

Date: 16 July 2026

NOTICE

Subject: Invitation for Applications – Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOM)

Dear All,

The All India Football Federation (“**AIFF**”) is inviting applications from eligible retired football players for inclusion in its (i) roster of male Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOMs) (“**Roster of Male SOMs**”); and (ii) roster of female SOMs (“**Roster of Female SOMs**” and together with the Roster of Male SOMs, the “**SOM Rosters**”) maintained in accordance with the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 and the National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 (together, the “**NSG Act and Rules**”). The Roster of Male SOMs shall comprise a total of twenty (20) male SOMs and the Roster of Female SOMs shall comprise a total of twenty (20) female SOMs.

For applicants to be considered for inclusion in the SOM Rosters, they must satisfy all eligibility criteria set forth. Preference for inclusion in the SOM Rosters will be given to applicants tier-wise, in descending order of the tiers as set out under Clause 2, Schedule I of the NSG Rules, among eligible applicants (as set out in Annexure 1 hereto). Where the number of eligible applicants within a particular tier exceeds the number of positions available in the SOM Rosters, seniority by age shall be the determining criterion for inclusion from amongst such applicants.

We request that this communication be shared with former players, district associations, clubs, academies and other relevant stakeholders to ensure maximum outreach.

1. Eligibility Criteria

As on the date of submitting their application, the applicants must:

- be a citizen of India;
- be at least twenty-five (25) years of age;
- be of sound mind;
- have retired from active competition and not have participated in any competitive event leading to selection for district, state or national representation for at least one (1) year; and
- have satisfied at least one tier criteria under Clause 2, Schedule I of the NSG Rules.

2. Application Process

Applicants that satisfy the eligibility criteria described in paragraph 1 above shall be required to submit the following in physical or digital formats:

- a completed application form (as set out in Annexure 2 hereto);



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- proof of age (for example, Elector's Photo Identity Card (commonly known as Voter ID), Aadhaar Card issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India, valid Passport issued by the Ministry of External Affairs);
- proof of citizenship (registered birth certificate (along with parents' birth certificate if the applicant was born after 01 July 1987) or Certificate of Registration / Certificate of Naturalisation, issued by the Government of India)
- documentary evidence of satisfaction of tier criteria as set out under Clause 2, Schedule I of the NSG Rules; and
- any additional documents specified in the application form.

No nomination, recommendation or endorsement from the State/UT Associations is required.

3. Applications must be submitted directly to AIFF on or before **13 September 2026**, via:

3.1 email at aiff@the-aiff.com with the subject line: *Application – Sportsperson of Outstanding Merit – [Applicant Name]*

[OR]

3.2 post to: Football House, Sector 19, Phase 1, Dwarka, New Delhi: 110075.

4. The application form and detailed guidelines relating to the same are annexed hereto.

For any clarifications, please contact the AIFF Legal and Regulatory Department by way of email at legal@the-aiff.com.

We appreciate your support and cooperation in this process.

Best Regards,

M Satyanarayan
Deputy Secretary General
All India Football Federation

ANNEXURE 1

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

SPORTSPERSONS OF OUTSTANDING MERIT (SOM) - GUIDELINES FOR ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

1. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the National Sports Governance Act of India, 2025 and rules thereunder (“**NSG Act and Rules**”), the All India Football Federation (“**AIFF**”) is required to maintain a roster of: (i) male Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOM) (“**Roster of Male SOMs**”); (ii) roster of female SOMs (“**Roster of Female SOMs**” and together with the Roster of Male SOMs, the “**SOM Rosters**”). Accordingly, AIFF invites applications for the inclusion of eligible retired football players in the SOM Rosters.

An applicant, once included in the SOM Rosters, shall be eligible to be nominated or elected as:

- one of the four (4) SOM members forming part of the AIFF General Body (two (2) SOMs being male and two (2) SOMs being female); and/or
- one of the two (2) SOM members of the Executive Committee of AIFF (one (1) SOM being male and one (1) SOM being female).

2. WHO CAN APPLY

2.1. General Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for consideration, an applicant must satisfy each of the following, as on date of application:

- (a) be a **citizen of India**;
- (b) be **at least twenty-five (25) years of age**;
- (c) be of **sound mind**;
- (d) have **retired from active competition**; and
- (e) not have participated in any competitive event leading to selection for district, state or national representation for at least one (1) year.

2.2. Tier Eligibility Criteria

In addition to the general criteria set out above, an applicant must satisfy any one tier criteria under Clause 2 of Schedule I under the NSG Rules, as follows:

Tier 1: Have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal in the Summer Olympic Games or Winter Olympic Games, provided that any medal if rescinded, shall not be considered; and/ or

Tier 2: Have participated in two or more editions of the Summer Olympic Games or Winter Olympic Games; and/ or

Tier 3: Have participated in at least one edition of the Summer Olympic Games or Winter Olympic Games; and/ or

Tier 4: Have been awarded a Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award or an Arjuna Award by the Central Government, provided that any award if rescinded or returned, shall not be considered; and/ or

Tier 5: Have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing, in a World Championship or equivalent competition, provided that any medal if rescinded, shall not be considered; and/ or

Tier 6: Have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing, in the Commonwealth Games or Asian Games or Asian Winter Games, provided that any medal if rescinded, shall not be considered; and/ or

Tier 7: Have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing, in an Asian Championship or equivalent competition, provided that any medal if rescinded; and/ or

Tier 8: Have participated in at least five sanctioned international matches; and/ or

Tier 9: Have participated in at least one sanctioned international match; and/ or

Tier 10: Have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing in the National Games or a National Championship or equivalent competition.

For the purposes of this application process, a sanctioned international match means a football match that is (a) recognised by the relevant international governing body i.e., Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) or Asian Football Confederation (AFC); and/or (b) verified through the official records maintained by AIFF.

AIFF reserves the right to determine the eligibility of international appearances based on its official records.

3. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

3.1. Applicants must submit the following documents along with the completed application form:

Sl. No.	Document	Category
1.	Completed and signed SOM Application Form of AIFF	Mandatory
2.	Proof of age (any one of the below): Passport, Aadhaar Card, Voter ID Card, or any other government-issued identification document	Mandatory
3.	Proof of citizenship (whichever applicable): registered birth certificate (along with parents' birth certificate if the applicant was born after 01 July 1987) or Certificate of Registration or Certificate of Naturalisation	Mandatory
4.	One recent passport-size photograph	Mandatory
5.	Documentary evidence of the applicant satisfying tier criteria as set out under Clause 2, Schedule I of the NSG Rules	Supporting

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 4.1. Applications must be submitted directly to AIFF. No nomination, recommendation or endorsement from any state-level association or federation affiliated to AIFF is required.
- 4.2. Applications, together with the documents listed in Section 3, must be submitted via email to aiff@the-aiff.com, with the subject line: '*Application – Sportsperson of Outstanding Merit – [Applicant Name]*' or via post on Postal Address: Football House, Sector 19, Phase 1, Dwarka, New Delhi: 110075.
- 4.3. Applications must be submitted on or before **13 September 2026**.
- 4.4. Queries relating to the application process may be addressed to legal@the-aiff.com.
- 4.5. Applicants to note that:
 - (a) Incomplete applications may not be considered.
 - (b) AIFF reserves the right to seek additional information or documentation from any applicant.
 - (c) Any false declaration or misrepresentation may result in rejection of the application. In case such false declaration or misrepresentation is identified after an applicant is included in either of the SOM Rosters, then such person shall be removed from the relevant SOM Roster with immediate effect.
 - (d) AIFF reserves the right to verify all information submitted.

5. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS AND POPULATION OF SOM ROSTERS

- 5.1. AIFF will verify and review all applications received against the criteria set out under Section 2.
- 5.2. In accordance with the NSG Act and Rules, the SOM Rosters are compiled at up to ten (10) times the number of SOMs required for the AIFF General Body i.e., up to a total of forty (40) applicants (with the Roster of Male SOMs consisting of twenty (20) male SOMs and the Roster of Female SOMs consisting of twenty (20) female SOMs). Preference for inclusion in the SOM Rosters will be given to applicants tier-wise, in the descending order of tiers, as set out under Clause 2, Schedule I of the NSG Rules among applicants who otherwise satisfy all the general eligibility criteria under Section 2 herein. Where the number of eligible applicants within a particular tier exceeds the number of positions available in the SOM Rosters, seniority by age shall be the determining criterion for inclusion from amongst such applicants.

6. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 6.1. **What is the Sports Persons of Outstanding Merit (SOM) category?**
The SOM category comprises eligible retired athletes who are included in AIFF's SOM Rosters in accordance with the NSG Act and Rules.

Only those SOMs that are included in the AIFF SOM Rosters are eligible to be elected/nominated to the General Body of the AIFF as members and/or to the Executive Committee of AIFF, for the slots/posts reserved for SOMs in accordance with the AIFF Constitution.

6.2. **Who is eligible to apply?**

Any retired football player satisfying the prescribed eligibility criteria may submit an application.

6.3. **Can current players apply?**

No. Applicants must have retired from active competition and must not have participated in any competitive event leading to selection for district, state or national representation for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of application.

6.4. **How long will the application window remain open?**

Applications must be submitted within **sixty (60) days from the date of issuance of the call for applications**. Applications received after the prescribed deadline will not be considered.

6.5. **Will AIFF acknowledge receipt of my application?**

Yes. Applicants will receive an acknowledgment upon successful receipt of their application.

ANNEXURE 2

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

APPLICATION FORM FOR INCLUSION IN THE ROSTERS OF SPORTSPERSONS OF OUTSTANDING MERIT

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

1. Applicants are advised to read the 'AIFF SOM Guidelines for Eligibility and Application' issued in accordance with the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, carefully before completing this Application Form.
2. All sections must be completed in BLOCK LETTERS or typed electronically.
3. Any incomplete applications or applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.
4. Applicants may append additional sheets where necessary.
5. Submission of this Application Form does not, of itself, guarantee inclusion in the Rosters of Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit.
6. The All India Football Federation reserves the right to verify all information and supporting documents submitted and seek additional information or documentation.

PART I

PARTICULARS OF THE APPLICANT

Affix recent
passport-size
photograph here

Full Name (as per official records)	
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	
Gender	
Nationality	
Current Residential Address	
Permanent Residential Address	Write 'Same as Above' if applicable

Mobile Number	
Email Address	

PART II

SPORTING CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENT DETAILS

State/Union Territory represented at the domestic level: _____

Year of Retirement from Active Competition (District/State/National): _____

Tier Eligibility Criteria (please tick the applicable boxes based on satisfaction of relevant criteria, provide details and attach copies of relevant documents)

☐ Tier 1 ☐ Tier 2 ☐ Tier 3 ☐ Tier 4 ☐ Tier 5 ☐ Tier 6 ☐ Tier 7 ☐ Tier 8 ☐ Tier 9 ☐ Tier 10

Details regarding each Tier criterion satisfied: _____

PART III

DOCUMENTATION

Please tick the applicable boxes and attach copies of relevant documents.

☐ Proof of age

Document Details (Aadhaar Card / Voter ID / Passport / Others): _____

☐ Proof of citizenship

Document Details (birth certificate / Certificate of Registration / Certificate of Naturalisation): _____

☐ Additional supporting documents

Document Details : _____

PART IV

DECLARATION AND UNDERTAKING

I, _____, hereby declare that, as on date:

1. I am an Indian citizen.
2. I am at least twenty-five (25) years.
3. I am of sound mind.
4. I have retired from active competition.
5. I have not participated in any competitive event leading to selection for district, state, or national representation for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of this application.

6. I confirm that I satisfy the Tier Eligibility Criteria under Tier(s) _____ and have furnished relevant details and documents in proof of the same.
7. The information provided in this Application Form, and in all accompanying documents, is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I understand that the All India Football Federation reserves the right to verify the information submitted and may reject this application if any information is found to be false, inaccurate, or misleading.

Name of Applicant: _____

Place: _____

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Signature of Applicant: _____