

BFF Disciplinary Code

July 2023



*Bhutan Football Federation
Thimphu
2023*

I.

General Provisions

1. Object

This code describes infringements of the rules in BFF regulations, determines the sanctions incurred, regulates the organization and function of the BFF judicial bodies responsible for taking decisions and the procedure to be followed before these bodies.

2. Scope of application: substantive law

- (1) This Code applies to every match and competition organized by BFF and to matches and competitions that come within the purview of BFF jurisdictions.
- (2) This Code also applies to any breach of BFF's statutory objectives as well as of any FIFA rule that does not fall under the jurisdiction of any BFF body.

3. Scope of personal application

The following are subject to this code:

- (1) clubs;
- (2) officials;
- (3) players;
- (4) match officials;
- (5) anyone assigned by BFF to exercise a function, in particular with regard to a match, competition or other event organized by BFF.

4. Scope of temporal application

- (1) This Code applies to all disciplinary offenses committed following 19 July 2023.
- (2) This Code also applies to all disciplinary offenses committed prior 19 July 2023, subject to any milder sanction that would apply under previous rules.
- (3) Disciplinary proceedings brought against someone who was under BFF's jurisdiction as per Article 3 (Scope of personal application) on the day the alleged disciplinary offense was committed shall not be abandoned by the BFF judicial bodies solely because the person involved is no longer under BFF's jurisdiction.

5. Applicable law

The BFF judicial bodies base their decisions:

- (1) primarily, on the BFF regulations, guidelines, directives and decisions;
- (2) secondly, FIFA statutes, regulations, circulars, directives and decisions, and laws of the Game; and
- (3) thirdly, on Bhutanese law that the competent judicial body deems applicable.

6. Disciplinary measures

- (1) The following measures may be imposed on natural and legal persons:
 - (A) warning;
 - (B) reprimand;
 - (C) fine or any other pecuniary measure;
 - (D) Return of awards;
 - (E) withdrawal of a title;

- (F) order to fulfill a financial obligation arising or existing in the context of a trial.
- (2) The following measures may be imposed on natural persons only:
- (A) Suspension for a specific number of matches or for a specific period;
 - (B) Ban from dressing rooms and/or team bench;
 - (C) Community football service;
- (3) The following measures may be imposed on legal persons only:
- (A) Ban on registering new players;
 - (B) annulment of the result of a match;
 - (C) Deduction of points;
 - (D) Relegation to a lower division;
 - (E) Expulsion from a competition in progress or from future competitions;
 - (F) Forfeit;
 - (G) Replaying a match;
 - (H) Forfeiture of training rewards that are due;
 - (I) Payment of a specific amount to a club;
 - (J) Refund of Club grant/subsidy.
- (4) Fines shall not be less than Nu. 5,000/- or more than Nu. 500,000/-
- (5) Clubs are jointly liable for fines imposed on players and officials.
- (6) The disciplinary measures provided for in this Code may be combined.

7. Directives

- (1) Directives require those affected by them to behave in a certain manner.
- (2) In addition to disciplinary measures, the BFF judicial bodies may issue directives stipulating the manner in which a disciplinary measure must be carried out, including the date and conditions on which the disciplinary measure is enforced.
- (3) The BFF judicial bodies may also award compensation for damage where a club is liable for that damage on the basis of article 8.

8. Responsibility

- (1) Unless otherwise specified in this Code, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed deliberately or negligently. In particular, clubs may be responsible for the behavior of their members, players, officials or supporters or any other person carrying out a function on their behalf even if the club concerned can prove the absence of any fault or negligence.
- (2) Anyone who takes part in committing an infringement or induces someone to do so, whether as instigator or accomplice, may also be sanctioned.

9. Decisions of the referee

- (1) Decisions taken by the referee on the field of play are final and may not be reviewed by BFF judicial bodies.
- (2) In cases where a decision by the referee involves an obvious error (such as mistaking the identity of the person penalized), the BFF judicial bodies may only review the disciplinary consequences of that decision. In cases of mistaken identity, disciplinary proceedings may, in accordance with this Code, be opened only against the person who was actually at fault.
- (3) A protest against a caution or a sending-off from the field of play after two cautions is admissible only if the referee's error was mistaken identity of the player.
- (4) In cases of serious misconduct, disciplinary action may be taken even if the referee and their assistants did not see the event in question and were therefore unable to take any action.
- (5) The provisions of this Code relating to protests against match results affected by a referee's decision that was obvious violation of a rule remain applicable.

II.

OFFENCES

Chapter 1: Infringements of the laws of the Game

10. Offensive Behavior and violations of the principles of fair play

- (1) Clubs, as well as their players, officials and any other member and/or person carrying out a function on their behalf, must respect the laws of the Game, as well as BFF's regulations, directives, guidelines and decisions, and comply with the principles of fair play, loyalty and integrity.
- (2) For example, anyone who acts in any of the following ways may be subject to disciplinary measures:
 - (a) Violating the basic rules of decent conduct;
 - (b) Insulting a natural or legal person in any way, especially by using offensive gestures, signs or language;
 - (c) Using a sports event for demonstrations of a non-sporting nature;
 - (d) Behaving in a way that brings the sport of football and/BFF into disrepute;
 - (e) Actively altering the age of players shown on the identity cards they produce at competitions that are subject to age limits.

Chapter 2: Disorderliness at matches and competitions

11. Misconduct of players and officials

- (1) Players and officials shall be suspended for misconduct as specified below and may be fined accordingly:
 - (a) One match for players who are sent off for denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity;
 - (b) At least one match or an appropriate period of time for unsporting behavior towards an opponent or a person other than a match official;
 - (c) At least one match for officials who are sent off for dissent by word or action;
 - (d) At least one match for deliberately receiving a yellow or red card, including in order to be suspended for an upcoming match or to ultimately have a clean record;
 - (e) At least two matches for serious foul play;
 - (f) At least two matches for provoking spectators at a match by any means;
 - (g) At least two matches or a specific period for acting with obvious intent to cause a match official to make an incorrect decision or supporting their error of judgement and thereby causing them to make an incorrect decision;
 - (h) At least three matches for violent conduct;
 - (i) At least three matches or an appropriate period of time for assault, including elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting or hitting an opponent or a person other than a match official;
 - (j) At least four matches or an appropriate period of time for unsporting behavior towards a match official;
 - (k) At least fifteen matches or an appropriate period of time for assaulting a match official, including elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting or hitting.

12. Discrimination

- (1) Any person who offends the dignity or integrity of a country, a person or group of people through contemptuous, discriminatory or derogatory words or actions on account of fact, skin color, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or any other opinion, wealth birth or any other status or any other reason shall be sanctioned with a suspension lasting at least ten matches or a specific period, or any other appropriate disciplinary measure.
- (2) The competent judicial body may deviate from the above minimum sanctions if the club concerned commits to developing in conjunction with BFF, a comprehensive plan to ensure action against discrimination and to prevent repeated incidents. The plan shall be approved by BFF and shall include, at least, the following three focus areas:
 - (a) Educational activities (including a communication campaign aimed at supporters and the general public). The effectiveness of the campaign will be reviewed regularly.
 - (b) Stadium security and dialogue measures (including a policy on how offenders will be identified and dealt with through football sanctions, a policy on escalation to state (criminal) legal authorities, and a dialogue with supporters and influencers on how to create change).
 - (c) Partnerships (including working with supporters, NGOs, experts and stakeholder to advise on and support the action plan and ensure effective and ongoing implementation).
- (3) Persons who are found by this Code and have been the victim of potential discriminatory behavior may be invited by the respective judicial body to make an oral or written victim impact statement, and will have the right to request the motivated decision in proceedings before the judicial bodies, as well as to lodge an appeal and act as party in the disciplinary appeal proceedings in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Code.
- (4) Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a match is abandoned by the referee because of racist and/or discriminatory conduct, the match shall be declared forfeited.

13. Unplayed matches and abandonment

- (1) If a match cannot take place or cannot be played in full for reasons other than *force majeure*, but due to the behaviour of a team or behavior for which a club is liable, the club will be sanctioned with a minimum of Nu. 50,000/- or the total cost price of hosting a similar match. The match will either be forfeited or replayed.
- (2) Additional disciplinary measures may be imposed on the club concerned.
- (3) If a match was abandoned and is to be replayed in full, any caution issued during that match shall be annulled. If a match was abandoned, in particular for reasons of *force majeure*, and it recommences at the minute at which play was interrupted, any caution imposed before the match was abandoned remains valid for the remainder of the match. If the match is to be replayed, the cautions received by the teams shall be upheld.

14. Protests

- (1) Clubs are entitled to lodge protests. Protests must be submitted unwritten addressing to the General Secretary of BFF to the Match Commissioner within One Hour in hard copy (roughly). Subsequently, a full written report needs to be submitted, indicating the relevant grounds, within 24 hours of the end of the match in question.
- (2) The protest fee is Nu. 10,000/-. It must be paid to BFF when the protest is lodged and is reimbursed only if the protest is admitted in full.
- (3) A protest is admissible only if it is based on:
 - (a) An ineligible player's participation in a match as a consequence of that player not fulfilling the conditions defined in the relevant BFF regulations;
 - (b) An unfit field of play, as long as the referee was informed as soon as the problem was reported or observed (whether in writing before the match, or orally by a team captain, in the presence of the captain of the opposing team, during the match);
 - (c) An obvious error by the referee as defined in clause 9 (Decision of the referee) of this Code, in which case the protest may be directed only at the disciplinary consequences of the referee's obvious error.

15. Manipulation of football matches and competitions

- (1) Anyone who directly or indirectly, by an act or an omission, unlawfully influences or manipulates the course, result or any other aspect of a match and/or competition or conspires or attempts to do so by any means shall be sanctioned with a minimum five-year ban on taking part in any football-related activity as well as a fine of at least Nu. 500,000/-. In serious cases, a longer ban period, including a potential lifetime ban on taking part in any football-related activity, shall be imposed.
- (2) If a player or official engages in behaviour described in clause 15 (1) above, the club to which the player or official belongs may be sanctioned with the forfeiting of the match in question or may be declared ineligible to participate in a different competition, provided the integrity of the competition is protected. Additional disciplinary measure may be imposed.
- (3) Persons bound by this Code must cooperate fully with BFF at all times in its efforts to combat such behaviour and shall therefore immediately and voluntarily report to the Competitions Department (which shall serve as the interim secretariat to the Disciplinary Committee) any approach in connection with activities and/or information directly or indirectly related to the possible manipulation of a football match or competition as described above. Any breach of this provision shall be sanctioned with a ban of at least two years on taking part in any football related activity and a fine of at least Nu. 50,000/-.
- (4) The Disciplinary Committee shall be competent to investigate and adjudicate all conduct on and off the field of play in connection with the manipulation of football matches and competitions.

Chapter 3: Other Provisions

16. Failure to respect decisions

- (1) Anyone who fails to pay another person (such as a player, a coach or a club) or BFF a sum of money in full or part, even though instructed to do so by a body, a committee or an instance of BFF:
 - (a) will be fined for failing to comply with a decision and receive any pertinent additional disciplinary measure; and, if necessary:
 - (b) will be granted a final deadline of 30 days in which to pay the amount due or to comply with the decision;
 - (c) in the case of clubs, upon expiry of the aforementioned final deadline and in the event of persistent default or failure to comply in full with the decision within the period stipulated, a ban on registering new player will be issued until the complete amount due is paid or the non-financial decision is complied with. A deduction of points or relegation to a lower division may also be ordered in addition to a ban on registering new players in the event of persistent failure (i.e. the ban on registering new players has been served for more than three entire and consecutive registration periods following the notification of the decision), repeated offenses or serious infringements or if no full registration ban could be imposed or served for a reason.
 - (d) in the case of natural persons, upon expiry of the aforementioned final deadline and in the event of persistent default or failure to comply in full with the decision within the period stipulated, a ban on any football-related activity for a specific period may be imposed. Other disciplinary measures may also be imposed.
- (2) The Disciplinary Committee shall be competent to decide on cases related to the failure to respect settlement agreements concluded in the context of disciplinary proceedings opened against a debtor with respect to a final and binding financial decision issued by a body, a committee or an instance of BFF.

17. Forgery and falsification

- (1) Anyone who, in football-related activities, forges a document, falsifies an authentic document or uses a forged or falsified document will be sanctioned with a fine and a ban of at least six matches or for a specific period of no less than 12 months.
- (2) A club may be held liable for an act of forgery or falsification by one of its officials and/or players.
- (3) Notwithstanding, anything provided for in clause 17 of this Code as here above, it is understood that an investigation or a prosecution by lawful authorities cannot be estopped or prevented. This Code does not supersede any legal obligations or rights that may arise from such investigations or prosecutions.

Chapter 4: Implementation of Disciplinary Measures

18. Enforcement of sanctions

- (1) The limitation period to enforce disciplinary measures is five years.
- (2) The limitation period begins on the day on which the final decision comes into force.

19. Determining the disciplinary measure

- (1) The judicial body determines the type and extent of the disciplinary measures to be imposed in accordance with the objective and subjective elements of the offense, taking into account both aggravating and mitigating circumstances.
- (2) When determine the disciplinary measure, the judicial body shall take into account all relevant factors of the case, including any assistance of and substantial cooperation by the offender in uncovering or establishing a breach of any BFF rule, the circumstances and the degree of the offender's guilt and any other relevant circumstances.
- (3) In exercising its discretionary powers, the relevant BFF judicial body may scale down the disciplinary measure to be imposed or even dispense with it entirely.

III.

ORGANISATION AND COMPETENCE

Chapter 1: General Provisions

20. General rule

- (1) The BFF judicial bodies shall be competent to investigate, prosecute and sanction conduct within the scope of application of this Code.

21. Composition of BFF judicial bodies

- (1) In this Code, the BFF judicial bodies are:
 - (a) the Disciplinary Committee;
 - (b) The Appeal Committee.
- (2) The BFF judicial bodies shall consist of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and an unspecified number of members.
- (3) The members of the judicial bodies including the chairperson and deputy chairperson are appointed by BFF for a period of four years.

22. Independence and impartiality

- (1) The chairperson, deputy chairperson and other members of the BFF judicial bodies shall be impartial.
- (2) Members of the BFF judicial bodies may not decide on a matter where there are legitimate grounds for questioning their independence or impartiality and/or if there is a conflict of interest. They shall disclose any circumstance which may give rise to any such ground.
- (3) If the circumstances give rise to legitimate doubts over the independence or impartiality of a member of the BFF judicial body, a party is entitled to challenge said member at the latest two days prior to the relevant date on which the judicial body is called to decide on a matter.
- (4) The chairperson shall decide on any such challenge. If an objection is raised concerning the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in their absence, the longest-serving member present shall decide on such challenge.

23. Meetings

- (1) At the request of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in their absence, the longest-serving member available, and depending on the seriousness of the potential infringement, the Competitions Department (which shall serve as the interim secretariat to the Disciplinary Committee) shall call the number of members deemed necessary to each meeting.
- (2) The chairperson, the deputy chairperson, and the members shall conduct the meetings and pass the decisions that this Code empowers them to take.

24. Confidentiality

- (1) The members of the BFF judicial bodies shall ensure that everything disclosed to them during the course of their duty remains confidential (including the facts of the case, the contents of the deliberations and decisions taken).

- (2) The opening of proceedings as well as decisions already notified to the addresses may be made public by BFF.
- (3) Any person who is required to participate in or is subject to a disciplinary investigation or disciplinary proceedings must keep such information confidential at all times, unless the chairperson of the judicial body explicitly stipulates otherwise in writing. Any breach of such duty may be sanctioned.
- (4) In the event of a breach of this clause (*clause 24- confidentiality*) by a member of a judicial body, the relevant member shall be suspended from the Disciplinary Committee until further notice by BFF.

25. Secretariat

- (1) The Competitions Department shall serve as the interim secretariat to the Disciplinary Committee until a permanent secretariat is established. For all purposes in this Code, the secretariat shall mean the Competitions Department.
- (2) The BFF shall provide BFF judicial bodies the necessary support and infrastructure. The BFF judicial bodies may be assisted by legal counsel or experts.
- (3) The secretariat takes charge of the administrative work and writes the decisions of the meetings.
- (4) The secretariat manages the case files. The decisions passed and the relevant files shall be kept for at least ten years.
- (5) The secretariat keeps records of cautions, sendings-off and match suspensions, which are stored in BFF's data storage system/records. The secretariat of the Disciplinary Committee confirms them in writing to the club concerned.
- (6) The secretariat takes charge of the necessary investigation ex officio.
- (7) The general principles that will apply to investigations are the following:
 - (a) BFF may investigate possible offenses falling within the scope of this Code.
 - (b) In principle, when an investigation is initiated, the parties concerned are informed. This does not apply where such notification is not deemed appropriate. Such investigations are conducted by means of written inquiries, engaging with third parties, such as forensic companies and, where necessary, the questioning of individuals. Other investigative procedures may also be employed, including but not limited to on-site inspections, document requests and the procurement of expert opinions.

An investigation may be reopened if new evidence or facts emerge which imply that an offense falling within the scope of this Code may have been committed.

26. Integrity experts

- (1) The secretariat may appoint an integrity expert(s) to support the necessary investigations into potential breached of BFF regulations.
- (2) The appointed integrity expert may request the opening of disciplinary proceedings and propose that disciplinary measures be imposed on clubs and individuals.
- (3) The integrity experts shall remain impartial and fulfill the independence criteria as defined by the secretariat during the time of engagement of the integrity expert. The

requirements and conditions of their appointment as well as of their role are set in accordance with the relevant circular issued by the secretariat.

27. Exemption from liability

Except in the case of gross culpability, neither the members of the BFF judicial bodies nor the secretariat may be held liable for any deeds or omissions relating to any disciplinary procedure.

28. Evidence, evaluation of evidence and standard of proof

- (1) Any type of proof may be produced.
- (2) The competent judicial body has absolute discretion regarding the evaluation of evidence.

29. Match officials' reports

Facts contained in match officials' reports and in any additional reports or correspondence submitted by the match officials are presumed to be accurate. Proof of their inaccuracy may be provided.

30. Burden of proof

- (1) The burden of proof regarding disciplinary infringements rests on the BFF judicial bodies.
- (2) Any party claiming a right on the basis of an alleged fact shall carry the burden of proof of this fact. During the proceedings, the party shall submit all relevant facts and evidence of which the party is aware at that time, or of which the party should have been aware by exercising due care.

31. Witnesses

- (1) Witnesses shall tell the absolute and whole truth and shall answer the questions put to them to the best of their knowledge and judgement.
- (2) It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure the appearance of the witnesses requested by them and to pay all costs and expenses in connection with their appearance.

32. Representation and assistance

- (1) Subject to clause 33 of this Code, the parties are free to have legal representation at their own cost, in which case a duly signed power of attorney must be submitted.
- (2) If they are not required to appear personally, they may be represented.

33. Legal aid

- (1) In order to guarantee their rights, individuals bound by this Code who have insufficient financial means may request legal aid from BFF for the purpose of proceedings before the BFF judicial bodies.
- (2) Applicants for legal aid must submit reasoned requests and supporting documents.

- (3) The secretariat may establish a list of pro bono counsel.
- (4) The chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee decides on requests for legal aid. Such decisions are final.

34. Communication with the parties

- (1) All of the parties shall be notified of the decision.
- (2) Communications from the secretariat shall be sent to the email address specifically provided to the secretariat by the party concerned. Emails are valid and binding means of communication and will be deemed sufficient to establish time limits and their observance.
- (3) The parties must ensure that their contact details (including their address, telephone number and email address) are valid and kept up to date at all times.

35. Effects of decisions

- (1) Decisions come into force as soon as they are notified.
- (2) Cautions, sendings-off and automatic match suspensions have an immediate effect on subsequent matches even if the notification reaches club concerned later.

36. Provisional measures

- (1) The chairperson of the competent judicial body, or their nominee, is entitled to issue provisional measures where these are deemed necessary to ensure the proper administration of justice, to maintain sporting discipline or to avoid irreparable harm, or for reasons of safety and security. They are not obliged to hear the parties.
- (2) Provisional measures issued by the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee or their nominee may be appealed against in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Code. However, the appeal must reach BFF in writing and with grounds within three days of notification of the contested measure. The chairperson of the Appeals Committee, or their nominee, decides on such appeals as a single judge. Such decision are final.
- (3) A provisional measure may apply for up to 90 days. The duration of any such measure may be deducted from the final disciplinary sanction. The chairperson of the competent judicial body, or their nominee, may exceptionally extend the validity of a provisional measure by up to 90 days.

Chapter 2: Decision-making process

37. Convocation, rights of the parties, hearings, decisions, communications and confidentiality

- (1) As a general rule, there are no oral statements and the BFF judicial bodies decide on the basis of the file.
- (2) At the motivated request of one of the parties or at the discretion of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson, a hearing may be arranged to be held, to which the parties shall be summoned.

- (3) Unless this Code specifies otherwise, the parties are entitled to submit written statements, examine the case file and order copies of the case file before any decision is reached.
- (4) The BFF judicial bodies may hold hearings and take decisions in the absence of one or all of the parties.
- (5) If different proceedings are opened against the same club or individual, the competent judicial body may combine the cases and issue one comprehensive decision.
- (6) At any time prior to the meeting set up to decide the case by the relevant judicial body, a party may accept responsibility and request the BFF judicial bodies to impose a specific sanction. The BFF judicial bodies may decide on the basis of such request or render a decision which it considers appropriate in the context of this Code.
- (7) All communications concerning a club or individual (including notifications of proceedings against them and the issuing of the sections taken by the BFF judicial bodies) are addressed to the club concerned, which must then, if applicable, inform individual in person. All such communications by BFF or the BFF judicial bodies take the form of emails sent by the secretariat.

38. Decisions

- (1) Decisions are passed by a simple majority of the members present. If votes are equal, the chairperson has the casting vote.
- (2) The BFF judicial bodies may take decisions via personal meetings, telephone conference, video conference or any other similar method.
- (3) In principle, the BFF judicial bodies issue the terms of decisions without rounds, and only these terms of the decision are notified to the parties, who are informed that they have ten days from that notification to request in writing, a reasoned decision. Failure to make such a request results in the decision becoming final and binding and the parties being deemed to have waived their right to lodge an appeal.
- (4) A reasoned decision shall include at least:
 - (a) a brief summary of the facts, which does not need to include every single contention;
 - (b) The clause(s) infringed;
 - (c) The considerations that are relevant to the potential breach of the BFF regulations; and
 - (d) The criteria used to determine the possible sanction.
- (5) If the reasoned decision is requested within the time limit stipulated in clause 38 (3) above, the time limit for lodging an appeal begins only on notification of the reasons. Only the parties to which a decision is addressed can request the reasons.
- (6) Any appeal lodged before notification of the reasoned decision is regarded exclusively as a request for reasons.
- (7) The request for a reasoned decision does not affect the enforcement of the decision, which shall take effect as soon as it is notified, with the exception of orders to pay a sum of money.

- (8) The competent judicial body may rectify any mistakes in calculation or any other obvious errors in the decision at any time.

Chapter 3: Disciplinary Committee

39. Commencement of proceedings

- (1) Proceedings are opened by the secretariat of the Disciplinary Committee:
- (a) on the basis of match officials' reports;
 - (b) where a protest has been lodged;
 - (c) at the request of the BFF Executive Committee;
 - (d) at the request of the integrity expert;
 - (e) at the request of the Ethics Committee;
 - (f) on the basis of a report filed by a BFF body, committee, instance or by the BFF administration;
 - (g) on the basis of clause 16 of this Code;
 - (h) on the basis of documents received from a public authority;
 - (i) *ex officio*.
- (2) Any person or body may report any conduct that is considered incompatible with BFF regulations to the BFF judicial bodies. Such complaints shall be made in writing. BFF may initiate investigations and appoint an integrity expert to investigate any such complaint.

40. Jurisdiction

- (1) The Disciplinary Committee is competent to sanction any breach of BFF regulations which does not come under the jurisdiction of another body.
- (2) The Disciplinary Committee is, in particular, responsible for:
- (a) sanctioning serious infringements which have escaped the match officials' attention;
 - (b) rectifying obvious errors in the referee's disciplinary decisions;
 - (c) extending the duration of a match suspension incurred automatically by a sending-off;
 - (d) pronouncing additional sanctions.
- (3) If deemed appropriate, the chairperson or their deputy may refer a case, regardless of the matter involved, directly to the Appeal Committee for consideration and decision.

41. Jurisdiction of chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee

- (1) The chairperson can rule alone as a single judge and may delegate its functions to another member of the Disciplinary Committee. In particular, the chairperson or its nominee acting as a single judge may take the following decisions with respect to any of the following matters:
- (a) urgent or protest cases;
 - (b) whether disciplinary proceedings should be initiated, suspended or terminated;
 - (c) Suspending a person for up to five matches or for up to three months;
 - (d) Pronouncing a fine of up to Nu. 50,000/-.
 - (e) Extending a sanction;

- (f) Setting disputes arising from objections to members of the Disciplinary Committee;
 - (g) Issuing, altering and annulling provisional measures;
 - (h) Cases involving matters under clause 16 of this Code;
 - (i) Cases involving order and security at matches; and/or
 - (j) Unplayed or abandoned matches.
- (2) The secretariat, under the guidance of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson, is responsible for assigning the relevant cases to single judges. The proceedings before a single judge shall be conducted in accordance with this Code.

42. Closure of proceedings

Proceedings may be closed when:

- (a) the parties reach an agreement;
- (b) a party is under insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings pursuant to the relevant national law and is legally unable to comply with an order;
- (c) a club is disaffiliated from BFF;
- (d) the alleged violation has not been proven.

Chapter 4: Appeal Committee

43. Jurisdiction

- (1) The Appeal Committee is competent to decide on appeals against any of the Disciplinary Committee's decisions that BFF regulations do not declare as final or referable to another body, as well as o cases referred by the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee or their deputy for consideration and decision.
- (2) The Appeal Committee is also competent to decide appeals against devisions of the Ethnic Committee, as set out in the FIFA Code of Ethics (this is an interim arrangement until a BFF Code of Ethics is adopted).
- (3) Any party intending to lodge an appeal must inform the Appeal Committee of its intention to appeal in writing within three days of notification of the grounds of the decision. Such intention may be lodged with the Competitions Department (which shall serve as the interim secretariat to the Appeal Committee).
- (4) Within five days of expiry of the time limit for the declaration of appeal, the appellant must file, in writing, the appeal brief. This must contain the appellant's requests, an account of the facts, evidence, a list of the proposed witnesses (with a brief summary of their expected testimony) and the appellant's conclusions. The appellant is not authorized to produce further written submissions or evidence after the deadline for filing the appeal brief.
- (5) In urgent cases and during final competitions, the chairperson may shorten the deadline for the submission of the above-mentioned documents.

44. Admissibility of appeals

- (1) An appeal may be lodged with the Appeal Committee against any decision passed by the Disciplinary Committee, unless the disciplinary measure issued is:
 - (a) A warning;

- (b) A reprimand;
 - (c) A suspension of up to two matches or of up to two months;
 - (d) A fine upto 50,000/- imposed on a club or of up to Nu. 30,000/- in other cases;
 - (e) Decisions passed in compliance with clause 16 of this Code.
- (2) Only the reasoned decision can be appealed against.
- (3) If the Disciplinary Committee combines disciplinary measures, an appeal is admissible if at least one of the disciplinary measures imposed exceeds the above limits. In this case, the subsequent instance(s) will only be entitled to examine the sanctions that exceed the above limit.

45. Standing to appeal

- (1) Anyone who has been party to proceedings before the Disciplinary Committee may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Committee, provided this party has a legally protected interest in filing the appeal.
- (2) Clubs may appeal against decisions sanctioning their players, officials or members.

46. Deliberations and decisions

- (1) The Appeal Committee deliberates behind closed doors.
- (2) Within the framework of the appeal proceedings, the Appeal Committee has full power to review the facts and the law.
- (3) The decision by the Appeal Committee upholds, amends or overturns the contested decision. In the case of a fundamental mistrial, the Appeal Committee can overturn the contested decision and refer the case back to the Disciplinary Committee for reassessment.
- (4) If the accused is the only party to have lodged an appeal, the sanction cannot be increased.
- (5) If new disciplinary offenses come to light while appeal proceedings are pending, they may be judged in the course of the same proceedings. In such a situation, the sanction can be increased.

47. Jurisdiction of the chairperson ruling alone

- (1) The chairperson (or in its absence, the deputy chairperson) of the Appeal committee may take the following decisions alone:
- (a) on a preliminary procedural issue related to the appeal, including the admissibility of the appeal;
 - (b) in urgent or protest cases;
 - (c) on an appeal against a decision to the extend a sanction;
 - (d) to resolve disputes arising from objections to members of the Appeal Committee;
 - (e) on appeals against provisional decisions passed by the chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee;
 - (f) issue, alter and annul provisional measures;

- (g) in cases where the sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee is a fine of up to Nu. 50,000/- or a suspension from playing or carrying out a function for up to five matches or a period of time up to 12 months; and/or
- (h) at the request of the parties.

48. Effects of appeal

- (1) The appeal does not have a suspensive effect except with regard to orders to pay a sum of money.
- (2) The chairperson, the deputy chairperson or, in their absence, the longest serving member available, may, on receipt of a reasoned request, award a stay of execution.

IV.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

49. Expulsion and match suspension

- (1) A player who has been sent off shall stay in the team dressing room. The player may be allowed to sit in the stands, provided their integrity and security are safeguarded and are no longer wearing their football equipment;
- (2) A player who is serving a match suspension:
 - (a) may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided their security and integrity are safeguarded;
 - (b) shall not enter the dressing room or technical area, before or during the match, attend the warm-up, or sit on the team bench. After the final whistle, a suspended player may join their team in the dressing room;
- (3) An official who has been sent off or is serving a match suspension:
 - (a) may be allowed to sit in the stands, but not in the immediate vicinity of the field of play, provided their security and integrity are safeguarded;
 - (b) shall not enter the dressing room, tunnel or technical area, or communicate with or contact any person involved in the match- in particular, players or technical staff- by any means whatsoever prior to or during the match;
- (4) A sending-off automatically incurs suspension from the subsequent match. The BFF judicial bodies may impose additional match suspensions and other disciplinary measures.
- (5) The automatic match suspension and any additional match suspension must be served, even if the sending-off is imposed in a match that is later abandoned, annulled, forfeited and/or replayed.
- (6) If a match is abandoned, cancelled or forfeited, a suspension is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended player belongs is not responsible for the circumstances that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeit of the match.
- (7) A match suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a match is retroactively forfeited because a player took part in a match despite being ineligible. This also applies to the match suspension imposed on the player who took part in the match despite being ineligible.

50. Carrying over cautions

- (1) If a person receives a caution in two separate matches of the same BFF competition, they are automatically suspended from the next match in that competition. Such suspensions must be served before any other suspension. The Disciplinary Committee may exceptionally depart from or amend this rule before the start of a particular competition. Any such decision reached by the Disciplinary Committee is final and binding.
- (2) Cautions received during one competition are not carried over to another competition.
- (3) If a person is sent off as a result of a direct red card, any other caution they have previously received in the same match is upheld.

51. Carrying over match suspensions

- (1) As a general rule, every match suspension (of players and other persons) is carried over from one round to the next in the same competition.
- (2) In no case may match suspension resulting from several cautions issued to a player in different matches of the same competition be carried over to another competition.

IV.

SPECIAL PROVISION

52. Recognition of FIFA and AFC statutes and legal instruments.

(1) The BFF judicial body shall be competent to invoke provisions from FIFA and AFC statutes and legal instruments should this Code fall short of provisions not already covered herein.