



FIFA Training Centre

**BEACH SOCCER
GUIDELINES**

**for member associations
to organise beach soccer
competitions**

ADVANCED

Guidelines for member associations to organise beach soccer competitions (ADVANCED)

Introduction

This guide aims to provide member associations (MAs) that have secured a certain level of internal financial and material resources and support with an overview of the resource and planning requirements to launch men's and women's beach soccer competitions in their country.

This document addresses a range of possibilities that encompass a wide spectrum of realities within the scope of practice of MAs, public authorities and event promoters, amongst others.

This guide also considers the importance of beach soccer-specific staff in the development of relationships with the aforementioned stakeholders, which are very often central to securing budgets for such activities.

1) Domestic league

When an MA has the financial and material resources in place to launch beach soccer activities, the first step typically involves establishing a domestic beach soccer league.

This section contains some important considerations when it comes to laying the foundations for such a project, which requires a significant budget and human resource investment for planning, execution and evaluation purposes throughout (i.e. prior to, during and after the completion of the domestic league season).



1.1 Competition preparation

Following the creation of an MA's first domestic beach soccer league, we recommend that consideration be given to the points below.

1.1.1 Facilities and pitches

It is essential that a specific budget be allocated for the construction and enhancement of facilities and pitches, which must meet all of the structural requirements established in the Beach Soccer Laws of the Game.

Depending on the country's territory (extension, size, transport links between regions and cities, etc.), competition pitches are allocated according to the following criteria:

By region: an appropriate number of pitches should be guaranteed, based on the country's size and needs. This criterion applies to countries with a large territory, such as Brazil, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, China PR, etc. We recommend that competition pitches be selected on the basis of which location offers the greatest potential for success (player/club interest, existing infrastructure in a beach location or sand pitches, summer sports complexes/championships, etc.).

By city: firstly, it is recommended that coastal cities (with a beach) and those with a tradition of beach/water sports be selected. Such locations already have the sand for the pitch surface in place, thereby reducing the infrastructural costs and allowing for investment to focus on maintenance, improvements or the installation of a mobile structure. This approach facilitates the continuity of beach soccer in such locations, encouraging more organisations to get involved in beach soccer competitions.

By club: a beach soccer pitch may be built at each of the country's leading association football clubs. For example, in countries with a small territory and a limited number of association football clubs, a beach soccer pitch could be built at one of the clubs.

MA headquarters/facilities: centralised across MA location(s), at least one beach soccer pitch could be set up at the MA's facilities. The majority of MAs have sufficient land available to host competitions.

In the case of non-beach locations, pitches could be set up using artificial/river sand, provided that the location offers all of the necessary conditions to host beach soccer games. Such locations require greater investment to set up pitches.

In addition to the above, it is recommended that at least one pitch offer all of the necessary features to host competition finals and international competitions. Such features comprise grandstands or stands, changing rooms for teams and referees, equipment and physiotherapy rooms amongst other spaces required to host elite competitions.

These additional facilities may be permanent or temporary. In the latter case, sufficient space must be allocated in advance to accommodate them.

1.2 Considerations for domestic competitions

As a starting point and in view of the challenges certain MAs may encounter in launching a new sport, this section proposes a number of possible competition formats involving different numbers of participating teams, divisions, pitches, regions and various competition durations.

Number of participating teams: initially, it is not a good idea to limit the number of participating teams in each region, but instead implement a series of minimum participation requirements. During this initial stage, the aim is to popularise the sport.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that a given number of teams be ranked per region to contest a final round, which is known as a super final.

For countries with small territories, in which a tournament can be staged within a single region, the ideal number of participating teams is between eight and 12, with a home and away round-robin format in place and no need for a super final.

Number of divisions: during the competition's early years, the number of divisions within the domestic league should be restricted to one, regardless of the number of registered teams. In the first year, there is no possibility of organising the league on the basis of ability or match results. Depending on the number of participating teams, it is recommended that an additional division be added in the competition's second year.

Number of pitches: the recommended minimum number of pitches that should be made available depends on the available sand surface, which has an impact on the associated costs. The following recommendations apply:

- At least two pitches in regions that have a beach or natural sand
- At least one pitch in regions that do not have a beach or natural sand (to reduce the set-up costs that several pitches would entail)

Number of regions: the number of regions into which a league may be divided depends on the country's territory and the interest expressed by the regional clubs in participating in the competition. Countries with a small territory, such as Bahrain, Paraguay or Portugal, may be divided into up to three regions.

Large countries, such as IR Iran, Russia, Brazil, China PR and India, may be divided into up to eight regions. Depending on the number of interested participating teams, a regional qualification tournament may be held to determine which teams qualify for the final regional league.

Duration: domestic competitions should be played over no more than two to three months, at least in the competition's first year. In subsequent years, the competition could be played over three to six months, which would allow players to focus on their preparation and be available to play other formats of football during the off-season, while also optimising the use of the beach soccer pitches and infrastructure.

With regard to cup competitions or the super cup, a more condensed format lasting no more than a month is recommended.

In the first year, it is important to schedule the tournaments on the MA's official calendar in the months when there are no futsal competitions, for example, so as to avoid any clashes and ensure that as many teams as possible have the opportunity to compete in the competition.

The following section proposes a series of competition formats with their respective features (number of divisions, division of regions, number of participating teams, competition duration, etc.).



1.2.1 Territorially small countries

a) Domestic league

- One division

- Divided into up to three regions

- Up to 32 teams per region (ideal scenario)

- Two pitches per region

- Competition staged over no more than two to three months in the first year

- Eight-team super final featuring the best teams from each region, contested at the main pitch with the necessary facilities, with a two-group format lasting between five and six days

b) Domestic cup or super cup

After the completion of the beach soccer domestic league season, the top eight teams qualify for the domestic cup or super cup, which involves the following features:

- One division

- One region (top eight domestic league teams)

- Week-long competition

- Held three to five days after the completion of the league season

1.2.2 Territorially large countries

a) Domestic league

- One division in the first year (it is recommended that a second division be introduced in the second or third year)
- Divided into up to five regions (if the country is very large, a pre-qualification phase may be organised within the regions)
- Up to 16 teams per region
- Three pitches per region
- Competition staged over three months
- A super final featuring the best team from each region, played on the main pitch in the host city with the best facilities and which benefits from certain infrastructure (stand rental, live production for streaming or broadcasting, etc.) and organisational structure (media, guests, etc.)

b) Cup

The teams that contest the regional pre-domestic league competition compete in a knockout system. The top two teams from each region qualify, meaning that a total of eight teams meet in a group format (two groups of four teams across five matchdays in a host city).



1.3 The pitch and equipment

- Pitch markings, goals, corner flags and flagposts
- Safety nets behind the goals: required to ensure spectator safety and prevent balls from leaving the playing area
- Scoreboard and clock: a minimum of one set per pitch is required during competition
- Balls: to be supplied by the official MA sponsor/partner at no or a reduced cost. If the budget permits, extra balls may be distributed among participating teams (five to ten per team) to help popularise the sport and improve the participating teams' technical level
- Training equipment: cones, hurdles, mini goals, etc. can be distributed amongst the participating teams to assist them with their preparations and/or supplied at the on-site warm-up area(s)

1.4 Coach education and capacity-building

When launching a new discipline, the MA should organise courses and seminars in order to build capacity and knowledge at all levels. Courses and seminars are a great tool for this – it is recommended that they be held prior to the start of a competition.

These provisions may be aimed at coaches, referees and players (including goalkeeper-specific provisions), as well as competition/beach soccer managers within the MAs, clubs or any other entity.

FIFA's Technical Development Division offers a portfolio of projects that are available to all MAs upon request.

Technical workshops

As well as constantly seeking to improve the standard of refereeing and coaching, an MA must explore ways to improve the standard of play and increase participation levels. Holding clinics for association football players, athletes from other sporting disciplines and those who have never played beach soccer before is an excellent means to pursue these objectives.

Support from FIFA's Beach Soccer Technical Experts is available upon request to the FIFA Global Football Development Division. Active international players and coaches may also lead the aforementioned educational activities.

Refereeing

It is recommended that the MA create a pool of qualified referees who are able to officiate at domestic and potentially international level. This is a key requirement in order to enhance the credibility of any competition, its organisation and results.

As part of its refereeing structure, an MA typically appoints a referee coordinator to oversee beach soccer and a beach soccer referee instructor. The better the structure of the MA's refereeing department, the more likely it is to deliver a high standard of refereeing across its competitions.

An MA can request support from the FIFA Refereeing International Lists to engage international referees to officiate in national-level competitions. This is a good way to improve the standard of refereeing in the country.

International talent

Another way to improve participating players' skills and raise the standard of play in a competition is to engage with international beach soccer talent (players and coaches) to join a participating team for a whole season or a short period (i.e. prior to the start of the competition). The MA may support this initiative financially or logistically. For example, it could cover some of the associated costs (flights, accommodation, fees and salaries) and host the international talent at its facilities.



1.5 Organisational structure

In order to create and deliver a successful competition, the organising entity should involve the majority of the MA's departments. The extent to which each department is involved varies depending on the MA's size and whether the particular department is directly involved in the organisation of the competition. This section outlines the responsibilities of the various departments and postholders across an MA.

General Secretary department

- Financial and internal organisational approvals, public relations, etc.

Competitions department

- Player registration, database management, transfers and loans
- Preparation and distribution of the competition calendar and schedules for each competition

Finance and administration departments

- Management of all resources generated specifically for and by beach soccer competitions
- Administrative management: supplier payments, receipt of financial resources, issuance and receipt of invoices, preparation and signature of contracts, etc.

Human resources department

- Recruitment and selection of personnel required for competitions
- Arrangement of visa/logistics support for all stakeholders involved in beach soccer events

Technical department

- Development of beach soccer in the country, devising a strategy aimed at raising standards at all levels of the game
- Implementation of all technical development-related activities, as well as defining, leading, controlling, monitoring and evaluating each project

Development office

- Collaboration with the technical director on the delivery of coaching and refereeing courses (e.g. regionally or locally)

Beach soccer committee

- Reviewing and approving the proposed competitions (formats, budgets, etc.)

Marketing and media department

- Seeking partners and sponsors to support the competition financially and/or logistically
- Promoting the project across the host cities/regions through its own channels, regional and national media, etc.
- Overseeing the delivery of all media content: press releases, digital platforms and social media channels, etc.
- Briefing and advising national, regional and local journalists on beach soccer-related matters
- Producing and editing competition brochures (media guide, etc.)

Head coach of the beach soccer national team

- Monitoring all beach soccer competitions to assess prospective national team players
- Supporting the technical and competitions departments in the creation of the league, establishing the competition format, selecting international players to support the national teams, etc.

Refereeing department

- Appointing referees for all official beach soccer competitions run by the MA

1.6 Engagement

With a view to securing the participation of as many teams as possible, it is important that the organising entity carry out engagement initiatives. This is particularly crucial in a competition's early stages until it attracts more media attention and becomes more popular.

It is recommended that the MA connect with certain stakeholders, some of which are listed below, to encourage them to register teams for the competition or promote it to their members and those in their databases. The MA should come up with ideas on how to get players and teams involved (creating a marketing campaign, offering incentives, etc.).

The main stakeholders that the MA should engage with are:

- MA-affiliated football clubs;
- private and public football academies;
- private and public sports academies and facilities;
- football/sports-related social projects and foundations;
- schools and organisers of extracurricular sports activities;
- universities;
- local businesses and existing business (sponsored football leagues);
- city councils and sports departments;
- regional governments and their ministries of sport;
- governmental sectors and entities (i.e. the military); and
- MA partners and sponsors.



2) Competition phase

Once all of the preparations have been completed and everything is in place for the start of the competition, the competition manager's role becomes more focused on delivery-oriented tasks. When there are limited human resources available within the MA/organising entity to attend all matches or stages of a competition, the referees and host team managers may be asked to perform a coordination role to ensure the smooth delivery of matches in line with the established regulations and Beach Soccer Laws of the Game.

Scope of the MA's work

Regardless of whether they attend all matches or stages of a competition, the competition manager is tasked with leading and managing the project. They must oversee all operations and coordinate the whole project, with their tasks including:

- managing the project and budget;
- ensuring competition regulations and rules are adhered to across all matches;
- managing the MA's regulatory bodies (disciplinary department, etc.);
- overseeing the competition infrastructure (preparation, readiness and maintenance);
- establishing the schedule and overseeing the delivery of match operations;
- appointing and managing referees in conjunction with the referee coordinator and/or referee committee, where relevant;
- team relations; and
- host city relations.



COMPETITION PHASE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Competitions

2.1.1 Ball crew

At least four ball crew members are required for each match throughout the first year of an official beach soccer competition. The number of ball crew members may be increased according to the level of interest and availability amongst children who are suitable for the role.

2.1.2 Balls

As well as being provided for each match, if the competition budget permits, balls should also be supplied for the participating teams' warm-ups. Teams must be notified in advance if balls will not be provided for their warm-ups.

2.1.3 Infrastructure readiness

The pitch, its equipment and the scoreboard (amongst other things) must be prepared in time for the competition phase.

2.1.4 Trophies and awards

The best teams and players are recognised, with beach soccer competitions typically recognising the achievements of the best players within three categories: best goalkeeper, best player and top scorer. The organising entity is responsible for arranging the awards ceremony.

2.2 IT

2.2.1 Audiovisual system

An audiovisual system is required where team presentations and entertainment activities are planned.

2.2.2 Internet connection and printers

This technology must be available to provide the participating teams, referees and media representatives with the relevant documents on site.

2.3 Public relations

This involves inviting stakeholders (i.e. city councils, regional FAs, potential partners and sponsors, journalists, etc.) to matches in order to engage them with the competition with the aim of securing their support for future editions.

3) Post-competition phase

Once the competition is over, the organising entity must officially communicate the results (standings, etc.), as well as the implications for subsequent editions, such as promotions and relegations and any disciplinary sanctions to be carried over to future editions.

From a management perspective, a report should be produced during this phase to reflect on the tournament and share knowledge and achievements internally with the participating teams, sponsors and prospective partners.



4) Costs and budget

The MA has to budget for some additional costs with every event and project that arises. A number of these costs, which contribute to enhancing the MA's competitions, are listed below:

4.1 Infrastructure

- Human resource costs, including staff and referees and their respective insurance cover (also applies for the participating teams)
- Digital platforms: team registration, competition management tool, etc.
- Pitch installation and equipment, as well as certification

4.2 Travel and accommodation

Subject to the tournament budget and format, particularly in countries with a large territorial extension, it is recommended that the MA partly or fully cover the cost of travel (whether by land, air or sea), accommodation and food incurred by the participating teams, while the costs incurred by referees and coordinators, etc. are usually covered in full.

The travel and/or accommodation costs borne by a participating team may be covered either exclusively for the final stage of the competition or for each match. This is particularly relevant for those matches played outside of the team's home region.

4.3 Foreign players and coaches

Based on a draft system, it is essential that the MA initially provide some additional budget to financially support those participating teams that intend to draft in renowned international players, a process described in section 1.5 of this guide.

4.4 Awards and incentives

It is important that a share of the financial resources for a competition be allocated to prizes to encourage participation. Whether in the initial or final stages or at the end of a competition, each team should receive participation prize money in order to encourage participation and ensure a minimum level of organisational support, while also helping to raise technical standards across the clubs.

It is also important to recognise the performance levels of the participating teams and individual players. The frequency with which accolades are awarded (per match, per matchday, per stage, at the end of the competition or a combination of these options) is dependent on the budget.

By way of example, a meaningful incentive would be for the MA to cover (or partly cover) the cost incurred by the winning team in participating in international beach soccer club competitions. This would also serve to improve standards across the teams.

5) Annual plan

When planning the competition season, the following factors should be taken into account:

- Territorial extension of the country (number of regions into which the country is divided) and the location of the participating teams

- Sports calendar: avoid clashes with international beach soccer competitions and domestic football and futsal leagues to maximise participation amongst athletes from these disciplines during their off-season

- Climatology

- Availability of men's and women's teams, both genders should play simultaneously

The following table outlines the various phases of the project during a 12-month cycle, with the duration of each phase noted. The months of the year are represented by numbers, which can be converted on the basis of the competition dates (November to April in areas such as CONMEBOL east, whilst in Europe competitions are typically held between May and September).

Month	Activity	Duration (days)
1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan and preparation 	90
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to commercial stakeholders: TV broadcasters and potential partners and sponsors 	10
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to present the beach soccer domestic league project to clubs/potential clubs participating in beach soccer competitions (clubs, universities, armed forces, ministries, etc.) 	60
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the project plan by establishing the number of participating teams, divisions, regions, pitches, registration deadline, etc. • Meetings with all relevant MA departments 	30
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media launch (TV channels, social media networks, etc.) 	20
8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staging of the first men's and women's domestic beach soccer league (one division across only two regions) 	90
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super final (if relevant) 	7
10-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA's beach soccer cup 	21
11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA's beach soccer super cup • Closing and reporting 	1



6) Case studies

6.1 Construction of pitches at beach soccer clubs

Russia offers a fine example of beach soccer pitches being built within beach soccer club complexes, including the facilities at St Petersburg-based BSC Kristall Club, BSC Lokomotiv and BSC Spartak Moscow. This approach has contributed to the successful development and growth of domestic beach soccer competitions and teams in Russia, despite the lack of natural beaches and the tough weather conditions during the winter months.

6.2 Construction of lakeside pitch (a non-beach location)

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) offers an excellent case study of the construction of beach soccer pitches in a country with no coastline and therefore no natural beach. In 2021, the FMF completed work on a permanent beach soccer stadium at a lakeside location: La Izvor Park.

6.3 Construction of pitches at MA facilities

Beach soccer pitches have been built within the MA facilities in Mexico, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. These pitches have been useful for the purpose of both hosting official competitions and staging national team training camps.

6.4 Multi-division domestic league

The domestic beach soccer league in IR Iran is one of the biggest of its kind in the world. It features three tiers on the men's side and one women's division.

6.5 Promotion and engagement

The *Torneo de las Estrellas* tournament was held in Paraguay in 2021. The competition saw each of the 12 official Paraguayan Football Association (APF) sponsors register a team. An official draft was organised that involved over 150 players to ensure that all 12 participating teams were competitive. The event attracted strong crowds, with many families in attendance.

6.6 Renowned international beach soccer players in foreign domestic leagues

Countries such as Portugal and Italy have welcomed foreign players in their domestic leagues for many years in an effort to increase the competitive standard and the level of the participating teams and the competition. In both cases, this policy has helped to create the strongest leagues and clubs in Europe, while also serving to boost the performance levels of the national teams.



6.7 Association football clubs forming beach soccer teams

The inaugural edition of Bahrain's domestic beach soccer league, launched in 2006, was formed by the country's ten top flight association football clubs. The Bahrain Football Association (BFA) guided and financially supported the clubs' participation in the domestic beach soccer league. This initiative delivered some incredible results in the competition's first year, with Bahrain securing their first-ever qualification for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup™. In subsequent years, teams representing the national police, army/ministries, etc. joined the league after beach soccer was added as a discipline in the Armed Forces National Games.

6.8 Grassroots festival

Children aged between seven and 12 from the association football academies in Paraguay's inland areas were invited to play beach soccer at the APF complex in Asunción to coincide with the national beach soccer championship. The entire initiative and logistics were financed by the MA, including travel, snacks, kit, etc.

6.9 Beach soccer coaching course

Several MAs have benefited from the expertise and knowledge of the FIFA Technical Experts after having submitted requests to host coaching courses in their countries. These courses served to enhance participants' knowledge of beach soccer tactics and techniques, while improving the standard of players in the domestic leagues, thereby boosting national team performance levels. In some cases, these programmes played a crucial role in securing historic qualifications for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup or in achieving impressive results in international competitions.