

To the members of FIFA

Circular no. 1132

Zurich, 27 December 2007

GS/mav-ebr

Sporting integrity – principles of promotion and relegation

Dear Sir or Madam,

In accordance with article 2 (e) of the FIFA Statutes, FIFA is committed to preventing all methods or practices which might jeopardise the integrity of matches or competitions or give rise to abuse of association football.

One corollary of this objective is the principle that entitlement to take part in a domestic league championship must depend primarily on *sporting* merit. This entitlement can also be made conditional upon the fulfilment of particular financial criteria set as part of club licensing procedures.

There have recently been cases of attempts to facilitate qualification for a particular competition and/or the issue of a licence through the implementation at short notice of procedures permitted under company law. Pursuant to the above-mentioned provision of the FIFA Statutes, such practices, which compromise the sporting integrity of competitions, must be combated and prevented. To this end, the FIFA Executive Committee passed the following decision at its last meeting:

- 1 A club's entitlement to take part in a domestic league championship shall depend principally on sporting merit. A club shall qualify for a domestic league championship by remaining in a certain division or by being promoted or relegated to another at the end of a season.
- 2 In addition to qualification on sporting merit, a club's participation in a domestic league championship may be subject to other criteria within the scope of the licensing procedure, whereby the emphasis is on infrastructural, administrative, legal and financial considerations. Licensing decisions must be able to be examined by the Member's body of appeal.
- 3 Altering the legal form or company structure of a club to facilitate its qualification on sporting merit and/or its receipt of a licence for a domestic league championship, to the detriment of the integrity of a sports competition, is prohibited. This includes, for example, changing the headquarters, changing the name or transferring stakeholdings between different clubs. Prohibitive decisions must be able to be examined by the Member's body of appeal.
4. Each member is responsible for deciding national issues, which may not be delegated to the leagues. Each confederation is responsible for deciding issues involving more than one



association concerning its own territory. FIFA is responsible for deciding international issues involving more than one confederation.

The FIFA Executive Committee further decided to introduce the above provisions with immediate effect. Consequently, member associations and leagues are requested to take immediate and concerted action to prevent such practices should they become aware of them.

In order to document these new binding measures on member associations, the FIFA Executive Committee will submit a proposal to the next FIFA Congress to include a corresponding provision in the FIFA Statutes.

We thank you for implementing these measures with immediate effect.

Yours faithfully,

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Jérôme Valcke
General Secretary

cc: - FIFA Executive Committee
 - Confederations