



OFFICIAL RULES

2025



2025 - FIWFA WORLD NATIONS CUP - RULES

Management and Rules of the Tournament

1. The entire management and control of the Tournament shall be vested in the FIWFA World Nations Cup Director (Mark Coleman), who reports to the Senior Executive Team. (Paul Carr, Ken Davies, and Ricky Weir). The Senior Executive Team shall have the power to deal with any matter for which no specific provision is made.
2. The Tournament shall observe the Rules and Regulations of the FIWFA, and all matches shall be played according to the FIWFA Laws of the Game, as published. Hyperlink is: <https://www.fiwfa.org/laws-of-the-game/>
3. The date(s) for the Tournament and the Grand Final Ties will be decided by the FIWFA Board.
4. Each team competing in the World Nations Cup Tournament shall send pre-tournament registration of squads by 30 September 2025, full squad details, and eligibility support to be emailed to the Tournament Director, Mark Coleman (markcoleman.swift@gmail.com)
 - a. Tournament player registration (passports) will take place on arrival in the host Country.
 - b. Changes to the registered squad will be allowed in exceptional circumstances, e.g. injury, illness, etc., before the tournament starts.
 - c. There will be no flexibility on the age criteria in all age groups
5. Any appeals in relation to the Tournament must be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Appeals Committee, Paul Carr (paulcarr@fiwfa.org). ~All appeals must be submitted with an appeal fee of €75.00 (In cash) which would be refundable subject to a successful appeal.
6. The age-specific Tournament shall be called the FIWFA World Nations Cup

Tournament Format

7. The Tournament shall comprise:
 - a. Men Over 50, 60, and 70
 - b. Women Over 40, 50, and 60
 - c. Duration of play:
 - d. Men Over 50, 60, and 70 – 40-minute game, two equal periods of 20 minutes
 - e. Women Over 40, 50, and 60 – 40-minute game, two equal periods of 20 minutes
 - f. The half-time interval will not exceed 5 minutes
 - g. 'Water Breaks' will be at the discretion of FIWFA on match days, depending on the weather
 - h. All group games will be played on a league basis
 - Three points for a win, 1 point for a draw
 - The winner and runner-up of each group will qualify for the quarter-finals

If points are level, the team with the superior goal difference will qualify

 - If the goal difference is level, the team with the superior goals scored will qualify
 - If the goals scored are level, the team that won the head-to-head game will qualify
 - If the head-to-head game was a draw, then the teams that are equal will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the FIWFA Laws of the Game.
 - If there are more than two teams Involved the qualification decision will be made by Senior Executive Team (and may Involve the drawing of lots)
 - i. It is anticipated that the Quarter Final, Semi Final, and the Final Ties will be played on a Knockout basis. This will depend on the final number of entries in each category and may be subject to change as considered necessary by the Directors.
 - j. These ties will be played on a single-leg basis. If the scores are level at the end of the game, 5 minutes of extra time one way will be played.
 - k. If the scores are level at the end of extra time, the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the FIWFA Laws of the Game.
 - l. The FIWFA World Nations Cup Director will decide on groups and seedings.
8. The tournament described as "Men" is an open tournament, as both genders can participate.
9. The tournament described as "Women" is a tournament that only women can participate Please refer to the WFA (adopted by FIWFA) Transgender Policy.
10. For the Men's Over 50s, Over 60s, and Over 70s tournaments, the Finals for each age group shall be the Winners of the semi-final games for that age group.
11. For the Women's Over 40s, Over 50s, and Over 60s tournaments, the Finals for each age group shall be the Winners of the semi-final games for that age group.
12. Please note: In all categories for all days:
The World Nations Cup Director and / or the Senior Executive Team reserve the right to award a score of 3-0 to the opponents of any team not present by their pitch at the scheduled kick off time.

Pitches

13. The standard pitch MUST be rectangular. The two longer boundary lines are touchlines. The two shorter lines are goal lines. The pitch may be divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touchlines.
14. Dimensions for competitions (i.e., 6-a-side) are a width of 28 metres and a length of 40 metres.
15. The standard goal size for this competition is a width of 3.66 metres and a height of 1.83 metres (12 feet x 6 feet).
16. A goal area must be clearly marked at each end of the pitch. This must be a semi-circle and should extend 6 metres from the goal line.
17. A penalty mark may be positioned in line with the centre of the goal, 1 meter outside the goal area.
18. At the taking of a penalty kick, the ball will be placed in line with the centre of the goal. A distance of 7m from the centre of the goal line. Note: If the goal area is 6m, then the penalty mark should be an additional 1m outside the 6m area. Thus, 7m from the centre of the goal line.
19. The position of the ball on the pitch is determined when it crosses a line entirely (i.e. the whole of the ball). A ball located on the line marking the goal area is considered to be within that area and can, therefore, only be played by the goalkeeper.

Players

19. In all matches, any Player who has been duly registered with the FIWFA shall be eligible
20. The maximum number of players allowed in a squad is 12
21. A minimum of 6 players, one of whom must be a goalkeeper, must be registered before the commencement of the Tournament
22. A match day squad in all games during the Tournament will be a maximum of 12 players, one of whom must be a goalkeeper
23. The age eligibility criteria are based on the age of the player at the time of the match, not the registration date
24. All players MUST wear a number either on their shirt or shorts that the match officials can easily recognise
25. To be eligible to play for a nation, evidence of player qualification and checks on arrival will include Passport / 5-year or more Residency Cards and DOB.
Proof of birthplace or a minimum of 5 years of residency is required
26. All players must retain the same shirt number throughout the Tournament
27. Teams must bring at least one spare kit for all players
28. Teams must bring at least one spare un-numbered shirt as a 'blood injury shirt'
29. Any Club found guilty of playing an ineligible Player shall be removed from the Competition and be subject to a fine at the discretion of the FIWFA Board. Their opponents shall be reinstated into the competition
30. Each team, in each category of age group, will be allowed to register a maximum of three ex-professional players.
 - a. When registering players, each Nation must clearly identify every ex-professional player in each team, in each category of age group. The term 'Ex Professional' is for those who have signed a full-time professional contract and played for a professional team. NOT to include Apprentice forms, Scholarships, or Semi-Pro contracts
 - b. Failure to do so will result in that player being unable to participate in the Competition.
 - c. Should the Tournament Directors determine that a team has played an ex-professional player in a winning team that was not 'clearly identified' on the registration documentation, the result of the game will be nullified, and a 3-0 win to the non-offending team will be recorded.

Substitutes

31. All substitutes will be deemed 'rolling substitutes, In accordance with the FIWFA Laws of the Game.
32. A Team may, at its discretion, use up to a maximum of three substitutes, who are members of their named squad, at any time in a match during a stoppage in play, Including the half time Interval, except to replace a player who has been dismissed from the field of play by the referee for misconduct after play has commenced.
33. The player being substituted must leave the field of play before the substitute enters at the half way line. If this is contravened in the first Instance the offending substitute will receive an initial warning. Any subsequent persistent Infringement by that team then the offending substitute may receive a straight blue card.
34. In the instances of more than one substitution, each substitution must be done individually.

Compulsory equipment

35. The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:
 - a shirt with sleeves
 - shorts

- socks – tape or any material applied or worn externally should be the same colour as that part of the sock it is applied to or covers
- shin guards – these must be made of a suitable material and be of an appropriate size to provide reasonable protection and be covered by the socks. Players are responsible for the size and suitability of their shin guards
- footwear (Venue guidelines: Moulded soles or Astro Boots: Blades MUST NOT BE WORN. The venue prefers dimples)

36. The team captain must wear the armband authorised by the relevant competition organiser, or a single-coloured armband that may also have the word 'captain', the letter 'C', or a translation thereof.
37. A player whose footwear or shin guard is lost accidentally must replace it as soon as possible and no later than when the ball next goes out of play; if, before doing so, the player plays the ball and/or scores a goal, the goal is awarded.

Colours

38. The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the match officials. In the event of a colour clash the second named team will be responsible for changing their kit.
39. Each goalkeeper must wear colours that are distinguishable from those of the other players and the match officials.
40. Match Officials will wear a black kit (shirts, shorts, and socks). Teams will be excluded from wearing a black or dark coloured kit that may clash with the Match Officials.

Technical Areas

41. Technical Area personnel will be limited to a maximum of 6 substitutes, the manager, the coach and the physio.
42. All occupants of the technical area must wear distinguishing colours that do not clash with either team or the Match Officials.
43. All occupants of the technical area must remain in the technical area with the exception of:
 - a. Substitutes warming up
 - b. The physio entering the pitch to assess and treat an Injured player

The Ball

44. All balls must be:
 - spherical
 - made of suitable material
 - of a circumference of between 68 cm (27 ins) and 70 cm (28 ins)
 - between 410 g (14 oz) and 450 g (16 oz) in weight at the start of the match
 - of a pressure equal to 0.6–1.1 atmosphere (600–1,100g/cm²) at sea level (8.5lbs/sq in–15.6lbs/sq in)
45. All balls used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIWFA must meet the above requirements

Administration Procedures

46. Each Team shall pay an Entrance Fee of £2300.00, payable before entry can be confirmed.
47. The payment for entry to the FIWFA World Nations Cup Tournament(s) [including any deposits] is non-refundable

Discipline

48. Any team not complying with FIWFA Laws of the Game and the FIWFA World Nations Cup Rules may be expelled from the Tournament.
 - a. The guilty team (country) will be liable to pay all expenses incurred by the FIWFA in investigating the incident up to a maximum of £250.00
49. Any player dismissed will be subject to a period of suspension as detailed in the 'Schedule of Offences and Periods of Suspension' [as set out in this document]
50. Only the team captain is permitted to talk to the referee. Any player or club official approaching a match official to protest about any decision may be issued a blue card.

Match Officials

51. The Referee will be appointed by the FIWFA appointing authority. An Assistant Referee and 3rd official may also be appointed.
52. Match Officials will wear a black or grey kit (shirts, shorts, and socks)

The Draw

53. The draw will be conducted by the FIWFA executive team, normally at least three months before the start date of the Tournament.

From FIWFA Laws of the Game

The Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- Kicks from the penalty mark are taken after the match has ended, and unless otherwise stated, the relevant Laws of the Game apply. A player who has been sent off during the match is not permitted to take part.
- Warnings and cautions issued during the match are not carried forward into kicks from the penalty mark.

Procedure Before kicks from the penalty mark start

- Unless there are other considerations (e.g. ground conditions, safety etc.), the referee tosses a coin to decide the goal at which the kicks will be taken which may only be changed for safety reasons or if the goal or playing surface becomes unusable
- The referee tosses a coin again, and the team that wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick
- With the exception of a substitute for a goalkeeper who is unable to continue, only players who are on the field of play or are temporarily off the field of play (in the Sin Bin, injury, adjusting equipment etc.) at the end of the match are eligible to take kicks
- Each team is responsible for selecting from the eligible players the order in which they will take the kicks. The referee is not informed of the order
- If, at the end of the match and before or during the penalty kicks, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to the same number as its opponents. The referee must be informed of the name and number of each player excluded. Any excluded player is not eligible to take part in the kicks (except as outlined below)
- A goalkeeper who is unable to continue before or during the kicks may be replaced by a player excluded to equalise the number of players or, if their team has not used its maximum permitted number of squad substitutes, a named substitute, but the replaced goalkeeper takes no further part and may not take a kick
- If the goalkeeper has already taken a kick, the replacement may not take a kick until the next round of kicks

During kicks from the penalty mark

- Only eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the field of play.
- All eligible players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle
- The goalkeeper of the kicker must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area, on the goal line where it meets the goal area boundary line.
- An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper
- The kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play or the referee stops play for any offence; the kicker may not play the ball a second time
- The referee keeps a record of the kicks
- If the goalkeeper commits an offence and, as a result, the kick is retaken, the goalkeeper is warned for the first offence and receives a 'totting up' warning for any subsequent offence(s)
- If the kicker is penalised for an offence committed after the referee has signalled for the kick to be taken, that kick is recorded as missed and the kicker receives a 'totting up' warning.
- If both the goalkeeper and the kicker commit an offence at the same time, the kick is recorded as missed and the kicker receives a 'totting up' warning.

Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take three kicks

- The kicks are taken alternately by the teams
- A different player takes each kick, and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.

- If, before both teams have taken three kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its three kicks, no more kicks are taken
- If, after both teams have taken three kicks, the scores are level, kicks continue until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- The above principle continues for any subsequent sequence of kicks, but a team may change the order of kickers.
- Kicks from the penalty mark must not be delayed for a player who leaves the field of play. The player's kick will be forfeited (not scored) if the player does not return in time to take a kick.

Substitutions and sending off during kicks from the penalty mark

- A player, substitute, or substituted player may be cautioned or sent off
- A goalkeeper who is sent off must be replaced by an eligible player
- A player other than the goalkeeper who is unable to continue may not be replaced
- The referee must not abandon the match if a team is reduced to fewer than four players

FIWFA

Schedule of offences and Periods of Suspension

	SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION
S1 A & B	Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match Ban
S2	Serious foul play	2 Match Ban
S3	Spitting at an opponent or any other person	3 Match Ban
S4	Spitting at a Match Official	Minimum 5 Match Ban to a maximum expulsion from the WNC
S5	Violent conduct against an opposing Player	2 to 5 Match Ban dependant on the severity
S6	Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures on the pitch	1 Match Ban
S7	Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures to a Match Official	2 Match Ban
S8	Receiving a second blue card in the same match	1 Match Ban
S9	Improper Conduct against a Match Official (Including Threatening and/or Abusive Behaviour)	Minimum 5 match ban up to expulsion from the WNC
S10	Assault of a Match Official	Immediate expulsion from the WNC
The period of suspension will commence after the Discipline/Appeals Committee have publish the result of the case		

Appendix 1:

Protocol for temporary dismissals of an offending player to the sin bin

The Referee

The referee has the power to show a blue card to temporarily dismiss a player, from entering the field of play at the start of the match until after the match has ended, including during the half-time interval, extra time and penalty shoot-out.

A temporary dismissal is when a player commits a cautionable offence, Blue Card (BC) and is punished by an immediate 'suspension' from participating in the next part of the match.

Players only

- Temporary dismissals apply to all players (including goalkeepers) for all 'totting up' offences (BC)

Referee's signal

- The referee will indicate a temporary dismissal by showing a blue card and then clearly pointing to the temporary dismissal area (usually the player's technical area, or, where his manager and substitutes may be standing)

Temporary dismissal period

- The length of the temporary dismissal should be 10% of the total playing time (e.g. 4 minutes in a 40-minute game). The temporary dismissal period begins when play restarts after the player has left the pitch.
- Once the temporary dismissal period has been completed, the player can return from the touchline with the referee's permission, when the ball is next out of play.
- The referee has the final decision as to when the player can return
- A temporarily dismissed player can only be substituted after the temporary dismissal period has ended
- If a temporary dismissal period has not been completed at the end of the first half, the remaining period is served from the start of the second half; this also applies in extra time. Similarly, if it has not been completed at the end of the second half when extra time is to be played, the remaining period is served from the start of extra time
- A player who is still serving a temporary dismissal at the end of the match is permitted to take part in a penalty shoot-out

Temporary dismissal area

- A temporarily dismissed player should remain within the technical area (where one exists) or with the team's coach/technical staff, unless 'warming up' (under the same conditions as a substitute)

Offences during a temporary dismissal period

- A temporarily dismissed player who commits an offence punishable by a (BC) or sending-off (RC) offence during their temporary dismissal period will take no further part in the match and may not be replaced or substituted.

Further disciplinary action

- A player temporarily dismissed need not be reported to the appropriate FIWFA authorities. However, a player who commits a further offence that results in a second temporary dismissal must be reported to the appropriate FIWFA authorities.