

NIGERIA NATIONAL LEAGUE

RULES

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DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Unless it is otherwise expressly provided for or the context otherwise requires, in these Rules:

“Agent” or “Intermediary” means any Person who represents, negotiates on behalf of or otherwise acts for a Club or a Player (other than a solicitor giving professional legal advice only) in the context of either the registration or transfer of the registration of a Player or the employment of a Player by a Club;

“Amateur Player” means any player who is registered to play or intends to be registered to play for a Club and who is registered with the NFF as an amateur in accordance with the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players;

“Appeal Committee” means the body having appellate jurisdiction under these Rules appointed by the NFF;

“Artificial Surface” means any playing surface which is not or not intended to be predominantly natural grass;

“Associate” means in relation to an individual any other individual who is:

(a) the spouse or civil partner of that individual; or

(b) a relative of the individual or of his spouse or civil partner; or

(c) the spouse or civil partner of a relative of the individual or of their spouse or civil partner;

“Authorized Signatory” means an Official of a Club duly authorized to sign documents as required by these Rules;

“Board” or “League Board” means the Board for the time being of the NNL; any reference to the Board in these rules is a reference to the NNL.

“Broadcaster” means a Person with whom the NNL has entered into a Broadcasting Contract and who is entitled to effect the Transmission of League Matches in accordance with the terms of that Contract;

“Broadcasting Contract Money” means money received by the NNL under any Broadcasting Contract;

“CAF” means Confédération Africaine de Football or Confederation of African Football; the continental governing body for Association Football in Africa, founded on February 8, 1957, with its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt.

“Club” means an association football club in membership of the NNL and any club which is entitled to be promoted from the Lower League to the NNL;

“Club Shirt Sponsor Contract” means any contract between any Club and any Person (not being the manufacturer, producer or distributor of that Club’s strip) providing for the exhibition upon that Club’s Strip of the agreed prime brand of that Person;

“Coach”, “Manager”, or “Technical Adviser” means the Official of a Club responsible for selecting the Club’s first team and, where applicable, includes an assistant Coach/Manager/Technical Adviser;

“Commercial Contract” means any contract entered into by the NNL relating to sponsorship or like transactions or other matters materially affecting the commercial interests of Clubs other than a Broadcasting Contract, or a Title Sponsorship Contract;

“Commercial Contract Money” means money received by the NNL under any Commercial Contract;

“Compensation Fee” means any sum of money or other consideration (exclusive of Value Added Tax) payable by a Transferee Club to a Transferor Club upon the permanent transfer of the registration of a Contract Player or in respect of an Out of Contract Player;

“Competition” shall mean the Nigeria National League:

“Contract Player” means any player (other than an Academy Player) who has entered into a written contract of employment with a Club;

“Control” means the power of a Person to exercise, or to be able to exercise or acquire, direct or indirect control over the policies, affairs and/or management of a Club, whether that power is constituted by rights or contracts (either separately or in combination) and having regard to the considerations of fact or law involved, and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, Control shall be deemed to include:

a) the power (whether directly or indirectly and whether by the ownership of the share capital, by the possession of voting power, by contract or otherwise) to appoint and/or remove all or such of the members of the board of directors of the Club as are able to cast a majority of the votes capable of being cast by the members of that board; and/or

b) the holding and/or possession of the beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, shares or other securities in the Club (whether directly, indirectly (by means of holding such interests in one or more other persons) or by contract) which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof 51 per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable at general meetings of the Club; for the purposes of the above, any rights or powers of a Nominee for any Person or of an Associate of any Person shall be attributed to that Person;

“Director” means any person occupying the position of director of a Club whose particulars are registered or register able under the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2004 and includes a shadow director, that is to say, a person in accordance with whose directions or instructions the directors of the Club are accustomed to act, or a Person having Control over the Club, or a Person exercising the powers that are usually associated with the powers of a director of a company;

“Disciplinary Committee” means the judicial body of the NFF having jurisdiction over disciplinary matters under these Rules and within the NFF;

“Extranet” means the secure online area maintained by the NNL for the purpose of the communication of information between it and the Clubs;

“Fans” or Supporters” shall mean the general followers of a football club, whether registered or not.

“FIFA” means the Fédération Internationale de Football Association or International Federation of Association Football, the world football governing body, founded in May 21, 1904, with its headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland.

“Football Matters” shall include decisions/actions of the referee on the pitch, decisions/actions of NNL or any of its Committees, and decisions of NFF or any of its Committees.

“Force Majeure” shall include but not limited to act of God, act of war, revolution, fire, flood, earthquake or other natural disaster, blockade, embargo, major strike or

any cause which by exercise of reasonable care and diligence, the clubs, teams, match officials, are unable to prevent.

“Form” means the appropriate form or substantially the same form as that prescribed in these Rules;

“General Meeting” means any meeting of the members of the League duly called;

“Head to Head” means in the case of a tie in any season, the result of the matches between the teams concerned as determined by the Board as follows:

- i. the greatest number of points obtained in the league matches between the teams concerned;
- ii. the goals difference resulting from the matches between the teams concerned;
- iii. the greatest number of goals scored in all the league matches between the teams concerned.

“Home Club” means the Club on whose ground a League Match is or was or should be or should have been played or, where the Clubs participating in that League Match share a ground, the Club whose name first appears in respect of that League Match on the League’s fixture list;

“International Transfer” means the transfer of the registration of a player to a Club in respect of which an international registration transfer certificate is required under the provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players;

“League” means the Nigeria National League;

“League Match” means a match played under the jurisdiction of the NNL;

“NNL” means the Nigeria National League;

“Loan Fee” means any sum of money (exclusive of Value Added Tax) payable by a Transferee Club to a Transferor Club upon a Temporary Transfer;

“Match Officials” means Referee and Assistant Referees and includes Reserve Officials and Fourth Officials;

“National Teams” shall include the Super Eagles, the U-23 Olympic Team, the U-20 Flying Eagles, the U-17 Golden Eaglets, the U-14 Team and any other National Teams that the NFF may constitute from time to time.

“New Registration” means the Registration of a Player at a time when no other Club holds his registration either because no previous application to register the Player has been made or because a previous registration has been cancelled or has terminated or has expired;

“NFA” or “NFF” means Nigeria Football Association or Nigeria Football Federation respectively, both names being of inter-changeable usage; an affiliate football federation of CAF and FIFA and the supreme football governing body in Nigeria;

“Nominee” means in connection to any Person another Person who possesses rights or powers on his behalf, or which he may be required to exercise at his discretion;

“NNL” means the Nigeria National League;

“Official” means any director, secretary, servant or representative of a Club, excluding any Player, Agent or Auditors;

“Out of Contract Player” means a Contract Player whose contract of employment with a Club has expired;

“Person” includes any legal entity, firm or unincorporated association;

“Player” means any Contract Player, Out of Contract Player, Amateur Player or AcademyPlayer who is registered to play for a Club;

“Player’s Image” means the Player’s name, nickname, fame, image, signature, voice and film and photographic portrayal, virtual and/or electronic portrayal image or representation, reputation, replica and all other characteristics of the Player including his shirt number;

“Promoted Club” means a Club which became a member of the League at the end of the previous Season;

“Relegated Club” means a Club which was relegated at the end of the previous Season;

“Respondent” means the person against whom a complaint or an appeal is brought;

“Retired Player” means a Player who has stopped playing competitive football;

“Scout” means any person employed or engaged by a Club (whether on a fulltime or part-time basis and whether or not he is remunerated in any way for his services)

whose duties include identifying to his Club players whose registration his Club may wish to secure;

“Season” means the period commencing on the date of the first League Match on the fixture list of the League’s first team competition and ending on the date of the last;

“Secretary” or **“Executive Secretary”** means the Secretary of the NNL;

“Section” means a Section of these Rules;

“Shares” include securities;

“Significant Interest” means the holding and/or possession of the legal or beneficial interest in, and/or the ability to exercise the voting rights applicable to, shares or other securities in the Club which confer in aggregate on the holder(s) thereof thirty (30) per cent or more of the total voting rights exercisable in respect of the Shares of any class of Shares of the Club. All or part of any such interest may be held directly or indirectly or by contract, and any rights or powers held by an Associate or Nominee shall be included for the purposes of determining whether an interest or interests amounts to a **“Significant Interest”**;

“Squad List” means the list of up to a maximum of 40 Players eligible to participate in League Matches during a Season;

“Strip” means Players’ shirts, shorts and stockings;

“Supporters Club” shall mean such club supporters as are duly registered by the NNL, through the State Football Association, donning distinguishable outfits at club games.

“Temporary Transfer” has the meaning set out in Rule 11.15;

“These Rules” means the rules for the time being of the League and a number following a reference to a rule identifies the Section in which it is comprised and its number within that Section;

“Third Party Payment” means any payment made or liability incurred (other than Compensation Fees, remuneration or payments to or for the benefit of Agents) by or on behalf of a Club in respect of a Player, including an Image Contract Payment;

“Title Sponsor” means the Person granted the right to have its agreed brand id entity associated with the name of the NNL’s first team competition;

“Title Sponsorship Contract” means any contract entered into between the League and a Title Sponsor;

“Title Sponsorship Money” means money received by the League under any Title Sponsorship Contract;

“Transfer” means the movement of a Contract Player from one Club to another through the Domestic Transfer Matching System (DTMS) or in such form and manner as may operate in the League from time to time.

“Transfer Agreement” means an agreement between a Transferor Club and a Transferee Club for the permanent transfer of the registration of a Contract Player;

“Transfer Windows” has the meaning set out in Rule 13;

“Transferee Club” means a Club to which the registration of a Contract Player is, or is to be or has been transferred (including on the basis of a Temporary Transfer) or which, in the case of an Out of Contract Player, affects his New Registration;

“Transferor Club” means a Club from which the registration of a Contract Player is, or is to be or has been transferred (including on the basis of a Temporary Transfer) or which, in the case of an Out of Contract Player, holds his registration;

“Transmission” means any terrestrial or satellite broadcast of television or other moving pictures with or without sound or transmission by cable of moving pictures with or without sound or inclusion of moving pictures with or without sound in a cable programme service and/or on the Internet and/or relay of moving pictures with or without sound whether to an open or closed user group by any means now existing or hereafter invented not consisting solely of the storage and distribution of recorded pictures with or without sound in tangible form whether the said transmission is on a live or recorded basis in whole or as excerpts;

“Visiting Club” means the Club playing, which has played, which should play or which should have played a League Match on the ground of a Home Club or, where the Clubs participating in that League Match share a ground, the Club whose name last appears in respect of that League Match on the League’s fixture list;

“Working Day” means any day on which the League office is open for normal business but excluding, unless the Board determines otherwise, a Saturday, a Sunday or a Public Holiday;

References to “written” or “in writing” shall be construed to include:

- a) hard copy;
- b) fac simile transmission;
- c) subject to any guidance issued by the Board, email (including any attachment to an email); but shall not include any form of electronic communication other than those listed in Rules (b) to (c) above. Where a communication is sent by email, the burden of proof of receipt shall be on the sender;

Unless the context otherwise requires:

- a) words importing the singular number shall include the plural and vice versa; and
- b) words importing any particular gender shall include all other genders.

References to statutory provisions shall be construed as references to those provisions as they may be amended or re-enacted.

The headings in these Rules are for convenience only and shall not affect their interpretation.

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions of the Articles and the Code of Governance shall prevail in the event of any conflict with these Rules.

Where a Club is required to submit a Form to the Secretary pursuant to these Rules, the Board may instead require that the information to be provided in the Form is submitted via the Extranet in such manner as it may determine.

PART A:

The Administrative Structure of the NNL

1. Name and Membership

- 1.1. The NNL's first team competition shall be called the **NIGERIA NATIONAL LEAGUE**, which may be adapted or added to the name of the title sponsor.
- 1.2. Members of the League shall be association football clubs based in Nigeria, which are qualified and have fulfilled all requirements for eligibility to participate in the League.
- 1.3. Membership of the League shall constitute an agreement between the NNL and the Clubs and between each Club to be bound by and in compliance with:
 - 1.3.1. the Laws of the Game;
 - 1.3.2. FIFA Statutes and Regulations;
 - 1.3.3. the NFF Statutes and Regulations;
 - 1.3.4. these Rules.
- 1.4. The competition shall be managed and operated by the Board of the NNL, as shall be constituted from time to time.

2. Eligibility/Requirements for Participation

- 2.1. A club shall be eligible to play in the Nigeria National League only upon the club licensing requirements as may be applicable to the NNL and being issued a Club License under the Club Licensing Regulations, including that the club:
 - 2.1.1. is affiliated to its State Football Association;
 - 2.1.2. has fulfilled all conditions and terms set out by the League for qualification;
 - 2.1.3. shall provide –
 - 2.1.3.1. Evidence of incorporation as a Limited Liability Company with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC);

- 2.1.3.2. Bankers full address;
- 2.1.3.3. Operational and well equipped office with full address;
- 2.1.3.4. Audited annual report;
- 2.1.3.5. Signed financial guarantee form from the sponsor(s) of the club to honour all its fixture obligations for the League season;
- 2.1.3.6. List of Management and Secretariat staff with their designations;
- 2.1.3.7. Evidence of Insurance policy cover for all registered players and officials;
- 2.1.3.8. Medical certificates of all registered players and officials;
- 2.1.3.9. Duly signed copy of each players and officials contract with the club, and
- 2.1.3.10. Functional fax line, website and E-mail addresses.

2.2. All clubs that are affiliated/registered and have satisfied all the conditions for participation voluntarily put themselves under obligation to unconditionally abide by the Rules, Regulations, Statutes, Orders and Directives of FIFA/CAF/NFF, their Committees or other statutory bodies and these Rules.

2.3. An application for, and registration to participate in the NNL constitutes a voluntary agreement that no party shall litigate over football matters and principal officers of the clubs shall sign an undertaking to that effect for and on behalf of their respective clubs.

2.4. Any club/team, club official, players, supporters club etc., violating the provisions of Rule

2.2 or 2.3 shall be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn its membership of the League and shall not be considered for readmission until the court action is withdrawn, and such party may be liable to pay a fine of up to Two Million Naira only (N2,000,000.00) in addition to any other sanction as may be deemed appropriate.

3. League Structure

- 3.1. The League shall consist of not more than 32 teams to be divided into 2 groups of 16 clubs each based on geographical spread.
- 3.2. Each Club shall register at least 2 Coaches, 1 Team Manager, 1 Media Officer, 1 Medical Officer, a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 40 players for its first team, without prejudice to such other requirements as may be directed under the Club Licensing Regulations or by the League.
- 3.3. At the end of the season, the top 4 Clubs (i.e. the first 2 Clubs in each of the NNL groups) on the League Table shall be promoted to the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL), the top tier of club football in Nigeria; while the last 4 (relegated) clubs in the NPFL shall be admitted into the NNL.
- 3.4. At the end of the season, the bottom 8 Clubs (i.e. the last 4 Clubs in each of the NNL groups) on the League Table shall be relegated to the Nationwide League One (NLO), the third tier of club football in Nigeria; while the top 8 (promoted) Clubs in the NLO shall be admitted into the NNL.
- 3.5. Any club that withdraws from the League or is in default of registration after the fixtures are made shall forfeit its registration fees and status.
- 3.6. A club that withdraws from the league shall be banned from participating in the Nigeria National League for a minimum period of five years. The NFF may impose further sanctions on any guilty club or officials as it deems fit.

4. The Competition

- 4.1. Each Club shall play 2 League Matches against every other Club in the same group each Season; being the Home Club in respect of one such League Match and the Visiting Club in respect of the other.
- 4.2. Each club shall be scored 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and no point for a loss, which shall be reflected on the League Table.
- 4.3. The results of League Matches shall be recorded by the Secretariat in a League Table containing in respect of each Club the following information:
 - 4.3.1. The number of League Matches played in that Season;

- 4.3.2. The number of League Matches won, drawn and lost as a Home Club in that Season;
- 4.3.3. The number of League Matches won, drawn and lost as a Visiting Club in that Season;
- 4.3.4. The number of goals scored in League Matches by and against that Club in that Season;
- 4.3.5. The number of points scored in that Season.
- 4.4. The position of Clubs in the table shall be determined by the number of points scored in that Season, the Club having scored the highest number of points being at the top of the table and the Club having scored the lowest number of points being at the bottom.
- 4.5. If any 2 (two) or more Clubs have scored the same number of points their position in the table shall be determined on goal difference, that is to say, the difference between the total number of goals scored by and against a Club in League Matches in that Season, and the higher or highest placed Club shall be the Club with the higher or highest goal difference.
- 4.6. If any 2 (two) or more Clubs have scored the same number of points and have the same goal difference the higher or highest placed Club shall be the Club having scored the most goals in League Matches in that Season.
- 4.7. Subject to the rule regarding Play-offs, if any 2 or more Clubs have scored the same number of points, have the same goal difference and have scored the same number of goals in League Matches in that Season they shall be deemed to occupy the same position on the table; provided that if any question of qualification or relegation cannot be determined because 2 or more Clubs are equal on points, goal difference and goals scored, and are at par in the head-to-head rule, the Clubs concerned shall play off one or more deciding League Matches, the format, timing and venue of which shall be determined by the Board.
- 4.8. At the end of the Season, a competition shall be organized amongst the top two clubs in each group of the league to determine the overall winner of the League, the format, timing and venue of which shall be determined by the Board.

4.9. In the play-off match to determine the League Champion, where 2 or more clubs have the same points and goal difference and are at par in the head-to-head rule and the play-off game produces no winner after 90 minutes, there shall be 30 minutes of extra time, and subsequently penalties, if the need arises, to determine the winner of the league.

4.10. Only the league table published by the NNL shall be authentic.

4.11. Teams shall participate in all other State, National and International competitions like the Federations Cup, CAF Confederations Cup, and other competitions organized or recognized and as determined by the NNL or the NFF; provided that a Club shall not enter or play in any friendly or other competitions without the approval of the NNL.

4.12. There shall be a break or off-season period of a minimum of four weeks between the end of a League Season and the commencement of another League season provided that the NNL may amend the fixtures from time to time.

5. Trophies and Awards

5.1. The League Champions will take home the League Trophy for a season and same to be returned exactly at the end of the first round of the next season. A replica trophy would however be given permanently.

5.2. Where a club fails to return the trophy at the appropriate time it shall be fined the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Naira(**N200,000.00**) only in addition to any other penalty as may be determined by the NNL.

5.3. The League Champions shall be awarded Medals for both players and team officials.

5.4. Prizes shall be awarded to outstanding players as may be determined by the Board.

5.5. The player that scored the highest number of goals at the end of the season shall be declared as highest goal scorer.

5.6. If two or more players scored the same number of goals, the following shall apply:

5.6.1. The player with the least number of goals scored from penalty spot;

- 5.6.2. If 5.6.1 above could not resolve the tie, then the player with the better disciplinary records in terms of the least number of caution and expulsion cards will be declared as highest goal scorer for the season.
- 5.7. The League Champions may enjoy the distinction of wearing for the duration of the succeeding league season the logo of the League set on a gold background or trimmed with gold.
- 5.8. Cash awards to the Clubs shall be as decided by the Board at the commencement of each season.

6. Club Management

- 6.1. Club management shall be properly constituted with defined functions for the day-to-day administration of the club.
- 6.2. The Club management shall include at least the following officers who shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the club: Club President, Club Secretary, Team Manager, Media Officer and Chief Coach/Technical Adviser.
- 6.3. Government officials and functionaries such as Commissioners, Special Advisers, etc. shall not be part of day to day running of the club.
- 6.4. The League shall not recognize an interim body or sole Administrator set up by or for any club. Any club violating this provision shall be fined One Million Naira only **(N1,000,000.00)**.
- 6.5. The Board will use its absolute discretion in deciding whether to approve a change in a Club's playing name; provided that no club shall be allowed to change its name more than once within a period of 3 seasons and, also, that any proposed name change shall not in the judgment of NNL be offensive or prejudicial to national unity, community identity, fans or supporters followership, other objectives and commercial interests of the League.
- 6.6. Change of ownership shall be between two (2) parties involved with the endorsement of the State Football Association(s) concerned and the details shall be communicated to the League for documentation.
- 6.7. The details of any change of ownership shall be submitted to the League for documentation together with a registration fee of **N500,000.00** payable by the new Club owner to the League.

- 6.8. Any Nigeria National League club registered with the League that intends to disband shall give the League in writing through its State FA, at least six months' notice of such intention with evidence of payment of all outstanding dues of their players and officials, including three (3) months' pay in lieu of notice.

7. Commercial Agreements

- 7.1. The NNL shall have the exclusive right to negotiate and or enter into Commercial Contracts, Broadcasting Contracts, Radio/TV Rights Contracts, Title Sponsorship Contracts, etc. for the League.
- 7.2. The League Broadcast Rights Owner shall have exclusive and unfettered access to all League venues without notice.
- 7.3. Any Club that hinders, prohibits or causes any delay in the television coverage of its home match may be liable to a fine of up to Two Million Naira Only **(N2,000,000.00)** in addition to any further applicable sanctions.
- 7.4. Subject to the rights and approval of NNL and the rights of the League Broadcast Rights Owner, Clubs are entitled to negotiate local radio broadcast rights for additional revenue generation as well as create awareness for their activities.
- 7.5. Clubs and Players shall provide such rights, facilities, permissions and services as are required to enable the League to fulfill its Commercial Contracts, Broadcasting Contracts, and Title Sponsorship Contracts and shall not by any act or omission infringe any exclusive rights granted thereunder or otherwise cause any breach thereof to occur.
- 7.6. Each Club shall indemnify the NNL against any liability it may incur in the event of a finding by a Court of Law or other body of competent jurisdiction that the League induced the Club to breach a contract with a third party as a result of requiring the Club to comply with Rule 7 hereunder.
- 7.7. The Title Sponsorship Contract shall not have the effect of preventing any Club from granting any rights of whatever nature pursuant to its Club Shirt Sponsor Contract irrespective of when the Club enters into the same and the Club Shirt Sponsor Contract of any Club shall not have the effect of preventing any right granted pursuant to any Title Sponsorship Contract being operated or enjoyed in respect of any Club or at the ground of any Club.

- 7.8. All rights contracts to be entered into by any Club shall first be subject to the vetting and approval of NNL, before execution.
- 7.9. Copies of all rights contracts executed by any Club shall be delivered to NNL.
- 7.10. The NNL may issue from time to time directives to Clubs setting out those rights which may and may not be granted by any Club in any Contract and each Club shall comply in all respects with any such directive.

PART B:

The Regulatory Framework of the League

8. Match Officials

- 8.1. Referees and Assistant Referees shall be appointed for NNL matches by the Referees' Committee of the NFF, while the Match Commissioners shall be appointed by the Match Commissioners Committee.
- 8.2. Match officials shall be accommodated together in a decent standard Hotel, with reasonable access and proximity to the match venue.
- 8.3. The home club shall provide a stand by vehicle for match officials for the period of their stay.
- 8.4. Match Officials shall be given adequate security before, during, and after the match.
- 8.5. The allowances of each Match Official shall be in accordance with the League approved rates.
- 8.6. If a Match Commissioner fails to honour a match, the Referee shall double as Match Commissioner/Referee.
- 8.7. Only Referees and Assistant Referees on the NFF/NNL approved list shall be used as fourth officials and as substitutes for appointed match officials.
- 8.8. If the Center Referee fails to show up for a match, the Assistant Referee I shall become the Center Referee while the Assistant Referee II shall take over as the Assistant Referee 1. The reserve Referee shall become the Assistant Referee II. The State Association shall appoint another Reserve Referee from the League approved list.

- 8.9. Only Referees and Assistant Referees on the League approved list shall be used as fourth officials and as substitute for appointed match officials, for matches within the level of the competition for which they have been classified. It is only in the absence of such category of officials in a particular state, shall fourth officials and substitutes from the immediate low cadre division be considered.
- 8.10. In the event of two or all the match officials not showing up for a match, the host Association shall approach a neighboring State FA which shall appoint from the approved list of match officials on behalf of Referees Placement Committee of the League and match shall be played on the match day as per the League fixture, provided there is ample time for the match.
- 8.11. If not, the match shall be played not later than 24 hours. Under no circumstances should teams mutually agree to the use of two or more home officials in a match in the event of non-appearance of designated match officials.
- 8.12. If a designated match official fails to attend a pre-match meeting or fails to arrive the match venue three hours before kick-off time, Article 8.8 shall apply and the official shall not be entitled to any claims unless there is a force majeure accepted by League.
- 8.13. If a match is postponed for 24 hours, all additional expenses of the match officials shall be borne by the home club.
- 8.14. If appointed match officials refuse to honour any match and it was established that they were duly notified, such match officials shall be black listed.
- 8.15. Match officials shall not swap matches.
- 8.16. Match reports must be submitted to the League Secretariat not later than 48 hours after the match. A summary of the report should be sent by SMS immediately after the match.
- 8.17. It is gross misconduct for any State Football Association, Club, Official, Player, Match Commissioner, Match Official, or other person to offer, receive, attempt to offer or receive, either directly or indirectly, any consideration whatsoever with a view to influencing the result, outcome, incident or course of a match.

8.18. Any State Football Association, Club, Official, Player, Match Commissioner, Match Official, or such other person found guilty of breach of Rule 8.17 shall be banned for 2years while the result of the match if already played and won by the offending club shall be nullified.

9. Coaches and Managers

9.1. The terms of every Coach's engagement by a club must be in a written Contract of Employment signed by the Club and the Coach as well as the intermediary/agent if applicable.

9.2. A copy of every Coach's contract of employment must be deposited and registered with the League.

9.3. No coach shall be entitled to be registered with the League or occupy the technical area during a match unless the Coach meets the qualification requirements as may be prescribed under the Club Licensing Regulations or by the League.

9.4. Coaches must at all times on match days dress appropriately and smartly and may wear branded apparels of their sponsors.

9.5. Coaches shall at all times conduct themselves in exemplary manner and maintain applicable codes of conduct.

10. Club Colours and Jerseys

10.1. Each club participating in the League shall register with the League its colours of jersey (shirt), shorts and hose, which shall not be in conflict with the colour or design of the National Team of Nigeria.

10.2. Clubs shall also register alternative colours of jerseys, which shall be used to resolve problems of clash of colours.

10.3. Each club shall play its home matches with the first choice colour while it may use its 2nd choice colours for away matches, particularly to resolve problems of clash of colours. A club may however be permitted to play in an alternative colour if there is a clash of colours or in unforeseen circumstances acceptable to the match officials.

10.4. The colours registered for the League shall remain the registered colours of the club throughout the League season.

- 10.5. In the event of clash in colours between two clubs, the away club shall change to its alternative colours provided the home club is wearing their registered first choice colours. Away teams must therefore take along alternative colours.
- 10.6. If the clash of colours affects the Goal -keeper's colours, the Goal-keeper shall change to his registered alternative. Clubs wearing unregistered or unapproved colours shall be liable to a fine of One hundred thousand Naira only **(N100,000.00)** for each infringement.

11. Players

- 11.1. All players shall put on football kits that are in conformity with the Laws of the Game.
- 11.2. The jerseys and shorts must be boldly and clearly numbered serially from 1 to 40, jerseys at the back and shorts in front, measuring a length of 9" and 4" respectively. Any club that numbers its jerseys to exceed 40 shall be fined the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Naira only **(N200,000.00)**.
- 11.3. Each jersey shall have the player's name clearly displayed above the jersey number. Players without their names at the back of jerseys shall not be allowed to play.
- 11.4. Pinned numbering or lettering on jerseys is prohibited. Any player wearing pinned jersey shall not be allowed to play.
- 11.5. Players can only play League matches wearing jersey numbers allocated to them during the registration.
- 11.6. It shall be an offence punishable by a fine of Five Thousand Naira only (N5,000.00) for a player to wear the anklet over his hose or fail to wear the hose up to knee level.
- 11.7. Each club shall register a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 40 players per season.
- 11.8. The registration of a player shall be in the form and manner prescribed by the League.
- 11.9. A player shall only register and play for one Club in the League during a season, except if properly transferred to another Club within the season;

provided that a player may not play for more than two clubs within the same season.

- 11.10. Any player found guilty of double registration or false procurement of registration or transfer shall be suspended for a period of up to one year.
- 11.11. Any Club found guilty of deliberate involvement in double registration or false procurement of registration or transfer shall be liable to a minimum fine of **N250,000.00**, in addition to any further sanctions as the League may deem fit; provided that no match shall be cancelled or points deducted or awarded where the registration or transfer of a player is found to have been false, illegal or irregular.
- 11.12. Any player found guilty of double registration shall be banned for a minimum period of one year.
- 11.13. The eligibility of a player to feature for a Club in League matches shall be confirmed upon issuance of a player license in favour of the registering club.
- 11.14. Transfer of players involving League clubs shall comply with relevant statutes and regulations on the status and transfer of players for the time being in force.
- 11.15. A player may be loaned (i.e. a temporary transfer) from one club to another on mutual agreement by both clubs for a minimum period of three months and for a period not exceeding 12 calendar months, subject to approval by the League. To this effect, the initial license issued to the transferring club must be deposited with the NNL before a new license is issued.
- 11.16. All Clubs shall give each registered player a copy of his contract or agreement in addition to any other relevant documents upon signing for the club.
- 11.17. ***All Clubs shall ensure that contract players are covered by comprehensive Insurance Policies from reputable Insurance Companies duly verified by the League and all Clubs shall comply with all relevant Pension laws and regulations and or special bridge Players pension schemes approved by the NNL.***

11.18. The monthly salary for a Nigeria National league player is negotiable but shall not be less than National minimum wage which must be paid as and when due.

11.19. A contract between a club and a player shall not be terminated before its expiry date except in accordance with the terms of the contract and the relevant regulations on the status and transfer of players.

11.20. Disputes arising from the termination of a player contract shall be referred to the Arbitration Committee of the NFF whose decisions shall be final. Failure by any club to comply with the decisions of the Arbitration Committee shall be sanctioned by the League Board, as it may deem necessary.

12. Medical

12.1. Clubs shall have a Medical Team made up of at least a Doctor, Nurse, Physiotherapist and a Masseur to service their home and away matches. Non-provision of Medical Personnel by clubs during a match shall attract a fine of **N50,000.00**.

12.2. *Each Club shall carry out medical examinations on all its Contract Players and keep medical records which shall be made available for inspection by authorized representatives of the NNL.*

12.3. When the transfer of a player's registration is being negotiated, the Club holding the player's registration shall make the player's medical record available to the other club.

12.4. All Clubs shall ensure that they maintain a medical insurance scheme approved by the NNL.

13. Transfer Window

13.1. **"Transfer Windows"** means the 2 periods in a **football season** during which, without prejudice to Rule 13.4 a Club may apply for the New Registration of a player or to have the registration of a player transferred to it or for a Temporary Transfer.

13.2. The first Transfer Window in any football season shall commence at midnight on the last day of the Season and shall end on at a time to be determined by the Board.

13.3. The second Transfer Window in any football season shall commence and end at such times to be determined by the Board.

13.4. Outside a Transfer Window the Board in its absolute discretion may:

13.4.1. Refuse an application; or

13.4.2. Grant an application and, if thought fit, impose conditions by which the Club making the application and the player shall be bound.

14. Fixtures

14.1. The NNL shall draw the league fixtures and only the league fixtures published by the NNL shall be authentic.

14.2. All intellectual property and other rights in the League fixtures shall belong to the NNL.

14.3. The NNL shall have power at any time to change the date upon which a League Match is to be played, in the exercise of which power the NNL may, as the circumstances require, consult with and take into account any representations made by the Clubs participating in the League Match in question and any other Clubs which may be affected thereby.

14.4. No Club shall either by itself or in conjunction with any other Club cancel or rearrange a fixture, either as to time or venue.

14.5. A League match shall not be postponed or abandoned except with the approval or on the instructions of the Referee, the Match Commissioner or the NNL as the case may be.

14.6. Upon a League Match being postponed or abandoned in accordance with Rule 14.5, the NNL may thereupon exercise its power under Rule 14.3.

14.7. Any club that fails to honour its fixture obligation without any reason acceptable to the NNL may be fined up to the sum of N1,000,000.00 (One Million Naira only) payable to the NNL in addition to expenses incurred by the home team; Provided that where the reason adduced is acceptable to the NNL, the fixture shall be rescheduled, otherwise, in addition to the sanctions above, the erring club shall forfeit 3 points and 3 goals arising from the match.

14.8. Any club that refuses to continue with a game for a period up to five (5) minutes in a match or till the expiration of full time of either half of the game

or walks-off the pitch in any form of protest against a decision of the referee or otherwise shall be liable to a fine of up to N500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira only); in addition, the Club shall forfeit the match to its opponent by 3 points, 3 goals or the scores at the time of abandonment whichever is higher.

- 14.9. On no account must a club refuse to play a scheduled match on grounds of inadequate security if the appointed match officials are satisfied with the security arrangement. Any club violating this Article shall pay a fine of N500,000.00 and 3 points 3 goals shall be awarded to the opponents.
- 14.10. Any Club that fails to honour 2 consecutive matches without an acceptable reason to NNL such a club shall be expelled from the League and its matches played and unplayed match shall be cancelled.
- 14.11. Any Club that fails to honour three (3) cumulative matches without an acceptable reason to NNL such a club shall be expelled from the League and its matches played and unplayed match shall be cancelled.
- 14.12. If a Club vehicle breaks down on its way to a match, the club must send an official to the venue of the match to report before the start of the match. The match shall then be played the next day. If the club still fails to show up, it shall forfeit the match to its opponent by 3 points 3 goals in addition to a fine of Five Hundred Thousand Naira only (N500, 000.00).

15. League Matches

- 15.1. All matches shall commence at 4.00pm; provided that matches may however be played outside the above time in order to accommodate Television transmission schedules, force majeure, etc., but on no account shall any match commence later than 7.00pm.
- 15.2. Any match that commences up to 30 minutes later than the scheduled kick-off time may be deemed a "no match"; the club responsible for the late kick-off shall pay a fine of N1,000,000 in addition to expenses for any replay of the match.
- 15.3. Players of both teams shall march on to the field of play side by side.
- 15.4. In any League Match a Club may include in its team list up to 7 substitute Players of whom not more than 3 may take part in the League Match.

- 15.5. Only 14 members of each club, whose names appear on the Team List, shall sit on its reserve bench (i.e. 7 players and 7 officials); provided that any Player or official who is dismissed shall proceed immediately to the dressing room and shall not occupy the trainer's bench.
- 15.6. All persons on the reserve bench shall be properly dressed in acceptable sports attire, preferable track suits or suits, not in flowing native or traditional attire.
- 15.7. Any violation of Rule 15.5 or 15.6 shall attract fine of One Hundred Thousand Naira only **(N100,000.00)**.
- 15.8. In all League Matches the Home Club shall provide and the participating Clubs shall use only the official ball approved by the NNL.
- 15.9. The duration of each game shall be 90 minutes playing time - 45 minutes for each half, with a half time interval of 15 minutes.
- 15.10. Where a League match for whatever reason lasts for less than 90 minutes, the NNL shall have power to:
 - 15.10.1. order that the match be replayed or continued as the circumstances may require; or
 - 15.10.2. order that the match shall count as a complete fixture.
- 15.11. At the end of every match, in order to encourage fair play, to show appreciation to spectators and to eliminate hooliganism, a match shall be concluded with the performances of the following processes:
 - 15.11.1. At final whistle, both teams shall assemble at the center circle;
 - 15.11.2. the Assistant Referee I and II shall join the Center Referee in the Center circle;
 - 15.11.3. the players and the Referees shall wave to the spectators;
 - 15.11.4. the players and Referees shall thereafter walk out in file;
 - 15.11.5. this process shall mark the completion of a match, the result notwithstanding;

- 15.11.6. it shall be an offence punishable with a fine of N25, 000.00 for any team(s) or player(s) or Referee to shun this process unless there is a force majeure or reason acceptable to League;
- 15.11.7. it shall also be an offence for a Match Commissioner not to report non-compliance with this directive.
- 15.12. Protests from clubs arising from any match shall be forwarded in writing to the League within 24 hours after the match (Sundays and Public holidays exclusive), accompanied by a protest fee of Two Hundred Naira only (N200,000.00).
- 15.13. All protests shall be written, clearly indicating the grounds on which they are based and addressed to the Executive Secretary of the League through the State Football Association.
- 15.14. Written protests properly lodged with the Match Commissioner at the match venue and accompanied by appropriate protest fees shall be accepted by the League.
- 15.15. At the hearing of any protest, the affected club may be invited at its own expense to tender relevant documents (regardless of the source) and call as many witnesses as may be necessary for the effective prosecution or defense of the case. Legal representation and Press coverage are forbidden.
- 15.16. Any club that fails to appear before any appropriate Committee of the League after due invitation shall be bound by the verdict.
- 15.17. The League reserves the right to cause a club, member/player found guilty of any violation of rules or lodging frivolous protest to pay part or full cost of all hearing expenses.

16. Disturbances and Disruption of Matches

- 16.1. No person shall encroach onto or throw objects towards the field of play at any time in the course of a match, whether before, during or immediately after the match or during the half-time interval.
- 16.2. Where a match is discontinued as a result of encroachment, throwing of objects towards the field of play or other similar act of misconduct,

the Club responsible shall be fined up to the sum of One Million Naira only (N1,000,000.00) in addition to any other applicable sanction.

16.3. Where a match is discontinued under Rules 16. 1, the NNL may further exercise any of its powers under Rule 15.10.

16.4. Any club guilty of disturbances in the course of its home match may be ordered to play subsequent home matches behind closed doors; provided that where the disturbances result in discontinuation of the match, the Club may be moved to a different venue for subsequent home matches.

16.4.1. Closed door match shall permit only the following:

i. 50 security personnel

ii. 7 club officials per team

iii. 12 dressed ball boys

iv. 10 host Football Association staff, inclusive of identifiable stadium security personnel.

v. 6 Match officials

vi. Accredited medical personnel whose names and identity must be forwarded to the match officials during pre-match meeting.

vii. 2 accredited camera men per team, whose names and identity shall be forwarded to the match officials during the pre-match meeting.

viii. 10 media men to be accredited by the State Football Association.

16.5. Supporters of any Club that persistently cause disorder either at home or away may be banned from all League match venues for such a period as the NNL deems fit.

16.6. The NNL reserves the right to cause the club with violent supporters to pay for damages for which they might be held responsible for before, during, and after any match.

17. Security

17.1. It shall be the responsibility of the home State Football Association in conjunction with the home club to provide adequate and effective security before, during, and after any match. However, nothing in these Rules shall prevent the home club from taking responsibility for ensuring that there is adequate security, crowd control and restriction of access by unauthorized persons from all restricted areas in the course of a match.

- 17.2. A minimum of 50 law enforcement agents must be present before the start and throughout the duration of any game. However, Match Commissioners may commence matches if satisfied with the security available on ground.
- 17.3. Eight (8) of the security Personnel shall be specifically detailed to the match officials.
- 17.4. Where necessary the security personnel shall have the compliment of Police dogs or mounted troops.
- 17.5. Ten minutes to the end of every match, all gates must be opened to avoid last minute stampede.
- 17.6. If a match fails to take place due to inadequate security, upon a written guarantee by the host Football Association, and the home club, the match shall be played the next day and all reasonable expenses in relation to the match officials and visiting team shall be borne by the home team.
- 17.7. However, if on the second day the match fails to hold due to ineffective security, except where the League decides otherwise, the home team shall loose the match by 3 points 3 goals in addition to any other sanctions as the League may deem appropriate in the circumstance.

18. Responsibilities of the State Football Association

- 18.1. The State FA being representative of the NFF shall perform the League's statutory functions with regards to overall control and security during matches. The State FA shall carry out this function with the cooperation and advice from the Club under its jurisdiction.
- 18.2. The State FA shall on behalf of clubs receive and accommodate match officials in the hotel, to be arranged and paid for by the League or clubs on behalf of the League.
- 18.3. The State FA shall on behalf of clubs under its jurisdiction convene the pre-match meeting and cooperate with the Match Commissioners who shall supervise the pre-match meeting.
- 18.4. If as a result of the non-arrival of the appointed Referees and it becomes necessary to secure Referees from a neighboring State, the State FA shall carry out this duty on behalf of the home club. The club shall be responsible for any expenses incurred.

19. Reception for Visiting Team

- 19.1. The visiting team shall notify the Home Club and State FA of its arrival and departure dates. The Home FA/Club shall ensure reasonable assistance to visiting teams in case of any difficulty.
- 19.2. Playing grounds shall be provided for training by visiting teams and during their period of stay. The match venues shall be accessible to the visiting teams for at least one-hour session at the fixed time on the eve of the match.
- 19.3. Training at match venues on match day is prohibited.

20. Match Venues

- 20.1. Each Club shall notify the League of its proposed venue for its home matches, which shall be inspected at least one month before the commencement of the season by the League.
- 20.2. League matches shall only be played at venues selected by clubs and approved by the League after inspection.
- 20.3. Match venues shall not be used for training purposes. All clubs must have separate training grounds, which shall also be inspected before the League commences.
- 20.4. There shall be a functional Score Board in every venue. In its absence, a manual scoreboard with a black background (minimum size 8x5 meters) should be put in use.
- 20.5. Standard substitution boards with a minimum measurement of 14 inches x 10 inches should be used in each venue. It shall be an offence to write with chalk on substitution Board's. A fine of N20,000.00 per match shall be imposed for use of chalk. Match Commissioners must report offending clubs.
- 20.6. All venues must have fortified perimeter fencing with a minimum height of 2 meters.
- 20.7. All match venues must be properly maintained all through the season and shall have functional dressing rooms for all teams and officials.
- 20.8. On agreement between two clubs and approved by the League, the home and away matches between the two clubs may be played at the same venue.

- 20.9. The League reserves the right to select alternative venues for clubs. Its decision in this regard shall be final.
- 20.10. Separate stands shall be provided for supporters of the participating clubs.
- 20.11. The following items are banned from all match venues:
- 20.11.1. bottled/can drinks;
 - 20.11.2. alcoholic drinks;
 - 20.11.3. all forms of narcotics;
 - 20.11.4. arms, ammunition and weapons;
 - 20.11.5. projectiles and missiles
- Match Commissioners in conjunction with the Heads of the security shall ensure compliance before commencement of matches.
- 20.12. First aid medical services are compulsory at all match venues. Home clubs and States FA shall provide Stretcher and Ambulances equipped with basic equipment at match venues. Failure to do this shall attract a fine of N200,000.00.
- 20.13. The League, for reason of poor standard, hooliganism, inadequate safety and security, very low gate proceeds, depreciation or damaged of facilities, etc; reserves the right to declare previously approved venues unfit for use during the season for any specified period.

21. Press/Media

- 21.1. It shall be the responsibility of the host Football Association/Club to provide a suitable Press Gallery in the stadium for the print and electronic media representatives in order to enable them cover a match. On no account should they be allowed to stay in the inner perimeter.
- 21.2. Only accredited media photographers shall be allowed into the inner perimeter fence. They shall however be restricted to the photographer's mark behind the goal line of the field of play.
- 21.3. At least 30 minutes before the kick-off, Team Manager of each team shall submit at least 10 copies of his team list to the Reserve Referee who in turn

shall make same available to the media. Any defaulting Team Manager shall be liable to a fine of N10, 000 payable within a week to the League.

21.4. All clubs must engage the services of a Press/Media Officer.

22. Miscellaneous

Betting

22.1. No Club, Official or Player shall bet on an event in, or on the result of a League Match, or in connection with betting on an event in, or on the result of, a League Match:

22.1.1. offer or receive a payment or any form of inducement to or from any Club or the Official or Player of any Club; or

22.1.2. receive or seek to receive any payment or other form of inducement from any Person.

Match Fixing

22.2. It is gross misconduct for any Club, Official/Member, Player, Match Officials to offer or attempt to offer either directly or indirectly any inducement whatsoever to Club or Match Officials appointed to officiate in a match of the League with a view to influencing the result of the match or act in sympathy during officiating.

22.3. Any Club, official, member, player, Match Official found guilty under Rule 22.2 above shall be banned for five (5) years and the result of the match if already played and won by the offending club shall be nullified.

22.4. Any Club, Official/Member, Player, Match Official who by whatever arrangement with any other person(s) or organization influences or attempts to influence the result of a match shall be deemed guilty of gross misconduct; and upon confirmation of such allegation, the following shall apply:

22.4.1. a fine of One Million Naira Only (N1,000,000. 00) each shall be imposed on the erring clubs;

22.4.2. the result of the match shall be cancelled;

22.4.3. any person(s)/club official(s) found guilty of involvement shall be banned for a minimum period of 2 years;

22.4.4. in addition to any other applicable sanction.

Players Invited to National Camps

22.5. At any particular time when there are no international engagement for the National Teams, players in the National Camps shall be released to play for their clubs in the League. The clubs concerned shall, however, guarantee the return of such player(s) to the National Camps within 48 hours after the club's engagement, as may be agreed with the handlers of the National Teams. Any club violating the guarantee shall be sanctioned by the League as deemed appropriate.

22.6. Where a club has 5 or more players in the National Camps, its matches may be postponed at the request in writing by such club provided such application is received not less than 72 hours before the schedule match.

22.7. It is mandatory for clubs to release players unconditionally for National Teams.

Supporters' Club

22.8. Clubs shall register their supporters clubs which must be properly constituted and recognized. They must be easily identified by the colours of their uniform at match venues.

22.9. Clubs shall be held responsible for the behavior of their supporters before, during, or after any match.

Prohibition of Political, Religious Messages etc.

22.10. The use of words, objects or other means to transmit or display any message that is not fit for a football or other sporting event, particularly messages of a political, religious, discriminatory or provocative nature is prohibited and punishable under these Rules.

Review

22.11. These Rules shall be subject to yearly review or as may be determined by the Congress.

Match Tickets/Stadium Entry

- 22.12. Match tickets shall be used and issued by the home Club for each match (whether or not there is any free entry) for record and crowd control purposes.
- 22.13. The home Club shall communicate in advance to the NNL the ticket prices of the various classes of tickets for admission to the match and no Club shall be entitled to change the ticket prices communicated to the NNL.
- 22.14. No club shall sell match day or season tickets without complying with the registration requirements stipulated in these Rules and being registered to play in the League.
- 22.15. All Clubs shall be obliged to grant free stadium entry to students dressed in school uniform as well as to persons below the age of 16 years, who are accompanied by teachers or adults.
- 22.16. Clubs may sell the gates of their home League matches on the following conditions:
- 22.16.1. there shall be a written agreement between the club, buyers, and the State Football Association;
 - 22.16.2. all parties must sign the agreement, a copy of which must be given to the Match Commissioner for onward transmission to the League.

Matters not provided for

- 22.17. Any matter unforeseen or not provided for or, conflict in the interpretation and application of these Rules, shall be dealt with by the NNL as the circumstances require, having regard to the interest of fairness, good sportsmanship and the overall interest of the game of football.
- 22.18. In addition to these Rules, the NNL and the Clubs are subject to such decisions or rulings that the NFF or its Committees may make from time to time.

PART C:
Disciplinary Provisions

23. Misconduct

23.1. Players, Club officials and every person involved in the League shall at all times act in the best interest of the game and comply with the principles of fair play, sportsmanship, the rules and regulations governing the League and not act (whether through words, conducts or behaviour) in a manner capable of bringing the game into disrepute; failure of which constitutes misconduct and a breach of the League Rules.

23.2. "Misconduct" includes:

23.2.1. a breach of any of the following:

23.2.1.1. the Laws of the Game;

23.2.1.2. the statutes and regulations of the NFF;

23.2.1.3. the statutes and regulations of CAF;

23.2.1.4. the statutes and regulations of FIFA;

23.2.1.5. these Rules;

23.2.1.6. any other relevant rule, regulation, order, requirement, directive or instruction,

23.2.2. any conduct capable of bringing the game into disrepute.

24. Yellow and Red Cards

24.1. A player who accumulates 3 yellow cards at different matches during the season is suspended for the next immediate match after the third caution; a subsequent accumulation of additional 3 yellow cards in the same season attracts a two-match suspension; a further accumulation of 3 yellow cards in the same season attracts suspension for the rest of the season.

24.2. A player who receives a red card shall be suspended for the next match, which may be increased to suspension for 2 or more matches if the offence is considered grave enough; an accumulation of 3 red cards within a season attracts suspension for the rest of the season.

- 24.3. Regardless of whether or not the League had informed all parties before the match, any club that features a player who ought to have been suspended, shall pay a fine of Three Hundred Thousand Naira only (N300,000.00) and forfeit the match to the opponent by 3 points & 3 goals or the result of the match, whichever is higher. In addition, the defaulting player shall be suspended for 2 subsequent matches.
- 24.4. For every yellow card offence a club shall be fined Fifteen Thousand Naira only (N15,000.00) and Twenty Five Thousand Naira only (N25,000.00) for a red card.
- 24.5. A player or official sent off the field of play for any offence shall retire into the dressingroom. Such player or official may face such other disciplinary measures as the NNL may determine.

25. Control of Players and Officials

- 25.1. Clubs are required to control their Players and Officials and ensure their proper conduct at all times.
- 25.2. No Player other than the captain is permitted to approach the Referee or match official in protest against any decision.

26. Assault of Match Officials

- 26.1. Any player or official who assaults a match official or any other person in the course of a match shall be suspended for a period of up to 1 year in addition to any other sanction deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- 26.2. The NNL may place a ban of up to 1 year on a venue where Match Officials are assaulted.

27. Disciplinary Powers of the League

- 27.1. The League may impose any of the following disciplinary sanctions on any club, official, player, or State Football Association if found guilty of contravening any of its Rules/Regulations.
- 27.1.1. Caution;
- 27.1.2. Censure;
- 27.1.3. Fine;

- 27.1.4. Cancellation of match;
 - 27.1.5. Deduction or cancellation of points;
 - 27.1.6. Ban on stadium;
 - 27.1.7. Movement of a team to different venues for its home matches;
 - 27.1.8. Order for matches to be played on neutral grounds in another State;
 - 27.1.9. Order for a Club to play any number of its home matches behind closed doors;
 - 27.1.10. Suspension or ban on a player or official;
 - 27.1.11. Expulsion from the competition or any League organized activities.
- 27.2. The League may impose any of the above disciplinary sanctions; provided that where the sanctioned party is dissatisfied with the decision of the League such party may request for a hearing upon which the matter shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the NFF.
- 27.3. Where there is a repeated or aggravated breach of these Rules, the nature of such repeated or aggravated breach shall be taken into consideration, with a view to imposing more severe sanction(s).

PART D:

Dispute Resolution

28. Trade Dispute

- 28.1. Any official or player of a club who intends to declare a trade dispute with a club over unfulfilled contract agreement or conditions of service shall in the first instance give one month's notice to the management stating grounds of dispute.
- 28.2. A copy of the notice shall be sent to League for information.
- 28.3. If at the expiration of the notice the dispute has not been resolved, the player or official shall refer the matter to the Arbitration Committee for adjudication.
- 28.4. The decision of the Arbitration Committee shall be final and binding on both parties on purely football matters.

- 28.5. If, however, the dispute is one, which can only be resolved in a Civil Court of Law, the party seeking to adopt this last measure shall seek the approval of the League.
- 28.6. Any player(s) or official(s) embarking on actions that result in his club's failure to honour any fixture obligation, without recourse to the above provisions, shall be banned for a minimum of two years.
- 28.7. At the expiration of the ban the player(s) or official(s) shall only be readmitted upon the payment of a fine of One Hundred Thousand only (N100, 000.00).
- 28.8. Strike and Industrial actions by Match Commissioners, Referees, Coaches, Players, etc are forbidden. A contravention of this rule shall attract sanction(s) as may be determined by the League.

29. Prohibition of Litigation

- 29.1. NNL and all Clubs undertake and resolve that no party subject to these rules shall have recourse to litigation in a Court of Law to settle any football matter, grievance, dispute or disagreement arising from or connected with the application or operation of these Rules.
- 29.2. Any party subject to these Rules who acts in breach or violation of Rule 26.1 above shall be subject to such disciplinary action, including expulsion from the League, as shall be deemed fit by NNL or NFF.

PART E:

APPEALS

30. Procedure for Appeal

- 30.1. If a club is dissatisfied with the verdict of the Disciplinary Committee, it reserves the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee of the NFF; provided that where an appeal or election for hearing pursuant to a notice in Form 16 fails or is found to have been frivolous, such party may be liable to such additional sanction as deemed fit in the circumstances.
- 30.2. Every appeal must indicate clearly and fully the ground on which it is based and must be lodged in writing to the General Secretary of the NFF through

the State Football Association within 48 hours of the receipt of the verdict of the Disciplinary Committee.

- 30.3. An appeal shall be accompanied by a fee of N250,000.00 that shall be refunded if the appeal is sustained.
- 30.4. The decisions of the Appeals Committee on any football issue shall be final and binding on all parties and shall not be a subject of litigation in a court of law.

These Rules are adopted by the Congress of Nigeria National League held at Centenary Hotel, Wuse zone 6, Abuja on

....., this day of, 20.....