
2024/2025
MTN NATIONAL FIRST DIVISION
RULES AND REGULATIONS



Compiled and Presented by
THE PREMIER LEAGUE OF ESWATINI

Approved by
ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
on the
12th September 2024

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PREAMBLE

This document lays out the Rules and Regulations of the 2024/2025 MTN National First Division (*hereinafter referred to as the Rules*).

The Secretariat of this league competition shall be at the PLE Offices at Sigwaca House, Ground Floor, Mbabane and all notices or correspondence must be served to the Chief Executive Officer on this location.

These Rules apply to every match and competition organized by the Premier League of Eswatini (the “**PLE / League**”) and to any act or conduct required by the MTN National First Division Rules & Regulations 2024/25; Football Compliance Manual; PLE Circulars; EFA Statutes, regulations, decisions and directives; CAF and FIFA Statutes & Regulations and to any breach thereof.

Article 1: DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

1. **An Official or Premier League of Eswatini Official** is:
 - a) Any member of the office of the Premier League of Eswatini and/or any member of the Sub-Committees of the Premier League of Eswatini.
 - b) Any person designated by the Premier League of Eswatini's Chief Executive Officer or designated officer in his/her absence, to act in an official capacity during matches to include a Match Coordinator, Security Officer, Health Compliance Officer etc.
 - c) Invited dignitaries and/or guests, members of the Royal Eswatini Police.
2. **A Match Commissioner** is: The match official appointed by the Referees Committee that has an authority for ensuring that a match is officiated according to the rules of the game as well as those laid down in this document and who shall be responsible for preparing a report of the match in his/her area of responsibility, for the relevant authorities.
3. **Unsporting Behavior**: means the infringement of the Laws of the Game such as foul play, simulation, and denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence which was an attempt to play the ball and the referee awards a penalty kick, dissent by word or action directed to an official, delaying the restart of play, improper registration of players, fielding of a defaulter, invading the field of play by supporters, throwing any objects onto the field of play or the surrounding areas, etc.
4. **Violent misconduct**: is when a player, official, match spectator or supporter uses or attempts to use force or excessive force or brutality against another person who may be an opponent, a team-mate, team official, match official, spectator or any other person, regardless of whether contact is made and will include the use of abusive or obscene words or conduct with the intention to insult, demean and provoke another person.
 - a) Invading the field of play, throwing of any object(s) into the field of play or its surrounding or onto persons thus assaulting or attempting to assault, use of threatening words and physical manhandling with intent to assault or to cause bodily harm.
 - b) Uttering abusive or obscene or derogatory words, spitting or emission of saliva onto a person or directed towards a person, use of provocative or insulting hand gestures/signals, and includes any incitement, conspiracy or attempt to engage in an act to bring football into disrepute.
 - c) Failure by club(s) to control their official(s) or player(s) or supporter(s) or fan(s).
5. A **Defaulter** means a player who is not eligible to play in a particular game for any reason such as suspension, improper registration, double registration who has played in the game in question.

6. **“International player”** means a player who is transferring from another association in the membership of FIFA into the territory of the EFA and has satisfied all the requirements of registration and is in possession of a valid work permit or a study permit.
7. **“Match Coordinator”** means an official allotted and entitled by the PLE or the Management Committee for the devotions of the administration of the competition matches at the match venue or stadium, who shall also have the accountability of generating a report for the MC or PLE with respect to the organizational issues around the match, where applicable in terms of the rules and regulations of the competition.
8. **“IFAB”** means the International Football Association Board being the body authorized to develop, amend and prescribe the Laws of the Game, which govern the constitutive practice of football matches.
9. The following abbreviations may be consistently used in this document:
 - a) PLE - Premier League of Eswatini.
 - b) CEO - Chief Executive Officer
 - c) COO - Chief Operations Officer
 - d) DC - EFA Protest and Disciplinary Committee
 - e) EFA - Eswatini Football Association
10. **“Head-to-head Rule”**: It is a rule of breaking ties in association football, when at least two (2) teams in a league competition or qualifying group or championship are level on points, where in order to separate them, the match or matches in which they played are considered. The team that has won the head-to-head encounter (match between the two tying teams) is placed higher than the other team. Where the competition is played on a home-and-away basis such as the league, the head-to-head rule, has an inherent rule the away-goal rule.
11. **“Away-Goal-Rule”**: It is a rule for breaking ties in association football, where the team that has scored more goals “away from home” wins, if the total number of goals scored by each team are otherwise equal. This away-goal-rule is also utilized in the determination of the log standings under the head-to-head rule at any point of the procession of the league matches, irrespective of whether the league has finished or not or the teams tying on points have played a single match or more.

Article 2: ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

1. Eligible players to participate in this Competition shall be players registered with Member Clubs who have satisfied all the requirements of registration as prescribed by the EFA including the payment of the registration fee of One Hundred Emalangen (E100.00) per player.
2. Each Member Club shall be allowed to register a maximum of thirty (30) players inclusive of a maximum of five (5) foreign players.
3. In addition to the above, a player to be registered and play football under the auspices of the PLE and EFA, must have complied with health protocols as prescribed by EFA and/or relevant authorities, regulations, directives and decisions, as amended from time to time. All players shall be accredited by the PLE and/or EFA in line with the Health protocols, as may be amended from time to time.
4. Only players who comply with and pass the testing requirements and timelines stipulated in the HEALTH regulations and match protocols as they relate to the HEALTH pandemic (*negative test result*) are considered eligible. In this regard, a HEALTH negative test result is compulsory for all players to be eligible to participate at the start of the season, at the point of their first match if they had not yet been registered at the start of the season, and at any given timeline where HEALTH testing has been scheduled. **Players who do not fulfil these provisions are automatically disqualified, hence are not eligible to participate in matches of this competition and any participating football club/team that violates these provisions shall be summarily fined E20, 000.00 for each player having violated these provisions.**
5. Any player who participates in this Competition without fulfilling the requirements of registration as prescribed in the registration regulations and directives of EFA shall be considered a defaulter and the club fielding a defaulter shall be guilty of misconduct and liable to lose the game and forfeit three points and three goals to the opposing club. However, if the goal difference in the field of play is greater than three (3), the result in the field shall be maintained. The offending player may be suspended for a period not more than six (6) official matches.
6. Any club that submits fraudulent documents to secure registration and/or accreditation of a player shall be guilty of misconduct and the PLE shall institute investigations and fine the offending team an amount not less than **E10, 000-00** by the D.C.

Article 3: PARTICIPATION IN THE LEAGUE COMPETITION

1. The League comprises of the National First Division Clubs.
2. The National First Division consists of 14 (fourteen) Member Clubs (the “First Division”) that compete nationally each season with one another.
3. All PLE Clubs shall affiliate to the PLE by paying: -

- a) An annual affiliation fee of three thousand Emalangeni (**E3,000.00**), Such affiliation fee shall be paid to the PLE on or before the first registration of players by the Club for the 2024/2025 Season;
 - b) An annual match officiating fee of Twenty thousand Emalangeni (**E20, 000.00**) per Club . Such match officiating fee shall before they play their first game of the 2024/2025 Season.
 - c) An accreditation fee of One thousand five hundred Emalangeni (**E1, 500.00**) at least seven (7) working days before their first game of the 2024/2025 Season
4. Each participating football club/team shall be responsible throughout the competition for:
 - a) The conduct of all accreditation-bearing players, coaches, managers, officials, media officers, representatives and guests of its delegation (hereinafter: Team delegation members), and of any person carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the competition;
 - b) Ensuring the provision of adequate insurance to cover its team delegation members and any other persons carrying out duties on its behalf against all risks, including but not limited to injury, accident, disease and travel consideration of the relevant rules and regulations;
 - c) Paying for incidental expenses and for any costs incurred by its team delegation members;
 - d) Attending media conferences and other official media activities organized by PLE and/or EFA or organizing body in accordance with the applicable regulations and instructions issued by the PLE and/or EFA;
 - e) Ensuring that every member of its delegation complies with the FIFA, CAF, EFA and PLE Statutes, the applicable FIFA, CAF, EFA and PLE regulations, Compliance Manual , directives, guidelines and circulars and decisions taken by EFA bodies, in particular the Executive Committee, the Competition organizing Committee, the Referees Committee, the Disciplinary Committee, the Ethics Committee and Appeals Committee;
 - f) Complying with and implementing (*where applicable*) the measures and protocols mandated in the EFA Health and Safety Protocol .
 5. All team delegation members shall comply with the Laws of the Game and the FIFA, CAF, EFA and PLE Statutes and all applicable EFA regulations (including these regulations), in particular the EFA Disciplinary Code, the EFA Stadium Safety and Security regulations, the FIFA Anti-Doping Regulations, the EFA Code of Ethics, the EFA and/or PLE Media and Marketing regulations and the FIFA, EFA and PLE equipment regulations as well as all circulars, directives and decisions of FIFA, CAF and EFA bodies, unless these regulations state otherwise, and all further EFA guidelines that have any significance regarding this competition;
 6. All Team Delegation Members shall also fully comply with these Regulations and the Regulations stipulated under the HEALTH Protocol, the Match Protocol and any other Health related requirements or instructions issued by FIFA, CAF and EFA, whether in circular letters or in any other documents.
 7. All participating football clubs/teams shall indemnify, defend and hold EFA or PLE, and all of its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents and other auxiliary persons free and harmless against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages, penalties, claims, actions, fines, expenses (including reasonable legal expenses) of whatsoever kind or nature resulting from, arising out of, or attributable to, any non-compliance with these Rules and Regulations by the participating football clubs/teams, their team delegation members, their affiliates and any third parties contracted to the participating football clubs/teams.

8. Unless otherwise stated in these rules and regulations, each participating football club/team hosting a match and on entering to participate in the competition shall automatically undertake to and shall be responsible for amongst other things:
- a) Guaranteeing, planning and implementing law and order as well as safety and security in stadiums and other relevant locations in conjunction with the relevant authorities. The applicable stadium safety and security regulations shall apply;
 - b) Ensuring that all measures taken in relation to team travel, transport, accommodation (where applicable), logistics, match preparation and the match itself are in line with the requirements set by the relevant authority(ies) and government;
 - c) Appoint a HEALTH Compliance Officer over and above the Team Doctor in accordance with the HEALTH regulations and applicable HEALTH protocols as prescribed by EFA.
 - d) Accept that all administrative, disciplinary and refereeing matters related to the competition shall be dealt with by PLE or EFA in compliance with the relevant EFA and/or FIFA regulations;
 - e) Participate with the best possible team in all matches of the competition in which their team is scheduled to take part;
 - f) Accept and fully comply with EFA's and/or the PLE's right to sub-license the right to use on a non-exclusive basis, in perpetuity and free of any charge, any of their records, names, photographs and images (*including and still and moving representation thereof*), which may appear or be generated in connection with the participation of the team delegation members of all participating football clubs/teams in accordance with the relevant Media and Marketing regulations for competitions. To the extent that EFA's and/or the PLE's to use and/or EFA's and/or the PLE's right to sub-license the right to use any of the records, names, photographs and images may fall in the ownership and/or control of a third party, the participating football club/team and their team delegation members shall ensure that such third party waives, pledges and unconditionally assigns and/or transfers to EFA and/or the PLE with immediate effect, with full title guarantee in perpetuity and without any restriction, any such rights to ensure EFA's and/or the PLE's unfettered use as set out above;
 - g) Play all matches until conclusion of the competition.
 - h) Observe the principles of fair play.
9. The league competition shall be played as a two-legged league with clubs playing each other on a home-and-away basis and the club shown first (*left side*) on each fixture shall be the home and/or host club.
10. Points for the league shall be awarded as follows:
- a) Three (3) points for a win.
 - b) One (1) point for a draw.
 - c) Zero (0) for a loss.
11. A fixture programme of all matches shall be prepared and issued to the clubs by the PLE and shall be adhered to by all clubs unless prior and written permission has been granted by the PLE for a club to deviate therefrom.

12. The host club will advise the PLE office of the venue, date, and starting time of their match at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the match, failing which the PLE may apply its own discretion to fixture the said game. Provided that the host team will still carry out hosting obligations where the match or competitions organizers or relevant authorities in the light of the Health protocols or any other reason have decided to change some or all of the provisions herein.
13. In turn, the PLE office shall ensure that the away club is aware of the fixture (date, venue, and starting time). Such information shall be communicated to the clubs by telephone or facsimile or e-mail to the designated club official, at least five (5) days before kick-off of their respective matches.
14. The home club shall be responsible for ensuring that the field of play is ready, the grass or turf is properly cut, the lines are properly marked, the nets are secured and flag poles are in place, where applicable floodlights are functional at least two (2) hours before the scheduled commencement of the match. Failure to comply shall mean that the team would have failed to fulfill its fixture and therefore shall be deemed to have caused the abandonment of the game, shall, if found guilty of such an offence lose the match, with three (3) points and three (3) goals awarded to their opponents and further be fined not less than **E20, 000.00** by the DC.
15. The home club/host club shall deliver to the Match Coordinator or Match Commissioner the keys to all facilities such as the visiting club's dressing rooms, referees changing rooms, etc. at least two (2) hours before the scheduled commencement of the match.
16. The Match Officials shall conduct a pre-match inspection of the facilities including the pitch, dressing rooms, at least 1 ½hrs before the scheduled commencement of a match with the hosting club or as may be determined by the official match countdown protocol.
17. The host club shall ensure that all points of entry or as may be designated by the Match Coordinator are operational two hours before the scheduled commencement of the match; and a violation shall be punishable by a summary fine of **E5, 000.00**.
18. The home club shall ensure that the sitting arrangement for fans and/or supporters of both clubs is properly demarcated and marked.
19. Failure by the hosting club to comply with any of the requirements outlined in 12, 16 and 15, above, the club shall be summarily fined by the PLE for each violation, a fine of **E5, 000-00** for each violation.

Article 4: STARTING TIMES OF MATCHES

1. The dates and venues of matches shall be fixed by the Chief Executive Officer or designated officer in his/her absence, of the League who may delegate his powers to any League official.

2. Clubs shall be notified by the League of all fixtures changes in writing by no later than Twenty-Four (24) hours before the scheduled start of the match. Such notification shall include the date, time and venue when the said fixture will be played.
3. Should any club wish to request a change to a fixture, such request must be submitted at least Seven (7) days before the scheduled start of the match. Fixtures will only be amended in extreme circumstances, at the discretion of the PLE.
4. Save and except where permission to change a fixture has been applied for and given in terms of Article 4.2 and 4.3 above. No fixture may be changed in any manner whatsoever with the exception that the PLE shall have the right to alter fixtures in his sole discretion.
5. A club shall name the ground at which it prefers to play its home fixtures, as well as an alternative home ground. In this regard, if the League is of the opinion that it may be impractical to play a match at that venue, for any reason whatsoever then the League may at any time prior to any match under its auspices, fixture such match at an alternative venue or alternatively postpone such fixture.
6. If for any reason a club is unable to play its home fixture at its home ground, the League may order the club to play a fixture at a ground selected by the club as its alternative home ground or at an alternative venue determined by the League. All reasonable costs of whatsoever nature occasioned by the change shall be paid by the original home club.
7. The onus of securing a venue shall be on the home club, and save and except for Force Majeure, the club's failure to secure a venue shall be regarded as misconduct, and the club shall be deemed to have failed to fulfill its fixture/s and shall be deemed to have caused abandonment of the game. The club shall, if found guilty of such an offence lose the match, with three (3) points and three (3) goals awarded to their opponents and further fined not less than **E15.000.00** by the DC.
8. Should a match be abandoned by the Referee due to an electricity power failure in a match played under floodlights or due to Force Majeure, then the match will be replayed at a date, venue and time stipulated by the PLE. The gate takings of the replayed match shall be shared between the two clubs having deducted the percentage due to the League, stadium and Match Officials' costs.
9. Each club shall sign a pre-match form to be provided to the PLE 48hrs before the scheduled time of the match.
10. The team official from each club shall report to the PLE official at the venue of the match at least 120 minutes before the scheduled start of the game to enable a pre-match meeting as well as the inspection of any applicable health requirements of Players and Officials. Failure to report to the PLE Official shall be penalized with a summary fine of **E5,000.00** by the PLE.
11. The hosting team shall use the dressing room on the left-hand side when facing the pitch and the away team shall use the dressing room on right side of the pitch when facing the pitch.
12. Each club shall be at the card checking point ready for checking seventy minutes before the scheduled start of the match or as may be determined by the official countdown protocol of the

match. The PLE official will inform the clubs of any delay and further inform them of the new card checking time.

13. Failure of a football club to report, as in 4.11 above, shall be summarily fined an amount of **E5,000.00** by the PLE.
14. The playing license checking point shall normally be the dressing rooms of the stadium, and all clubs shall use such dressing rooms as directed by the Match Coordinator or Match Officials. Failure to comply with the officials' directive of using the dressing room shall render the club guilty of contravening this rule and liable to a summary fine of **E5 000-00** by the PLE.
15. At all stadiums, clubs shall adhere to instructions given by the Match Coordinator or Match Officials regarding the use of facilities. It shall be deemed an offence for clubs to ignore or not follow the instructions of the officials on this matter. Any club found guilty of contravening this rule shall be liable to a summary fine of **E10 000.00** by the PLE.
16. Each registered club shall have three sets of contrasting uniforms, for home and away fixtures and an alternate kit. The colours must be registered with the PLE office and be adhered to by all clubs. In cases of colour clashes, the away or visiting club shall be required to change uniform. Failure to comply with this rule may result in the game being abandoned or called off and if the game is abandoned or called off, the offending club shall be brought before the DC and if found guilty shall be fined an amount of not less than **E10 000-00** and further lose the match with three points and three goals awarded to their opponents.
17. Any club reporting for players license checking within fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start of the match, shall be summarily fined an amount of **E5 000-00** by the PLE.
18. Any club reporting for players license checking after fifteen minutes (15) minutes after the scheduled start of the match will result in the match being called off. The offending club shall be liable to a disciplinary hearing and if found guilty shall be fined an amount not less than **E15 000-00** and shall further be deemed to have caused the abandonment of the match and shall further lose the match, with three points and three goals awarded to their opponents.
19. After the players license checking formalities have been completed, clubs will be led into the field of play by the referees and/or match officials. A club contravening this rule and shall be summarily fined an amount of **E5 000-00** by the PLE.
20. A club that shall cause a delay of the start of the match shall be summarily fine E5 000.00 by the PLE.
21. Any club walking out, refusing to play a match or refusing to honour a fixture duly issued by the PLE and/or whose fan(s), supporter(s), official(s) invade the field of play and/or throw missiles/objects into the field of play which would result in the match officials stopping the game shall be deemed to have caused the abandonment of the match, and shall, if found guilty of such an offence shall lose the match, with Three (3) points and Three (3) goals awarded to their opponents, and a suspension of not more than Three (3) months imposed on them plus a fine of not less than **E20,000.00** by the DC.

22. The referee's report, where a match had already kicked-off and Match Commissioner's report in the event that the match had not kicked-off, shall provide conclusive proof as to which club abandoned or caused abandonment of the match. The Match Coordinator's report may be consulted.
23. Week 24, 25, and 26 of the second-round fixtures will be scheduled by the PLE in its sole discretion. However, all other timelines on communicating fixtures to teams still hold, as defined in these rules, depending on the state and to safeguard the integrity of the competition, the period of controlled fixture may be extended such that it starts earlier than the 23rd week.
24. Any match which is not played or which is abandoned or any withdrawal – except in cases of force majeure recognized by EFA – may lead to the imposition of sanctions against the relevant football club(s) by the EFA Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the EFA Disciplinary Code or any other applicable or equivalent code, over and above those provided for in these regulations.
25. The HEALTH pandemic and related circumstances are not, in and of themselves, considered cases of force majeure in respect to the implementation of this competition, unless or otherwise stated by EFA. However, examples of circumstances resulting from the HEALTH pandemic that may be submitted to the EFA for consideration as cases of force majeure include the following:
 - a. The national authorities announce just before a match is scheduled to be played, restrictions that prevent the match from being staged;
 - b. A participating football clubs/team and its team delegation members is not permitted to leave its place of domicile as a result of a complete lockdown or closed travel and there are no alternative provisions or exceptions for travel allowed;
 - c. A participating football club travelling to a place or an area where a match is scheduled to be played is refused entry and returned to its place or area of original domicile;
 - d. There is an insufficient number of match officials available to referee the match, even after alternative options to have enough match officials available have failed to materialize;
 - e. EFA has the sole discretion to determine cases of force majeure.
26. In any case, all matches scheduled to be played or replayed (*where applicable*) shall be executed in compliance with these regulations, including the HEALTH regulations, protocols and any other directives and decisions relating to the subject.

Article 5: MATCH OFFICIALS AND PLAY

1. The referees committee shall appoint the match officials to officiate in a match.
2. In the event of the non- availability of the Match Commissioner to discharge such a function, the Referee of the match in question, shall facilitate.

3. The match officials of each match shall arrive at the field of play at least two hours before the scheduled start of the match and if he fails, he shall be subjected to disciplinary action in terms of the Referees Code of Conduct.
4. Any referee who takes the field of play, one to fifteen minutes after the scheduled start of the match shall be subject to disciplinary action in terms of the Referees Code of Conduct. Failure to comply shall lead to the PLE, deducting 30% of the match official's allowances due for the match. The PLE Official's report shall provide conclusive proof as to the time of arrival of the Match Commissioner.
5. If 15 (fifteen) minutes after the scheduled start of the match, all referees fail to arrive, and The Match Commissioner cannot provide substitute referees, the Match Commissioner shall call off the match. The referees scheduled for this match shall be subject to disciplinary conduct in terms of the referee's code of conduct.
6. Member Clubs will upload duly completed team sheets on the FIFA/EFA CMS least 120 (One Hundred and Twenty) minutes prior to the start of the match.
7. Each Club shall present an electronic (digital) Player License for each player on the team sheet to the match commissioner for checking, at the checking point.
8. The team sheet will record the following information:-
 - a. The full names of the 11 (eleven) registered Players starting the match;
 - b. The full names of the 12 (twelve) substitutes registered Players who may be utilised during the match;
 - c. The full names of the 5 (five) Member Club Officials entitled to sit on the team bench;
 - d. The full names of the 2 (two) Member Club Officials entitled to sit on the additional two seats alongside the team bench.
 - e. Changes to the starting list on the team sheet may be made at any time prior to the start of the match provided that these are in compliance with the FIFA/EFA CMS Rules and Regulations.
 - f. A maximum of five (5) substitutes are allowed for each match, substitutions which must be done within three (3) substitution opportunities. A substitution done at half time does not count as part of the three (3) opportunities, and as such, it becomes an additional opportunity.
 - g. If a named substitute enters the field of play instead of a named starting Player at the start of the match and the requirements of Rule 6 have not been complied with the Member Club will be summarily fined **E1,500.00** (One thousand five hundred emalangeni).
 - h. If a Player's name appears on the final team sheet he will be deemed, for the purposes of these Rules, to have participated in the match.
9. Before the commencement of each match; the Match Commissioner, the Fourth (4th) official and the captains of both clubs or registered team official shall check the players against their players license and team sheets.

10. After a completion of the players license checking formalities, the Match Commissioner and the Referees shall formally lead the two clubs into the field of play. It shall be an offence for a club to refuse to follow Match Official's instruction. Any club that refuses to follow the referees' instruction shall be summarily fined an amount not exceeding **E10,000.00**.
11. The Match Officials may allow the clubs a period of warm up, if time and circumstances permit. It must be noted that clubs can go into the field of play for warm-up before inspection by the referees.
12. The Match Commissioner or Referees shall allow and lead teams to return into field of play during half time of the match. It shall be an offence for a team to return into the field of play without the referee's or match commissioner's permission and the club shall be summarily fined **E5,000.00**. The club shall enter the field of play to their own half that the team will defend during the second half of the game.
13. The Referee shall at the end of the match, compile and sign a match report in duplicate for the PLE which should contain the following:
 - a) Name of the competition;
 - b) Date and venue of the match;
 - c) Names of the referee and assistants referees;
 - d) Names of clubs;
 - e) Names of club captains;
 - f) Times of the start, half time and full time;
 - g) Half time and full-time score;
 - h) Substitutes used by each team;
 - i) Cards (red and yellow) issued to players or officials during the match for misconduct;
 - j) Any event that the referee considers worth reporting such as misconduct or violent behavior by any club/s, player/s, club official/s, fan/s etc.
 - k) Signature of the referee.
14. The Referee's report is to reach the offices of the PLE 24 hours after the match . Failure to adhere to this timeframe and to comply with Article 10 above shall NOT render the contents of the report null and void
15. Any Referee that fails to submit his report within the period as stated in Article 11 or to write a report as prescribed in Article 10 shall have 30% of his/her allowance for that match deducted and

paid to the PLE. Further delays in submitting the report will result in a further 10% deduction for each day that the report is delayed.

16. The Match Commissioner shall also prepare a match report and submit same to the PLE within the timelines prescribed in Article 5 (11) above stating any relevant material facts regarding the match. Both the Referee's report and that of the Match Commissioner shall provide conclusive proof pertaining to any circumstance(s) regarding the match. The reports, either the original or duplicate (bearing the PLE received stamp) shall be admissible evidence during the DC hearings.
17. The PLE may require the Match Coordinator to provide a report regarding any occurrence(s) at the stadium in addition to the reports referred in this Article of the Rules. The Match Commissioner, referee, Match Coordinator, shall report all occurrences of misbehavior by club(s), player(s), official(s) fans(s) etc. during and after the game and such report shall be conclusive proof pertaining to any circumstance (s) regarding the match.
18. At the end of every game, the clubs' coaches shall give Media an interview and such place will be identified by the Match Coordinator. Failure or refusal by a Coach to give such interview, the club shall be summarily fined an amount of **E5, 000-00** by the PLE.
19. The clubs' coaches dress code shall be either formal, smart casual or clubs' tracksuits. Failure to comply with this provision, the coach shall be summarily fined **E5, 000.00**, and the club whose coach has violated this provision shall be fined **E5, 000.00**.
20. All people in the technical area shall be qualified or licensed in terms of the prevailing qualifications and applicable licenses, as determined by the EFA over and above that all persons in the technical area must be listed on the matchday team sheet. A summary of **E3, 000.00** per individual having violated this provision shall be effected.
21. All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game in force as laid down by the International Football Association Board (IFAB). Each match shall last 90 minutes, comprising of two periods of 45 minutes, with a half-time interval of 15 minutes.
22. The number of substitutions in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game, as approved by the IFAB, and in respect of the league competition, five (5) substitutions are permitted as follows:
 - a) During the match, each team:
 - i. May use a maximum of five (5) substitutes;
 - ii. Has a maximum of three (3) substitution opportunities;
 - iii. May additionally make substitutions at half time.
 - b) Where both teams make a substitution at the same time, this will count as a used substitution opportunity for each team. The use of return substitutes is not an option for senior competitions.
23. If the referee is prevented from carrying out his/her duties, such referee shall be replaced by the forth official. The same applies for either of the assistant referees if a reserve assistant referee is not appointed. In such a case, a minimum of three match officials are needed to referee the match.

Article 6:

SERIOUS PLAYER/CLUB MISCONDUCT

1. DISMISSALS

- a) Any player dismissed from the field of play by the referee (i.e. "red carded" or sent off, including dismissal as a result of two (2) yellow cards awarded in the same match) for the first time in any season shall be suspended from participation in the next one (1) match to be played by his team in any official competition under the auspices of the PLE and this Rule shall duly be affected by any subsequent amendment by FIFA as the case may be. Any club fielding a suspended player shall be summarily fined **E10, 000.00** by the PLE, and this shall preclude any affected team to lodge a protest in terms of these rules.
- b) For each subsequent occasion that a player is suspended during the same season the period of suspension shall be increased by one (1) match from the suspension previously served.
- c) Any period of suspension or part thereof of which remains outstanding at the end of a season must be served at the start of the following or next season.
- d) The League shall be responsible for keeping all records relating to cautions, dismissals and suspensions shall be publicized and only the League's records shall be considered accurate and binding.
- e) This Rule shall only be applicable to cautions and dismissals that occur in a match forming part of an official competition of the League. For the purposes of this Rule, "official competition" shall not include Charity cup fixtures.
- f) The provisions of Rule 6.1 a) to d), above shall also apply to team officials who are dismissed from the field of play, including the technical area. When under suspension club officials may not enter the confines of the field, including the technical area or official area. The Referee will be the sole judge of what constitutes the technical area in question while the Match Commissioner shall determine what constitutes the official area at any given match.
- g) Where a player or official transfers to a new club during a period of suspension, cautions and dismissals, the counting shall also transfer to the new club from the time when the player or official becomes eligible for the new club.

2. CAUTIONS

- a) Any player who accumulates three (3) cautions (i.e. "yellow cards") in any season shall be suspended from participation in the next one (1) match to be played by his team in any official competition under the auspices of the PLE.
- b) Where a player receives a red card in a match any yellow card received by the player in that particular match shall not be counted for the purposes of this Rule.

- c) Once the player has served the suspension the player's total number of accumulated cautions will revert to zero (0) and counting will resume again. The cycle of counting of cautions and the resulting suspension may be repeated any number of times in a season.
- d) Players who have accumulated cautions and are transferred to a new club within the same playing season shall carry over such cautions to the new club.
- e) A player who has received a red card will automatically have his playing license suspended.
- f) It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that all its players are eligible to play in this competition. Any club contravening this rule shall be deemed to have fielded a defaulter.
- g) Notwithstanding any provision in these rules, the PLE reserves the right to charge any player and/or club that contravenes Article 2.5, and if found guilty the offending club shall lose three points and three goals from the total number of points accumulated by the offending club. The offending player may further be suspended up to three months.
- h) Any club fielding a defaulter shall, upon protest by the Opposing team, be found guilty of misconduct and shall be liable to **lose the game forfeiting three points and three goals to the opposing club and shall further be fined not less than E5, 000.00 (five thousand Emalangeni) payable within 21 days**. The player if found guilty shall be suspended for all matches until he is eligible to play.
- i) All football clubs of the National First Division must utilize the services of qualified football coaches in terms of the requirements laid down in the Coaching regulations or policy and any circular or directive (which are compulsory and binding) from the EFA on the subject. A club that knowingly utilizes a coach who does not conform to all the licensing requirements shall be liable to a fine of not less than E10, 000.00 on the first instance.
- j) A repeat of a violation by a club for the second and subsequent times in a season carries a fine of not less than E15, 000.00.
- k) A club losing the head coach or coach during the course of the season will be given a grace period of one game/match to search for a coach. However, during the grace period, the club must appoint an acting coach, who is a qualified coach in terms of the EFA Coaching Qualifications, whose application to act as a coach for the maximum interim (grace) period, stated in these rules, must have been similarly done as that of the substantive coach (i.e. application for acting with the EFA). After the grace period, failure by the club to have an appropriately licensed coach shall result in the deduction of points from the defaulting team, until the team secures an appropriately licensed coach in terms of these rules.

Article 7: OTHER UNSPORTING BEHAVIOUR AND VIOLENT MISCONDUCT

1. Any club whose member(s), player(s), official(s) marshal(s) or supporter(s) engage in unsporting or violent misconduct either before, during or after a match shall be liable to punishment. The following offences shall be punishable in the following ways:

- a) Invading the pitch before, during, and after a game by a supporters), fan(s), a marshal(s) or spectator(s) (unless authorized by official in a final) - a summary fine of **E5 000.00** by the PLE.
- b) Threatening by conduct or words to assault or attempt to assault a referee, PLE official, player, club official, marshal, supporter, fan, spectator- a minimum fine of **E5,000.00** and a maximum fine of **E20, 000.00**. In addition, the offending club shall be ordered to compensate the victim for any financial loss incurred due to the assault by the DC.
- c) Assaulting a referee, PLE official, player, club official, marshal, supporter, fan, spectator or the use of excessive force shall be punished with a fine of not less than **E20 000-00** by the DC. In addition, the offending club shall be ordered to compensate the victim for any financial loss incurred due to the assault
- d) Uttering abusive or obscene or derogatory words, spitting or emission of saliva onto any person or directed towards a person - a minimum of **E10, 000.00** and a maximum of **E20, 000.00** by the DC. This should also include players where players can incite fans, opposing players and officials, etc.
- e) Use of provocative or insulting gestures or signals, unbecoming behavior or conspiracy or attempt to act to bring football into disrepute or inciting people to behave in a manner that brings the game of football into disrepute - a minimum of **E5, 000.00** and a maximum of **E20,000.00** by the DC.
- f) Throwing objects of any kind onto the field of play or its surroundings or unto any person(s) thus assaulting or attempting to assault and invading the field of play - a fine of not less than **E5 000.00** by the DC.
- g) Failure to control fan(s), supporter(s), official(s), marshal(s) - a fine not less than **E10,000.00** by the DC.
- h) Maliciously damaging or attempting to damage property in the stadium – a fine of not less than **E 5,000.00**
- i) Committing any act of violence of whatsoever nature not provided for in these Rules – minimum fine of **E 10,000.00**
- j) To directly or indirectly interrupt, obstruct or disturb the normal proceedings of a match before, during or after the match – a fine of not less than **E 5,000.00** by the DC
- k) Failing to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and committing any other act of unsporting behaviour – a minimum fine of **E5,000.00**.
- l) Refusal to adhere to any directives of the Executive Committee – summary fine of **E 5,000.00**.

- m) Failure to comply with any of the regulations set out in the HEALTH Regulations and HEALTH protocols shall be punishable by a summary fine not exceeding **E 5,000.00** depending on the severity of the breach.
2. Notwithstanding, the provisions of Article 7 (1) above, the PLE reserves the right to charge any player, official, marshal, supporter, fan, spectator positively identified by the Referee or Match Commissioner or PLE Official to have contravened any of Article 7(1) and if found guilty he/shall be punished in accordance with the EFA Statutes and/or the EFA rules and regulations or the EFA Disciplinary Code.
3. Member(s), player(s), official(s), supporter(s), fan(s), and spectator(s) shall include the following:
- a) Any person wearing articles of a colour commonly associated with the colour of the offending club, e.g. scarf, badge, etc., and/or,
 - b) Any person who is seated at a stand or section of a stadium that is occupied by the followers of the offending club when the offence is committed and/or,
 - c) Any person known to the PLE Official to be a member, player, marshal, official, supporter or fan of one of the clubs and/or,
 - d) Any person who commits the offence in furtherance or support of the offending club's interest or favour.
4. Clubs are expected to post marshals in the stands to control their crowds and the marshals should police the proceedings and submit any offender to the police for criminal prosecution if they misbehave. Such incidents must be brought to the attention of the PLE official to serve as a mitigating factor in the case that the club is charged for misbehavior of its supporters, fans or members.
5. Use of any substance that is alien to, or is foreign to, a football field or stadium is not allowed, and:-
- a) It shall be an offence for a club, if its supporters, fans, officials and players, are seen using any substance that is alien to, or is foreign to, a football field or stadium. Any club identified by the Referee/Match Commissioner or the Match Coordinator committing this offence shall be summarily fined an amount of **E10,000.00** by the PLE.
 - b) The Referee's report/Match Commissioner/ Stadium representative's report shall provide conclusive proof regarding the use of substance as outlined in Article 7 (5) (a) above.
6. If a club appears before the DC for a second time on the similar charges of violence and if found guilty, the DC shall double the fine. Further to that a club shall lose three (3) points and three (3) goals from their accumulated number of points and goals.

7. The PLE shall provide copies of the EFA Statutes to the members of the DC.
8. The DC shall have power to sit over a case even if the other party is not represented if the DC is satisfied that such party was informed of the date, time and venue of the hearing. The decision of the DC shall be binding to all parties concerned herein.
9. In the event that a party has been properly served with the notice to sit for a hearing, and the matter has to be postponed due to the party's unavailability, the DC may order the said party to pay the costs related to the postponement of the case. Such hence proof of payment produced before the sitting.

Article 8: THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE, POWERS AND THE INSTITUTION OF DISCIPLINARY CHARGES

1. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned disciplinary procedures, the DC shall have the liberty to use the disciplinary measures as outlined in the Rules and Regulations of the Statutes of the EFA.
2. Where these Rules do not prescribe any sentence for any transgression, misconduct or unsporting behavior, the DC shall exercise its discretion in meting out an appropriate fine or such other sentence as provided in the PLE and/or EFA Constitution. The amount of fine in such instances shall not be less than **E 5,000.00**.
3. Disciplinary charges shall be instituted by the Prosecutor in line with the PLE Disciplinary code

Article 9: SPONSORSHIP TERMS AND COMMERCIAL RIGHTS

1. As a principle, EFA, in conformity with the EFA Statutes is the original owner of all rights emanating from all competitions in its territory, as a collective whole, as well as from any other related events coming under its jurisdiction, without any restrictions as to content, time, place and law. These rights include, among others, all kinds of financial rights, audiovisual and radio recording, reproduction and broadcasting rights, multimedia rights, marketing and promotional rights incorporeal rights (such as those pertaining to emblems) as well as rights arising under copyright law whether currently existing or created in the future, subject to any provision as set forth in specific regulations.
2. All participating football clubs must comply with the PLE Handbook and Compliance Manual in respect to Media and Marketing regulations, including sponsorship terms and they must ensure that their members, officials, players, delegates and other applicable third parties also comply with these regulations.
3. All participating clubs shall wear outfits or soccer jerseys with the appropriate markings of the MTN logo on one sleeve of the soccer jerseys and on the shorts during all matches of this league competition. The badges shall be those designed and specified by MTN, and obtainable from the PLE Office in Mbabane.
4. Any club(s) that contravenes Article 9 (2) and (3) hereinabove shall be liable to a sanction of a Summary Fine in the amount of **E5,000.00**.

5. All participating clubs shall avail any of their members/players to MTN for advertising Campaigns at no cost to the MTN Group. The use of players from the National First Division by the sponsor for advertising purposes shall be negotiated via the PLE office on a case by case basis.
6. No club shall have direct communication with the sponsor for whatever reason. Any breach of this rule shall be punishable with a fine of not less than **E10, 000.00**.

Article 10: PROTESTS, APPEALS AND FEES

1. Member Clubs will upload duly completed team sheets on the FIFA/EFA CMS least 120 (One Hundred and Twenty) minutes prior to the start of the match
2. Each Club shall present an electronic (digital) Player License for each player on the team sheet to the match commissioner for checking, at the checking point.
3. Clubs shall submit duly completed team list in eight (8) duplicates to the match officials on arrival at the match venue or stadium prior to the start of play, as regulated in these rules. Such list shall include:
 - a) The full names of Eleven (11) players starting the match;
 - b) The full names of Twelve (12) substitutes which may be utilized during the match;
 - c) The full names-of seven (7) club officials positioned in the technical areas for the match.
4. Any protest involving defaulters shall duly be made immediately after inspection of both teams at the dressing rooms or such other allocated point of inspection in terms of these rules otherwise the protest shall be rendered null and void.
5. Any other protest shall be lodged with the referee at the time when it occurs; otherwise it shall be null and void. A decision taken by the referee during the course of the match shall not be subject to protest.
6. Both captains and the referee must sign the protest for acknowledgement. Should any captain refuse to sign the protest, the Referee and/or the Match Commissioner shall indicate that in his/their report(s).
7. Club captains shall not refuse to sign a protest lodged by another club. Offending clubs shall be summarily fined an amount of **E2, 000.00** by the PLE.
8. Confirmation of a protest in writing plus supporting evidence in duplicate must reach the PLE office **WITHIN TWO WORKING DAYS**, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays, after the match otherwise it shall be null and void. A bank stamped deposit slip for a **NON-REFUNDABLE PROTEST FEE** of **E3 000-00** shall accompany the confirmation. The team that loses the protest shall be required to pay costs of the sitting as calculated by the PLE. A protesting club that fails to confirm its protest or abandons it shall be summarily fined **E5, 000.00** by the PLE.
9. Upon receipt of a protest, the PLE shall charge the offending party with committing the offence complained about and institute a disciplinary hearing as soon as possible, wherein the said

protest shall be tabled before the DC for determination. The protesting club bears the onus to prove its case.

10. **The DC shall dismiss the protest if it is deemed frivolous or vexatious on the face of it, failing which the Disciplinary hearing shall proceed.**
11. The protesting club shall have the right to appeal against the decision of the DC not to entertain the protest or dismiss the protest in terms of these Rules.
12. The protesting club shall have the right to be presented and give evidence before the Disciplinary Committee hearing the charge/s against the offending party. The National First Division may subpoena any party under its jurisdiction and/or request the EFA to subpoena such person to give evidence or produce any book, paper or document at the hearing. The protesting club and the offending party shall have the right of appeal to the EFA Appeals Committee against any decision of the Disciplinary Committee.
13. A club may be represented by a person of their choice as per the FIFA and EFA statutes or regulations, provided the representative is not a former employee of the organization or if a former employee, he/she must have been at least three years out of the employment of the organization.
14. In the event that a party has been properly served with the notice to sit for a hearing and the matter has to be postponed due to the party's unavailability, the DC is empowered to order the said party to pay the costs related to the postponement of the case; that includes the sitting and travelling allowances of all concerned or in the event a club requests for postponement.
 - a) Such costs shall be calculated by the office and shall be payable to the office within seven (7) calendar days unless the next sitting has been set within a period less than the 7 days where the payment shall be made before the next sitting.
 - b) In the event the party having requested for the postponement fails to pay within the stipulated timeframe the case shall proceed with the club fined not less than **E5,000.00** in addition to the costs in question.
15. A club which shall need to produce evidence from the office or any other EFA Member shall request such evidence in writing.
16. Any club that has been found guilty shall pay all costs of the hearing (e.g. DC sitting, prosecutors, their travelling expenses, half protest fee over and above the fine imposed).
17. Any club that is not satisfied with the decision of the DC shall have the right to appeal. An appeal shall be made to the EFA Appeals Committee within **FIVE WORKING DAYS** after the written verdict of the DC; otherwise it shall be null and void. A non-refundable fee amounting to **E5, 000.00** must accompany the appeal.
18. **Complaints shall not be treated as a protest nor shall it warrant for a hearing as it assists administration as they manage the competition.**

Article 11: LEAGUE POSITIONS, RELEGATION AND PROMOTION OF CLUBS

1. The number of points accumulated at the end of the second round shall determine positions in this competition. The final and officially completed log shall be binding on all clubs and officials, and will be used for the purpose of resolving disputes that should arise due to any unforeseen circumstances. A copy of the final and complete log shall be sent to all clubs by the PLE.
2. The Member Clubs that end the Season in the top 2 (two) positions of the National First Division league table shall be promoted to the Premier Division .
3. The football club accumulating the most points on completion of the league shall be declared the winner.
4. In the case of failure of 3 above , positions in the log will be determined by the head to head encounter(s) on the tying teams.
 - a) As a principle, the log standings shall be, as from the very first round of matches, of the competition be determined and/or published in terms of the head-to-head rule.
 - b) The head-to-head rule shall be applicable even when a single round of matches has been played in the league or a single match has been played between two tying teams. The head-to-head rule therefore is applicable at any point of the procession of the league in the determination of the log standings.
 - c) The head-to-head rule also has as an inherent rule, the away-goal-rule. In the away-goal-rule, the team that has scored more goals “away from home” wins, if the total number of goals scored by each team are otherwise equal. This away-goal-rule shall also be utilized in the determination of the log standings under the head-to-head rule at any point of the procession of the league matches, irrespective of whether the league has finished or not or the teams tying on points have played a single match.
5. In the case of the failure of 3 and 4, the positions on the log will be determined by the best goal difference.
6. If 3, 4 and 5 are not decisive, the club having scored the most goals shall be declared the winner.
7. If 3, 4, 5 and 6 fail to produce a clear position, and then a play-off match which shall proceed straight to penalties, if the game ends in a draw in regulation time (90 minutes) shall be played by the contesting clubs to determine the winner at a neutral venue.
8. The **four (4)** clubs that have the least number of points on completion of the league and/or positioned fourteenth (11th) (12th) (13th)and (14th) in the final log standing, shall be automatically relegated from the National First Division to their respective EFA Regional Super leagues, while the 4 (four) EFA Regional Super League Champions will be promoted to the National First Division of the

League. In determining the clubs to be relegated the format provided in Article 11(3), 11(4), 11(5), 11(6) 11 (7) herein shall be used.

Article 12: PROVISIONS

The provisions of Article 11 and any other provisions related, is subject to any amendments and/or directives or decisions on the structure of the League as may be pronounced by the EFA, where applicable.

Article 13: PRESS STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Each club shall be responsible for advertising its matches through the media. Clubs shall furnish the PLE with the name, addresses, E-mail, telephone and fax numbers, of the person who shall act in this capacity.
2. The PLE Chief Executive Officer shall be entitled to publish in the press, or in any other media, reports of activities related to the PLE League.
3. Clubs, officials, supporters, fans shall not publish or make statements that may bring the sponsors, the PLE and all its Sub-Committees into disrepute. Anyone or any club that commits this offence shall be brought before the DC for disciplinary action, and if found guilty, the person's) and/or the club(s) shall be fined an amount not exceeding **E5 000-00** by the DC.
4. A club shall release the coach and the captain to attend a compulsory pre and post-match interview at a venue determined by the league. Failure to attend by anyone of the two individuals shall attract a summary fine of **E2, 000.00** per incident, which shall be paid by the club. The fine shall increase by sum of **E2, 000.00**, for each repeated transgression by the offender.

Article 14: CLUB LICENSING AND COACH LICENSING

1. Principle

As a principle, all football clubs of the National First Division must conform to the Club Licensing and Coach Licensing Regulations requirements to participate in the 2024/2025 Football Season competitions.

2. All Club Licensing application, registration, implementation, monitoring and sanctioning shall be done exclusively by the EFA in terms of the prevailing regulations for Club Licensing in line with the requirements of the CAF Club Licensing System. The PLE may decide to have additional requirements aimed at enhancing the professionalization of clubs and competitions under its auspices.
3. All football clubs of the National First Division must utilize the services of qualified football coaches in terms of the requirements laid down in these rules, the Coaching regulations or policy and any circular or directive (*which are compulsory and binding*) from the EFA on the subject.

4. Applicable Coaching Licenses for National First Division in the 2024/2025 football season

- a. All coaches of the PL Football Clubs, irrespective of whether the coach is a Head Coach or Assistant Coach, shall possess, **as a minimum requirement, the CAF License B and must be members of the EFA (through the recognized Coaches Association)**, to qualify to be licensed and sit in the Technical Area (*bench*) during a football club's official competitions matches for the 2024/2025 football season. Fitness and goalkeeper coaches should possess, as a minimum, basic certificates in physical conditioning or fitness coaching and goalkeeping respectively.
- i. All Coaches shall submit the valid Coach License (*with License Number*) in the name of the football club in question (*attained from the EFA in terms of the applicable coaching regulations or directives and payment of a **E50.00** license fee with the EFA*), at the license checking point of the team/club, as is the case for team players. It is therefore a must, that all coaches shall carry their Valid License to their club's respective matches.
- ii. For the 2024/2025 season; Coaches or football clubs/teams whose coaches have not yet attained the minimum Diploma in Coaching Certificate may be allowed to coach on condition they fulfil the following exclusive criteria:
1. The coach is attending or in an ongoing CAF License Coaching Course; or
 2. The coach has submitted his/her registration to the EFA Technical Director for training towards the attainment of the EFA Diploma Coaching Certificate with proof of payment for the course fees, in possession of both the club and coach. A receipt of payment generated from the EFA Finance Office is the authentic proof of payment.
- iii. Upon satisfaction of the above requirements, coaches shall be accorded licenses to coach as student coaches; licenses which are also attainable from the EFA Licensing department upon payment of E50.00 license fee.
- iv. Names submitted for the purposes of training towards the minimum required license must have been received by the EFA and approved (*with a license card*) before the first match of the club in the current season or the match for which the coach has been engaged to coach the club (*in the case of newly hired or engaged coaches or those coaches engaged in the middle of the season or competition*), at the latest.

- b. Failure by both the club and the coach to conform to these directives shall deprive the club from having the service of its coach at the technical bench and attract further sanctions for any match the club plays without a qualified licensed coach, or presence of an ineligible coach, sanctions which are articulated in this article. The same applies to the coach in question.
- c. Coaches that do not conform to all of the above-mentioned requirements (*i.e. all the provisions of article 14 (2) (a-b) in full shall be ineligible*) and that such ineligible coaches and the club/team that will utilize such coaches or violate the provisions of these rules shall be sanctioned in terms of these rules and any other sets of regulations and directives as they relate to the subject.

5. Membership of coaches with the EFA

- a. As a principle, all coaches practicing as coaches of clubs or teams, irrespective of whether they are student coaches, in competitions under the territory of the EFA, must be members of the EFA.
- b. All coaches shall be fully paid up members of the EFA, through the Swaziland Football Coaches Association (SFCA) at the instance of the registration of the coach for the current season and License Card (*Coaching License*).
- c. In view of the fact that a body or an organization for coaches, recognized and in membership with the EFA already exists, in the frame of the Swaziland Football Coaches Association (SFCA), coaches must have subscribed and be up-to-date with their subscriptions or membership by the effective date. The registry of coaches with the SFCA shall provide proof of the status quo on the membership database of coaches in the country.
- d. Any Coache who does not conform to this requirement shall not be allowed to sit in the Technical Area or specific areas in the vicinity of the field of play during their respective clubs' official matches, until the requirement has been met in full. Coaches are liable to further sanctions as may be determined by these rules and/or the Coaching Regulations and Policy and/or disciplinary body of the EFA in view of the EFA, CAF and FIFA statutes, regulations, directives and disciplinary code as they relate to this subject.

6. Restriction of coaches and ban from the team's Technical Area at the match venue

- a. In principle, the Technical Area is under the control of the Head Coach and only the Head Coach and/or his/her assistant(s) are allowed to make movements or coaching gestures around the Technical Area in line with the Laws of the Game and in pursuit of their professional work.
- b. All other personnel, that is, medical attendants, players and other officials and support staff are not allowed to make any movements, unless

specifically required to do so in conformity to the Laws of the Game, i.e. players required to warm-up; or medical assistants requested by the referee or match officials to attend to an injury; or officials required to perform a specific function by the referee or match officials in pursuit of the Laws of the Game.

- c. No coach and/or his/her assistants who have been banned shall be allowed to sit in the Technical Area or be allowed to make movements or sit in specific areas of the match venue. In this view a coach who has been banned from coaching his club in a particular match shall sit in the general stands.
- d. A suspended coach shall not sit in the VIP areas of the match venue or any other areas dedicated for such in venues without such demarcations.
- e. A coach sitting in the general stands shall not be expected to be seen to make coaching gestures and/or shouting or communicating instructions to his technical bench or team in the field of play. The coach shall further not be allowed into the dressing rooms or an area designated for such at half-time or access to the team at the instance of any recess provided in terms of the Laws of the Game.
- f. Executive Committee members of the EFA, member associations and leagues; fulltime employees of the EFA, member associations and leagues shall not be allowed to practice as coaches for football clubs, even if they qualify. No license shall be granted to them.

7. Requirements for Foreign Coaches

- a. As a principle, all foreign coaches who are sought or who wish to practice coaching in the country at the level of the National First Division shall be expected to possess the minimum applicable License requirements applicable in the Premier League.
- b. Further to the above and as a principle, foreign coaches, are expected to have applied for and obtained work permits from the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (*Immigration Department of the Ministry of Home affairs*) before being allowed to practice as coaches of football in the country.
- c. Foreign Coaches, over and above their requirements of obtaining work permits and other immigration requirements in conformity to the laws of the country, shall be expected to abide by all the requirements of these rules and that of the Coaching Policy and directives relating to such.
- d. The EFA shall not grant permission to a foreign coach who shall not satisfy the requirements of these rules and that of the Coaching policy and applicable directives. In the quest to ascertain the qualifications of a foreign

coach, the EFA, if not satisfied with the qualifications presented before it, may decide to give the coach an Oral, Theoretical and Practical Examination equivalent to the minimum License qualification of the National First Division or National First Division League of the EFA Diploma Coaching Course, to determine if the coach may be allowed to practice coaching in the territory of the EFA.

- e. Neither the coach nor the club which seeks services of the coach shall refuse the undertaking of an examination. A coach who refuses shall automatically be banned from practicing as a coach in any league of the country whilst the club, if found guilty, shall be liable to a fine and any further sanctions as may be determined, relating to this subject.

8. License, Validity, Suspension and Withdrawal

- a. A Coaching License is valid for only one football season.
- b. All coaches shall be expected to make an application for a renewal of a License in the following season and at the beginning of every subsequent season.
- c. A license may be suspended or withdrawn on account of a default or a misrepresentation by the coach as may be determined by the disciplinary body or licensing body.
- d. A license shall be automatically suspended on the suspension of a coach, on sanctions relating to football.
- e. A license shall be withdrawn on account of perpetual violation of the provisions of these rules, the coaching regulations and any other applicable directives on the subject.

9. Sanctions to defaulting Coaches and/or Clubs

- a. In principle, all coaches and clubs shall be expected to observe the directives and requirements of these rules, regulations, the Coaching Policy and directives (*circulars*).
- b. The following shall be the sanctions for the violation of the provisions and/or directives of these rules, the coaching policy and applicable directives. Further sanctions shall be contained in the Coaching Policy Document.
 - i. A coach that has been banned from sitting in the Technical Area or banned from coaching his club in a particular match (*as stated in these rules*) shall sit in the general stands. No coach that has been banned from coaching a club shall sit in the VIP areas of the match venue.

- ii. A banned coach sitting in the general stands shall not be seen to make coaching gestures and/or shouting or communicating instructions to his technical bench or team in the field of play for the duration of the match for which he or she is banned.
- iii. The coach shall further not be allowed into the dressing rooms at half-time nor access to the team at half time, in the cases of venues where there are no dressing rooms nor access to the team at the instance of any recess provided in terms of the Laws of the Game.
- iv. A Coach failing to observe sections 9 (b) (i-ii) above, shall be liable to a fine of not less than **E5, 000.00** and be further banned for two (2) matches when he or she finally conforms to the requirements. Further sanctions as may be determined by these rules, the Coaching Regulations and Policy and/or disciplinary body of the EFA in view of the EFA, CAF and FIFA statutes, regulations, directives and disciplinary code as they relate to this subject may be meted to the coach.
- v. A repeat of a violation by a coach for the second and subsequent times in a season carries a fine of not less than **E5, 000.00**, a further four (4) match ban once conformed and further disciplinary action as stated in 9 (b) (iii) shall be meted to the coach.
- vi. A club that knowingly utilizes a coach who does not conform to all the licensing requirements applicable to its respective league as stipulated in these rules, the Coaching Policy, circular and/or directives on this subject, shall if found guilty, be liable to a fine of not less than **E5, 000.00**, a further two (2) match ban without the services of a properly licensed coach, other than the one banned for and further disciplinary action in accordance with this circular and the coaching regulations.
- vii. A repeat of a violation by a club for the second and subsequent times in a season carries a fine of not less than **E15, 000.00**, a further four (4) match ban without the services of a properly licensed coach other than the one banned and further disciplinary action in accordance with these rules, the coaching policy and a circular on such if applicable.
- viii. A club losing the head coach or coach during the course of the season will be given a grace period of one game/match to search for a coach. However, during the grace period, the club must appoint an acting coach, who is a qualified coach in terms of the EFA Coaching Qualifications, whose application to act as a coach for the maximum interim (*grace*) period, stated in these rules, must have been similarly done as that of the substantive coach (*i.e. application for acting with*

the EFA). After the grace period, failure by the club to have an appropriately licensed coach shall result in the deduction of points from the defaulting team, until the team secures an appropriately licensed coach in terms of these rules.

- ix. Perpetual defaulting coaches will have their licenses withdrawn, if already in possession, be blacklisted and face expulsion from all football activities under the auspices of the EFA.
- x. Perpetual defaulting clubs will have their licenses withdrawn or meted with sanctions as may be decided by the relevant authority, including the deduction of points for matches of a league competition or disqualification in the case of a knockout competition or tournament.

10. Waiver of requirement in a particular match

- a. If for reasons beyond the control of the coach, the registration office has not produced a coach license card, the structure responsible for the monitoring and implementation of these directives shall be accorded, by the EFA, with a communication waiving the possession of the card or applicable requirement for only the specific match(es) affected.
- b. A waiver, may be accompanied by specific conditions which shall be conformed to without fail and shall be binding to all parties.

11. Monitoring and Implementation body

- a. The EFA has tasked the Premier League, Technical Committee, the Competitions Committees and match officials to monitor the application and observance of these rules, Coaching Regulations and Policy and circular, as they relate to this subject, where all coaches shall be expected to produce their licenses with the Match officials of their respective matches for verification.
- b. It shall be the duty of the coach and/or club in question, to ensure that a coach's license is valid and verified for every match.
- c. The match commissioners, match supervisors or equivalent or officials tasked for this purpose, are expected to complete, together with the other match reports, a report on the coaching licensing application and submit it to the regional association office, for use in the disciplinary action on the coaches and clubs with respect to the subject of club or coach licensing.
- d. The EFA reserves the right to do spot checks and/or mete sanctions, where omissions have occurred.

Article 15: GENERAL

1. Entrance fees at all matches shall be a minimum of **E20-00** and a maximum of **E30-00**. Children below the age of 12 years will be charged half. For category A games the charge shall not exceed **E30.00** and/or in case of a double header; the entrance fee shall not exceed **E40.00**.
2. The PLE shall collect 20% of the gross gate takings from all matches played in this tournament.
3. In the event of any dispute or conflict arising between these rules and the Constitution of the PLE or the PLE Handbook and Compliance Manual then the PLE Statutes shall take precedence followed by the EFA Statutes.
4. Failing to attend an official event and or official meetings shall result in a summary fine of ten thousand Emalangeni (E10.000.00).

Article 16: PAYMENTS TO THE PLE

1. All clubs are directed to utilize the PLE Cheque Accounts held at Swazi Bank, Mbabane Branch when making payments; For affiliation and registration; **77022831533**; for protest fees, **77022831517**; and for fines, **77022831576**.
2. After making a deposit, the club should proceed to the PLE office with the stamped Bank deposit slip where they shall be furnished with a PLE receipt by the Accounts/Administration Officer, as acknowledgement of payment/deposit.
3. Fines imposed by the PLE to club (s), player (s) and/or official (s) are payable within twenty-one (21) days. The PLE shall have power to suspend the defaulting club (s), player (s) and/or official (s) for non-payment. Such dues are subject to the normal rates of interest as may be determined by the PLE.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: **2024/2025 SEASON MATCH COUNT DOWN** (Standard Match Day Program)

TIME BEFORE KICK OFF (hr/min)	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
4hr	Stadium Management Keys to Clubs	PLE Coordinator to supervise handover of Keys to Clubs
3hr/2hr	Prematch Meeting in the case of Live TV Broadcast	Match Commissioner
120 (one hundred and twenty)	Deadline of uploading Team List on FCMS	Team Reps
90 (ninety)	Final teams list to the Match Commissioner – Home Team	Home Team Manager
90 (ninety)	Final team list to the Match Commissioner – Away team	Away Team Manager
60 (sixty)	Teams' inspection in Dressing rooms	Team managers
60 (sixty)	Inspection of cards, Home team first	Match commissioner
60 (sixty)	Interviews of the coaches on the field	Team media officers, Broadcaster
55 (fifty-five)	Warm-up commences	
30 (thirty)	Meeting of match commissioner and doctors	Match commissioner, team reps
15 (fifteen)	Teams to leave the field	4th (fourth) official
8 (eight)	Team to be called from dressing rooms	4th (fourth) official
5 (five)	Teams to be ready in the tunnel for inspection	Team managers, match officials
4 (four)	Walkout of teams	Broadcaster, match commissioner
2 (two)	Team photos	
1 (one)	Coin toss	
0 (zero)	Kick-off	Referee

NB:

1. Teams and Officials are expected to leave the stadium within 15 minutes after the conclusion of the match.
2. No team is allowed to remain and watch the other match in case where double or more headers are concerned.
3. No team is allowed to arrive earlier than the stipulated time of its respective scheduled match.