

Federation Competition Regulations

Northern Regional Football League



1. Reference to General Provisions

These regulations are specific competition regulations governing aspects of play and procedure as allowed under Section 4 of the Federation Competition Regulations, Senior and 19th Grade Men, Senior Women, General Provisions.

The General Provisions shall apply to NRFL as well as these specific competition regulations, with the proviso (for NRFL competitions only) that where there is a contradiction between the two, these specific regulations shall take precedence.

2. Participation

Participation in the NRFL shall be open to all clubs within the boundaries of Federations One, Two and Three as specified in NZ Football Rules, that are qualified to play in Federation competition, subject to the granting annually of any further sanctions or permissions required in NZF or Federation Rules.

An area or regional team from within a Federation may participate in the NRFL only if it is the sole representative of that area, subject to the approval of both the home Federation in which the team is based and AFF as competition manager.

As a condition of entry all clubs and teams that participate in the NRFL shall abide by these specific competition regulations, as set down or amended from time to time by AFF, and AFF may at its discretion create and obtain a signed agreement from each club agreeing to the conditions of participation in the NRFL in any season.

Clubs wishing to participate in the NRFL for any season are required to apply to AFF to enter, on the requisite form which may be prescribed by AFF from time to time, on or before a date to be set and advised by AFF. A club should confirm at that point the club's ability and desire to retain their team's or teams' grading based on finishing position in the previous season's competition.

AFF may at its absolute discretion fill vacancies in any divisions, or accept entries from clubs after the closing date advised as above.

3. Advisory Group

AFF shall set up and facilitate the regular meeting of an Advisory Group, chaired by the CEO of AFF, and additionally consisting of interests in the NRFL as follows:

- Two persons representing AFF men's clubs
- Two persons representing WBoPF clubs
- One person representing AFF women's clubs
- Two persons representing US1 clubs
- One person representing referee's groups

The Advisory Group shall consider any areas of operation and policy of the NRFL at its own discretion, or at the direction of AFF, and shall have powers of recommendation to the Board of AFF, with final decisions on all matters of policy and operation of the NRFL to remain with AFF as indicated in Section 1 of the AFF Federation Competition Regulations, Senior and 19th Grade Men, Senior Women, General Provisions.

4. Costs of Participation

AFF may set from time to time costs of participation, above and beyond the normal Federation and NZF levies which shall in any case be payable to a club's own Federation. AFF shall use its best endeavours to notify clubs of costs of participation and due dates by November 1st in the year preceding the season for which those costs shall be due, but such costs shall not be invalidated by a failure to meet this deadline.

AFF shall have the power to recover all such costs remaining unpaid beyond due dates, and to take any sanctions or impose restrictions on participation, including expulsion from the NRFL, that may be necessary to effect such recovery.

Clubs shall be required to confirm their participation, by way of pre-payment of referee and other costs as invoiced, by a date set and advised by AFF at its discretion. Clubs not meeting the deadline date for payment may be excluded from participation in the NRFL competition.

Clubs withdrawing from competition beyond the deadline date, whether or not payments due have been made, may be subject to sanctions as set out in Clause 16 of these Regulations.

5. NRFL Competitions

AFF shall at its sole discretion determine each season the composition of the NRFL leagues, including the number of divisions of men's and women's competitions, and the inclusion of any Reserve competitions.

No club or combination of clubs forming a regional team shall enter more than one team in any division of the NRFL. AFF may in its absolute discretion accept more than one entry from the same club in separate divisions of NRFL competition.

In the event of a vacancy in a division of NRFL competition AFF shall have the power to fill such a vacancy at its discretion.

AFF shall determine arrangements for the promotion and relegation of teams between the divisions in each NRFL competition each season. AFF shall use its best endeavours to inform clubs of these arrangements in advance of the first round of competition in each division, but failure to do so will not invalidate the arrangements.

AFF shall determine arrangements for the promotion and relegation of teams between the NRFL competition and respective Federation leagues each season. AFF shall use its best endeavours to inform clubs of these arrangements in advance of the first round of competition in each division, but failure to do so will not invalidate the arrangements.

AFF may at its absolute discretion split any division into two sections for the purposes of grading, easing travel or other circumstances which affect the running or continuance of that division, in which case the following shall apply:

- There shall be a play-off of the winners of each section to determine the division champion, and/or promotion to another division, and/or
- There shall be a play-off between the bottom two or four clubs, and/or those clubs plus clubs from a lower division, to determine placing in divisions of the following season's competition, if required.

AFF shall use its best endeavours to notify clubs of any alterations to the composition of the NRFL competition or any particular division for the following season no later than 30 September in the preceding year. Failure to meet this deadline shall not invalidate the power of AFF to make changes later than this date.

Any alteration to competition or divisions shall not normally deprive any team which has fulfilled all other requirements of these specific competition regulations the right to play in its graded division following any promotion or relegation during the previous season. However, AFF reserves the right to make such provisions and arrangements as it deems necessary and for whatever reason for the effective continuance of the NRFL or any division for any season which may override this principle.

6. Participation Criteria

AFF may set and publish from time to time participation criteria for each division of competition, to be appended to these specific participation criteria, which may differ from division to division, and which clubs must meet for their entry to that division to be accepted in any season.

Clubs not meeting participation criteria in any one season may at the absolute discretion of AFF be allowed to play in that competition, but may be subject to a signed agreement that any particular areas of non-compliance with the criteria will be addressed to the satisfaction of AFF within a specified time-period.

If clubs for any reason fall below participation criteria, or if any terms of an agreement as above are not met, then AFF shall have the power to determine any sanctions, including the continued participation of that club in the competition, or the declining of an application to join the NRFL.

7. Fixtures

Competition in all divisions of the NRFL competitions shall normally be played on a double-round robin basis, with each team facing all others once at home and once away. However, the AFF at its absolute discretion may vary this to effectively run or complete a competition or division.

Fixtures, venues and kick-off times shall be prepared and published by AFF in advance of the start of the season. Where scheduling on a home ground or a neutral ground consisting of artificial turf constructed and installed to the appropriate standards, both teams shall fulfil the fixture or be deemed to have defaulted. Artificial surfaces accepted for play in the NRFL competition shall be published in advance of each season by AFF, and no other artificial surface shall be included on this list without prior approval of AFF in consultation with the local Federation.

Matches shall be played at such time and on such grounds as may be directed by AFF, and both teams having not less than nine players present, must be prepared to commence the game no later than 10 minutes after the time set down for kick-off.

Any team not complying with this specific competition regulation, unless good cause can be demonstrated to AFF, shall be deemed to have defaulted the match.

Proposed postponement/abandonment of any match prior to kick-off, for any reason, shall be reported immediately to the AFF Competitions Manager, by the referee if present, or if no referee is present, by the home club.

If the match referee is not present, the AFF Competitions Manager may request that the match referee attend the ground to assess conditions, or where the match referee is not able to attend within a reasonable time, request of the NRFL Referee Administrator and/or the local referee appointments officer that a senior local referee attend the ground to assess conditions, and provide a verbal report back to the AFF Competitions Manager.

The above procedure shall be initiated with the traveling time of the away team in mind, such that the expense of wasted trips is avoided. Where a home club has in the opinion of the AFF Competitions Manager through lack of timely action contributed to an away team commencing or completing a journey and incurring unnecessary costs, the home club may be fined an amount commensurate with those costs and the fine be diverted to the away club to offset those costs.

The AFF Competitions Manager may:

- Confirm the match is abandoned, or
- Transfer the match to another venue on the same day at the same time, or
- By mutual agreement with the clubs and official involved, immediately reschedule the match to be played later on the same day, the next day or on another day.

Any match abandoned after kick-off, for any reason, shall be reported immediately to the AFF Competitions Manager, by the referee if present, or if no referee is present, by the home club. The Competitions Manager may decide that:

- The score at the time of the abandonment shall stand, or

- The match shall be awarded to one of the teams as a forfeit win with a recorded scoreline of 3-0, or
- The match shall be rescheduled to another date.

Matches not played for any reason other than forfeit can, with the written agreement of both clubs *and* AFF, be rescheduled to another date by mutual agreement. If no date can be mutually agreed (including by AFF) within 10 days after the date of the original fixture, AFF shall at its sole discretion reschedule the match at a suitable date, time and venue.

Standard match playing days and kick-off times shall be as follows:

- Men's Premier Division Saturday at 2.45pm
- Men's Premier Reserves Saturday at 12.30pm
- Men's First Division Saturday at 2.45pm
- Men's First Div Reserves Saturday at 12.30pm
- Women's Premier Division Sunday at 1.00pm

Regular and/or programmed changes to standard match day and/or kick-off time may be allowed at the request of the home club and with the permission of AFF, *prior* to the initial publication of fixtures for the season, as follows:

- Sunday fixtures - if the match is so scheduled, any mirrored reserve grade match shall *also* be moved, unless agreed by both teams *and* AFF.
- Friday evening fixtures - if the match is so scheduled, any mirrored reserve grade match shall *not* be moved, unless agreed by both teams *and* AFF.

Changes to individual fixtures *after* the initial publication of fixtures for the season may be requested by the home club, accompanied by the permission in writing of an authorised official the opposing club/team. AFF may in its sole discretion agree to the change.

Other changes to individual fixtures may be made at the sole discretion of the AFF Competitions Manager, not instigated by a club and not requiring permission in writing from the opposing club/team or club. Such changes shall ordinarily be made with notice to both clubs of at least 14 days. However, in exceptional circumstances or emergencies such a notice period may not be possible.

With the exception of matches rescheduled by AFF, requests for changes to fixtures, venues and kick-off times *not* accompanied by the permission in writing of an authorised official of the opposing team/club must be submitted to the AFF in writing not less than 14 days prior to the scheduled date of the fixture. Where the request is for a change to an already-rescheduled fixture, the request must be received by AFF not less than 5 days prior to the rescheduled date of the fixture. AFF may or may not accede to the request in their sole discretion, or may seek the cooperation of the opposing team/club

Any costs of night matches scheduled at the request of a club shall be borne by the club making the request. Any costs of night matches scheduled by AFF shall be borne by AFF, unless it is a match rescheduled at the request of a club, in which case the costs shall be borne by the club making the original request.

Teams may be required to play rescheduled fixtures at night at the direction of the AFF provided at least 10 days notice in writing is given to both clubs.

Changes to fixtures, venues and kick-off times for all matches shall be published by AFF not less than 5 days prior to the match, except where such changes are due to weather, poor pitch conditions or ground availability. All changes must be instigated by or have the approval of AFF.

8. Number of players per side

Teams shall have a maximum of 11 players on the field at any time and a minimum of 7 players. Should any team be reduced to less than 7 eligible players, whether through shortage or sending-off, the match shall be abandoned by the referee.

9. Duration of matches:

All NRFL Divisions 2 x 45 min halves plus half time of up to a maximum of 15 minutes, from whistle to whistle.

10. Substitutions

All NRFL Leagues

Up to 3 substitutes may be used from up to 5 players named on the team card, but requiring the permission of the referee, and provided that:

- i) the player leaves the field completely before the substitute enters the field
- ii) substitutions are made during a break in play
- iii) players always enter and leave from the half-way line.

11. Player Eligibility

Clubs shall ensure that a player is eligible to play and is properly registered with their club's own Federation, and that all necessary clearances from previous clubs are obtained from the club and via other Federations or FIFA member countries as required in NZF Regulations (including provisions for players paying under any loan agreement) and covered in the Federation Competition Regulations, Senior and 19th Grade Men, Senior Women, General Provisions, *prior to taking the field.*

AFF Clubs only: Any player by age 15th Grade or below requires dispensation from AFF to play for an AFF club in NRFL competition. Clubs shall request dispensation from AFF in writing and accompanied by a letter or a signature from the parent or guardian of the player supporting the dispensation request, and such dispensation must be granted prior to the player taking the field. If such dispensation is required but has not been granted, the player is ineligible to play.

Clubs from other Federations should check with their home Federation for any specific dispensation or eligibility requirements for young players.

Where clubs are found to have played an ineligible player the following sanction will apply:

- The offending team shall forfeit any points gained, goals scored by that team shall also be forfeited, goals against shall stand
- The opposing team shall be awarded the points for the match, goals scored by that team shall stand, goals against cancelled
- In the event of a scoreless draw, a 1-0 win shall be recorded in favour of the non-offending team.
- If both teams are found to have played ineligible players, the match result shall be cancelled, any sanctions imposed by AFF, and the match may be replayed at the discretion of AFF
- The offending club(s) shall incur any Ineligible/Unregistered player fine as set down in the Schedule of Fees published by AFF.

No club may have more than three guest players (as defined in NZ Football Regulation 5) recorded on a match information sheet in any one match.

There is no restriction on movement between NRFL men's first and reserve teams in either division, *within* the NRFL competition.

There is no restriction on movement between an AFF club's NRFL first or reserves team and AFF competitions during a season with the following exceptions:

- If a club's NRFL team(s) has/have completed its competition (including any play-off matches if applicable) or has/have no game scheduled for any particular weekend, then no more than three NRFL players (first team *or* reserves) may play down in an AFF competition team in any one match, and in any case no lower than the next team down. An NRFL player is defined as one who has taken the field in two-thirds or more (by percentage) of NRFL matches at first team *or* reserves level to that point in that season.

- For AFF senior knockout cup competitions (for which reserve grade teams are not eligible), no more than three NRFL players, defined as someone who has taken the field in two-thirds or more (by percentage) of first or reserve team matches to that point in that season, may play in the AFF knockout cup fixture, and none who have played in an NRFL first team fixture in the 17 days immediately prior to the fixture.

Clubs outside AFF should check with their own Federations for additional Federation regulations that apply to movements between NRFL and Federation competitions.

Eligibility for participation in play-off matches or series, held either at the end of a season or at the start of the following season, is described in the section on Play-Off Competitions.

12. Match Balls

Three superior quality size 5 FIFA-approved match balls shall be provided by the home team, fit for play as determined by the referee. The match balls must be delivered to the referee not less than 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the match.

AFF may from time to time enter into commercial arrangements with a third party that includes a requirement to specify the brand and model of ball to be used in one or more Division of the NRFL, whether or not it is provided free of charge. In these circumstances AFF reserves the right to make use of such ball compulsory within the scope of these specific competition regulations.

13. Referees

A match official or officials will be appointed by a referee administrator through AFF to each NRFL league match.

In the event of the referee so appointed not attending, the officials of the two teams shall make every endeavour, including contacting the AFF Competitions Manager and/or the NRFL referee administrator, to mutually appoint or have appointed another person to referee the match. Any person so appointed shall have the same powers and authorities as an official appointed by the AFF.

14. Goals, Markings, Technical Areas

Approved goals, and marked grounds with corner flags in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game Law 1 must be supplied by the home team and must be in place before the scheduled kick-off time. Nets are mandatory for all NRFL matches.

All grounds on which NRFL matches are played must also meet the ground marking requirements as noted for Technical Areas in the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Only the players and officials named on the match information sheet handed to the referee prior to the start of the game will be permitted in the Technical Area. All other people will be requested to leave the Technical Area. Sufficient seating must be provided inside the Technical Area for all those named on the match information sheet, up to the permitted maximum of nine people.

15. Uniform Clashes

If in the opinion of the referee there is a clash between the registered colours of the two teams, the away team (ie second-named team) in the fixture must provide a change of the item(s) of strip (shirt, shorts and/or socks) that does not clash with the home team's registered colours. Failing to provide such a change, or playing in unregistered colours that creates a clash, will incur a fine for Incorrect Strip as set out in the AFF Schedule of Fees.

Home teams must not deviate from the colours notified to AFF and via any NRFL handbook to all other teams. Away teams will be deemed to have complied with this regulation if they arrive with a strip that does not clash with the home team's colours as noted in the handbook. It shall then be the responsibility of the home team to revert to their published colours or find an alternate strip that does not clash with the away team.

The referee will be the sole judge of whether a clash requiring a change of items of a team strip exists.

16. Sponsor Advertising on Playing Shirts

Players shirts (including goalkeepers) may carry advertising subject to the following conditions:

- There is no conflict with the interest of the sponsors of the NRFL
- The sponsorship does not conflict with aims and objectives and the interests of NZF and the federations
- Designs have been submitted to AFF for approval and AFF (where necessary in consultation with NZF and other federations) have approved the design in writing
- The dimensions of the advertising do not exceed those outlined below
- Goalkeepers shirts must not carry different advertising to the rest of the players' shirts.

All new strips procured by clubs must meet this regulation. Where playing strips with advertising are already in existence and are proposed to be used in the 2010 season though it is thought they may fall outside the regulation, clubs should seek temporary approval for the existing shirts from AFF, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

Shirts may have the following advertising and logos:

- One NRFL competition logo if such is designed and in use, not exceeding 100 sq cms
- One logo of the NRFL competition sponsor, not exceeding 100 sq cms
- One club badge or emblem, not exceeding 100sq cms
- One example of the manufacturers trademark or name, not exceeding 20 sq cms
- The name or logo of the club sponsor or sponsors, which must be on the front and/or back of the shirt as follows:
 - Front – not more than 450 sq cms in area, not more than 30 cms across and not more than 10 cms high
 - Back – not more than 300 sq cms in area, not more than 30 cms across and not more than 10 cms high.
 - One sponsor may appear on front and back, or two different sponsors, one in each place
 - (Areas shall be calculated measuring around the outline of the advertising including spaces between words and between elements of the logo and wording)
- Shirts may not carry advertising for alcohol or tobacco, nor anything connected to those two industries, nor anything which may be regarded as distasteful or ethically or morally undesirable
- The colour and design of advertising may be taken into account by referees in determining any colour clash, and may enforce a change of strip in their discretion where advertising is a factor.

17. Defaults

Defaults must be notified in writing to the AFF Competitions Manager by the Club Secretary no later than 12.00 noon on the Friday preceding the fixture so that the ground may be used for an alternate fixture and any referee allocation can be changed.

Clubs may be fined for defaults not notified before this deadline in accordance with the Schedule of Fees published from time to time by the AFF.

Any team defaulting after the deadline, including on match day, will have a 3-0 win recorded to the opposition, providing that they in their turn have complied with these regulations. The AFF Competitions Manager should immediately be informed of a default on match day.

It is recommended that defaulting teams also advise their opposition as a matter of courtesy.

Where a team claims a match by default it must submit a properly completed match information sheet showing the names of the players present and prepared to play, and the grounds on which the match is claimed. If the match referee is also present the facts should

be substantiated by his or her signature, or if not and if otherwise possible by an official or member of the opposing club.

Any team defaulting two games consecutively, or three in a season, may be further fined by AFF and will be deemed to have withdrawn from the relevant competition.

Teams withdrawing from NRFL competition for any reason following confirmation of entry and with or without pre-payment of any fees due having been made, or at any stage during the season, may be subject to further sanctions at the sole discretion of AFF. Such sanctions may include, but are not limited to, a fine of a maximum of \$5000 (first team) and \$1000 (reserves) (\$6000 for both first team and reserves), and/or a time restriction on re-applying to enter the NRFL. Such sanctions may be imposed en-bloc should a Federation withdraw teams under its jurisdiction from NRFL competition.

18. Misconducts, Cautions and Expulsions

NZ Football Regulations, and the provisions of Section 5 of the AFF Federation Competition Regulations, Senior and 19th Grade Men, Senior Women, General Provisions, concerning misconducts of players, coaches and officials, apply to all NRFL matches.

Misconducts, cautions and expulsions shall be referred to a player's home club Federation and will be dealt with under each Federation's own disciplinary procedures.

Any players under suspension shall be ineligible to take part in any matches or to act as a club or team official during the term of the suspension, and may not be named as a team official on the match information sheet nor occupy a place in the technical area.

Serious misconducts or incident reports, or incidents involving players or officials from more than one team, will be dealt with by a joint NRFL Judicial Panel formed for the purpose of hearing such cases, involving representatives of AFF and the federation of each player or team involved. For teams within AFF, a representative of at least one other federation will be involved in any NRFL judicial process.

19. Protests, Disputes and Appeals

NZ Football Rules and Regulations, Federation Rules and Regulations, and the provisions of Section 6 of the AFF Federation Competition Regulations, Senior and 19th Grade Men, Senior Women, General Provisions, concerning protests, disputes and appeals, apply to all NRFL matches.

20. Match Information Sheets

A completed NRFL match information sheet is to be filled out correctly and in clear and legible letters by each team in an NRFL fixture, including reserves games, listing the given names and family names of eleven starting players and up to five substitutes, plus up to four additional coaching, managerial or medical staff authorized to be within the technical area. (All other personnel associated with the team are to be outside the technical area and behind all other crowd control measures.)

Completed NRFL match information sheets shall be handed to the referee no later than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement of the game.

In the event of a player entered on a match information sheet subsequently not taking part in the match, the onus of deleting the player's name prior to kick off shall be on the officials of that player's own club.

At the conclusion of the game the referee shall transfer information on the following to the match information sheet:

- The shirt number of the scorer and the time of each goal,
- The shirt numbers and times of substitutions onto and off the field,
- The shirt number and time of each caution or sending-off

The referee shall sign both sheets and hand them back to the respective teams after agreeing the final score, after the game. The respective coaches shall complete the player of the day rankings for the *opposing* team and the club shall sign and return their own sheet to the AFF office by fax or in person no later than midday Monday after a weekend fixture, or midday the day following a midweek fixture.

Each team is responsible for its own match information sheet, and that the information for which they are signing has been correctly entered. It is recommended that clubs retain a photocopy of the match information sheet prior to sending to AFF.

Any match information sheet that is illegible or incomplete, or that is deliberately completed with obviously false names, will be treated as not returned. Teams not returning match information sheets in time or in accordance with these specific competition regulations will be subject to sanction as set out in the AFF Schedule of Fees as published by AFF from time to time. A match information sheet will be deemed incomplete and the sanction imposed where the only portion not completed is the nomination of opposing players of the day.

21. Determination of Competitions

Three points shall be awarded for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a loss.

Defaults shall be recorded as a 3-0 win to the non-offending team. If both teams are deemed to have defaulted, a 'no result' shall be recorded unless the AFF Competitions Manager decides to reschedule the game.

Following any grading rounds or preliminary competitions, the team with the highest points at the end of competition in each league shall be declared the league champion or, if a further play-off series is to follow, (see 22. below) minor premiers. If teams are equal on match points, goal difference shall be used to determine the winner, and if still level the team with most goals scored will be declared the winner.

If still level then head-to-head results of matches between the teams shall be used to determine a winner, using first match points won, and then, if still level, aggregate scores over the matches. Any play-off matches between the two shall not count in this calculation.

If two or more teams cannot be separated as above then the team's disciplinary record shall be the determining factor, with yellow cards counting as one point and red cards as three points. (Sending off for a second yellow card offence will count two points). The team with the lowest total points shall be deemed the winner.

If two or more teams cannot be separated using any of the provisions above, then the teams will remain tied unless it is necessary to establish final placings for promotion, relegation or any other reason, in which case AFF shall at its absolute discretion establish final placings using an alternative method.

In the event of a team being withdrawn from any division at any round during competition, then results, points and goal statistics shall be adjusted as though the club concerned was never involved in that division. This regulation shall apply even if one full round robin has already been completed.

22. Results

Both teams shall text to the AFF Competitions Manager and also to the AFF Communications Manager not less than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the match the half time and full time score and the first and family names of all goalscorers.

Clubs failing to comply with this regulation may be subject to late results penalties as set out in the AFF Schedule of Fees as published from time to time.

AFF shall be responsible for placing results on the AFF competitions website, and for communicating results to relevant media.

Clubs are invited to be in contact with AFF to add relevant local media to results circulation, and to discuss other media relationships where clubs and AFF may be able to coordinate promotion of the NRFL competitions.

23. Play-Off Competitions

At its absolute discretion, the AFF may organize play-off competitions to determine the final composition of the NRFL or a division for the following season, or as a finals series to determine the winner of a division or competition.

Where such a competition is between three or more teams, AFF shall announce specific regulations that will govern the playing and determination of the play-off competition.

Where such competition is between two teams, the play-off shall be organized as herein:

- Either two matches shall be played, with each team entitled to a 'home' fixture, or one match shall be played at a neutral ground, or with a coin-toss or other method used to determine the home team
- If played prior to the commencement of a season, unless otherwise agreed to between the clubs and advised to and agreed with AFF not less than 14 days prior to the first game, play-off matches must be played within the period no more than 30 days and no less than 10 days prior to the first day of the normal competition
- If played following the conclusion of a winter season, unless otherwise agreed to between the clubs and advised to and agreed with AFF not less than 14 days prior to the first game, matches must be played within the period no more than 30 days after the final day of the normal competition
- If two matches are to be played, a coin toss shall determine which team has the choice of their home fixture being played first or second, the toss being arranged at a time and place by AFF, with a representative of each club invited to be present
- The higher-graded team shall have the right to call, or if teams are of equal status (eg both winners of Federation leagues) then the first team in alphabetical order shall call.
- Each home club shall provide a suitable venue and pitch to be approved by AFF at its absolute discretion, otherwise a neutral venue and pitch will be chosen by AFF at which the match shall be played
- The winner of the play-off series as determined below shall play in the higher division and the loser in the lower competition
- If one match is to be played, the game shall consist of two periods of 45 minutes, followed by two periods of 15 minutes of extra-time, followed if necessary by a penalty competition as prescribed in FIFA Laws of the Game
- If two matches are to be played, points shall be awarded three for a win, one for a draw, no points for a loss. The team with the higher number of points shall be the winner
- If after two matches the teams are level on points, the team with the higher goal difference shall be the winner
- If still level, the goal difference shall be recalculated with goals scored by the away team in each game counting double
- If still level at the completion of normal playing time of the second game, extra time of 30 minutes in two equal halves shall be played. Away goals in extra time do not count double.
- If still level at the completion of extra time, a penalty shoot-out shall be conducted under the FIFA Laws of the Game to determine the winner.

For teams in a play-off competition the following additional regulations shall apply:

- For play-offs held at the commencement of the subsequent season any player registered with the respective clubs up to and including 30 September of the previous year is eligible to participate in the play-off competition
- Any new player registered with one of the clubs after 1 October of the previous year and that takes the field in any play-off match at the commencement of the subsequent season must remain registered with that club for a minimum period of 8 weeks from the last date of participation in the play-off competition

- For play-off competitions which follow immediately on from or are part of the winter season, any player registered with the club prior to July 2nd in that season is eligible to participate in the play-off competition. Players registered after October 1st will not be eligible to play even where the play-off series for any reason is not concluded until after that date
- Clubs must submit to AFF no less than 5 days in advance of the first or only play-off game a squad list of 18 eligible players to be used for the entire play-off competition. AFF will forward copies of all squad lists to all competing clubs prior to the start of the first match.
- Any changes to the squad list must be in writing to AFF no later than noon prior to the match, and must be agreed in writing by AFF in return before a player takes the field
- Match Information Sheet and Substitute regulations as above shall apply.

24. Obligations and Responsibilities of Participating Clubs

Clubs shall operate on match days under Law, under any bye-laws of Territorial Land Authorities on whose land their grounds and premises sit, under FIFA Fair Play and under the NZF Code of Conduct.

Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, coaches, officials and spectators. Home clubs are also responsible for the conduct of any others present at the match, whether or not such persons are directly connected to the club.

In particular clubs are reminded of their duties to manage as directed by such instruments as are named above and any others that may apply the sale and consumption of alcohol at their grounds.

It is the duty of the referee to order the removal of offenders by officials of the home club if he or she feels that the consumption of alcohol is affecting his or her control of the match. The referee may stop the match until such offenders have been removed, and the incident shall be reported after the match to the AFF Competitions Manager.

If the match, once stopped, is abandoned for any reason relating to the consumption of alcohol, the matter must *immediately* be reported to the AFF Competitions Manager. The matter will be passed on the offending club's own Federation for such action as it sees appropriate.

25. Match Day Manager

Clubs shall nominate for each home game a match day manager, who shall be responsible for liaison with opposing teams and with match officials, and for the overall management of the match on the day.

The match day manager shall make him or herself known to all parties on their arrival, and be the person sought by them should they have any requirements or requests of the home club at any time during their visit.

The match day manager shall also be the first point of contact for emergency services if required, for the removal of unruly spectators if required by the referee, and for reference in any instances requiring the filing of an incident report by a match official or by either club.

The match day manager must be able to be readily and quickly identified, and be available to act decisively and with the authority of the club to meet reasonable requests and to control any incidents. Any incidents of note should be reported to the AFF Competitions Manager on the appropriate form.

At the discretion of the home club, the designated match day manager may be identified by easily-recognised and distinctive clothing.