

TO THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1843

Zurich, 28 April 2023

Registration bans – Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players / FIFA Disciplinary Code

Dear Sir or Madam,

As you are aware, and in accordance with article 55 of the FIFA Statutes, a ban on registering new players, either nationally or internationally (a so-called **registration ban**), is one of the disciplinary measures that may be imposed by FIFA's judicial bodies or by the Football Tribunal.

Given the increasing number of registration bans imposed in recent years, combined with the high volume of related requests received by the FIFA administration, the purpose of this circular is to provide general information on this disciplinary measure as well as clarification on its scope.

a. Jurisdiction to impose a registration ban

(i) Football Tribunal

A registration ban is one of the potential sanctions that the Football Tribunal may impose on clubs, in accordance with the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (**RSTP**), and, when appropriate, in line with the FIFA Clearing House Regulations (**FCHR**).

More specifically, it may be imposed in relation to overdue payables (article 12bis of the RSTP), the termination of a contract without just cause (article 17 of the RSTP), the unilateral termination of a contract on the grounds of a player being or becoming pregnant (article 18quater paragraph 3 of the RSTP), or the failure to pay relevant amounts in due time (article 24 of the RSTP and article 8 paragraph 2 of Annexe 2 to the RSTP).

(ii) Disciplinary Committee

In accordance with article 6 paragraph 3 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code (**FDC**), the FIFA Disciplinary Committee may impose a “ban on registering new players” on legal persons only, specifically on clubs.

The vast majority of decisions in which this measure is imposed emanates from article 21 of the FDC (related to the failure to respect decisions), said provision specifically stating that “in the case of clubs, (...) a ban on registering new players will be issued (...)”.

This being said, it is to be noted that this measure is not limited to potential breaches of said article and it may be imposed on a club as a result of any breach of FIFA's regulations. More generally, registration bans are the sanction that is most often imposed for infringements relating to international transfers involving minors.

b. Scope

(i) A ban on registering new players

A club subject to a registration ban shall be banned from registering any new players, either nationally or internationally, whether as amateurs or as professionals, for the full duration of this measure.

In other words, the club shall only be able to register new players (i) upon the ban having been served for its entire duration (in case of a registration ban imposed for a specified period of time¹, in which case the club will only be able to register new players as of the next registration period following the complete serving of the relevant sanction), and/or (ii) upon the ban being lifted by the FIFA administration (in case of a registration ban imposed until a specific action is completed²).

Consistently with the above, and for the duration of the registration ban, the club may not make use of the exceptions stipulated in article 6 paragraph 3 of the RSTP in order to register players at an earlier stage.

¹ See, for instance, article 17 paragraph 4 of the RSTP (“The club shall be banned from registering any new players, either nationally or internationally, **for two entire and consecutive registration periods.**” – emphasis added).

² See, for instance, article 21 paragraph 1 d) of the FDC (“(...) a ban on registering new players will be issued **until the complete amount due is paid or the non-financial decision is complied with.**” – emphasis added), article 17 paragraph 6 of the FCHR (“(...) The registration ban shall be lifted **once the amount has been paid in full.**” – emphasis added) or article 17 paragraph 8 of the FCHR (in case of a Second Compliance Assessment failure “(...) The registration ban shall be lifted **only after the FIFA Clearing House confirms that the club has passed a subsequent Compliance Assessment.**” – emphasis added).

(ii) Territorial application of the ban

As previously mentioned, a registration ban shall apply both at national and international levels. In other words, it shall affect any registration deriving from either a domestic or an international transfer.

A ban at international level will be implemented directly by FIFA in the Transfer Matching System (**TMS**) for all clubs existing in the system. However, it is the responsibility of the association concerned to ensure that the ban is also correctly implemented at national level within its own registration platform and at international level for those clubs that are not in TMS. The association concerned would thus be required to provide the FIFA administration with proof that the measure has been duly implemented. In other words, and for the sake of clarity, member associations are ultimately responsible for ensuring that no players are registered for a club for the entire duration of the ban, regardless of whether the registration derives from a domestic or an international transfer. Any failure by an association to comply with these obligations would be subject to potential sanctions imposed by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee (cf. section c. *infra*).

For the sake of completeness, any international transfer processed by a club serving a registration ban will trigger a validation exception in TMS (cf. article 14 paragraph 1 of Annexe 3 to the RSTP).

(iii) Enforcement of the ban

A registration ban is automatically enforced and takes effect immediately as from the date of the communication. Such a ban applies to all registrations that have not been concluded by the time of the communication.

(iv) Players concerned: gender, discipline and status

As a general rule, and unless otherwise specified within the relevant decision imposing the sanction, a registration ban shall apply to the corresponding gender (i.e. male or female) and discipline (i.e. 11-a-side football, futsal or beach soccer) of the party and/or parties which gave rise to such decision, regardless of their status (amateur or professional).

By way of an example, a club subject to a registration ban imposed under article 21 of the FDC as a result of its failure to pay a male player (even though instructed to do so by a body, a

committee, a subsidiary or an instance of FIFA or CAS) will be prevented from registering 11-a-side male players, either as amateurs or as professionals. In other words, the ban would, in such a scenario, not apply (i) to female players or (ii) to futsal or beach soccer.

(v) Youth teams

In order not to hinder the development of young football players, and unless otherwise specified within the relevant decision imposing the sanction, as from the date of issuance of this circular, a club subject to a registration ban may register players for its youth teams, such possibility being, however, limited to players until the age of 15. Players newly registered with a youth team during a registration ban cannot play for the club's first team or any other professional team of the club until the registration ban has elapsed. If this occurs, the player(s) concerned shall be declared ineligible, and any match in which the player(s) featured must be declared forfeited.

(vi) Signature of contracts

A registration ban imposed on a club does not prevent it from signing contracts with (new) players. Only the registration in accordance with article 5 of the RSTP, and consequently the participation in official and/or friendly matches of those players, would be affected by the sanction.

(vii) Regulatory exceptions

Notwithstanding the above and consistently with article 25 paragraph 3 of the RSTP, the following actions do not contravene a registration ban:

- a) the return from loan of a professional, solely where the loan agreement expires naturally;
- b) the extension of the loan of a professional, beyond the natural expiry of the loan agreement;
- c) the definitive engagement of a professional who was temporarily registered for the club directly prior to the registration ban being imposed;
- d) the registration of a professional who was already registered with the club as an amateur directly prior to the registration ban being imposed.

For the sake of clarity, the same principles shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to any registration ban imposed by the Disciplinary Committee on the basis of the FDC.

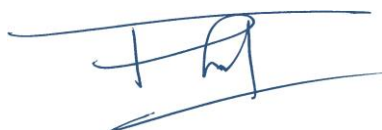
c. Failure to respect or to implement a registration ban

Finally, we would like to clarify that any club and/or association failing to respect and/or implement a registration ban may be subject to further sanctions imposed by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee under article 21 of the FDC.

If you have any questions on this subject, please write to legal@fifa.org.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'FS', is written over two horizontal lines.

Fatma Samoura
Secretary General

- cc:
- FIFA Council
 - Confederations
 - FIFA judicial bodies
 - FIFA Football Tribunal
 - ECA
 - FIFPRO
 - World Leagues Forum