



REFEREEING EXPERTS WORKSHOP REPORT

25 - 26 APRIL 2017 | KUALA LUMPUR



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25-26 April, 2017 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CONTENTS

04

Introduction

09

Workshop
highlights

06

Representatives
overview

13

Feedback and
proposals

08

Workshop approach
and structure

14

Workshop
conclusions

INTRODUCTION

The development of world refereeing took centre stage in Asia in April 2017 as the leaders of world refereeing gathered for the inaugural Refereeing Experts Workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The two-day workshop, opened by AFC General Secretary Dato' Windsor John, aimed to understand the various refereeing strategies currently employed by all six Confederations and FIFA, as well as to identify opportunities for closer collaboration. The forum offered great possibilities for progress through sharing and exchanging of ideas, and learning from the collective experiences worldwide.

Referees department heads and representatives from all six Confederations as well as AFC Referees Committee Deputy Chairman Hany Taleb B S Al-Raeesi, FIFA Head of Refereeing Massimo Busacca and FIFA Referees Committee Chairman Pierluigi Collina were present to add their expertise to the discussions.

This report provides an overview of administrative and operational aspects in world refereeing and outlines development programmes and latest initiatives devised to continue elevating the standards of match officials.





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AIM & INTRODUCTION

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REPRESENTATIVES



THE FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (FIFA)

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is the international football governing body, overseeing the six Confederations and in charge of organising and promoting major football tournaments. Founded in 1904, FIFA is based in Zurich and supports 211 Member Associations with the primary objective “to improve the game of football constantly and promote it globally in the light of its unifying, educational, cultural and humanitarian values, particularly through youth and development programmes”.

Representatives:

FIFA Referees Committee Chairman
Pierluigi Collina

FIFA Head of Refereeing
Massimo Busacca

THE ASIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION (AFC)

Since 1954, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is the ruling body of football in Asia, consisting of 46 Member Associations and one Associate Member Association - The Northern Mariana Islands. In addition to developing and regulating the game, upholding the integrity and laws of the game, boosting grassroots and youth football and conducting top-level competitions, the AFC works closely with its Member Associations and key stakeholders to bring to life its objectives under its Vision and Mission for the future of Asian football.

Representatives:

AFC Referees Committee Deputy Chairman
Hany Taleb B S Al-Raeesi

AFC Director of Referees
Shamsul Maidin

CONFÉDÉRATION AFRICAINE DE FOOTBALL (CAF)

The Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) is the biggest of the six Confederations under the umbrella of FIFA. Established in 1957, CAF currently supports 57 Associations, 55 full Members and Zanzibar and Réunion Island as Associates. CAF leads continental, national and club competitions and controls regulations and media rights for those events.

Representative:

CAF Referees Assistant Manager

Hana Abdelsattar



THE CONFEDERATION OF NORTH, CENTRAL AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL (CONCACAF)

Formed in 1961, the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) is the game's governing body in North America, Central America and the Caribbean regions, comprising 41 Member Associations. CONCACAF manages competitions and offers technical and administrative training courses, while also actively promoting and developing football.

Representatives:

CONCACAF Director of Refereeing

Brian Hall

FIFA / CONCACAF Technical Instructor

Peter Prendergast

CONFEDERACIÓN SUDAMERICANA DE FÚTBOL (CONMEBOL)

The Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol (CONMEBOL) is the oldest of the six Confederations: it was formed in 1916. Located in Luque, Paraguay, CONMEBOL governs 10 Member Associations across the region and is responsible for the running of major South American competitions.

Representative:

CONMEBOL Referees Committee Member

Alberto Tejada

OCEANIA FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION (OFC)

Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) was inaugurated in 1966, acting as the umbrella organisation of the national football associations within Oceania. Responsible for promoting the game in the territory, OFC has 11 member associations which it supports financially and logistically through various programmes.

Representative:

OFC Technical Consultant

Neil Poloso

THE UNION OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS (UEFA)

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is the governing body of European football, representing 55 National Associations across Europe. Founded in 1954, UEFA works with and acts on behalf of Europe's National Associations and other stakeholders in the game to boost football and strengthen its position as the world's most popular sport.

Representatives:

UEFA Head of Refereeing Services

Chris Wild

UEFA Refereeing Officer

Hugh Dallas

WORKSHOP APPROACH AND STRUCTURE



The event programme allocated each Confederation an introductory session, followed by a round of questions and answers, each lasting 20 minutes.

Guidelines and suggested topics were agreed with the representatives prior to the workshop in order to facilitate a good event flow and achieve the goal of addressing current practices and identifying opportunities for further cooperation.

Main topics discussed

- Organisational structure
- Departmental structure
- Referees Committee composition
- Referees, instructors and assessors panels
- Annual activities
- Annual budget
- Appointment process
- Development programmes
- National and club competitions
- Competition preparation
- Supportive systems

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Based on the discussions, the experts recognised a wide range of common practices and procedures. Refereeing organisations inputs and areas of concerns are detailed below.

DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

The majority of the organisations have an established refereeing department with similar duties and responsibilities, committed to fulfilling specific continent-wide strategic plans. Overall, the duties are discernibly distributed among administration and technical areas, and matters overseen by the referees committees.

A significant difference in manpower capacity was acknowledged, and in some instances, resulting in staff being overloaded with work.

ANNUAL BUDGET

Most of the experts highlighted concerns about financial restraints and insufficient budget to plan and carry out development activities.

REFEREES, INSTRUCTORS AND ASSESSORS PANELS

All six Confederations have defined clear categories of referees, from the youngest to the elite groups. Generally, all of them benefit from a stable panel of referee instructors and referee assessors —also known as observers.

Most of the experts identified and agreed the shortage of women match officials was one of the main areas of concern, alongside the quantity and quality of referee assessors. The organisations are working to strengthen this area by revising the selection criteria and through various development programmes.

Likewise, issues related to activities at the national level were addressed for instance, some of the Member Associations lacked a referees department or quality control processes for the FIFA referees list.



DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

All continental referees departments have designed tailor-made education programmes for referees, assistant referees, futsal and beach soccer referees, instructors and assessors.

Benefiting from the legacy of the FIFA Referee Assistance Programme (RAP), the course contents and supporting resources are uniform and consistent throughout the globe. Thus, all Confederations have or plan to have online training platforms and produce their own teaching materials following similar procedures: video analysis of competition matches, collection and database of incident footage, review of incident footage, categorisation of video footage and display of final materials in the form of interactive application.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

AFC Referee Academy

The AFC Referee Academy is scheduled to open in the later stages of 2017 and it will be based at AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The academy will focus on the AFC's objective of increasing the number of AFC referees at the world-class level and extending development support to the AFC Member Associations.

Talent development as well as identifying and preparing potential referees for the AFC elite referees panel will also be one of the key tasks of the academy.

CONCACAF Program of Refereeing Excellence (PORE)

The 2017 ground-breaking edition of the Program of Refereeing Excellence (PORE), supported by the Mexican Football Federation (FMF), provided 14 referees from 13 CONCACAF Member Associations with an opportunity to be trained by professional Mexican referees and FIFA instructors and officiate matches in the FMF's lower divisions.

The programme comprises two four-week sessions corresponding to the introductory and certification courses respectively.

CONMEBOL Excellence Centre of South America Refereeing

Complementing the current development programmes, CONMEBOL plans to launch an Excellence Centre of South America Refereeing.

UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE)

Since its launch in September 2010, the UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) training programme educates young referees and assistant referees who show potential to become FIFA officials. Held once every two years, all CORE courses include a ten-day introductory session, followed by an eight-day consolidation course, both

held on separate occasions. Notably, the officials are given the opportunity to officiate at matches in Switzerland and neighbouring France, gathering crucial experience.

COMPETITION PREPARATION

Similar preparation prior and during competition was described by all the Confederations and FIFA.

SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS

Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) system

UEFA conceived and introduced the Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) system for top competitions in the 2009/2010 season.

The AFC has approved the implementation of the AAR system in the AFC U-23 Championship China 2018 and the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 and in the 2017 club competitions from the quarter-final stage.

Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system

As part of the FIFA Quality Programme, FIFA initiated the experimentation phase of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system in 2016 when it was used for the first time at the FIFA Club World Cup in Japan. Video assistant referees will be appointed for 2017 competitions, including the upcoming FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017.







FEEDBACK AND PROPOSALS

Various opportunities for closer collaboration were proposed by FIFA and the Confederations at the concluding session of the Refereeing Experts Workshop. The attendees also provided feedback, recommending future actions to address the areas of concern summarised in this report.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

- Exchange programmes based on the existing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs);
- Exchange programmes between CAF and the AFC in terms of youth development;
- Exchange programmes between UEFA and AFC staff;
- Instructors to observe other Confederations' competitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Referees Committees composition to be based on refereeing experts;
- Increased involvement by the Confederations in the selection process of referees for the FIFA list;
- Confederations to reinforce supervision of the frequency of referees' appointments at the national level;
- Confederations to ensure that minimum standards are met in order to establish a professional environment for referees;
- Quality over quantity to be prioritised in FIFA Competitions and FIFA list.



WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Refereeing Experts Workshop successfully achieved its goal of providing an open forum for refereeing representatives from around the world to share their experiences and address common challenges.

The initiative was unanimously welcomed and regarded as highly-beneficial by FIFA and the Confederation members. The experts conveyed their desire to hold a second edition of the workshop on a venue rotation basis.

The AFC would like to thank FIFA and the sister Confederations for their active involvement and invaluable contributions to the enhancement of the refereeing fraternity and looks forward to working closely with all its stakeholder to build a better and brighter future for the world of refereeing.





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