

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: MINIMUM LABOUR CONDITIONS FOR PLAYERS

Women's football has exhibited extraordinary growth over the past decade, with levels of participation, competitiveness and global exposure all on the rise. This progress must go hand in hand with the development of an adequate regulatory framework, in order to protect players and provide women's football with the best possible platform for sustained longevity and long-term career prospects.

In this context, FIFA is introducing relevant changes to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP), which concern guarantees needed to better protect female players' working conditions.

With this in mind, FIFA is proceeding with the approval of a series of minimum working conditions for female players and maternity protection. These will set a minimum standard globally, with each member association free to offer higher protection:



Mandatory remuneration (new article 18 paragraph 7 RSTP):

Pursuant to International Labour Organization Convention No. 183, and in the absence of more beneficial conditions provided by national legislation or a collective bargaining agreement, a female player is entitled to maternity leave, defined as a minimum period of 14 weeks' paid absence – with at least eight weeks after birth – during the term of the contract, paid at the equivalent of two thirds of her contracted salary.

Return to work (new article 18quater RSTP):

A player shall have the right to return to football activity after the completion of her maternity leave. Her club will be under an obligation to reintegrate her into football activity and provide adequate ongoing medical support. The player will be given the opportunity to breastfeed an infant and/or express milk. Clubs shall provide suitable facilities in accordance with applicable national legislation or a collective bargaining agreement.



Registration (new article 6 paragraph 1 RSTP):

Clubs may exceptionally register a female player outside of a registration period to temporarily replace another female player who has taken maternity leave. The duration of the contract of the temporary replacement shall, unless mutually agreed otherwise, be from the date of registration until the day prior to the start of the first registration period after the return of the player that has taken maternity leave. The registration of a female player who has completed her period of maternity leave will exceptionally be allowed to occur outside the registration period.

Protection during pregnancy (new article 18quater RSTP):

In order to ensure that pregnant players are not put at risk, should they choose to continue to provide services, female players have the right to receive regular and independent medical advice. Pregnant players should also have the right to provide services to their club in an alternate manner. In such cases, the club has an obligation to respect this decision and work with the player to formalise a plan for her alternate employment.



Special protection from dismissal for female players (new article 18quater RSTP):

No female player should ever suffer a disadvantage of any sort on the basis of her pregnancy. As a consequence, the unilateral termination of a female player's contract on the grounds of her becoming pregnant will be considered a termination without just cause. Such a termination will be considered an aggravating circumstance and will, in addition to the obligation to pay compensation, lead to the imposition of sporting sanctions, which may be combined with a fine.

This new set of rules, which will guarantee appropriate working conditions for female players, was unanimously endorsed by the FIFA Football Stakeholders Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2020, and will be put forward for the FIFA Council's final approval in December 2020.