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1. Introduction

- Club License, which shall be granted by Bangladesh Football Federation, is required for clubs to be eligible for participating in the Bangladesh Premier League.
- The Club Licensing Regulations for Bangladesh Premier League (The BPL Club Licensing Regulations) defines the criteria and procedure, which clubs must comply with to apply and obtain license.

2. Objectives

The BPL Club Licensing Regulations have the following objectives-

- Establishing reliability, credibility and integrity of the Bangladesh Premier League along with the clubs participating in the competition.
- Promotion and continuous improvement of standards of all the aspects of football in Bangladesh.
- Ensuring qualified coaches are engaged in training of the players in each Bangladesh Premier League participating club with the overall aim to improve the standard and quality of the matches.
- Ensuring every Bangladesh Premier League participating clubs implicates a youth team in its set up and the youth team regularly competes in official competitions in Bangladesh.
- Ensuring adequate facilities for the Bangladesh Premier League participating clubs.
- Improving the overall management organization of the clubs in Bangladesh and making them more efficient, productive and transparent.
- Improving the economic and financial standings of the Bangladesh Premier League participating clubs and generating revenues through effective marketing & commercial exploitation by the clubs.

3. LICENSOR

A. WHO IS THE LICENSOR?

- BFF is the licensor in Bangladesh.
- BFF as the licensor is legally authorized to draft, finalize and issue the license to any applicant that seeks to get the license.
- BFF governs the licensing system, appoints the corresponding licensing bodies and fix the necessary processes.
- BFF guarantees the license applicant (club) full confidentiality with regards to information given by the license applicant during the licensing process.
- Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by BFF will ensure confidentiality of the tasks undertaken.

B. DECISION MAKING BODIES

BFF has 2 decisions making bodies to decide on the application and hearing appeals on the granting of license to the applicants. These 2 decision making bodies are-

i. First Instance Body (FIB)

a) A Committee formed by BFF shall be the First Instance Body (FIB) for the Club Licensing.

b) The FIB of BFF decides on whether a license should be granted to an applicant club on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance of the BPL Club Licensing Regulations at the submission deadline.

ii. Appeals Body (AB)

a) The Appeal Committee of BFF acts as the Appeals Body (AB) of BFF for the BPL club licensing regulations.

b) The AB of BFF decides on appeals submitted in writing and makes a final and binding decision on whether a license should be granted.

c) Appeals may be lodged by-

i. The license applicant club, who received the refusal of the FIB

ii. The licensee club, whose license has been withdrawn by the FIB

iii. BFF, the assigned body of which must be defined (e.g. BFF Licensing Administration)

d) The AB makes its decision based on the decision of the FIB and all the evidence provided by the license applicant club or licensee club or BFF with its request for appeal.

C. LICENSING ADMINISTRATION

a) The Licensing Administration of BFF is responsible for all the administrative matters relating to BPL Club Licensing Regulations.

b) The Licensing Administration is responsible for:

i. Preparing, implementing and further developing BPL Club Licensing Regulations

ii. Providing administrative support to the decision making bodies

iii. Assisting, advising and monitoring the licensed clubs during the season

c) All persons involved in the licensing process must comply with strict confidentiality rules regarding information received during licensing procedure.

d) The Licensing Administration will not be influenced or affected by the decision-making bodies in any aspects.

D. SEASON FOR PARTICIPATING CLUBS OF BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE

Season for participating clubs of Bangladesh Premier League is defined as one cycle of all competitions those, which are designated for them that usually commences in the month of October and usually concludes in the month of July in the next calendar year. □

□ □ □ □ □ (e.g. - Season for participating clubs of Bangladesh Premier League 2013-14 commences in August 2013 and concludes in July 2014).

4. LICENCE APPLICANT AND LICENCE

A. DEFINITION OF LICENSE APPLICANT

A license applicant is defined as a football club that applies to BFF to get a license to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League. The football club must be a registered legal entity as per Bangladesh national Law.

An individual or a natural person cannot apply for a license.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENSE APPLICANT

The license applicant is responsible for ensuring that BFF is provided with all necessary information and/or documents relevant to proving that the licensing obligations are fulfilled, as these obligations relate to the criteria set out under the club licensing regulations.

C. LICENSE

A license is a right given by BFF to the football club to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League for the upcoming season. Once the license applicant has been granted with a license by BFF, it becomes a licensee, i.e. an entity having a license to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League.□

The principles governing the License are:

- a) BFF issues the license according to the provisions of the BPL Club Licensing Regulations.
- b) BFF will issue an invitation in writing to the football clubs to apply for a license. The club applying for a license (i.e. license applicant) must submit a written application to BFF. In this application, the club must, in particular, declare that it will fulfill the obligations of the licensing system.
- c) Only clubs, which fulfill the criteria set out in the BPL Club Licensing Regulations at the deadlines, may be granted a license by BFF to enter into the Bangladesh Premier League season.
- d) A license expires without prior notice:
 - i. at the end of Bangladesh Premier league season for which it was issued, or□
 - ii. On dissolution of the Bangladesh Premier League.
- e) License may be withdrawn during a season by BFF or its decision making bodies if:
 - i. For any reason a licensee becomes insolvent and enters into liquidation during the season, as determined by the Bangladesh National Law: or
 - ii. any of the conditions for the issuing of a license are no longer satisfied; or
 - iii. The licensee violates any of its obligations under the BPL Club licensing regulations.
- f) A license cannot be transferred.

5. CORE PROCESS

This article defines the details of process that BFF undertakes before deciding if a license applicant can be granted a license or not.

A. PRINCIPLE

BFF defines the core process for the verification of the criteria described in this regulations and thus to control the issuance of a license to a license applicant club.

The core process is aimed at –

- a) Establishing an appropriate and efficient licensing process according to its needs and requirements
- b) Ensuring that the decision of the granting of club license is made by the appropriate decision making body (FIB and/or AB)
- c) Ensuring that the decision making bodies receive adequate support from the Licensing Administration of BFF

B.PROCESS

The core process of licensing implementations is as follows-

- a) BFF Executive Committee approves and adopts the BPL Club Licensing Regulations before 31 July.
- b) BFF will announce the 'BPL Club Licensing Regulations' to any club who wishes to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League and will explain the terms, criteria and the requirements to be fulfilled by the applicant clubs as part of the club licensing regulations.□
- c) License Applicants should start the process of fulfilling and implementing the criteria in their respective clubs immediately after BFF has explained the terms, criteria and the requirements they need to fulfill to acquire the license.
- d) The BFF Licensing Administration will closely monitor and follow up on the License Applicants in fulfilling the criteria. If necessary, the BFF Licensing Administration will visit the License Applicants and provide them with any kind of information or assistance that the License Applicant needs.
- e) License Applicants need to submit their written application for the license along with the required supporting documents to BFF in order to prove compliance with the licensing criteria. The last date for submission of the application along with the supporting documents for participating in the upcoming season for the clubs of Bangladesh Premier League will be 21 September 2013. No applications will be accepted after 21 September 2013.
- f) Licensing Administration of BFF will assess the documents submitted by the license applicant clubs to verify their compliance with the criteria once the License Applicants submit the application along with the supporting documents.
- g) Licensing Administration of BFF will forward the license application along with the supporting documents to the FIB by 25 September.
- h) The First Instance Body (FIB) of BFF will decide on whether a license should be granted to the applicant club on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance of the BPL Club Licensing Regulations by 3 October 2013.
- i. If the FIB accepts the application and decides on issuing the license, the decision will be conveyed to the license applicant club in writing within 3 days of the acceptance;
- ii. If the FIB refuses to issue the license, the decision will be conveyed to the license applicant in writing along with the reason for refusal within 3 days of the refusal;

- i) On refusal of the license, the applicant club can lodge an appeal to General Secretary of BFF against the refusal. The appeal should be made in writing along with the supporting documents and evidence within 7 days of the receipt of refusal from BFF. It shall be complied by Licensing Administration and forwarded to AB of BFF.
 - j) The AB will examine the application, supporting documents and submitted evidence to make a decision on the issuing or refusing a license by 23 October.
 - i. If the AB accepts the application and decides on issuing the license, the decision will be conveyed to the license applicant club in writing within 3 days of the acceptance;
 - ii. If the AB refuses to issue the license, the decision will be conveyed to the license applicant in writing along with the reason for refusal within 3 days of the refusal;
- BFF ensures equal treatment to all license applicant clubs during the core process.

6. CRITERIA

6.1 SPORTING CRITERIA

One of the most important attributes of a successful football club is to have a base of players having all the necessary technical and sporting skills. It is necessary that the players have the strength, endurance, skills and motivation to play good quality football and bring positive results for the club on the field. The benefit of having sporting criteria is encouraging the clubs to produce and continuously develop good quality players for the first team.

Also, an important aspect of sporting criteria is the youth development in the club. If the club wants to improve its elite team/first team, it needs to focus on its youth football. It takes a lot of efforts and time to develop young talent and make them technically good footballers. It is important to attract more and more young players towards football and the first step in this is through having a good youth development set up at the club level. The objectives of the sporting criteria are-

- a) Continuous production & development of skilled players for the club
- b) Investment of clubs into youth development
- c) Encourage education (football & non-football) among the youth players
- d) Encourage youth players to adopt a fair play policy on & off the pitch

6.1.1 HEAD COACH OF THE FIRST TEAM

The license applicant club must have appointed a Head Coach for its first team, who is responsible for all the football matters of the first team.

The Head Coach must:

- a) Hold at least a valid AFC 'B' Certificate or any valid coaching qualification that is equivalent to AFC 'B' that is recognized by BFF and AFC;
- b) Be appointed by the executive body or the club secretariat of the license applicant club through a written agreement endorsed by the head of club administration;

Submission to BFF

The club must submit to BFF the name and the CV of the Head Coach of the first team. The club must also submit a copy of his coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the head coach of the first team of the club.

BFF would verify the documents to confirm the appointment.

6.1.2 ASSISTANT COACH OF THE FIRST TEAM

The license applicant club must have appointed an Assistant Coach for its first team,

who is responsible for assisting the Head Coach in all the football matters of the first team.

The Assistant Coach must:

- a) Hold at least a valid AFC 'C' Certificate or any valid coaching qualification that is equivalent to AFC 'C' that is recognized by BFF and AFC;
- b) Be appointed by the executive body or the club secretariat of the license applicant club through a written agreement endorsed by the head of club administration;

Submission to BFF

The club must submit to BFF the name and the CV of the Assistant Coach of the first team. The club must also submit a copy of his coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the assistant coach of the first team of the club.

BFF would verify the coaching certificates and the CV to confirm the authenticity.

6.1.3 PARTICPATION IN YOUTH COMPETITION(S)

The license applicant club must have at least one youth team within the age range of U-18 that participates in all the youth competition(s) organized by BFF in the national, regional or local level in Bangladesh. The youth team should also participate in any youth development activities organized by BFF.

The youth team in the above mentioned age range should have regular training before and during the youth competition(s) and must be coached by a coaching personnel having at least minimum coaching qualification as defined by BFF.

Submission to BFF

The club needs to provide a signed undertaking in writing stating its commitment to participate in all the youth competitions organized by BFF. The undertaking should specifically imply that the club would be fielding its U-18 team in all the youth competitions organized by BFF.

6.2 INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

Today, the game of football and even a competition has become an event and for an event to be successful, it should be held in good infrastructure conditions. Therefore a football match should be organized in good stadiums with all the adequate facilities for the players, officials and most importantly for the spectators.

Also for a club, infrastructure criteria should be seen as a long-term investment. It helps in attracting more fans to the stadium, creating a match atmosphere and generating a revenue base too. Therefore, clubs in coordination with BFF, government and the local community should ensure that they have an access to a stadium that is attractive, safe, secured, hygienic and easy to access for the fans.

The objectives of the infrastructure criteria are-

- a) Clubs have access to a stadium that is approved by BFF for Bangladesh Premier League that provides necessary and adequate facilities for the players, officials and spectators;

b) Clubs have suitable training facilities for their players to help them improve their technical skills;

6.2.1 HOME PLAYING FIELD (Optional for BPL Clubs)

The BPL clubs may either own or have a guaranteed access to a Home Playing Field that is considered as its home venue for the Bangladesh Premier League matches. Not more than “3” (THREE) can share one stadium as its home playing field. So, maximum of 3 “3” (THREE) clubs can register one stadium as their venue for playing their home games for the Bangladesh Premier League.

The playing field must be of minimum size as indicated in the FIFA Laws of the Game.

The Home Playing Field must have adequate:

- a) Dressing rooms for players (home team & away team);**
- b) Referees room;**
- c) Media facilities (for print, radio & TV);**
- d) Medical room;**

Submission to BFF

The club must submit to BFF the name and address of the Home Playing Field along with the agreement with the owner of the Home Playing Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its Home Playing Field for the Bangladesh Premier League matches. If the Club owns the Home Playing Field, it must submit the documents proving its ownership. BFF would verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venues.

6.2.2 TRAINING FACILITIES

The club must either own or have a guaranteed access to Training Field / Training Facilities that is available throughout the year where the players of the club can train on a regular basis.

The Training Field must have adequate:

- a) Full Size football pitch of good quality;**
- b) Balls, cones, bibs, goal post and other necessary training equipment's;**
- c) Shower room for players;**
- d) Gymnasium;**

Submission to BFF

The club must submit to BFF the name and address of the Training Field along with the agreement with the owner of the Training Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its Training Field for the entire year. If the Club owns the Training Field, it must submit to BFF the documents proving its ownership.

BFF would verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venue of the training field.

6.2.3 CLUB SECRETARIAT

The club must either own or have a guaranteed access to an office space to conduct its administrative task. The club administration must be based in this office space.

The administrative office must be equipped with all the necessary communication facilities such as telephone, fax, computer, internet, email, etc.

Submission to BFF

The club must submit to BFF the name and address of the club secretariat along with the agreement with the owner of the office space stating guaranteed access to the club as its secretariat to conduct all its administrative tasks. The club must submit all the relevant contact details of the club secretariat.

If the Club owns the office space, it must submit to BFF the documents proving its ownership.

BFF would verify the documents and visit the office space to confirm the facility.

6.3 PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

In today's world, football is not only about results on the field, but also incorporation of professionalism in running the day-to-day administration of the club. In this regard, having professional, well-educated and experienced people in the administration of the club is key in running the club in an efficient & effective manner.

The focus is on the professional and expert manner in which the people that are appointed perform their duties. The professionalism will also be improved if clubs clearly define the profiles for the function to be performed and the requirements for the job (education, working experience, IT skills, language skills, commercial and marketing knowledge pertaining to the football industry). The license applicant club is responsible for identifying & recruiting people who meet these requirements and comply with the defined profile either full time or part time.

The objectives of the personnel & administrative criteria are-

- a) Clubs are managed in a professional way by professional experts;
- b) Clubs have well-educated, qualified and skilled specialists with specific know how and experience;
- c) Clubs are in a position to exploit the commercial & marketing opportunities prevailing in the commercial environment of the country;
- d) It helps the league to become more professional and commercially beneficial over a period of time;

6.3.1 FULLTIME CEO/GENERAL MANAGER/GENERAL SECRETARY

The club must have an appointed full time CEO or General Manager or General Secretary who is the head of the administration of the club. He is responsible for managing and supervising the administrative matters of the club.

The CEO/General Manager/General Secretary should at least be a Graduate from a recognized college/university in or outside Bangladesh and must have experience of administration of football club. He should have the necessary knowledge & communication skills required in club management.

It shall –

- a) Be responsible for executing the decisions of the Executive Body of the club;
- b) Be responsible for the administration of the club secretariat and appointment & supervision of the administrative staff;
- c) Assist and participate the Congress & Executive Committee meetings of the club as an ex-officio;
- d) Be responsible for all the official correspondence and communications with BFF, District FAs, Divisional FA, Government, Other Clubs and any other stakeholders involved;
- e) Attend all the club management & club development seminars organized by BFF or any other governing bodies for the development of the club;

The appointment of the full time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary should be done by the Executive Body of the club through a written contract. The appointed official should not have any other full time activities other than management of the club that has

employed him.

Submission to BFF

The club must submit the name and CV of the full time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary to BFF along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating his/her appointment as a full time head of club administration.

BFF would verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

6.3.2 FULL TIME/PART TIME MARKETING DIRECTOR

The club must have an appointed full time or part time Marketing Director who is the head of all the marketing, sponsorship and commercial matters relating to the club. He is responsible for managing and supervising all the marketing matters of the club.

The Marketing Director should have adequate marketing academic qualifications and experience in marketing & commercial aspects of football industry. He should have the necessary knowledge & skills in marketing, sponsorship management of football clubs and should beware of the demographic, geographic and marketing environment prevailing in the football industry of Bangladesh.

It shall –

- a) Be responsible for designing and implementing the marketing & promotional plan for the club;
- b) Be responsible for identifying & approaching all the prospective sponsors and commercial partners for the club;
- c) Be responsible for presenting and selling the marketing opportunities for the club to potential sponsors;
- d) Be responsible for drafting, finalizing and delivering all the sponsorship agreements entered into with the sponsors;
- e) Be responsible for continuously striving towards improving the sponsorship and commercial capabilities of the club thereby increasing the club revenues;
- f) Research the market to exploit any available marketing opportunities;
- g) Plan and supervise the club's marketing operations budget;
- h) Attend all the marketing & sponsorship seminars and workshops organized by BFF or any other governing body for the development of the club in marketing & commercial aspects;

The appointment of full time/part time Marketing Director should be done by the head of the club administration, i.e. the CEO/General Manager/General Secretary through a written contract. The appointed official should give utmost importance to club's marketing, sponsorship & commercial activities.

Submission to BFF

The club must submit the name of the full time/part time Marketing Director to BFF along with his CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as the head of all the marketing, sponsorship and commercial matters relating to the club.

BFF would verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

6.3.3 FULLTIME CLUB COORDINATOR

The club must have an appointed full time coordinator for the club who is responsible staff in the administration of the club. He will report to the head of the club administration. He is responsible for managing and coordinating all the communication and activities between the club, BFF and any other stakeholder. The Coordinator should

have good communication & coordinating skills and lead the coordination between the club & BFF.

It shall –

- a) Be responsible for all the actual communication and correspondence between the club & BFF and any other stakeholders;
- b) Be responsible for informing the head of club administration about all the communications & correspondence between the club & BFF and any other stakeholders;
- c) Be responsible for informing BFF about any of the activities undertaken by the club directly or indirectly affecting BFF or its competitions;
- d) Be responsible for communicating to BFF any problems or issues faced;□
- e) Be responsible to communicate with the club administration or club officials about any communication from BFF that needs their attention & action;
- f) Be responsible to communicate to the club about any courses, workshops or seminars being organized by BFF or any other stakeholder for the development of the club;
- g) Be responsible to maintain peaceful & harmonious relationship between the club & BFF and any other stakeholders;

The appointment of the full time coordinator should be done by the head of the club administration, i.e. the CEO/General Manager/General Secretary of the club through a written contract. The appointed official should not have any other full time activities other than coordinating the activities, communication and correspondence between the club and BFF.

Submission to BFF

The club must submit the name of the full time coordinator to BFF along with his CV and all his contact details. The club must submit an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the official as the official club coordinator and liaison between club & BFF.

BFF would verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

6.4 LEGAL CRITERIA (Optional for BPL Clubs)

An important characteristic of a well managed & a stable football club may have a strong legal foundation. It is necessary that the club has an appropriate legal base as per the principles of football in the country. The benefit of having legal criteria is encouraging the clubs to be stable over a long run.

The objectives of the legal criteria are-

- a) Establishing a stable & sustainable entity;
- b) Compliance of the rules & regulations of the national association;
- c) Increased protection for club, players and officials through compliance of contractual obligations;
- d) Increased efficiency in player transfer procedures;□
- e) Transparency in financial management;
- f) Ability to secure contracts with sponsors and commercial partners;
- g) Streamlining of approvals from government bodies for construction/ownership of club infrastructure;

6.4.1 LEGAL ENTITY (Optional for BPL Clubs)

The license applicant may be registered with an appropriate authority as a legal entity as per the law prevailing in Bangladesh. The license applicant must be in possession of a

legally valid declaration confirming the following:

- a) It is a legal entity registered with a recognized legal authority;
- b) It holds a certificate/document stating its legal entity status;
- c) It has valid club statutes that is approved by the authority confirming the legal entity status on the license applicant;

Submission to BFF

The club needs to provide the necessary documents and certificates that prove that the club is a legal entity that is registered with the appropriate authority in Bangladesh and valid club statutes that is approved by the authority.□

6.5 Summary of the Criteria

Following is a one-page summary highlighting the club licensing criteria for the clubs to participate in the Bangladesh Premier League –

SPORTING CRITERIA

- a) License Applicant Club to appoint a Head Coach for its first team, who hold at least an AFC ‘B’ Coaching Certificate.
- b) License Applicant Club to appoint an Assistant Coach for its first team, who hold at least an AFC ‘C’ Coaching Certificate.
- c) License Applicant Club to have at least one youth team within the age range of 18 that takes part in the youth competitions organized by BFF.

INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

- a) License Applicant Club either own or have a guaranteed access to a Home Playing Field to play its Bangladesh Premier League matches.
- b) No more than “3” (THREE) clubs can register and share one stadium as their home venue for Bangladesh Premier League matches.
- c) License Applicant Club to either own or have a guaranteed access to Training Field / Training Facilities throughout the year.
- d) License Applicant Club to either own or have a guaranteed access to an office space to conduct its administrative task.

PERSONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

- a) License Applicant Club to appoint a full time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary as the head of club administration.
- b) License Applicant Club to appoint a full time/part time Marketing Director as the head of all the marketing, sponsorship and commercial matters relating to the club.
- c) License Applicant Club to appoint a full time Coordinator for the club who is responsible for managing and coordinating all the communication and activities between the club, BFF and any other stakeholders.

LEGAL CRITERIA (Optional for BPL)

- a) License Applicant Club to be a legal entity registered with the appropriate authority with having club statutes.

7. MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR

Matters not provided for in these regulations shall be decided by the BFF Executive Committee, whose decisions are final.

