



REGULATORY AND PROCEDURAL UPDATES IN SPORTS

(October 2020)

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1. THE FIFA COUNCIL BUREAU APPROVES INTERNATIONAL MATCH PROTOCOL AND ADAPTS RULES ON RELEASE OF PLAYERS



FIFA's Return to Football – International Match Protocol which would usher in the safe return of international football; was approved by the Bureau of the FIFA Council.

The protocol was agreed on after consultations and contributions from the six confederations and stakeholder representatives. Included are several guidelines as regards the health and safety of players and that of delegates; as well as provision of exemptions for local authorities in relevant situations.

This protocol which was released prior to the October 2020 international football break, differs from the September version of the international break protocol which applied to only UEFA Member Nations. The October protocol is more encompassing as it applies to all members of the six confederations of FIFA.

The protocol, which is similar to the September release, focuses on the following:



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(a.) Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

FIFA has drafted rules as regards preventive measures which would be implemented by football confederations during matches, such as:

- Strict monitoring and testing of players, delegates and officials;
- Hand hygiene;
- Respiratory hygiene;
- Physical distancing;
- Cleaning and hygiene regime;
- Risk communication and awareness;
- Defining and tracing contacts;
- Management of people with COVID-19, its symptoms, and their contacts;
- Management, responsibility and planning.

The protocol also covers logistical considerations, match operations, media and broadcasting matters, as well as return of spectators.

(b.) FIFA World Cup 2022 Tournament

The Implementation of this protocol means that a number of amendments have been put in place as regards competition regulations. Under the amendment, participating teams are allowed to use up to five substitutes during matches - from the regular three substitutions.





(c.) Release of Players Temporarily Adapted



Amongst the other amendments implemented by the Bureau of the FIFA council, includes temporary amendments to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

The amendments contain the following resolutions:

(1.) That the temporary amendments shall apply to all international windows for men's football, women's football, and futsal, scheduled for the remainder of 2020.

(2.) That all international matches taking place in those windows are required to apply FIFA's Return to Football – International Match Protocol or an equivalent protocol of the relevant confederation compliant with the said Protocol.

(3.) That the rules relating to release of players to association teams, as provided by the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players apply as usual, except where:

- i. There is a mandatory period of quarantine or self-isolation of at least five (5) days upon arrival in:
 - a. The location of the club which has an obligation to release the player to an association team; or
 - b. The location where a representative team match is scheduled to take place; or
- ii. There is a travel restriction to or from either location (a. or b. above); and
- iii. Specific exemption from the relevant authorities relating to the above decisions has not been granted to players of a representative team.



2. FIFA PUBLISHES GUIDE TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER OF MINORS



" Since 2001, the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP) have prohibited the international transfer of a minor (a player under the age of 18), with limited exceptions. As per the most recent edition of the RSTP, a player under the age of 18 may only transfer internationally if they meet one of six limited exceptions." (Source: FIFA.Com)

In a bid to continue to promote transparency and disclosure of most of its internal activities, FIFA has published a [Guide](#) to submitting an application where a minor is to make an international transfer.

The main objective of the guide is to provide football stakeholders with proper education, as well as documentary requirements relating to minors making international transfers.

Amongst the reason for the publication was the recent codification of new exceptions, the high number of cases received and their increasing complexity, as



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well as the need to provide legal certainty to football stakeholders.

Contained in the Guide, are the following:

- i. A complete overview of the application process for the international transfer of a minor;
- ii. A comprehensive summary of the types of applications and the relevant documents required for each specific application;
- iii. A frequently-asked-questions section providing practical advice and clarifications, based on real-life cases encountered by the FIFA administration: and
- iv. Useful legal and regulatory material, in particular, FIFA circulars and CAS awards, which provide further insight on the policy reasons underpinning FIFA's rules on the protection of minors in the football transfer system.

Furthermore, the Guide provides a clear and beneficial way of understanding the complexities involved in the transfer of minors; useful for clubs, member associations, players and their parents or legal guardians, as well as the general public.

You can access the Guide [here](#)



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BASKETBALL



1. FIBA RELEASES 2020 OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES

On October 1, 2020, a new edition of the FIBA Official Basketball Rules came into effect. The main changes to the new FIBA Official Basketball Rules 2020 include:

- Definition of the player's "cylinder";
- Definition of the Double Foul;
- Definition of an Unsportsmanlike Foul in fast-break situations;
- Definition of Table Officials' duties (Scorer and Timer);
- Instant Replay System usage and reporting protocol;
- Specifications of the FIBA approved basketball equipment.



In line with the established procedure, FIBA's Rules Advisory Group (RAG), which comprises of basketball and refereeing experts, closely studied all proposals for the rule changes before submitting them to the FIBA Technical Commission for the final review. The analysis of the rule changes involved all key stakeholders, including coaches, players, NBA and NCAA representatives, during the process.

Follow this link to access the [Official Basketball Rules in English](#).



FULL MEANING OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **FIFA**- Federation Internationale de Football Association
2. **CAS**- Court of Arbitration for Sports
3. **RSTP**-Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.
4. **FIBA**- Federation of International Basketball Association
5. **NCAA**- National Collegiate Athletics Association



ABOUT SPORTLICITORS

We are a law firm specialized in sports law practice, covering a variety of areas such as sport governance & regulation; sports contracts; sports dispute resolution; intellectual property rights in sports; sports marketing & sponsorship; sports immigration services, amongst others.


Our firm is one of the foremost fully-specialized sports law firms in Africa. It was established based on the understanding that the African sports industry needs expert lawyers who are fully-devoted to helping sports stakeholders exploit the opportunities, and negotiate the challenges of an ever-changing sports industry.

Over time, we have provided legal services in respect of:


- Sports disciplinary matters;
- Formation of sport leagues/clubs;
- Dispute Resolution before local/international sports tribunals, and civil courts; such as matters of 'overdue payables', 'training compensation', 'solidarity contribution', tort in sport, etc;
- Advice on player management and transfers;
- Club management, employment contracts and commercial contracts, etc.

Our track record includes provision of legal services to clients such as: Fédération Internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnel (FIFPRO), Myron Topclass Sport Outfit, Discovery Sport, Oghenekaro Etebo (Stoke City FC, England), Godbless Asamoah (Rivers United FC, Nigeria), Adama Coulibaly (Warri Wolves FC, Nigeria), Adeola Aminu & Chima Nwosu (Sunshine Queens FC, Nigeria), Gbagada FC (Nigeria), Geedeede FC (Nigeria), Ahmed Kone & Bobbie Ansah (Sunshine Stars FC), among others.

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