IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
AMATEUR GAME PLAYER REGISTRATION REGULATIONS
SEASON 2019/20

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1.0 Introduction

a. Players participating in organised football are either amateurs or professionals. A professional is a player who has a written contract with a club and is paid more for his footballing activity than the expenses he effectively incurs. All other players are considered to be amateurs.

b. Youth players shall not be subject to the Player Registration Regulations and may register freely until the season in which their 12th birthday occurs, subject to individual competition rules.

c. The following regulations shall apply for amateur players registering for their club to play in purely amateur competitions. Competition rules shall determine if a competition is to be purely amateur (for the avoidance of any doubt if a competition's rules do not explicitly exclude professional players from participating then it shall not be considered to be a purely amateur competition and the Professional Game regulations shall apply).

d. All amateur registrations shall be administered by Clubs/Leagues using the Comet FMS

e. All Club registrars shall act as agents for the Association and will be obliged to agree to the terms and conditions of the access to and use of the Comet FMS.

f. Appointed league officials shall have full access to player registration records within their own league and will have full administrator rights to assist clubs as and when required. Such officials will be obliged to agree to the terms and conditions of the access to and use of the Comet FMS.

g. A player not registered with the Association who appears for a club in any official match shall be considered to have played illegitimately. Without prejudice to any measure required to rectify the sporting consequences of such an appearance, sanctions may also be imposed on the player and/or the club by the organising body of the competition concerned.

h. It shall be the responsibility of clubs playing in any match to be played under the jurisdiction of the Association to ensure that its players are eligible to play in such a match.

i. Professionals who end their careers upon expiry of their contracts and amateurs who terminate their activity shall remain registered at the Association of their last club for a period of 30 months. This period begins on the day the player made his last appearance for the club in an official match.

2.0 Number of Registrations/Clubs

a. A player must be registered at an association to play for a club as either a professional or an amateur in accordance with the provisions of article 2 (FIFA

Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players). Only registered players are eligible to participate in organised football. By the act of registering, a player agrees to abide by the statutes and regulations of FIFA, the confederations and the associations.

b. A player may only be registered with one club at a time.

c. Players may be registered with a maximum of three clubs during one season (the period from 1st August to 31st May, and in the case of NIFL Women's Premiership and NIWFA from 1st March to 31st October). During this period, the player is only eligible to play in official matches for two clubs. As an exception to this rule, a player moving between two clubs belonging to associations with overlapping seasons (i.e. start of the season in summer/autumn as opposed to winter/spring) may be eligible to play in official matches for a third club during the relevant season, provided he/she has fully complied with his/her contractual obligations towards his/her previous clubs. Equally, the provisions relating to the registration periods (article 6 – FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players) as well as to the minimum length of a contract (article 18 paragraph 2 – FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players) must be respected.

   This exception may also apply to players moving between two clubs belonging to domestic leagues with overlapping seasons.

d. In the event of the Association receiving formal notification, in writing, of a club ceasing to exist all amateur players registered with said club during the current season shall be immediately released from their registration and free to register with another club, subject to compliance with the relevant league's rules. For the avoidance of any doubt the club who cease to exist will not be counted in the number of clubs for which the player has been registered in the current season.

e. Under all circumstances, due consideration must be given to the sporting integrity of the competition. In particular, a player may not play official matches for more than two clubs competing in the same national championship or cup during the same season, subject to stricter individual competition regulations of member associations. (FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players).

f. Notwithstanding any of the above, a player may only register for any club twice in one season.

3.0 Registration Periods

a. Players may only be registered during the official registration period for purely amateur competitions which shall open on 1st June and close on 31st March.
b. Players participating in NIFL Women's Premiership and NIWFA organised competitions may be registered during the period 1st March to 7th August.

4.0 Reacquisition of Amateur Status

a. A player registered as a professional may not re-register as an amateur until at least 30 days after his last match as a professional (and provided the previous registration has either expired or been cancelled).

b. No compensation is payable upon reacquisition of amateur status. If a player re-registers as a professional within 30 months of being reinstated as an amateur, his new club shall pay training compensation in accordance with Article 20 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

5.0 Amateur Registrations

a. All amateur registrations must be submitted via the Comet FMS by Club Registrars.

b. All mandatory fields of the Comet FMS must be completed in full before a registration is confirmed. The player shall be considered registered upon completion of the online procedure and an email confirming the player's registration will be automatically sent to the email address provided by the player to the club and entered in the Comet FMS. Any player who is under the age of 18 on the date of registration must have the email address of a parent or guardian entered in the Comet FMS. In the event that a player, or in the case of a player under the age of 18 their parent or guardian, does not consent to the registration of the player they should immediately contact the Irish Football Association who will investigate the matter and either confirm or terminate the registration as appropriate.

c. The length of an amateur registration shall be from its effective date until 30 June 2020. Re-registration of players is available via Comet FMS from 1 – 30 June.

d. Priority of registration shall determine the eligibility of a player to play for the club with which he was first registered.

e. In the event of a team whose club participate in both professional and purely amateur competitions such clubs shall be permitted to register players outside the fixed registration periods for the professional game (but within the amateur game of registration period 1 June – 31 March) but such players so registered shall be restricted to playing for the team who participates in purely amateur competitions. Such player will only become eligible to participate in a professional game competition at the commencement of the subsequent registration period.

6.0 Transfers

Amateur players moving clubs will be required to complete a transfer. The transfer instruction must be submitted via the Comet FMS and approved by both clubs involved in the transfer.

7.0 International Transfer Certificates (ITC)

a. An amateur player whose last registration was held outside Northern Ireland may not be registered with a Club unless the Association has received an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) issued by the National Association which the player wishes to leave

b. A player shall not, under any circumstances, be authorised to play in official matches for his new Club until an ITC has been received by the Association

c. Only the Irish Football Association is entitled to request an ITC to enable a player to be registered in Northern Ireland

d. The ITC may not be made subject to any conditions. In particular, the validity of an ITC shall not be restricted to a certain period and any clauses to this effect appended to the certificate shall be considered null and void.

e. The registering association is obliged to provide the club with which the player is registered with a player passport containing the relevant details of the player. The player passport shall indicate the club(s) with which the player has been registered since the season of his 12th birthday. If a birthday falls between seasons, the player passport shall indicate the club with which he was registered during the season following his birthday.

8.0 Loan of Players

The loan of amateur players is not permitted.

9.0 Cancellation of a Registration

Cancellation of an amateur player shall only be administered by the Irish Football Association to cancel an amateur player's registration where he/she is moving to another national association.

10.0 Protection of Minors

a. International transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18.

b. The following three exceptions to this rule apply:
   i. The player's parents move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football.
   ii. The transfer takes place within the territory of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) and the player is aged between 16 and 18. In this case, the new club must fulfil the following minimum obligations.

   - It shall provide the player with an adequate football education and/or training in line with the highest national standards.

   - It shall guarantee the player an academic and/or school and/or vocational education and/or training, in addition to his football

education and/or training, which will allow the player to pursue a career other than football should he cease playing professional football.

- It shall make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the player is looked after in the best possible way (optimum living standards with a host family or in club accommodation, appointment of a mentor at the club, etc.).

- It shall, on registration of such a player, provide the relevant association with proof that it is complying with the aforementioned obligations.

iii. The player lives no further than 50km from a national border and the club with which the player wishes to be registered in the neighbouring association is also within 50km of that border. The maximum distance between the player's domicile and the club's headquarters shall be 100km. In such cases, the player must continue to live at home and the two associations concerned must give their explicit consent.

c. The conditions of this article shall also apply to any player who has never previously been registered with a club,is not a national of the country in which he wishes to be registered for the first time and has not lived continuously for at least the last five years in said country.

d. Every international transfer according to paragraph ii) and every first registration according to paragraph iii), as well as every first registration of a foreign minor player who has lived continuously for at least five years in the country in which he wishes to be registered, is subject to the approval of the sub-committee appointed by the FIFA Players' Status Committee for that purpose. The application for approval shall be submitted by the association that wishes to register the player. The former association shall be given the opportunity to submit its position. The sub-committee's approval shall be obtained prior to any request from an association for an International Transfer Certificate and/or first registration. Any violations of this provision will be sanctioned by the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the FIFA Disciplinary Code. In addition to the association that failed to apply to the sub-committee, sanctions may also be imposed on the former association for issuing the International Transfer Certificate without the approval of the sub-committee, as well as on the clubs that reached an agreement for the transfer of a minor.

e. The procedures for applying to the sub-committee for a first registration and an international transfer of a minor are contained in Annexe 2 of the FIFA regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

11.0 Transfer Disputes

a. Where a club has not responded to a transfer request for an amateur player within 7 days the League (if both clubs are in membership of the same League) or the IFA (if both clubs are in membership of different Leagues) shall terminate the former registration to enable the transfer to be completed unless 11b applies.
b. Where a club objects to a transfer request for an amateur player they must notify their League / IFA within 7 days. Proceedings will be instigated to arrange a dispute resolution hearing.
    i. If both clubs are in membership of the same League such hearing shall be considered by that League.
    ii. If both clubs are in membership of different Leagues such hearing shall be considered by the IFA Player Registration Sub Committee.
c. All registration disputes will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
d. Any club who rejects the transfer of an amateur player within 7 days, without just cause, shall be fined a minimum sum of £100.
e. In the event of any transfer dispute being officially reported to the Association less than 7 days before the expiry of a registration period the Player Registration Sub Committee shall have discretionary powers on a case by case basis to approve such registration.

12.0 Domestic Training and Development Compensation Regulations

a. A player's training and education takes place between the ages of 12 and 23. Training compensation shall be payable, as a general rule, up to the age of 23 for training incurred up to the age of 21.

b. Domestic Training and Development Compensation shall only be paid when a player moves between clubs in membership of the Irish Football Association.

c. Training compensation is due when:
    i. a player is registered for the first time as a professional; or
    ii. a professional is transferred between clubs

    before the end of the season of his 23rd birthday.

d. Compensation will only be claimable from the start of the season of the players 12th birthday up to the end of the season of the players 21st birthday.

    Training compensation shall be payable until the end of the season of the player's 23rd birthday.

e. In order for compensation to be due the player must be registered as a professional player with the new club, regardless of his status with the former club.

Categorisation

Under the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, Senior Football in Northern Ireland holds Category 3 Status with all other levels below Senior Football being assigned Category 4 status. Training Compensation is not due if a player is transferred to a category 4 club.

There are 3 categories in Northern Ireland:

i. Senior Football
ii. Intermediate Football
iii. Junior / Youth Football

The compensation payable for the above categories is as follows:

Category 1 - £1500
Category 2 - £1000
Category 3 - £500

The above categorisation applies to the club who are claiming compensation not the player's new club.

f. More information in respect of the application of the Domestic Training and Development Compensation regulations are provided in Annex 1.

13.0 Player Registrations Sub Committee

A Sub Committee consisting of seven representatives of the Football Committee will meet as required to deal with the following:

- Registration disputes
  - Transfer dispute involving an amateur player
  - Contract disputes between a professional player and his club
  - Priority of Registration Disputes
- Review and monitor implementation of regulations
- Impose sanctions on leagues for non-compliance

14.0 Leagues retain the Right

Leagues retain the right to determine the criteria for the eligibility of players playing for clubs within their league and to impose sanctions where appropriate in accordance with their rules but must comply with the FIFA Regulations as adopted by the IFA.

ANNEX 1

Application of the Domestic Training and Development Regulations

All decisions relating to domestic training compensation are to be made by the IFA Football Committee.

The training compensation payable is calculated by taking the training cost categorisation multiplied by the number of years of training from the season of the player's 12th birthday to the season of his 21st birthday.

The claimant club must effectively demonstrate this fact by adhering to the principles and procedures below:

Only full seasons where the player has been registered with the claimant club can be counted. Where two or more clubs can demonstrate bone fide registration of a player for the same season or seasons, then the Football Committee, at its discretion, may distribute any compensation payment between such clubs for the claimable season or seasons.

If a player is registered with an NIFL Premiership or Championship Club and is therefore eligible for the First (Senior – Cat 1), Reserve (Intermediate – Cat 2) and Youth (Junior/Youth – Cat 3) teams, the Football Committee will decide how the player should be categorised for any given season(s). It is entirely the responsibility of the claimant club to evidence and demonstrate the applicable category of the *'training, education and development'* of the player for any claimable season in these circumstances.

All previous, affiliated, clubs (from the season of the players 12th birthday) are eligible to lodge a claim for compensation ONLY when the player FIRST registers as a professional.

In the event of subsequent transfers of the professional before the end of the season of the player's 23rd birthday (where the player is registered as a professional with the new club) compensation is ONLY due to the player's previous club. If the former club does not offer the professional player a contract, no training compensation is payable. The former club must offer the professional player a contract in writing via Special Delivery post at least 30 days before the expiry of his current contract. Such an offer shall furthermore be at least of an equivalent value to the current contract.

The only exception to this principle is in respect of pre-contract agreements. Where a professional player has signed a pre-contract agreement at least 30 days prior to the end of his current contract, his former club will retain their right to compensation without having to offer a contract in writing via Special Delivery post at least 30 days before the expiry of his current contract.

Any right to training compensation shall only be triggered with the activation of the professional contract with the new club, not the signing of the pre-contract agreement and remains subject to the claim being lodged in accordance with the provisions of these regulations.

For the avoidance of doubt, where a club is no longer interested in the services of one of its professional players and does not seek to renew his contract, that club is deemed to have written off the investment made for his training and the player is free to move to another club without any compensation being payable.

When a player moves for a transfer fee during his existing registration no training compensation shall be paid. Instead the club losing the player should receive a transfer fee that should be equal to or greater than the amount set out in the training compensation scale above.

Training compensation is not due if a professional reacquires amateur status on being transferred. However, if a player re-registers as a professional within 30 months of being reinstated as an amateur, training compensation will then be payable if applicable as per these regulations.

For the purposes of these regulations, the end of the football season is deemed to be 31 May.

Clubs claiming compensation have a maximum of one year from the player's date of professional registration with the new club to lodge its claim to the IFA. Any such claim must:

- Be lodged within the applicable timeframe (within one year from the player's date of professional registration with the new club) by Special Delivery Letter.
- Clearly identify the season(s) for which the claim is being lodged (e.g. 2005-06).
- Clearly identify the club(s) from which compensation is being claimed.
- All evidence which is to be relied upon to support the claim must accompany the letter of claim within the Special Delivery envelope (including registration documentation, dated press clippings and photographs etc.)
- Clubs have one opportunity only to lodge a claim in respect of any given player (no additional / supplementary evidence, documents or contentions may be made or lodged beyond the original submission envelope). The only exception to this principle is where specific clarification is subsequently requested by the Football Committee to aid its decision making.

It is entirely the responsibility of the club claiming compensation to provide the necessary evidence (documentary or otherwise) to support its claim. In this respect the burden of proof rests solely with the claimant club.

All compensation monies due must be paid within 90 days of a decision being given by the IFA Player Registration Sub Committee.

The FIFA Solidarity Mechanism principles are not applicable for transfers between clubs belonging to the IFA.

Matters not provided for in these guidelines shall be decided upon by the IFA Football Committee.

NOTES:

CLAIMS FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT COMPENSATION AND/OR SOLIDARITY PAYMENTS MAY **ONLY** BE LODGED BY CLUBS AFFILIATED TO THE IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OR THE NORTHERN IRELAND BOYS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

FOR SEASON 2013-14 AND ONWARDS, **ONLY** PLAYER REGISTRATIONS LODGED AND ADMINISTERED VIA THE IFA PLAYER REGISTRATION CENTRAL DATABASE WILL BE ACCEPTED AS DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM A PLAYER'S REGISTRATION AND PLAYING HISTORY VIA THE 'PLAYER PASSPORT'.

WHERE CLUBS SEEK COMPENSATION FOR SEASONS PRIOR TO SEASON 2013-14, THE IFA FOOTBALL COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE, ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, TO EXAMINE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, PLAYER REGISTRATION DOCUMENTATION FROM RELEVANT LEAGUES/BODIES, LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM LEAGUES, DATED MEDIA ARTICLES, PLAYER ID CARDS AND SUBSTANTIATED PHOTOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE ETC.