

70TH **FIFA**[®]
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Proposal for amendments to the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes



Eligibility to participate for representative teams

In September 2019, the Football Stakeholders Committee established a technical working group (**TWG**) to examine the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes, which govern eligibility to participate for representative teams (**Regulations**). The establishment of the TWG followed requests by several associations to amend these Regulations.

Following the completion of the TWG's mandate, the FIFA administration compiled the principles agreed by the TWG, identified gaps in the Regulations based on practical experience, and examined several requests from associations to amend the Regulations.

It is proposed, in short and in summary, to:

- define vague phrases which associations have consistently inquired about;
- codify "jurisprudence" made without a regulatory basis by the single judge of the Players' Status Committee in order to provide regulatory certainty for decisions; and
- introduce three additional exceptions to the general prohibition on changing association, based on proposals from associations and case law.

On 27 February 2020, the principles underpinning the amendments were endorsed by the Football Stakeholders Committee.

On 25 June 2020, the FIFA Council recommended that the amendments to the Regulations, as presented below, be submitted to the FIFA Congress for approval. They shall enter into force immediately after the close of the 70th FIFA Congress.

Amendments to the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes

III. ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

5. Principles

1. Any person holding a permanent nationality that is not dependent on residence in a certain country is eligible to play for the representative teams of the association of that country.
2. There is a distinction between holding a nationality and being eligible to obtain a nationality. A player holds a nationality if, through the operation of a national law, they have:
 - a) automatically received a nationality (e.g. from birth) without being required to undertake any further administrative requirements (e.g. abandoning a separate nationality); or
 - b) acquired a nationality by undertaking a naturalisation process.
3. ~~2.~~With the exception of the conditions specified in article ~~89~~ below, any player who has already participated in a match (either in full or in part) in an official competition of any category or any type of football for one association may not play an international match for a representative team of another association.
4. For the purposes of arts 6 to 9 below, the phrase "lived on the territory of the relevant association" shall mean a period of physical presence on the territory of that association. The period shall be for a defined period of time (in years) in accordance with the relevant provision.
 - a) The period of physical presence is not interrupted by:
 - i) short absences abroad for personal reasons;
 - ii) holidays abroad during the football off-season;
 - iii) medical treatment or rehabilitation abroad following injury or illness; or
 - iv) travel abroad as a result of football employment.
 - b) The period of physical presence is interrupted (and time requirement resets) where:
 - i) a player is transferred to a club affiliated to a different association; or
 - ii) a player is absent from a territory for any reason other than those set out in par. a) above.
5. Notwithstanding art. 5 par. 4 a), unless exceptional circumstances exist, a player must be physically present on the territory of an association for at least 183 days during a 12 month period to be considered to have "lived on the territory" of that association for that year.
6. For the purposes of arts 6 to 9 below, the Rules Governing the Procedures of the Players' Status Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber shall govern any requests for eligibility or change of association.

6. Nationality entitling players to represent more than one association

1. A player who, under the terms of art. 5, is eligible to represent more than one association on account of his nationality, may play in an international match for one of these associations only if, in addition to ~~having holding~~ the relevant nationality, he fulfils at least one of the following conditions:
 - a) He was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - b) His biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - c) His grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - d) He has lived ~~continuously~~ on the territory of the relevant association for at least ~~two~~five years.
2. Regardless of par. 1 above, associations sharing a common nationality may make an agreement under which item d) of par. 1 of this article is deleted completely or amended to specify a longer time limit. Such agreements shall be lodged with and approved by the Council.
3. The associations which share a common nationality shall be identified and updated as appropriate by the FIFA general secretariat in a circular.

7. Acquisition of a new nationality

1. Any player who refers to art. 5 par. 1 to assume a new nationality and who has not played international football in accordance with art. 5 par. ~~2-3~~ shall be eligible to play for the ~~new~~ representative teams of the new association only if he fulfils one of the following conditions:

 - a) He was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - b) His biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - c) His grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant association;
 - d) He has lived ~~continuously for at least five years after reaching the age of 18~~ on the territory of the relevant association:
 - i) for players that began living on the territory before the age of 10: at least three years;
 - ii) for players that began living on the territory between the age of 10 and 18: at least five years;
 - iii) for players that began living on the territory from the age of 18: at least five years.

2. A player who seeks to rely upon par. d ii) must:
 - a) demonstrate that the move to the territory of the association was not for the purpose of participating for its representative teams; and
 - b) submit, via the relevant association, a request for eligibility to the Players' Status Committee.

8. Stateless individuals

1. A player that:
 - a) does not hold any nationality; and
 - b) due to national law of the country of their domicile, will never be granted the nationality of such country,

may be declared eligible to play for the representative teams of the association concerned, provided that:

 - c) he has lived on the territory of the relevant association for at least five years; and
 - d) he can demonstrate that the move to the territory of the association was not for the purpose of participating for its representative teams.
2. A player who seeks to rely upon par. 1 must submit, via the relevant association, a request for eligibility to the Players' Status Committee.

9.8. Change of association

1. ~~If a player has more than one nationality, or if a player acquires a new nationality, or if a player is eligible to play for several representative teams due to nationality, he~~ A player may, only once, request to change the association for which he is eligible to play ~~international matches~~ to the association of another country of which he holds nationality, ~~subject to the following conditions:~~
2. A request to change association may be granted only in the following circumstances:
 - a) He ~~the~~ player:
 - i) was fielded in a match in an official competition at any level (with the exception of "A" international level) in any kind of football for his current association; and has not played a match (either in full or in part) in an official competition at "A" international level for his current association;
 - ii) ~~and~~ at the time of his being fielded for his first match first full or partial appearance in an international match in an official competition in any kind of football for his current association, he already ~~had held~~ the nationality of the representative team association which he wishes to play represent.
 - b) the player:
 - i) was fielded in a match in an official competition at any level (with the exception of "A" international level) in any kind of football for his current association;
 - ii) at the time of being fielded for his first match in an official competition in any kind of football for his current association, he did not hold the nationality of the association which he wishes to represent;

- iii) at the time of being fielded for his last match in an official competition in any kind of football for his current association, he had not turned 21 years old; and
 - iv) meets any of the requirements provided in article 6 or article 7.
- c) the player:
- i) was fielded in a match in an official competition at "A" international level in any kind of football for his current association;
 - ii) at the time of being fielded for his first match in an official competition (at any level) in any kind of football for his current association, he held the nationality of the association which he wishes to represent;
 - iii) at the time of being fielded for his last match in an official competition in any kind of football for his current association, he had not turned 21 years old;
 - iv) was fielded in no more than three matches at "A" international level in any kind of football for his current association, whether in an official competition or non-official competition;
 - v) at least three years have passed since being fielded for his last match at "A" international level in any kind of football for his current association, whether in an official competition or non-official competition; and
 - vi) has never participated in any kind of football at "A" international level in the final tournament of the FIFA World Cup or a final tournament of a confederation competition.
- d) the player:
- i) wishes to represent an association that was admitted to FIFA membership after he was fielded in his first match in an official competition (at any level) in any kind of football for his current association;
 - ii) was never fielded in a match in an official competition (at any level) in any kind of football for his current association after the association which he wishes to represent was admitted to FIFA membership;
 - iii) at the time of being fielded for his first match in an official competition (at any level) in any kind of football for his current association:
 - a. held the nationality of the association which he wishes to represent; or
 - b. obtained the nationality of the association which he wishes to represent as soon as reasonably practicable after the country was recognised by the majority of members of the United Nations;
 - iv) meets any of the requirements provided in article 6 or article 7.
- e) the player:

- i) was fielded in a match in an official competition at "A" international level in any kind of football for his current association;
- ii) permanently loses his nationality without his consent or against his will due to a decision by a government authority; and
- iii) holds the nationality of the association that he wishes to represent.

3. b) HeA player is not permitted to play for his new association in any competition in which he has already played for his previous association.

4. A player who seeks to rely upon par. 2 must submit, via the relevant association, a request for change of association to the Players' Status Committee.

5. A player that was:

- a) granted a change of association; and
- b) was not fielded in a match in any (official or unofficial) competition in any kind of football by the new association.

may request a change of association back to his former association provided he continues to hold the nationality of such association.

6. A player who seeks to rely upon par. 5 must submit, via the relevant association, a request for change of association to the Players' Status Committee.

7. A player that has filed a request in accordance with this article is not eligible to participate for any representative team until the request has been decided upon.

~~2. If a player who has been fielded by his association in an international match in accordance with art. 5 par. 2 permanently loses the nationality of that country without his consent or against his will due to a decision by a government authority, he may request permission to play for another association whose nationality he already has or has acquired.~~

~~3. Any player who has the right to change associations in accordance with par. 1 and 2 above shall submit a written, substantiated request to the FIFA general secretariat. The Players' Status Committee shall decide on the request. The procedure will be in accordance with the Rules Governing the Procedures of the Players' Status Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber. Once the player has filed his request, he is not eligible to play for any representative team until his request has been processed.~~