DECISION ON THE VOTING STATUS OF AND OBJECTION CONCERNING, THE TAMIL NADU 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 objection set out below concerning the Tamil Nadu Football Association ("**TNFA**"), whose voting status, the Draft Electoral College also records, has to be decided by the undersigned. The said question along with the objections regarding TNFA are dealt with through this Order.

With regard to preparation of the Electoral College, the following provisions of the Constitution of AIFF ("**the Constitution**") , National Sports Governance Act, 2025 ("**the Act**"), and the National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 ("**the NSBR**"), and further amendments and resolutions 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. ...*"

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE (NATIONAL SPORTS BODIES) RULES, 2026

Rule 10(1) of NSBR reinforces the fact that Section 4 of the Act only gets attracted at the stage of contesting for elections to the Executive Committee of AIFF ("EC"). Rule 10(2) is for Indian Olympic Association and has no bearing here. 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:-*

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(a) every individual sportsperson of outstanding merit shall have one vote;

(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

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supported when Article 20.7 is read with Article 1.11, the latter mandating that to be a 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.

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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



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 TNFA and its representatives, the following objection was received by the undersigned:

a. **Objection dt. 17.11.2026 from the Administrative Committee of TNFA (Dr. Justice A.K. Rajan, Chairman):**

- This objection, received by the undersigned on 20.11.2026, states that TNFA, which participates in all AIFF competitions, has not been included in the Draft Electoral College dated 15.11.2026; that TNFA is administered by an Administrative Committee constituted pursuant to the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras in O.S.A. Nos. 277 to 281 of 2019 and in subsequent proceedings before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (I.A. Nos. 161683/2025 and 161834/2025); and that its entitlement to representation is required to be examined in terms of the Constitution of AIFF, the Election Bye-Laws and the aforesaid orders. The objector seeks inclusion of TNFA as a voting member. The objection does not intimate the names of any representatives.

- On receiving this objection, the undersigned asked AIFF for its comments on the objections. AIFF has, by its letter dated 21.11.2026 regarding the voting status of TNFA, placed the following position on record:

  *"**1. Suspension and Appointment of Ad-Hoc Committee:** On 20th November 2023, in the interest of the athletes and the sport of football in the state of Tamil Nadu, the AIFF appointed a five member Ad-Hoc Committee to oversee footballing affairs in the suspended Member Association.*

  ***2. Pending Judicial Proceedings:** Matters concerning the Tamil Nadu Football Association are currently pending adjudication before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in SLP (C) No. 019331 - 019343/2025, and the issues pertaining to its representation and status remain sub judice.*

  ***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 Tamil Nadu 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."*

- It is noted that the Draft Electoral College dated 15.11.2026 records that the voting status of TNFA is to be decided by the undersigned, as the matter is sub judice. TNFA 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

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to 2 votes. However, Article 17.4 of the Constitution provides that a suspended Member shall lose its membership rights.

- AIFF has informed the undersigned that TNFA is a suspended Member since 20.11.2023, 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. The objector has not placed on record any order of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras or of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India staying or setting aside the suspension or restoring the membership rights or voting right of TNFA. The administration of TNFA by an Administrative Committee under the directions of the Court does not, by itself, lift the suspension or restore its voting right.
- The record now contains the order dated 16.07.2025 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in SLP (C) Diary Nos. 36957/2025 and 37353/2025, by which the fresh elections directed by the Hon'ble High Court of Madras were stayed and it was directed that the affairs of TNFA shall continue to be looked after by the Administrative Committee earlier appointed by the Hon'ble High Court. That order concerns the administration of TNFA. It does not deal with the membership rights of TNFA in AIFF and does not direct AIFF to treat TNFA as a voting Member. The record also contains letters dated 07.07.2025 and 08.07.2025 by which the Chairman and a member of the Administrative Committee sought to be discharged, and a communication dated 23.07.2025 of the Madras District Football Association questioning the functioning of the Committee. Whether those resignations took effect need not be decided for the present purpose.
- The decision by which TNFA was suspended has not been separately produced, and the objector states that TNFA participates in AIFF competitions. However, the official record of AIFF states that TNFA has been treated as a suspended Member since 20.11.2023, has not been invited to the meetings of the General Body and is recorded as having no voting powers, and the objector has not shown any decision of AIFF or order of a court restoring its voting right. Further, no names of representatives have been intimated on behalf of TNFA under Article 4.2 of Schedule III, either by 13.11.2026 or with the objection.
- The undersigned does not have the jurisdiction to examine the validity of the suspension of a Member Association, or the issues pertaining to the representation and status of TNFA which are pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in SLP (C) No. 019331 - 019343/2025.
- Therefore, so long as the suspension subsists, TNFA does not have a voting right in the elections of the Executive Committee of AIFF. The consequence that there will be no representation from the State of Tamil Nadu is a result of that suspension, which is a matter within the authority of AIFF under Article 17 of the Constitution, and not of any decision of the undersigned. This decision is subject to any order that may be passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India or by the Hon'ble High Court of Madras. If, before the Electoral College is finalised, the Hon'ble Supreme Court passes an order, or AIFF restores the

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rights of TNFA in accordance with Article 17.11 of the Constitution, TNFA may apply under Article 4.2 of Schedule III and the matter shall be considered afresh.

- Accordingly, this objection stands disposed off as **rejected**.

Electoral Officer
24/11/2026
All India Football Federation

Place: New Delhi

Date: 24.11.2026

Electoral Officer
All India Football Federation