



CLUB LICENCING REGULATIONS & CRITERIA 2025 FOOTBALL SEASON



COOK ISLANDS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

- The following are regulations of the Cook Islands Football Association, hereinafter referred to as CIFA, which reflect the principles of the FIFA, OFC and CIFA Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria.
- CIFA recognises the everyday effort of club stakeholders, especially their administrators, coaches, families and volunteers make in order for CIFA's footballers, youth and senior, to have an opportunity to play football. These efforts also contribute in bringing the beautiful game to fans at the fields.
- The Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria have been designed as a development tool for all football clubs on Rarotonga and Island Associations in the Cook Islands.

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Section I: Introduction

Article 1: Goals of the Club Licencing Project

The overall aim of Club Licencing within CIFA is to raise the level of club football throughout the Cook Islands.

1. Raise the level of professionalism in club football through strengthening their administration, technical and sporting development.
2. Formalise requirements for participation in national and regional club competitions.

Article 2: The Level of Criteria

The criteria described in the CIFA Club Licencing Regulations has been defined as follows:

Domestic Criteria:

The fundamental items and procedures that every club in Cook Islands need to meet in order to participate in the Rarotonga Football Competition for the 2024 season and the clubs on the various islands. The Domestic Criteria will also be applied to the clubs who have qualified to participate in the OFC Champions League.

Article 3: Scope of Application

1. These regulations apply to the clubs which participate in the Rarotonga Football Competition, as well as the CIFA Club(s) who have qualified to participate in OFC Champions League:
2. These regulations govern the rights, duties and responsibilities of all parties involved in the CIFA Club Licencing system and define in particular:
 - a) the licence applicant (club) and the licence required to enter the Rarotonga Football Competition, the OFC Champions League and the competition with the various Island Football Association.
 - b) the minimum infrastructure, sporting, administration, financial, legal, and social responsibility criteria to be fulfilled by a club in order to be granted a licence by the CIFA Executive as part of the admission procedure to enter the Rarotonga Football Competition, the OFC Champions League and the competition on the various Island Associations.

Section II: CIFA Club Licencing System

Article 4: Exception Policy

The OFC may grant exceptions to the provisions set out in these regulations.

Article 5: CIFA's Responsibility

CIFA is the licensor of the Club Licencing system and is therefore in charge of implementing the Club Licencing system at the national level. For the implementation of the CIFA Club Licencing system, the CIFA must:

- a) Ensure the Club Licencing system will be based on a binding agreement between the Club/Island Association and CIFA.
- b) Appoint a Club Licencing Manager.
- c) Establish a List of Sanctions as outlined in Article 13.

Article 6: CIFA's Club Licensing Administration

Upon completion of the tasks outlined in Article 5, the CIFA's established Club Licencing Administration, under the guidance of the Club Licencing Manager, must:

- a) Finalise the Club Licencing Manual/Regulations.
- b) Determine deadlines for documentation to be presented by the club to the CIFA's Club Licencing Manager.
- c) Review documentation submitted by clubs.
- d) Visit each club during the licencing process.
- e) Inform OFC of all licence decisions i.e., approvals and rejections.

Article 7: The Football Club

1. The football club is defined as being the legal entity fully responsible for a football team, which participates in domestic, national, and international (OFC Champions League) club competitions and is a member of CIFA.

2. Only a registered member of CIFA or Island Association club may apply for a licence.

3. The club is fully responsible for participation in domestic, national, and international club competitions as well as the fulfilment of the Club Licencing criteria within the deadlines established by FIFA, OFC and CIFA.

Article 8: The Licence

1. Licences must be approved by CIFA according to the provisions of the recognised CIFA Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria.
2. The club must, in particular, declare that it shall fulfil the obligations of the licencing system.
3. Only clubs which fulfil the criteria set in the CIFA Club Licencing Regulations by the relevant deadline will receive a licence.
4. CIFA must indicate the licence expiration date.
5. A licence may be withdrawn by the CIFA Executive during a season if:
 - a) any of the conditions for the issue of a licence are no longer satisfied; or
 - b) the club violates any of its obligations under CIFA Regulations.

Article 9: The Club Licencing Decision-Making Body

1. CIFA Executive shall be the Club Licencing decision-making body.
2. The Club Licencing decision-making body shall receive administrative support from the Club Licensing Administration. A member of the Club Licencing decision-making body must in all cases abstain from participating in the licencing process.
3. The Club Licencing decision-making body shall decide on whether a license shall be granted to a club on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance with the provisions of the CIFA Club Licencing Regulations at the submission deadline set by CIFA.
4. All decisions by the Club Licencing decision-making body must be made in writing.

Article 10: The Decision-Making Procedure

In the CIFA Club Licencing Regulations, CIFA shall define procedural rules with respect to decision-making. These shall regulate the following standards:

- a) deadlines (e.g. submission deadlines);
- b) official language(s);
- c) type of evidence requested;
- d) decisions (in writing with reasons);
- e) cost of procedure, administrative fee and deposit.

Article 11: OFC Spot Checks

1. The OFC reserves the right to conduct spot checks, at any time, to CIFA or the clubs, training facilities, stadiums and headquarters.
2. FIFA has the right to request the OFC to carry out a specific spot check.
3. The spot checks aim to ensure licenses have been correctly awarded by CIFA at the time of the final decision.
4. Upon FIFA's request, OFC shall send FIFA comprehensive reports about the results of the spot checks.
5. If the OFC determines that CIFA issued a licence in breach of the OFC or CIFA Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria, CIFA shall be sanctioned by OFC's Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the applicable disciplinary regulations.

Article 12: FIFA Spot Checks

1. In the event that the OFC fails to implement a spot check procedure to CIFA or does not send to FIFA, at its request, comprehensive reports about the result of the spot checks, FIFA shall set the OFC a deadline to do so. If this deadline is not respected by the OFC, FIFA has the right to carry out the spot checks directly. CIFA is obliged to cooperate with FIFA for this purpose and provide FIFA with full access to the files.
2. If FIFA realises that CIFA has issued a licence in breach of the OFC or CIFA Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria, FIFA shall inform the OFC so the latter can sanction CIFA in accordance with Article 11. In the event that the OFC fails to take action or fails to impose sanctions, FIFA shall set the OFC a deadline to do so. If this deadline is not respected by the OFC, the FIFA Disciplinary Committee has the right to sanction CIFA directly in accordance with the FIFA Disciplinary Code.

Article 13: List of Sanctions

Under the CIFA Club Licencing Regulations and Criteria, CIFA must set up a List of Sanctions for the Club Licencing system for non-fulfilment of Domestic Criteria. The List of Sanctions may include, but is not limited to:

- a) a caution;
- b) a fine;
- c) the obligation to submit evidence or fulfil certain conditions by a certain deadline;
- d) the deduction of points;
- e) withholding CIFA club grant;
- f) Suspension or Expulsion from participation in the Rarotonga Football Competition and Island Football Competition.
- g) Suspension or Expulsion as a member of the Cook Islands Football Association.

Section III: Administration Criteria

Implementation of the Administration Criteria is aimed at encouraging clubs to elect or appoint individuals to key administrative roles in order to increase the level of professionalism at the clubs and island associations. Collecting this information will also allow for the creation of a database of club administrators.

Article 14: Annual General Meeting

- i. The Clubs must hold their Annual General Meeting by **Thursday, 31 July 2025**.
- ii. The Island Associations must hold their Annual General Meeting by **Thursday, 31 July 2025**.

Article 15: Club Administration Form

The club and island association must accurately complete and submit the Club Administration Form.

Article 16: Club Secretary

The club and island association must elect a Club Secretary who is responsible for running its daily operations.

Article 17: Club Treasurer

The club and island association must elect a Club Treasurer who is responsible for its financial operations.

Article 18: Technical Coordinator

The club and island association must appoint a Technical Coordinator who is responsible for its technical/coaching operations.

Article 19: Budget

The club and island association must prepare and submit a budget for the upcoming season.

Article 20: Financial Statements

The club and island association must prepare and submit its audited Financial Statements from the previous year.

Section IV: Infrastructure Criteria

Implementation of the Infrastructure Criteria is aimed at ensuring that clubs have adequate playing and training facilities for all home matches and training sessions, as well as informing clubs of the minimum requirements their field must comply with in order to participate in the Rarotonga Football Competition and Island Association Competition.

Article 21: Club Infrastructure Form

The club must complete and submit the Club Infrastructure Form by **Thursday, 31 July 2025**.

Article 22: The Field

1. The club must have a field (i.e. home venue) available to host home matches and training sessions with one of the following options:

- a) The club legally owns the field; or
- b) The club is permitted to use the field. The club must provide a copy of the written agreement with the owner of the field or other sporting codes who use the same field. The agreement specifying the club's use of the field for all home matches for the duration of the football season including one month prior to the season for training purposes.

Section V: Sporting Criteria

The Sporting Criteria is aimed at identifying and increasing the number of players, coaches and referees together with improving the quality of football in the Cook Islands.

Article 23: Registration of Players/Teams

All players/teams must be registered with CIFA under the Rarotonga Football Competition and Island Association Competition Regulations.

Article 24: Coaching Accreditation and Criteria

The club must appoint a Coach for all teams in the various divisions and must hold the following coaching qualification to coach a particular team in the various divisions.

TEAM / DIVISION	2025	
	QUALIFICATION	MIN. TRAINING SESSIONS PER WEEK
Premier Men	OFC C Licence, MA Senior Certificate	2 sessions plus a match
Under 18 Men	Youth Licence	2 sessions plus a match
Under 15 Men	Youth Licence	2 sessions plus a match
Senior Women	OFC C Licence, MA Senior Certificate	2 sessions plus a match
Under 15 Women	Youth Licence	2 sessions plus a match
Under 12 Mix	Grassroots Licence	1 session plus a match
Under 10 Mix	Grassroots Licence	1 session plus a match
Under 8 Mix	Grassroots Licence	1 session plus a match
Under 6 Mix	Grassroots Licence	1 session plus a match

Article 25: Duration of Training Sessions

All club teams in the various divisions are to carry out training sessions with the following duration times:

TEAM / DIVISION	2025
	TRAINING DURATION
Premier Men	75 - 90 minutes
Under 18 Men	75 – 90 minutes
Under 15 Men	60 – 90 minutes
Senior Women	75 - 90 minutes
Under 15 Women	60 – 90 minutes

Under 12 Mix	60 – 75 minutes
Under 10 Mix	60 – 75 minutes
Under 8 Mix	60 – 75 minutes
Under 6 Mix	60 – 75 minutes

Article 26: Referees Criteria

Each club must provide referees and assistant referees for the Rarotonga Football Competition and the Island Association Competition.

The criteria is as follows:

REFEREE/AR	2025
Referee	3
Assistant Referee (AR)	4

All Referees and Assistant Referees will have to go through the basic refereeing course before being accredited to officiate club games.

Section VI: Final Provision

Article 27: Adoption and Entry into Force

These regulations were adopted by the CIFA Executive Committee on 21 June 2018 and come into force with immediate effect.

Rarotonga, Cook Islands

President:
Lee Harmon

General Secretary:
Mii Piri