or team related to Hong Kong Premier League and Hong Kong Premier League Committee. Otherwise, the related member of HKFA must fulfill such commitments and responsibilities.
6. Entry Form
  - 6.1. Participating Clubs must submit the completed entry form in the designated period concluded by HKFA.
7. Entry Fee
  - 7.1. Participating Clubs must submit the entry fee in the designated period concluded by HKFA. The entry fee for 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League is HK Dollars Fifty Thousand (HKD50,000).
8. Club License
  - 8.1. All clubs participating in the Hong Kong Premier League must follow the rules listed in the Club License.
  - 8.2. The obligations and responsibilities of the Participating Club/s are stipulated in the Club License Regulations.
  - 8.3. Any clubs who fail to follow the rules of the Club License shall be liable to disciplinary action, including but not limited to a caution, a fine, point deduction in the league table or to fulfil certain conditions by a deadline.
9. Number of Participating Teams
  - 9.1. The number of participating teams in the Competition shall be determined by HKFA. The maximum number of participating teams in 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League shall not exceed twelve (12) teams. the priority will be given in the following order:
    - 9.1.1 participating teams in 2024/25 Hong Kong Premier League (in accordance with the league ranking);
    - 9.1.2 the first ranked team in 2024/25 First Division League.
  - 9.2. HKFA reserves the rights to grant the participation rights to any club if there is any vacancy available, the priority will be given in the following order:
    - 9.2.1 participating teams in 2024/25 First Division League except the first ranked team (in accordance with the league ranking, but the relegated teams will not be considered);
    - 9.2.2 the local team invited by HKFA;
    - 9.2.3 the overseas team invited by HKFA.

## 10. Responsibilities and Duties

### 10.1. Participating Clubs must automatically undertake the following matters:

- 10.1.1 abide by the Statutes of Sports established by FIFA and AFC;
- 10.1.2 comply with and adhere to all agreements reached with the HKFA, Club Licensing Regulations, all policies, codes, notices, guidelines and decisions issued by the HKFA, and relevant Hong Kong laws;
- 10.1.3 adhere to the Laws of the Game;
- 10.1.4 accept that all administrative, disciplinary and referee matters related to the competition shall be dealt with by the HKFA or its relevant organizations in accordance with these Regulations;
- 10.1.5 field their strongest squad in all matches;
- 10.1.6 accept all arrangements made by the third parties appointed by the HKFA for competition matters;
- 10.1.7 adhere to the principles of fair play;
- 10.1.8 comply with the relevant codes or regulations of all match venues;
- 10.1.9 be responsible for the conduct of its directors, players, officials, members, supporters or any relevant personnel in matches;
- 10.1.10 accept the HKFA's use and/or the HKFA's right to grant a non-exclusive license free of charge for the permanent and royalty free right to use, any records, names, photos, emblems and images (including any static and dynamic representations) that may appear or be generated in connection with the participation of their players in the matches; Participating Clubs are required to provide a permanent ownership guarantee to HKFA to ensure that the HKFA can use the above rights without restriction;
- 10.1.11 in accordance with the HKFA's guidelines and/or notices, attend and participate in all official events and projects organized by the HKFA.

## 11. Name of Participating Team

11.1. Except in the case as described in Art. 11.2, the official name of a Participating Club shall be used as the name of its participating teams.

11.2. A Participating Club may apply for HKFA's permission to use a name other than their official name as the name of the participating team (such as a sponsor's name or name change), but the participating club shall submit the application according to the application procedure concluded by HKFA.

## 12. Insurance

12.1. Participating Clubs must participate in a comprehensive insurance protection scheme and provide insurance coverage for all players who are eligible to play for the participating club (comprehensive insurance includes but is not limited to medical insurance, personal accident insurance and employees' compensation insurance). The decision on the comprehensive insurance protection scheme is decided by HKFA and each Participating Club through voting. The option with the highest number of votes will be selected as the comprehensive insurance protection scheme.

## 13. Withdrawal

13.1. Except in cases of force-majeure recognized by HKFA, if a Participating Club withdraws from the Competition after it has been accepted for the participation or on course of the Competition after it has started, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling, including but not limited as follows:

13.1.1 all its matches cancelled and/or the record of the matches expunged (except all disciplinary record);

13.1.2 imposition of fines:

13.1.2.1. if withdraws before the commencement of the Competition: the minimum of fine is HK Dollars Twenty Thousand (HK\$20,000) and confiscation of entry fee;

13.1.2.2. if withdraws after the first match of the Competition: the minimum of fine is HK Dollars Fifty Thousand (HK\$50,000) and confiscation of entry fee;

13.1.2.3. if withdraws after its playing team's first match in the Competition: the minimum of fine is HK Dollars Eighty Thousand (HK\$80,000) and confiscation of entry fee;

13.1.3 return to HKFA any financial amount that have been collected by the club in relations to and throughout the Competition or forfeit the right to collect the amounts.

13.1.4 be required to pay compensation for any and all damages or losses suffered by including but not limited to other Participating Clubs, HKFA, HKFA's commercial and TV partners, or Hong Kong Premier League Committee. The amount of compensation will be determined by HKFA;

13.1.5 be referred to appropriate HKFA bodies for additional sanctions depending on the gravity of the situation, then to HKFA for final decision.

## Section C: Technical Regulations

14. Mode of Competition
  - 14.1. The competition shall be divided into two phases. During the first phase, a home-and-away double-round robin will be taken, each club plays two matches against every other club, once at home and once away; for the second phase, a single-round robin after separation into two groups will follow, those finishing in first to fifth in the first phase will enter second phase Championship Group, while those ranked sixth to tenth in the first phase will enter second phase Challenging Group. Points, goal differences, as well as disciplinary and ethics records accumulated during the first phase will be carried into the second phase. Second phase will be played in specific venues for each Group respectively, and after its conclusion, the rankings of Championship Group and Challenging Group will determine the first to fifth place and sixth to tenth place of the competition respectively.
  - 14.2. HKFA has the right to change or alter the competition system based on the number of participating teams or other special reasons and reserves the right to modify the competition system if necessary.
15. Point System and Determination of Positions in the League Table
  - 15.1. Participating Clubs' positions in the league table shall be determined by the number of points obtained by their respective playing team in the Competition, the team obtained the highest number of points being at the top of the table and the team obtained the lowest number of points being at the bottom. The point system for each match is as follows:
    - 15.1.1 three (3) points shall be awarded to the winner;
    - 15.1.2 one (1) point shall be awarded to each Participating Team for a draw;
    - 15.1.3 no points shall be awarded to the loser.
  - 15.2. If any two (2) or more participating teams have obtained the same number of points, the positions of the teams concern shall be determined as follows by order of priority:
    - 15.2.1. number of points obtained in the matches of the Competition between/among the teams concerned, higher or highest placed team shall be the team with the higher or highest number of points;
    - 15.2.2. goal difference, which means, the difference between the total number of goal scored by and against a team in the matches of the Competition between/among the teams concerned, and higher or highest placed team shall be the team with the higher or highest goal difference;
    - 15.2.3. number of goals scored by a team in the matches of the Competition between/among the teams concerned, and higher or highest placed team shall be the team with more or most goals scored;
    - 15.2.4. if, after having applied Art. 15.2.1 to 15.2.3, playing teams still have an equal ranking, Art. 15.2.1 to 15.2.3 are reapplied exclusively to the matches between the participating teams in question to determine their final rankings. If this procedure does not lead to a decision, Art. 15.2.5 to 15.2.8 will be applied;

- 15.2.5. goal difference, which means, the difference between the total number of goal scored by and against a team in all its matches of the Competition, and higher or highest placed team shall be the team with the higher or highest goal difference;
  - 15.2.6. number of goals scored by a team in all its matches of the Competition, and higher or highest placed team shall be the team with more or most goals scored;
  - 15.2.7. the score calculated according to the number of yellow and red cards received in the competition, and higher or highest placed team shall be the team with the lower or lowest score. The point system for each yellow and red card is as follow:
    - 15.2.7.1. one (1) point shall be calculated for each yellow card;
    - 15.2.7.2. three (3) points shall be calculated for each red card as a consequence of two yellow cards;
    - 15.2.7.3. three (3) points shall be calculated for each direct red card;
    - 15.2.7.4. four (4) points shall be calculated for each yellow card followed by a direct red card.
  - 15.2.8. the drawing of lots (in the case of deciding the champion, a play-off match will be arranged. The duration of the play-off match will be played in accordance with Art. 27. If the play-off match cannot be arranged, HKFA will determine the champion by drawing lots).
  - 15.3. If any Participating Club withdraws from the Competition after it started, the record of the matches (except all disciplinary record) of the Competition in which its playing team has participated shall be expunged from the league table (Refer to the Art. 13).
  - 15.4. The Participating Club which is at the top of the league table at the end of the Competition shall be the Hong Kong Premier League Champion and the second top club shall be the Runners-up.
  - 15.5. If the Competition cannot be completed due to force majeure, HKFA will first try its best to complete the remaining matches under the venue and certain condition allowed. If the Competition is ultimately confirmed to be unable to be completed, the relevant arrangements will be discussed with each participating team and a decision will be made based on the actual situation. The relevant decision will be submitted to HKFA Board of Directors for final approval.
16. Relegation
- 16.1. The relegation system will be adopted in 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League, the tenth placed team will be relegated and participate in 2026/27 HKFA First Division.

## Section D: Match Venues and Fixture

### 17. Match Venues

- 17.1. HKFA shall negotiate with the relevant authorities in each season to reserve stadiums or sports grounds for the allocation of the home venues to Participating Clubs. HKFA shall in consultation with the Participating Clubs for the allocation of home venues, and HKFA has the discretion to make decision on the final allocation. Except for special reasons or circumstances, the Participating Clubs shall play their home matches at their home venue.
- 17.2. In accordance with the agreement between HKFA and HKPLC, Hong Kong Premier League clubs will be entitled to use the same home venue for three seasons starting from 2025/26 season. The allocation of home venues will be based on the league ranking of the previous full season, which means the final ranking of 2024/25 Hong Kong Premier League will be used for the allocation of the three-season home venue for 2025-28 seasons.
- 17.3. Subject to the agreement of HKFA and relevant authorities and availability of the concerned facilities, one venue cannot be used by more than one (1) Participating Clubs.
- 17.4. If a new club participates in 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League, the home venue which is already selected by other Participating Club during 2024/25 season is required to change under the following circumstances:
  - 17.4.1 if a District Team joins 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League, and the venue in that district area where the District Team belongs/the venue in the neighboring district (if there is no suitable venue in that district area) has been used as home venue by other Participating Club during 2024/25 season, then the Participating Club which used that district venue during 2024/25 season shall change the home venue in 2025/26 season in accordance with the principle that District Team can use the venue which is situated at its district/its neighborhood area (if there is no suitable venue in that district area) as the home venue;
  - 17.4.2 the Participating Club shall change the home venue in 2025/26 season if the venue is not available to use during 2025/26 season (including but not limited to venue maintenance).
- 17.5. Subject to the new club participates in the 2025/26 Hong Kong Premier League and in accordance with Article 17.4, the priority for Participating Clubs to select their home venue will be determined as follows by order of priority:
  - 17.5.1 the new District Club will have priority to select venue in their respective district/in neighboring district as their home venue;
  - 17.5.2 the Participating Club requires to change the home venue in accordance with Article 17.4 (the priority order will be based on the ranking of 2024/25 Hong Kong Premier League);

17.5.3 other new non-district club (priority order: 2024/25 First Division Club > 2024/25 Second Division Club > 2024/25 Third Division Club > 2024/25 Other Club. If more than one (1) club participated in the same division, the priority order will be given based on the ranking of that division).

## 18. Arrangement of Fixtures

- 18.1. HKFA shall be responsible for drawing up the fixtures of the Competition and the Participating Clubs shall play in all their matches according to the fixture. The fixture list containing match information including but not limited to the match dates, kick-off times, venues, Home Teams (team name first appears) and Visiting Teams (team name last appears) shall be disseminated by HKFA to Participating Clubs before the commencement of the season. HKFA reserves the right to make change to the fixture.
- 18.2. Fixture list shall be disseminated to Participating Clubs through the contact information (address, facsimile or e-mail) submitted by the Participating Clubs. It is deemed to have been served once the fixture list is sent out via post, fax or e-mail.
- 18.3. All intellectual property, copy and other rights of the fixture list shall belong to HKFA.
- 18.4. HKFA can schedule may matches on any day of the week.
- 18.5. For the matches held on weekdays (Monday to Friday), the kick-off times should be no earlier than 1800 hours (Hong Kong Time) and not later than 2100 hours (Hong Kong Time); for the matches held on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) or public holidays, the kick-off times should be no earlier than 1400 Hours (Hong Kong Time) and not later than 2100 Hours (Hong Kong Time). However, under special circumstances, if there is no objection from relevant departments, including but not limited to HKFA, playing teams, venue management or the police, the kick-off times can be handled individually.
- 18.6. Subject to conditions (such as venue arrangements and TV broadcast), the participating team may submit a recommendation about the match kick-off time. The HKFA will consider and make the final decision.
- 18.7. If the match is not played due to force majeure recognized by HKFA, the HKFA has the right to order to replay the match. The decision of the HKFA will be final and not appealable.
- 18.8. If the match is abandoned due to force majeure recognized by HKFA, the HKFA has the right to order to replay the match which will start from the beginning. The decision of the HKFA will be final and not appealable.

## 19. Cancellation of Matches

- 19.1. For any match cannot commence on the scheduled kick-off time due to force majeure or any other incidents (including but not limited to the field is not fit for play, weather condition, floodlight failure, etc.), the following procedures shall be followed:
- 19.1.1. the match shall be delayed for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes, unless the referee decides that the match can commence prior to the completion of the delay of 30 minutes, or in extreme circumstances it may be necessary to cancel;
  - 19.1.2. the referee may declare the match to be cancelled, unless at the discretion of the referee that an additional delay will allow the match to commence, and the additional delay of a maximum of thirty (30) minutes shall be allowed. If the match cannot be commenced after the second delay of thirty (30) minutes, the referee must declare the game to be cancelled.
- 19.2. If the match is cancelled in accordance with Art. 19.1, the HKFA has the right to order to replay the match. The decision of the HKFA will be final and not appealable.

## 20. Abandonment of Matches

- 20.1. For any match is stopped due to force majeure or any other incidents (including but not limited to the field is not fit for play, weather condition, floodlight failure, etc.), the following procedures shall be followed:
- 20.1.1. the match shall be stopped for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes, unless the referee decides that the match can resume prior to the completion of the stoppage;
  - 20.1.2. the referee may declare the match to be abandoned, unless at the discretion of the referee that an additional stoppage will allow the match to resume, and the additional stoppage of a maximum of thirty (30) minutes shall be allowed. If the match cannot be resumed after the second stoppage of thirty (30) minutes, the referee must declare the game to be abandoned.
- 20.2. If the match is abandoned in accordance with Art. 20.1, the HKFA has the right to order to replay the match which will start from the beginning. The decision of the HKFA will be final and not appealable.

## 21. Match Delay or Suspension

21.1. If a match is delayed in accordance with Art. 19.1, or a match is suspended in accordance with Art. 20.1, the participating teams may allow to have additional warm-up time as follow:

21.1.1 if the match the delayed or suspended less than 15 minutes, no additional warm-up time will be allowed for the participating teams before the match is commenced or resumed;

21.1.2 if the match the delayed or suspended for 15-30 minutes, a 10 minutes of additional warm-up time will be provided for the participating teams before the match is commenced or resumed;

21.1.3 if the match the delayed or suspended for more than 30 minutes, a 20 minutes of additional warm-up time will be provided for the participating teams before the match is commenced or resumed;

## 22. Failure to Fulfill Fixture

22.1. If a participating teams fail to fulfill the match according the to the fixture and cause the match cannot be played as scheduled, except the force majeure or any other incidents recognized by HKFA (including but not limited to the field is not fit for play, weather condition, floodlight failure, etc.), the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling, including but not limited to the following:

22.1.1 it will be regarded as a violation, the offending team will be penalized 0:3 in the match, and the opposing team (non-violating team) will award three (3) points;

22.1.2 Imposition of fines:

22.1.2.1. if the participating team notifies not to participate in the match no less than 24 hours before the scheduled kick-off time: a maximum fine of HK Dollars One Hundred Thousand (HK\$100,000);

22.1.2.2. if the participating team notifies not to participate in the match is less than 24 hours before the scheduled kick-off time or no notice was given by the participating team: a maximum fine of HK Dollars One Hundred and Fifty Thousand (HK\$150,000).

22.1.3 be required to reimburse HKFA and the opposing club for any expenses incurred due to the participating teams fail to fulfill the match according the to the fixture;

22.1.4 be required to pay compensation for any and all damages or losses suffered by including but not limited to other Participating Clubs, HKFA, HKFA's commercial and TV partners, or Hong Kong Premier League Committee. The amount of compensation will be determined by HKFA;

22.1.5 be referred to appropriate HKFA bodies for additional sanctions depending on the gravity of the situation, then to HKFA for final decision.

## 23. Refuse to Play or Not Having Enough Players for Match

- 23.1. If a participating team refuses to play the match after it has started, leaves the field before the end of the match, or has less than seven players to play the match that caused the match to be abandoned, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling, including but not limited to the following:
- 23.1.1 it will be regarded as a violation, the offending team will be penalized 0:3 or maintained the match result at the time when the match abandoned (if the result is better than 0:3) in the match, and the opposing team (non-violating team) will award three (3) points;
  - 23.1.2 Imposition of a maximum fine of HK Dollars Two Hundred Thousand (HKD200,000);
  - 23.1.3 be required to reimburse HKFA and the opposing club for any expenses incurred due to the participating teams fail to fulfill the match according to the fixture;
  - 23.1.4 be required to pay compensation for any and all damages or losses suffered by including but not limited to other Participating Clubs, HKFA, HKFA's commercial and TV partners, or Hong Kong Premier League Committee. The amount of compensation will be determined by HKFA;
  - 23.1.5 be referred to appropriate HKFA bodies for additional sanctions depending on the gravity of the situation, then to HKFA for final decision.

## 24. Competition Arrangements with Hong Kong, China Representative Team

- 24.1. HKFA will arrange the fixtures in accordance with FIFA's international match calendar and/or by consensus with Participating Clubs.
- 24.2. The Participating Club agrees to respect the wishes of HKFA to increase the international standing of the representative teams and to assist, where possible, in facilitating improvements in the performance of the representative teams including the release of players for representative team training, where possible.

## 25. Change of Fixture

- 25.1. HKFA shall have power at any time to change the fixture. By exercising such power, HKFA will consult with and take into account any representations made by the Participating Clubs concerned and any other club/s which may be affected thereby.
- 25.2. A Participating Club can request to reschedule the match due to the participation in any match played in the FIFA or AFC Competition. The Participating Club shall submit the application to HKFA in written notice 30 days before the match of the related Competition (including but not limited to Hong Kong Premier League or related Cup Competitions, FIFA or AFC Competitions) or after the fixtures released within 5 days (whichever is earlier). HKFA shall accept the application which has fulfilled the following conditions:
  - 25.2.1 the time interval between the relevant team's participation in the FIFA or AFC Competition and the scheduled Hong Kong Premier League (including but not limited to the Hong Kong Premier League and related Cup Competitions) is less than 60 hours (calculated based on the kick-off time).
- 25.3. Subject to Art. 25.2, if special circumstances occurred, HKFA will make the following arrangements according for handling:
  - 25.3.1 if a participating team participates in a FIFA or AFC Competition and needs to arrive early or leave the competition venue late due to flight issues, causing it to clash with the Hong Kong Premier League (including but not limited to the Hong Kong Premier League and related Cup Competitions), the team may apply to HKFA, together with the relevant flight arrangements and reasonable reasons. HKFA reserves the right to approve the participating club's application for rescheduling the match according to the actual situation. However, the Participating Club which applied for rescheduling the match must bear the related expenses which have been paid for the match;
  - 25.3.2 if the team is delayed in returning to Hong Kong due to flight delays or force majeure, HKFA reserves the right to approve the participating club's application for rescheduling the match according to the actual situation. However, the Participating Club which applied to reschedule the match must bear the related expenses which have been paid for the match.
- 25.4. If a participating team applies to reschedule the match due to other reasons, it shall fulfill all the following conditions:
  - 25.4.1 the Participating Club shall submit the application to HKFA in written notice 30 days before the match of the related Competition (including but not limited to Hong Kong Premier League or related Cup Competitions) or after the fixtures released within 5 days (whichever is earlier), together with the reasonable reasons;
  - 25.4.2 there are no objections from relevant authorities, including but not limited to HKFA, the teams related, venue management or police, etc.

- 25.5. Subject to Art. 25.2 to 25.4, the new date for the match shall fulfill all the following conditions:
- 25.5.1 the new date for the match will not result in the participating teams have to play another official match within 60 hours (calculated based on the kick-off time);
  - 25.5.2 the new date for the match will not be later than the final week of the Competition in that season;
  - 25.5.3 the new date for the match shall be played at the same match venue of the original match date as the priority. If there is no suitable date or venue available, HKFA reserves the right to change the venue of the match.
- 25.6. No matches shall be rescheduled or abandoned unless the following circumstances occur:
- 25.6.1 according to Art. 25.2 to 25.4, HKFA has approved the application to reschedule match; or
  - 25.6.2 with the approval of or on the instructions of the officiating referee; or
  - 25.6.3 by order of the police; or
  - 25.6.4 by order of any other authority exercising its statutory powers to that effect; or
  - 25.6.5 on the instructions of or with the prior written consent of HKFA.
  - 25.6.6 the force majeure or any other incidents recognized by HKFA (including but not limited to the field is not fit for play, weather condition, floodlight failure, etc.).
- 25.7. Subject to Art. 25.6, if a match is rescheduled or abandoned, HKFA shall have the power to arrange the match in question to be held on another date.
- 25.8. Except in the case of a match which, without either of the Participating Clubs being at fault, is rescheduled or abandoned under the provision of Art. 25.6, any Participating Club which causes the reschedule or abandonment of a match on the date fixed, or to which it is re-arranged in accordance with Art. 25.7 shall be in breach of these Regulations. and may be dealt with under the provisions of Section I of these Regulations (Disciplinary Matters). The relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.
- 25.9. HKFA shall have the power to order that a rescheduled or abandoned match be replayed upon recommendation to that effect made by an appropriate body or authority.

## Section E: Technical Regulations

26. Laws of the Game
- 26.1. Unless otherwise stated in these Regulations, all Matches shall be played in accordance with Laws of the Game as laid down by the International Football Association Board (IFAB). In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, the English version shall be authoritative.
- 26.2. HKFA may, at its discretion, decide to use football technologies in any Match or Matches in the Competition or in the Competition as a whole (including Goal-Line Technology (GLT), a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system or Electronic Performance and Tracking Systems (EPTS)) in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Match validity (Laws of the Game). A match is not invalidated because of the following:
- 26.2.1 malfunction(s) of the VAR technology;
- 26.2.2 wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a Refereeing Official);
- 26.2.3 decision(s) not to review an incident
- 26.2.4 review(s) of non-reviewable situation/decisions.
27. Match Duration
- 27.1. Each Match shall last ninety (90) minutes, comprising two (2) periods of forty-five (45) minutes, with a half-time interval of fifteen (15) minutes.
- 27.2. If a play-off match is required to play due to Art. 15.2.8, when a play-off match ends in a tie after completion of the 90-minute period, the match shall go into extra time which is comprising two (2) periods of fifteen (15) minutes. If the result is still draw, a penalty shoot-out as defined in the Laws of the Game will be applied to determine the winner of the match.

## 28. Substitution Arrangements

- 28.1. The substitution arrangement for each team in each match is as follows:
  - 28.1.1 each team has a maximum of five substitutes;
  - 28.1.2 each team has a maximum of three substitution opportunities (If both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as a used substitution opportunity for each team. Multiple substitutions by a team during the same stoppage in play count as one used substitution opportunity);
  - 28.1.3 each team may have additionally substitution opportunity at half-time.
- 28.2. If the match needs to go to extra time (Art. 27.2), the substitution arrangement for each team is as follows:
  - 28.2.1 if a team has not used its maximum number of substitutes or substitution opportunities, the unused substitutions and opportunities may be used in extra time;
  - 28.2.2 each team has one additional substitute and one additional substitution opportunity in extra time;
  - 28.2.3 each team may make substitutions in the period between full-time and the start of extra time, or at half-time in extra time, the substitution will not be regarded as a substitution opportunity.

### 28.3 Additional Permanent Concussion Substitution

The Competition will introduce the additional permanent concussion substitutions in accordance with Law of the Game. When the team's medical staff indicates to the referee that the injured player has suffered or is suspected of concussion, the team can use a "concussion substitute". When a "concussion substitution" is used, the opposing team then has the option to use an "additional substitution" for any reason. The relevant arrangements will be implemented in accordance with Law of the Game.

## 29. Match Balls & Multi-ball System

- 29.1. HKFA reserves right of ball deals and provide the official balls for matches.
- 29.2. The footballs used in the Competition shall comply the requirements of the Laws of the Game and bear one of the following three (3) designations:
  - 29.2.1 the official "FIFA Quality PRO"; or
  - 29.2.2 the official "FIFA Quality"; or
  - 29.2.3 the official "FIFA Basic" or "International Match Standard (IMS)"
- 29.3. Multi-balls system shall be adopted in the Matches and ball persons shall be appointed for implementation of the system.

### 30. Equipment

- 30.1. Participating Clubs shall comply strictly with the HKFA Equipment Regulations.
- 30.2. If the team fails to comply with the rules set out in the HKFA Equipment Regulations, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for disciplinary action.
- 30.3. HKFA takes final decisions regarding the approval of kits and other items mentioned in the HKFA Equipment Regulations. HKFA declines all responsibility and authority in the event of conflicts arising from the contract between a Participating Club and its sponsor(s) on account of the advertising provisions of the HKFA Equipment Regulations. Participating clubs cannot claim any liability against the HKFA for any losses caused by any equipment decisions.

### 31. Use of Competition Emblem

- 31.1. Participating Clubs must abide by the guidelines issued by HKFA on the use of the competition emblem and must ensure that the competition emblem will not be used by any organization in any commercial activities, promotions or advertising without approval.

## Section F: Players and Team Officials

32. Regulations regarding Players
- 32.1. Unless otherwise stated, all the relevant HKFA rules and regulations regarding the status and transfer of players in force shall be applicable to the Competition.
33. Eligibility of Players
- 33.1. A player is eligible to play in the Competition provided that:
- 33.1.1 the player is duly registered by his club with HKFA as accordance to the Rules of HKFA and those of FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players where relevant;
  - 33.1.2 the player enters into a valid professional player contract or Memorandum of Understanding for Amateur Players (Memorandum of Understanding for Amateur Players is only applicable to young players born between 2003 and 2010 who must be over 15 years old) with his club with a copy duly filed to HKFA;
  - 33.1.3 the player provides documentary proof for being permitted to take up employment as football player in Hong Kong with the club he registers to play for.
- 33.2. A player is deemed ineligible if:
- 33.2.1 there is a violation of Art. 32.1 and 33.1;
  - 33.2.2 the player is fielded despite being served a disciplinary suspension;
  - 33.2.3 the player fails a doping test;
  - 33.2.4 the player fails in Pre-Competition Medical Assessment;
  - 33.2.5 HKFA finds that document/s submitted during registration is/are counterfeit or false.
- 33.3. Any Participating Club that fields player who is not eligible to play, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling, including but not limited to the following:
- 33.3.1 imposition of a maximum fine of HK Dollars Two Hundred Thousand (HKD200,000)
  - 33.3.2 deduction of points in league table;
  - 33.3.3 the offending team will be penalized 0:3 or maintained the match result (if the result is better than 0:3) in the match, and the opposing team (non-violating team) will award three (3) points;
  - 33.3.4 an order to have the match replayed.
34. Registration System
- 34.1. The registration for players and team officials will be submitted through the online registration system (HK Football Connect), and the club shall log in to the registration system for registration.

### 35. Registration of Players

- 35.1. Participating Clubs shall complete player registration within the registration window. There are two registration windows for the Competition. Each registration window shall open on a date as communicated by the HKFA, detail is as follow:
- 35.1.1 Registration Window 1: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
(Unemployed players will be extended to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025)
  - 35.1.2 Registration Window 2: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
(Unemployed players will be extended to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026)
  - 35.1.3 for details on the interpretation of unemployed players, please refer to the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, and HKFA will handle the matter in accordance with relevant regulations.
- 35.2. The registration of players must be in accordance with HKFA Rules of Association and HKFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Unless otherwise stated, all rules and regulations regarding player status and transfers will be applicable in the Competition.
- 35.3. According to HKFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players Art.5(3), a player can register with three clubs during each season, but the player can only be eligible to play in official matches for two clubs during the season.

### 36. Registration of Team Officials

- 36.1. Participating Clubs can register team officials at any time during the season, the relevant positions include but are not limited to head coach, coach, team manager, technical analyst, kit manager, medical staff, etc.
- 36.2. Each team must enroll at least one (1) and no more than seven (7) registered team officials at the age of 21 or above to be the team game supervisor(s). (A team game supervisor shall be present during the entire match. If before or during the match, either team has no team game supervisor presence, the referee will not start the match or the referee will terminate the match immediately. The team that has no team game supervisor appearance shall bear the consequence and responsibility. If a team game supervisor is sent off by a referee with a red card and no other team official is available to serve as a team game supervisor, the team game supervisor must remain on the field to perform his duties, and the matter will be referred to Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.)

### 37. Team Participating List

- 37.1. Participating teams must submit their team participating list to HKFA at least seven working days before the first match of the Competition. Players and team officials who have successfully registered can be listed on the team participating list.
- 37.2. At any time during the season (from the time of submission of the team participating list according to Art. 37.1), the team participating list shall fulfill the following conditions:
- 37.2.1 the team participating list shall have no less than eighteen (18) and no more than thirty (30) players (each Participating Club shall be allowed to add ten (10) additional youth players born between 2004 and 2011 to the team participating list, but that youth player must be at least 15 years old when added in the team participating list); and
  - 37.2.2 each player on the team participating list must be assigned a jersey number. The jersey number must be between 1 and 99, and number 1 must be the goalkeeper. Except the Participating Club submit a written application with reasonable reasons and is accepted by HKFA, the player's jersey number must remain the same for the same club throughout the season once the jersey number is assigned on the team participating list; and
  - 37.2.3 the team participating list shall have no more than fifteen (15) team officials, of which at least one (1) and no more than seven (7) team officials aged 21 or over to be the team game supervisor(s); and
  - 37.2.4 the team participating list shall have one (1) head coach. The head coach must be class A or above assessed by AFC and registered with HKFA or an equivalent qualification, and must meet the requirement of club license. (If a participating team does not have a head coach for any reason during the season, the club must notify HKFA in writing and make a replacement in accordance with the regulations stated in the club license); and
  - 37.2.5 the team participating list shall have at least one (1) accredited medical personnel. The accredited medical personnel must be from the HKFA accredited list of medical personnel, and the position is either the team doctor or physiotherapist.
- 37.3. If a participating team requires to make changes to the players on the submitted team participating list, the participating team can make changes for any reasons in the following dates:
- 37.4.1 changes can be made from the start date of the registration window 1 until the fourteen (14) working days after the end of the registration window 1, that is from 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025, except for unemployed players who have successfully registered will be extended to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025;
  - 37.4.2 changes can be made from the start date of the registration window 2 until the fourteen (14) working days after the end of the registration window 2, that is from 30<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026,

except for unemployed players who have successfully registered will be extended to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026;

37.4.3 in order to facilitate the Participating Clubs to promote youth players with potential to the first team to participate in the competition, Participating Clubs can add the youth players born between 2004 and 2011 (that youth players must be at least 15 years old when added in the team participating list) from 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026, but the related youth players must have registered in the registration window in the same Participating Club and comply with relevant registration regulations.

37.4. Participating teams can remove players from the submitted team participating list at any time during the season.

37.5. Participating teams can change or remove team officials or team game supervisors from the submitted team participating list at any time during the season.

### 38. Non-Resident (Foreign) Players

38.1. Participating clubs may register non-resident (foreign) players in accordance with Art. 35, and there is no limit to the number of quota.

38.2. Participating teams can list the non-resident (foreign) players who have successfully registered on the team participating list in accordance with Art. 37.

38.3. Participating teams can submit up to a maximum of seven (7) non-resident (foreign) players on the Start List (listed as starting player or substitute) and a maximum of six (6) non-resident (foreign) players can be fielded at one time of a match (During player substitution, the entire substitution opportunity shall prevail, and the number of non-resident (foreign) player will also be included the non-resident (foreign) player being sent-off by referee with red card).

### 39. Submission of Start List

39.1. Participating teams must submit their start list to the competition staff or the designated personnel of HKFA no later than ninety (90) minutes before the kick-off on the match day. The participating teams must clearly list out the following information on the start list:

39.1.1 eleven (11) starting players and no more than twelve (12) substitutes; and

39.1.2 participating teams can submit up to a maximum of seven (7) non-resident (foreign) players on the Start List (listed as starting player or substitute) and a maximum of six (6) non-resident (foreign) players can be fielded at one time of a match (including the non-resident (foreign) player being sent-off by referee with red card); and

39.1.3 select a captain; and

39.1.4 select no more than eight (8) team officials on the substitution bench, which must include one (1) head coach (this will not apply during the suspension of the head coach, but if the head coach is unable to attend the match due to other reasons, the participating team must submit a written application to HKFA no later than ninety (90) minutes before

- the kick-off of the match and accepted by HKFA. Otherwise, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling) and at least one (1) accredited medical personnel; and
- 39.1.5 select one (1) team official on the substitution bench to be the team game supervisor in accordance with Art. 39.1.5 (A team game supervisor shall be present during the entire match. If before or during the match, either team has no team game supervisor presence, the referee will not start the match or the referee will terminate the match immediately. The team that has no team game supervisor appearance shall bear the consequence and responsibility. If a team game supervisor is sent off by a referee with a red card and no other team official is available to serve as a team game supervisor, the team game supervisor must remain on the field to perform his duties, and the matter will be referred to Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling); and
- 39.1.6 kit colors for outfield players and goalkeeper; and
- 39.1.7 the captain and team game supervisor shall sign on the start list.

- 39.2. When the participating teams submitted their start list to the competition staff or the designated personnel of HKFA for the match, the list will be regarded as the start list for the match. If the participating team requires to make changes on the start list before the kick-off of the match, the procedure will be in accordance with the following:
- 39.2.1 if a starting player is unable to play for any reason, that starting player can be replaced by a substitute, and the number of substitutes of the related team will be reduced accordingly. The starting player who has been replaced is no longer to participate in the match;
  - 39.2.2 if a substitute is unable to play for any reason, the substitute can be removed from the start list, but the substitute cannot be replaced by another player, and the number of substitutes of the related team will be reduced accordingly.
  - 39.2.3 the number of substitutions for the related team in that match will remain unchanged (Art. 28);
  - 39.2.4 players not selected in the start list cannot replace any starting players or substitutes;
  - 39.2.5 if any team officials on the substitution bench or team game supervisor who are listed on the start list is unable to play for any reason, the participating team can make change on such position before the kick-off;
  - 39.2.6 participating team shall inform the referee, competition staff or designated personnel of HKFA immediately for any changes to the start list.

## Section G: Match Organization and Operations

40. Match Rundown
  - 40.1. All Matches will be staged as according to the Match Rundown (Appendix II) adopted by HKFA. Failure to comply with the provisions may deem as misconduct, the matter will be referred to HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.
41. Arrangement of Team Dressing Rooms
  - 41.1. Each participating team will be allocated a dressing room at the match venue for each match. The allocation shall be decided by the HKFA and it shall be determined as a final decision.
42. Checking of Players' Identity and Equipment
  - 42.1. The period between the participating teams submitted their start list (according to Art. 39.1) and before the pre-match warm-up (according to Art. 43.2), the refereeing officials will conduct identity and equipment check for the starting players and substitutes. Any player who fails to undergo identity and equipment check shall not be permitted to take part in the match.
43. Warming Up
  - 43.1. HKFA will decide if the participating teams shall be entitled to warm up on the field of play before the match depending on the actual weather conditions. Only the starting players and substitutes shall be allowed to use the pitch area for warming up.
  - 43.2. Unless otherwise instructed by HKFA and its designated competition staff, participating teams can only conduct pre-match warm-up from fifty (50) minutes to twenty (20) minutes before the kick-off time. The duration of pre-match warm-up should not exceed thirty (30) minutes.
  - 43.3. The goalmouth area shall be used by goalkeepers only.
  - 43.4. All speed and stamina work shall be undertaken off the pitch. Only in the absence of sufficient space that only part of the pitch between the edge of penalty area and the half way line, or as otherwise directed by the HKFA and its designated competition staff, can be used.
  - 43.5. During the half time, players shall pay attention to ongoing activities or other events on the field of play when warming up.
  - 43.6. During the match, a maximum six (6) substitutes from each team may warm up at the same time but without the ball (except for the goalkeeper). The warm-up area for each team shall be located behind the goal line closest to their substitution bench or the area determined by the HKFA or its designated competition staff. The players may be accompanied by a maximum of two (2) team officials on the substitution bench. All players and team officials who are warming up must wear kits or bibs that are contrasting in colors with the kits of the players and referees on the pitch.

44. Team March-in
  - 44.1. Participating teams shall enter to the field of play according to the match rundown established by HKFA (Art. 40), led by the refereeing officials.
  - 44.2. Subject to the prior written consent of HKFA, the home team can arrange escort kids to join the team march-in. In Cup Competitions, both participating teams can apply for the escort kids to join the team march-in.
45. Pre-match Ceremony and VIP Handshake
  - 45.1. Participating teams shall take part in the pre-match protocol (including but not limited to fair play handshake, group photo taking, etc) as adopted and promulgated by HKFA.
  - 45.2. Subject to the prior written consent of HKFA, the home team may arrange pre-match VIP Handshake. In Cup Competitions, both participating teams can apply for the VIP Handshake.
46. Other Activities
  - 46.1. No Participating Club is allowed to arrange any other activity in the match (including but not limited to at the time before the match, during half-time and after the match) without the prior written consent of HKFA.
  - 46.2. For any other activities, the protection of the pitch condition and crowd control must be the primary considerations. HKFA reserves the powers to stop the activity even though prior consent has been granted. The Participating Club shall hold HKFA harmless to any damage or liability for such forfeiture of consent.
47. Use of Substitution Bench
  - 47.1. Each match venue shall provide separate benches for refereeing officials, competition staff, medical staff and participating teams. The home team shall arrange to use the substitution bench to the left of the fourth official's bench.
  - 47.2. A maximum of eight (8) team officials on the substitution bench and a maximum of twelve (12) players are allowed to sit on the team substitution bench during the match. The above-mentioned team officials and players must be listed on the start list and wear the appropriate eligibility and access card at all time.
  - 47.3. All persons on the substitution bench must wear kits or bibs that are contrasting in colors with the kits of the players and referees on the pitch.
  - 47.4. Persons sitting on the substitution bench must behave in a responsible manner, and must remain within the confines of the team bench and the technical area as described in Art. 48, except for the following circumstances:
    - 47.4.1 substitutes or team officials need to do the warm-up; or
    - 47.4.2 medical staff need to enter the field of play with the referee's permission to provide medical attention to an injured player.

#### 48. Use of Technical Area

- 48.1. The technical areas, with boundaries clearly marked, shall include the substitution benches as described in Art. 47.1 and shall extend one (1) metre on either side of each the substitution bench and shall extend forward up to one (1) metre from the touchline.
- 48.2. Only one (1) team official on the substitution bench from each team is authorized to convey tactical instructions in the technical area at a time.
- 48.3. The use of any form of electronic communication by team officials is permitted where it directly relates to player welfare, safety or for tactical/coaching reasons but only small, mobile, hand-held equipment (e.g. microphone, headphone, ear-piece, mobilephone/smartphone, smartwatch, tablet, laptop) may be used. A team official who uses unauthorized equipment or who behaves in an inappropriate manner as a result of the use of electronic or communication equipment will be dismissed from the technical area. Video shooting and photo taking is not permitted within the technical area during the match.

#### 49. Post-match Handshake

- 49.1. Players shall assemble with the Referee Officials at the centre circle after the completion of the match for post-match handshake. Any player who fails to do so shall be issued a mandatory fine of HK Dollars Two Thousand (HKD2,000).

#### 50. Post-match Interview or Press Conference

- 50.1. At the request of HKFA, players, head coach or other club personnel shall attend the post-match press conference or post-match interviews. Any violations, the Participating Club will be fined HK Dollars Two Thousand (HKD2,000).

#### 51. Post-match Cool Down

- 51.1. Participating team shall inform the HKFA staff in advance if its team needs to conduct post-match cool down. If the pitch condition is acceptable, the participating team can perform the post-match cool down at the designated area which is instructed by HKFA. The post-match cool down shall be completed within 30 minutes after the final whistle.

## Section H: Match Officials

52. Appointment of Match Officials
- 52.1. HKFA may appoint match officials including but not limited to Match Delegate, Refereeing Officials, General Coordinator, Referee Assessor, Media Officer, Marketing Officer, Security Officer, Medical Officer, Doping Control Officer and Anti-discrimination Officer for the organization and operations of the matches.
53. Match Delegate
- 53.1. HKFA shall appoint to each HKPL match a Match Delegate who acts as the official representative of HKFA at the match to which he is appointed and reports thereon to HKFA.
- 53.2. The powers and duties of Match Delegate are set out as Appendix III of these Regulations.
54. Refereeing Officials
- 54.1. HKFA shall, through its Referees Committee, appoint to each HKPL match in the Competition in the role of the Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official. For HKPL match utilizing the VAR technology, on top of the Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official, the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) and Assistant Video Assistant Referee (AVAR) (collectively as Refereeing Officials) shall be appointed which is stipulated in the Laws of the Game.
- 54.2. HKFA will consolidate and publish the list of Referees, Assistant Referees and Video Match Officials (VMOs) who are qualified to officiate in matches. All referees, assistant referees and Video Match Officials (VMOs) are selected from this list.
- 54.3. The powers and duties of the Refereeing Officials are set out respectively as follow:
- 54.3.1 referee: Law 5 of the Laws of the Game;
- 54.3.2 assistant referee: Law 6 of the Laws of the Game;
- 54.3.3 fourth official: Law 6 of the Laws of the Game;
- 54.3.4 video assistant referee (VAR) protocol.
- 54.4. The management of the Refereeing Officials shall be governed by the HKFA Referees Regulations drawn up and communicated by the HKFA Referees Committee and in force at the time of the Competition.

## Section I: Disciplinary Matters

55. General Principles
- 55.1. All participating clubs, its Team Officials and Players undertake to comply with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code and all relevant circulars and directives in force at the time of the Competition, and agree in particular to respect the spirit of fair play, non-violence and the authority of the match officials, and behave accordingly.
56. Disciplinary Incidents
- 56.1. Disciplinary incidents shall be dealt with in compliance with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force and all relevant circulars and directives.
- 56.2. HKFA may initiate investigations should it suspect and/or is aware of any violation of current HKFA Constitution, HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the relevant circulars and directives.
- 56.3. HKFA may impose disciplinary measures for any violation of the current HKFA Constitution, HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the relevant circulars and directives.
57. Team Officials or Players Cautioned or Dismissed from the Field of Play
- 57.1. All team officials or players being cautioned or dismissed from the Field of Play shall be dealt with by the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in accordance with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force. Each club shall bear the responsibility of monitoring the cautions and/or suspensions received by its team officials or players and to ensure that all team officials or players registered and/or fielded during the competition are eligible to play.
58. Conduct of Team Officials and Players
- 58.1. Any team official or player who fails to conduct oneself in a proper and responsible manner before, during or after the match, including but not limited to misconduct on the field of play, in the technical area, dressing rooms and match venue premises, shall be liable to disciplinary action.
- 58.2. Any team official or player reported for indiscipline or violent conduct anywhere in the match venue, including but not limited to the field of play, in the technical area, dressing rooms and match venue premises, by the match officials shall be dealt with by the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in accordance with HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force.
59. Making Disparaging Remarks on and Charging at Match Officials
- 59.1. No team official, player or a member of the Participating Clubs shall make any disparaging remarks on the match officials of a match; any such remark made by an team official, player or a member of the team may render such person liable to disciplinary actions.
- 59.2. Team officials, players and members of the Participating Clubs are prohibited from charging at match officials before, during or after the game, for whatever reasons. Any such action shall render the team official, player or member concerned liable to disciplinary actions.

60. Team Supporters' Conduct

- 60.1. Participating Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their supporters during the match. Improper conduct of team supporters includes without limitation violence towards persons or objects, letting off incendiary devices, throwing missiles, displaying insulting, religious, or political slogans in any form, uttering insulting words or sounds, or invading the pitch.

61. Protest

- 61.1. A protest is an objection of any kind related to any event and/or matter that has a direct effect on a match.
- 61.2. No protest shall be lodged relating to the referee's decision regarding facts connected with play. Unless otherwise provided in the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the referee's decision is final and not subject to appeal. The same applies for any potential issue concerning the use and/or operation of any video assistant referee (VAR) system.
- 61.3. A protest shall be submitted to HKFA by the participating team in accordance with the following provisions:
- 61.3.1 submitted in writing to HKFA for the relevant match within two (2) hours of the final whistle; and
  - 61.3.2 followed up with a full written report and the protest fee of HK Dollars Two Thousand (HKD2,000) to HKFA within forty-eight (48) hours of the final whistle.
- 61.4. If any of the formal requirements set out in Art. 61.3 are not met, the relevant protest shall be disregarded.
- 61.5. HKFA will deal with the protest after receiving it. If the relevant protest fails to be established, the protest fees will be confiscated.
- 61.6. If the protest is ultimately successful, the protest fee will be fully refunded.
- 61.7. If an unfounded or irresponsible protest is lodged, the protest fee will be fully refunded. In addition, HKFA may impose a further fine on the club concerned.

## 62. Disputes and Arbitration

- 62.1. All disputes arising between HKFA, participating clubs, officials and players in relation to the competition must be resolved in the first instance through discussion.
- 62.2. Subject to compliance with FIFA statutes and HKFA constitution, participating clubs and their officials and players cannot take any dispute to a court outside the jurisdiction of FIFA and HKFA, except to allow the involvement of the Labour Department and Labour Tribunal.
- 62.3. If there are any disputes or disagreements between clubs and players, HKFA will refer the matter to the HKFA National Dispute Resolution Chamber (NDRC) according to FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. The NDRC must act promptly and handle the matter according to FIFA statutes. The National Dispute Resolution Chamber also has the power to submit the matter to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.
- 62.4. Participating clubs, officials and players acknowledge and accept that the sole remaining recourse available when all FIFA and HKFA internal channels have failed to resolve a dispute is to submit the dispute to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne. The decisions of the Court of Arbitration for Sport shall be final and binding and not subject to appeal. All matters submitted to the Court of Arbitration for Sport shall be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Sports-related Arbitration of the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

## **Section J: Code of Ethics Regulations**

63. FIFA Code of Ethics
- 63.1. All participating clubs, their officials, players and match personnel agree to comply with FIFA's Code of Ethics, relevant circulars and guidelines during the competition. And agree to take a stand against discrimination, racism and match manipulation.
- 63.2. All participating clubs must ensure that their governance arrangements are transparent and open to scrutiny. All detailed information should comply with the Club Licensing Regulations.

## **Section K: Medical Matters & Anti-doping**

64. Medical Matters
- 64.1. Participating Club shall ensure that all players selected to take part in any match are in all respects medically fit.
- 64.2. Participating Club shall comply with all medical regulations set out in the Club License at all times. Participating Club shall be solely responsible for the arrangement and payment of medical treatment of players and team officials and solely liable for the costs of such treatment.
65. Pre-Competition Medical Assessment
- 65.1. A player must undergo the Pre-Competition Medical Assessment before the player can participate the match. If the player fails to pass the Pre-Competition Medical Assessment, the player cannot be listed in the start list and will not be able to participate in any competitions until the player passes the Pre-Competition Medical Assessment.
66. Anti-doping
- 66.1. Doping is strictly prohibited and all participating clubs, its officials and players shall comply the relevant regulations, circulars and directives of FIFA, AFC, WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), ADOHK (Anti-Doping Organization of Hong Kong, China) or HKFA as well as to accept the same.
- 66.2. Any Participating Club, team official or player found guilty of breaching the relevant regulations, circulars and directives shall be deemed to have committed gross misconduct and shall be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee and/or appropriate body for such action as deem fit.
- 66.3. HKFA can conduct doping tests according to the standards and procedures established by FIFA, AFC or WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), including but not limited to in-competition tests or out-of-competition test.
67. Medical Guidelines
- 67.1. Participating Club shall comply with the medical guideline set out by HKFA at all times.

## Section L: Awards

68. Hong Kong Premier League Trophy
- 68.1. The Hong Kong Premier League Trophy is the property of HKFA.
  - 68.2. The Champion shall receive the Hong Kong Premier League Trophy, and the trophy shall return to HKFA in good condition two months before the final match of 2025-26 Hong Kong Premier League. HKFA reserves the right to recourse to the champion team for related repair costs if the trophy is damaged during the retention period.
69. Trophy and Medals
- 69.1. The Champion shall be awarded a replica of the trophy for retention, and forty-five (45) commemorative medals.
  - 69.2. The Runners-up shall be awarded a replica of the trophy for retention, and forty-five (45) commemorative medals.
  - 69.3. The player(s) who scores the most number of goals of the Hong Kong Premier League will be the Hong Kong Premier League Top Scorer and will be awarded a trophy. If any team violated the regulations, then the goal(s) which scored by player(s) from the violation team will not be counted.
  - 69.4. The goalkeeper(s) who have the most number of clean sheet of the Hong Kong Premier League will be awarded a trophy. If any team violated the regulations, then the clean sheet of the match(es) for the goalkeeper(s) from the violation team will not be counted.

## Section M: Match Fixing

70. Match Fixing
- 70.1. All club owners, directors, administrators, coaches and players shall comply with the Code of Conduct. (Please refer to Appendix I)
  - 70.2. The Club agrees to confirm all players and personnel to attend the events about Integrity in Sport arranged by HKFA. The club shall confirm that it has released relevant information to all its players and related personnel before the commencement of the Competition.
  - 70.3. If HKFA receives a report or any evidence from the FIFA, AFC or any organization authorized by FIFA/AFC regarding the match fixing, HKFA has the right to refer the case to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling.

## Section N: Financial Matters

### 71. Club Financial Account in HKFA

- 71.1. Participating Clubs shall pay a minimum of HK Dollars Fifty Thousand (HKD50,000) to HKFA as their account deposit on or before fourteen (14) days before the first match of the Competition.
- 71.2. After the start of first match of the Competition, participating club must deposit a minimum of HK Dollars Fifty Thousand (HKD50,000) in its account within fourteen (14) days after the notice is issued by HKFA or at the latest on the 19<sup>th</sup> of each month. .
- 71.3. If the club fails to maintain an account balance of at least HK Dollars Fifty Thousand (HKD50,000) in accordance with Art. 71.1 and 71.2, the relevant matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee for handling, including but not limited to the following:
  - 71.3.1 a first offense will result in a written warning;
  - 71.3.2 a second offense will result in a fine of HK Dollars ten thousand (HK\$10,000);
  - 71.3.3 a third offense will result in a fine of HK Dollars twenty thousand (HK\$20,000);
  - 71.3.4 a fourth offense will result in a fine of HK Dollars thirty thousand (HK\$30,000);
  - 71.3.5 Starting from the fifth offense, each offense will be subject to a fine of HK Dollars fifty thousand (HK\$50,000) and a suspension from the competition (when the account deposit reaches at least HK Dollars fifty thousand (HK\$50,000), the suspension ban will be lifted), and the suspended match will be penalized 0:3, and the opposing team (non-violating team) will award three (3) points;
- 71.4. The club's monthly account statement will be issued on the fifth working day of the next month. If no questions are received from the club within fourteen (14) days, the monthly statement will be deemed to be correct. The balance in their account will be returned to the club after the competition completed.

## Section O: Final Provisions

### 72. Breaches of These Regulations

72.1. Any participating club, its official or player commits a breach any articles of these Regulations shall be considered a violation, and the matter will be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, appropriate bodies of HKFA or other bodies for appropriate action as deem fit at their absolute discretion.

### 73. Languages

73.1. In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the English and Chinese version of these Regulations, the Chinese version shall be authoritative.

### 74. No Waiver

74.1. Any waiver by HKFA of any breach of these Regulations (including of any document referred to in these Regulations) shall not operate as, or be construed to be, a waiver of any other breach of such provision or of any breach of any other provision or a waiver of any right arising out of these Regulations or any other document. Any such waiver shall only be valid if given in writing. Failure by HKFA to insist upon strict adherence to any provision of these Regulations, or any document referred to in these Regulations, on one or more occasions shall not be considered to be a waiver of, or deprive HKFA of the right to subsequently insist upon strict adherence to, that provision or any other provision of these Regulations, or any document referred to in these Regulations.

### 75. Force Majeure

75.1. If by any reason of any event which could not reasonably have been prevented by any party including but not limited to any abnormally inclement weather, flood, lightning, storm, fire, explosion, earthquake, subsidence, structural damage, Government orders closure of competitions or training grounds due to pandemic or other natural physical disaster, failure or shortage of power supplies, war, military operations, riot, crowd disorder, strike, lock-outs or other industrial action, terrorist action, civil commotion and any legislation, regulation, ruling or omissions (including failure to grant any necessary permissions for reasons outside the control of either party) of any relevant government, court or any competent national or international authority, any party is delayed in , or prevented from, performing any of the provisions of these Regulations then such delay or non-performance shall not be deemed to be a breach of these Regulations and no loss or damage shall be claimed by the other party by reason thereof.

### 76. Notice and Service

76.1. Any notice of breach or default will be in writing and sent via registered or certified mail, by verifiable facsimile transmission, by express courier service with confirmed delivery, or e-mail to the breaching party to the contact information submitted by the participating club to HKFA (unless written notice of a change of contact information has been provided). Notices shall be deemed given at the time after the notice sent out.

77. Matters Not Provided For

77.1. Matters not provided for in these Regulations and cases of force majeure shall be dealt with, and decided at its absolute discretion, by HKFA as it deems fit and its decisions thereupon are final.

78. Amendment and Interpretation of the Regulations

78.1. HKFA Board shall have the right to make amendments, additions, deletions and to interpret any articles in these Regulations.

## Appendix I: Additional Information

### A. Disciplinary Matters

- A1. All participating clubs, its Team Officials and Players undertake to comply with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code and all relevant circulars and directives in force at the time of the Competition, and agree in particular to respect the spirit of fair play, non-violence and the authority of the match officials, and behave accordingly.
- A2. Disciplinary incidents shall be dealt with in compliance with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force and all relevant circulars and directives.
- A3. HKFA may initiate investigations should it suspect and/or is aware of any violation of current HKFA Constitution, HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the relevant circulars and directives.
- A4. HKFA may impose disciplinary measures for any violation of the current HKFA Constitution, HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code, the relevant circulars and directives.
- A5. All team officials or players being cautioned or dismissed from the Field of Play shall be dealt with by the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in accordance with the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force.
- A6. Any team official or player who fails to conduct oneself in a proper and responsible manner before, during or after the game, including but not limited to misconduct on the field of play, in the technical area, dressing rooms and match venue premises, shall be liable to disciplinary action.
- A7. Any team official or player reported for indiscipline or violent conduct anywhere in the match venue, including but not limited to the field of play and the dressing rooms, by the match officials shall be dealt with by the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee in accordance with HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Code in force.
- A8. Any team supporter reported for misconduct before, during or after the game, including but not limited to misconduct on the field of play, in the technical area, dressing rooms, spectators stand and match venue premises, the related team or person shall be liable to disciplinary action.
- A9. No team official, player or a member of the playing teams shall make any disparaging remarks on the match officials of a match; any such remark made by a team official, player or a member of the team may render such person liable to disciplinary actions.
- A10. Team Officials, players or members of the playing teams are prohibited from charging at match officials before, during or after the game, for whatever reasons. Any such action shall render the official. Player or member concerned liable to disciplinary actions.
- A11. HKFA may impose disciplinary measures for any match fixing by following receipt of reports or any evidence from any authorized organization.

## B. Code of Ethics

- B1. All participating clubs, its Team Officials and Players, Match Officials undertake to comply with the FIFA Code of Ethics and all relevant circulars and directives in force at the time of the Competition, and agree in particular to respect the fighting against discrimination, racism and match-fixing activities.
- B2. All Officials, Players and Match Officials participating in the Competition shall comply with the HKFA Code of Ethics.

## C. Doping Control

- C1. Doping is strictly prohibited and all participating clubs, its officials and players shall comply the relevant regulations, circulars and directives of FIFA, AFC, WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), ADOHK (Anti-Doping Organization of Hong Kong, China) or HKFA as well as to accept the same.
- C2. Any Participating Club, team official or player found guilty of breaching the relevant regulations, circulars and directives shall be deemed to have committed gross misconduct and shall be referred to the HKFA Disciplinary and Ethics Committee and/or appropriate body for such action as deem fit.
- C3. HKFA can conduct doping tests according to the standards and procedures established by FIFA, AFC or WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), including but not limited to in-competition tests or out-of-competition test.

## Appendix II: Match Rundown

Pursuant to Art. 40 of these Regulations, a Hong Kong Premier Match shall be staged according to the rundown as below:

Countdown	Activity
- 01' 30"	Latest arrival time for match officials
- 01' 30"	Latest arrival time for teams
- 01' 30"	Teams' submission of start list
- 01' 15"	Checking of Home Team players' identity and equipment
- 01' 10"	Checking of Away Team players' identity and equipment
- 00' 50" to - 00' 20"	Teams warm-up
- 00' 30"	Production and distribution of official start list
- 00' 10"	Substitute players and officials to be on the bench
- 00' 08"	Starting players and match officials to be in the tunnel
- 00' 07"	Referees check on starting list players list and players' equipment
- 00' 05"	Start of processional entry
- 00' 03"	Pre-match ceremony
- 00' 00"	Kick-off
The rundown starting from the gathering of starting players and match officials may need to carry out earlier if there will be other pre-match activities, e.g. VIP Handshake, added to the programme.	
Half-time break will be 15 minutes from whistle (end of 1 <sup>st</sup> half) to whistle (start of 2 <sup>nd</sup> half).	
Players gathering at the centre-circle immediately after the final whistle for post-match handshake (Art. 49)	
Post-match media conference (if any) will be held 15 minutes after the final whistle (Art. 50)	

## Appendix III: Powers & Duties of the Match Delegate

Pursuant to Art. 53 for the appointment of Match Delegate, Match Delegate shall have following powers and duties:

1. Match Delegate shall act as the official representative of HKFA at the match.
2. Match Delegate shall arrive at the venue at least ninety (90) minutes before the scheduled kick-off time.
3. Ninety (90) minutes before the kick-off, Match Delegate will proceed to the dressing rooms of both teams to collect the start list. Seventy-five (75) minutes before the kick-off, Match Delegate will proceed to the changing rooms of both teams to ascertain the player's eligibility to play by checking his identity and players' gears with the referees.
4. After checking, the official start list will be distributed to the referees, match officials, playing teams, media and appropriate parties.
5. Match Delegate will be seated in a prominent seat where Match Delegate can get the best overview of the stadium.
6. Match Delegate will submit a confidential report in the required format containing a summary of the match data, a brief description of his observations on, inter alia, the behavior of the teams, attitude of spectators, general organization, police service, medical service, press organization, special incidents and any other remarks.
7. If there is any violence or incident before, during and after the match, Match Delegate shall submit a separate report on the incident identifying the trouble-makers (as far as possible).
8. Match Delegate shall submit reports on all controversial incidents relating to, inter alia, disciplinary issues and goal scoring.
9. Match Delegate shall also submit reports on any misconduct or other incident that occurred out of the view of the match officials.
10. Match Delegate shall submit his report(s) to HKFA by fax or by e-mail not later than forty-eight (48) hours after the match, notwithstanding that it may be a Saturday, Sunday or a Public Holiday.
11. Match Delegate shall refrain from making statements to the media especially on decision made by the match officials.

## Appendix IV : Powers & Duties of the Fourth Official

Pursuant to Art. 54 for the appointment of Fourth Official, Fourth Official shall have following powers and duties:

1. The Fourth Official will assist with any administrative duties before, during and after the match as required by the referee.
2. The Fourth Official will be responsible for assisting with substitution procedure during the match.
3. The Fourth Official has the authority to check the equipment of substitutes before they enter the field of play. If the equipment does not comply with the Laws of the Game, he informs the referee.
4. The Fourth Official supervises the replacement footballs where required. If the match ball has to be replaced during a match, he provides another ball, on the instruction of the referee, thus keeping the delay to a minimum.
5. The Fourth Official shall assist the referee at all times to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. The referee, however, retains the authority to decide on all points connected with play.
6. The Fourth Official must indicate to the referee when the wrong player is cautioned because of mistaken identity or when a player is not sent off having been seen to be given a second caution or when violent conduct occurs out of view of the referee and assistant referees.
7. After the match, the Fourth Official must submit a report to HKFA on any misconduct or other incident that occurred out of the view of the referee and assistant referees. The Fourth Official must advise the referee and assistant referees of any report being made.
8. The Fourth Official has the authority to inform the referee of irresponsible behavior by any occupants of the technical area. The Fourth Official shall identify all occupants of the technical area before the start of the match and ensure that they display their eligibility and access card on a visible part of their body throughout the match.
9. The Fourth Official shall officiate if any of the three officials, i.e. referee and assistant referees, is unable to continue.

