DECISION ON THE VOTING STATUS OF AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING, THE HARYANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (AIFF EC ELECTION, 20.12.2026)

Ref No:

ORDER

(24.11.2026)

The Draft Electoral College for the election to the Executive Committee of All India Football Federation (AIFF) was published on the website on 15.11.2026 and a window of 7 days was provided for sending objections to the same till 3:00 PM on 21.11.2026. The undersigned has received the objections and claims set out below concerning the Haryana Football Association ("**HFA**"), whose voting status, the Draft Electoral College also records, has to be decided by the undersigned. The said question along with the objections regarding HFA are dealt with through this Order.

With regard to preparation of the Electoral College, the following provisions of the Constitution of AIFF ("**the Constitution**") along with its amendments and resolutions, the National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 ("**the NSBR**") and the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 ("**the Act**") are material:

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE ACT, 2025

The only relevant provision in this regard is Section 4(2) of the Act. However, it is seen that Section 4(2) pertains to eligibility for contesting elections or seeking nominations. It does not apply to inclusion in electoral college. The opening line of Section 4(2) reads:

> "*(2) A person shall not be qualified to contest for election or seek nomination to, the Executive Committee, unless. ...*
>
> *...or to the Executive Committee after a mandatory cooling off period of one term*"

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE (NATIONAL SPORTS BODIES) RULES, 2026

Rule 10(3) provides for who are the eligible voters are for the elections of EC and Rule 10(4) states that the Electoral College shall consist of only such members or their representatives that have voting rights as per Rule 10(3) and are not otherwise disqualified as per the provision of the Act or the NSBR. Relevant extract from Rule 10 reads as follows:

> ***10. Election to the Executive Committee. —***
>
> ...
>
> *(3) Members of the General Body of a National Sports Body other than the National Olympic Committee, as specified under sub-rule (1) of rule 7, shall be eligible to vote for the election to its Executive Committee as specified below, namely:-*
>
> *(a) every individual sportsperson of outstanding merit shall have one vote;*

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION ELECTORAL OFFICER AIFF

(b) every State level affiliate unit of the National Sports Body that is registered with the National Sports Board, shall have a maximum of two votes, to be exercised by separate individual representatives of such affiliate unit; and

(c) for any category of persons specified under clause (e) of sub-rule (1) of rule 7, one vote for each such person.

(4) The electoral roll for an election to the Executive Committee shall consist of only such members or their representatives in the General Body of the relevant National Sports Body that have voting rights as per subrule (2) or sub-rule (3), as the case may be, and are not otherwise disqualified under the provisions of the Act or these rules."

Further, Rule 10(5) provides that the draft electoral roll shall be prepared and released by the Electoral Officer, and its proviso states that

"the Electoral Officer's decision shall be final and binding in respect of the inclusion or non-inclusion, as the case may be, of any person on the electoral roll".

Rule 10(6) requires the Electoral Officer to provide at least seven days from the release of the draft electoral roll to receive and respond to any objections regarding the composition of the final electoral roll.

Further, Rule 11 outlines the disqualifications from being a member of the General Body, of AIFF ("**GB**") or of any committee of AIFF, which disqualifications are also attracted for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee of AIFF. The same reads as follows:

11. Disqualifications. *— (1) A person shall be disqualified from being a member of the General Body, or of any committee of a National Sports Body, and shall not be eligible for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee, if such person is-*

(a) declared insolvent under applicable law; or

(b) subject to a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction in India for an offence, followed by a sentence of imprisonment; or

(c) subject to a ban from holding any such position by an order of the Ethics Committee of such National Sports Body:

Provided that the disqualification in respect of -

(i) clause (a) shall be for the period of insolvency as applicable;

(ii) clause (b) shall be for a period of one full term of the Executive Committee after the completion of such sentence; and

(iii) clause (c) shall be for the duration of such ban.

(2) The bye-laws of a National Sports Body may provide that, in addition to the criteria specified under sub-rule (1), a person shall be disqualified from -

(a) being a member of the General Body or of any committee of such National Sports Body, or shall not be eligible for contesting elections to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Committee, if such person is a member of any other National Sports Body other than the National Olympic Committee; and



(b) being a member of the General Body or of any committee of such National Sports Body, where such person has not completed the cooling off period of one term after having held the position of President, Secretary General or Treasurer in any other National Sports Body."

CONSTITUTION OF AIFF

Entitlement to vote.

As per Article 13.3(a) of the Constitution, every Member Association which is a Full Member is entitled to 2 votes in the elections of the EC of AIFF. The procedure for admission as Full Member is outlined in Schedule I of the AIFF Constitution. Article 4.1 of Schedule III provides that each State Association, which is a Full Member, shall have up to 2 votes, to be cast by separate individuals eligible to represent such Full Member.

Intimation, scrutiny and objections.

Article 4.2 of Schedule III provides that each Full Member shall intimate the names of its 2 representatives / delegates for inclusion in the Electoral College to the Electoral Officer on its letter head duly signed by its President / Secretary, as per the timelines prescribed by the Electoral Officer, and that such representatives shall not be subject to any Disqualification Event. Any change in the name of the representatives / delegates after the last date, or any intimation received thereafter, is permitted only with the approval of the Electoral Officer. Under Article 4.3 of Schedule III, the Electoral Officer scrutinizes the names, prepares the Electoral College List in Form 1, and takes up and decides objections within 7 days.

Loss of voting right.

As per Articles 17, 18 and other such provisions of the Constitution, the voting right of a Full Member extinguishes if its membership is suspended or it is expelled by AIFF. Under Article 17.1, the authority to suspend a member vests in the General Body (including where the Member has been derecognised or suspended under the NSGA), and the procedure under Article 17.3 has to be followed. Under Article 17.2, the Executive Committee may also suspend a member with immediate effect, which suspension lasts until the following General Body meeting unless lifted earlier. Article 17.4 provides:

"17.4 A suspended Member shall lose its membership rights. Other Members shall not entertain sporting contact with a suspended Member."

For expulsion, the detailed procedure under Article 18.2 has to be followed by AIFF. Article 17.6 also provides for loss of rights in the circumstances stated therein.

Disqualification of representatives.

Another bar for being a representative of a Full Member is laid down in Article 20.7, which in turn relies on the Disqualification Events defined in Article 1.17. This interpretation is supported when Article 20.7 is read with Article 1.11, the latter mandating that to be a

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION ELECTORAL OFFICER ★ AIFF ★

candidate for elections of the EC of AIFF, the concerned individual must be a voting member of the General Body of AIFF. Of the Disqualification Events, the following are relevant to the objections:

> *"b) Attainment of the age of 70 (seventy) years; ...*
>
> *c) Conviction followed by a sentence of imprisonment; ...*
>
> *g) Being or becoming a minister or a government servant (unless such government servant has necessary approvals from the relevant government in order to not be considered disqualified);*
>
> *h) Completion of the maximum term of office of any particular office-bearer as specified in Article 26.3, without serving the specified cooling-off period of 4 (four) years where applicable; ..."*

Article 26.3 provides that the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer of AIFF may continuously hold their positions for up to 3 consecutive terms and shall be eligible for re-election to such posts after having served a mandatory cooling-off period.

Disputes between rival groups.

Article 51.6 provides:

> *"51.6 In addition to the above, any dispute arising on account of claims by 2 (two) different executive/managing committees or sets of individuals claiming to be the duly elected committee representing the Member Association in a State, or of two different groups claiming to constitute the official Member Association of a State, such dispute shall be referred by the AIFF in the first instance for hearing and redressal by the NDRC. Till the time, the NDRC has not been constituted by AIFF, such disputes shall be referred to a sub-committee of the Executive Committee, which sub-committee shall not include any person from the State relating to which the dispute has arisen."*

Articles 51.7 and 51.8 further empower the Executive Committee to derecognise or de-affiliate, and to appoint an ad hoc committee for a period not exceeding 6 months, while such a dispute is pending.

Twin test.

Thus, broadly, the twin test which needs to be applied is (i) whether a state association is a Full Member of AIFF or not, and (ii) whether the Full Member or its representatives are disqualified as per the Act, the NSBR, or the Constitution of AIFF. In applying this test, the following principles are kept in mind:

a. A Full Member's voting right is lost only on suspension or expulsion in accordance with Articles 17 and 18, or by an operative order of a competent court. The pendency of litigation, without such an order, does not by itself suspend or extinguish it. While a Member remains suspended, it does not have a voting right.

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION
ELECTORAL OFFICER
AIFF

b. Disqualification Events attach to individuals. They do not take away the status or the votes of the Member Association.

c. The task of the Electoral Officer under Rule 10 and Article 4 of Schedule III is confined to preparing the roll and deciding objections to it. The Electoral Officer does not adjudicate the validity of elections of a Member Association, its internal governance, the validity of its suspension, or disputes between rival groups, which are for the competent forum or, under Article 51.6, for AIFF to refer to the NDRC. Likewise, whether the governing body of a Member Association has been elected or appointed in compliance with Article 15.7, and is to be recognised, is a matter of recognition by AIFF and not one for the Electoral Officer while preparing the roll.

d. Where a Full Member is entitled to vote, exclusion of both its representatives would leave a State or Union Territory without representation, which is contrary to the objective of preserving broad-based and democratic representation in the electoral process.

e. Every decision is subject to any order that may be passed by a competent court or forum.

f. Under Article 4.2 of Schedule III, read with Circular No. 1 (Ref. No. 2/EC/Election/2026/1) dated 06.11.2026, the names of representatives are to be intimated on the letterhead of the Full Member signed by its President / Secretary by 6:00 PM on 13.11.2026. Where separate or conflicting nominations are received from the same Member Association, the names nominated by its President prevail. An intimation received after that time, or a change in the names, is permitted only with the approval of the Electoral Officer, which is exercised case by case so as to secure broad-based representation of the Full Members.

g. Every representative must be free of any Disqualification Event on the date of the election. The undersigned verifies this, including the age of each representative under Article 1.17(b), from the Government-issued photo identity documents furnished with the nomination.

Further, the draft Minutes of the Special General Body Meeting of AIFF held on 01.11.2026 ("**SGBM**"), which the undersigned is informed are yet to be approved, record that the House deliberated upon the challenges faced by certain Member Associations in completing their constitutional alignment and electoral processes within the stipulated timelines, recalling the general sense of the House in the SGM held on 23rd May 2026 in Kolkata that Member Associations facing genuine difficulties should not be penalised. The draft Minutes further record that Mr. Praful Patel, Mr. N.A. Haris and Mr. B.S. Mehra pointed out that, since the AIFF election process was underway and an independent Electoral Officer had been appointed for the AIFF Elections, any decision regarding eligibility for inclusion in the Electoral College rests strictly with the Electoral Officer. These draft Minutes are referred to only as recording the understanding of the House. The power of the undersigned to decide the inclusion or non-inclusion of any person in the Electoral College flows from Rule 10(5) of the NSBR and Article 4.3 of Schedule III, and not from those Minutes. A resolution or observation of a general meeting, whether approved or not, neither confers nor takes away the

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION
ELECTORAL OFFICER
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voting right of any Member, which can be lost only in the manner provided in Articles 17 and 18 of the Constitution.

DECISION

With regard to the inclusion of HFA and its representatives, the following objections were received by the undersigned:

a. **Objection dt. 13.11.2026 from Ms. Sheikh Sabera Begum, Secretary, District Football Association, Rohtak:**

- This objection states that HFA does not have any valid Governing Body and has been managed by an Administrator appointed by the District Registrar, Firms & Societies, Gurugram since 16.06.2025, following the District Registrar's finding that the election of 19.08.2024 was non-compliant with the Haryana Registration and Regulation of Societies Act, 2012 ("**HRRS Act**"). It is further stated that, by interim order dated 03.07.2026 in CWP No. 19805 of 2026, the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana permitted the election under the notice dated 13.06.2026 to be held but stayed the declaration of its result. The objector requests that only the two representatives nominated by the Administrator be accepted on behalf of HFA and that no nomination from any person claiming to be an office-bearer of HFA on the strength of the elections held in 2021 or on 19.08.2024 be entertained.

- On receiving this objection, the undersigned asked AIFF for its comments on the objections. AIFF has, by its letter dated 20.11.2026 regarding the voting status of HFA, placed the following position on record:

> *"**1. Suspension and Appointment of Ad-Hoc Committee:** On 18th July 2025, in the interest of the athletes and the sport of football in the state of Haryana, the AIFF appointed a three-member Ad-Hoc Committee Mr. Mohanlal, M. Dilip Singh Shekhawat, and Mr. Mihir Kherud to oversee footballing affairs in the suspended Member Association.*
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> ***2. Pending Judicial Proceedings:** Matters concerning the Haryana Football Association are currently pending adjudication before the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab & Haryana in CWP No. 18107 of 2026 and CWP No. 19805 of 2026, and the issues pertaining to its representation and status remain sub judice.*
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> ***3. Constitutional Position on Voting Rights:** As per the provisions of the AIFF Constitution, a suspended Member Association loses its voting rights during the period of suspension. Pursuant to its suspended status, the Haryana Football Association was not invited to attend any Special General Meeting (SGM), Annual General Meeting (AGM), or any other meeting convened exclusively for Full Members of the Federation. Furthermore, the official attendance records of such meetings explicitly reflect that the Association does not possess voting powers."*

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION
ELECTORAL OFFICER
★ AIFF ★

- It is noted that the Draft Electoral College dated 15.11.2026 records that the voting status of HFA is to be decided by the undersigned, as the matter is sub judice. HFA is a Full Member of AIFF and, as per Article 13.3(a) of the Constitution and Article 4.1 of Schedule III, a Full Member is ordinarily entitled to 2 votes. However, Article 17.4 of the Constitution provides:

  "17.4 A suspended Member shall lose its membership rights. Other Members shall not entertain sporting contact with a suspended Member."

- AIFF has informed the undersigned that HFA is a suspended Member since 18.07.2025, that it has not been invited to the meetings of the General Body, and that the official attendance records reflect that it does not possess voting powers. The procedure for suspension is provided in Article 17.3 of the Constitution. No order of the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana, or of any other court, staying or setting aside the suspension or restoring the membership rights of HFA has been placed on record. The interim order dated 03.07.2026 in CWP No. 19805 of 2026, as relied upon by the objector, only provides that the result of the election held pursuant to the notice dated 13.06.2026 shall not be notified.

- The record now contains the letter of AIFF dated 18.07.2025 addressed to the District Registrar, Firms & Societies, Gurugram. By that letter, AIFF, referring to the appointment of an ad hoc committee by the District Registrar to work under the supervision of the Haryana Olympic Association, stated that such management by a third party may be a violation of the obligation of a Member Association to manage its affairs independently and a failure of HFA to fulfil its obligations, and, referring to its power under Article 17 of the Constitution, appointed its own ad hoc committee for HFA. The letter names five members, whereas the letter of AIFF dated 20.11.2026 refers to a three-member committee. The resolution of the General Body or the Executive Committee under Article 17.1 / 17.2 by which HFA was suspended has not been separately produced.

- The undersigned has therefore considered whether, on the record as it stands, HFA can be treated as having a voting right. AIFF, which maintains the records of its membership, has stated in writing that HFA is a suspended Member, that it has not been invited to any meeting of the General Body since, and that the attendance records of those meetings reflect that it has no voting powers. None of the objectors, including those who claim to act for HFA, has placed on record any decision of AIFF or order of a court treating HFA as a Member in good standing, or shown that HFA has attended or voted at any meeting of the General Body after 18.07.2025. The undersigned has no jurisdiction to examine the validity of the action taken by AIFF, and accordingly proceeds on the official record of AIFF that HFA stands suspended.

- Even otherwise, there is at present no person who can intimate names on behalf of HFA under Article 4.2 of Schedule III. The persons at Sl. Nos. 67 and 68 claim under the election held on 19.08.2024, which the District Registrar has found to be non-compliant with the HRRS Act. The Administrator-cum-Returning Officer, Justice H.S. Bhalla (Retd.), whose appointment was

ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION
ELECTORAL OFFICER
★ AIFF ★

continued by the order of the District Registrar dated 04.11.2026, is neither the President nor the Secretary of HFA. The result of the election held under the notice dated 13.06.2026 cannot be declared under the interim order dated 03.07.2026 in CWP No. 19805 of 2026, and by order dated 17.09.2026 the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana adjourned that petition and the connected matters to 02.12.2026. The question of who may act for HFA is therefore itself sub judice.

- Therefore, so long as the suspension subsists, HFA does not have a voting right in the elections of the Executive Committee of AIFF. The question as to who is competent to intimate the names of its two representatives under Article 4.2 of Schedule III, namely the Administrator appointed by the District Registrar or the persons at Sl. Nos. 67 and 68, need not be finally decided by the undersigned. For the same reason, the undersigned has not examined the validity of the election of 19.08.2024 or of the orders of the District Registrar, which is not within the jurisdiction of the undersigned.

- The exclusion of HFA is thus on account of its suspension and the consequence provided in Article 17.4 of the Constitution, and not on account of the mere pendency of proceedings before the Hon'ble High Court. The consequence that there will be no representation from the State of Haryana is a result of that suspension, which is a matter within the authority of AIFF under Article 17 of the Constitution. This decision is subject to any order that may be passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana in CWP No. 18107 of 2026 and CWP No. 19805 of 2026. If, before the Electoral College is finalised, the Hon'ble High Court passes an order, or AIFF restores the rights of HFA in accordance with Article 17.11 of the Constitution, HFA may apply to the undersigned under Article 4.2 of Schedule III and the matter shall be considered afresh.
- Accordingly, the names at Sl. Nos. 67 and 68 of the Draft Electoral College stand excluded and the nominations of the Administrator are not accepted. This objection stands disposed off as **allowed in part**, to the extent it seeks that the persons at Sl. Nos. 67 and 68 not be included in the Electoral College, and **rejected** to the extent it seeks acceptance of the nominees of the Administrator.
- Accordingly, as HFA has been found to not have any voting right owing to its suspension, objections **(i) dt. 16.11.2026 from Mr. Sachin Thakran, Joint Secretary, District Football Association, Gurugram, (ii) dt. 16.11.2026 from Ms. Shaffali Nagal, General Secretary, HFA, and (iii) dt. 17.11.2026 from Justice H.S. Bhalla (Retd.), Administrator, HFA** are disposed off in the above terms. The prayers in these objections for recognition of the voting rights of HFA are rejected for the reasons recorded above.

Place: New Delhi

Date: 24.11.2026

Electoral Officer
All India Football Federation

24/11/2026

Electoral Officer
All India Football Federation