

Regulatory Actions Implemented by FIFA in 2020



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→ **FIFA - FIFA Regulations - FIFA RSTP - COVID-19**

This article outlines the regulatory actions carried out by FIFA in 2020, including the different measures and adjustments instituted to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as those new regulations and initiatives which are aimed at renewing the legal framework.

Unsurprisingly, in the coming decades, 2020 will be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unceasing spread of the virus across the globe led to the implementation by government authorities of significant measures, mostly aimed at the preservation of public health.

As could be expected, the football industry has also been affected by the critical measures for COVID-19 prevention and control.

Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the temporary cessation and postponement of competitions provoked a dramatic reduction of revenues, which resulted in drastic and immediate losses and, at the same time, profoundly disrupted the football transfer market.

Against this background, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) - which has been in the process of regulatory reform for some years - reacted promptly by establishing provisional measures with the aim of providing, on the one hand, a response to the loopholes caused

by this anomaly; and, on the other, financial relief and economic support to those who have been most affected.

Measures and adjustments instituted to confront the COVID-19 pandemic

Worldwide registration periods calendar

As included in Article 6 of *Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players* (RSTP), players may only be registered during one the two annual registration periods fixed in the relevant association, with the exception that a professional, whose contract has expired prior to the end of a registration period, may be registered outside that registration period. During the “COVID-19 time”, there was a temporary exemption to this rule, where a professional footballer, whose contract has expired or been terminated as a result of the pandemic, had

the right to be registered by an association outside a registration period, regardless of the date of expiry or termination.

With this scenario, and the uncertainty about what could happen with professional football during the pandemic, FIFA was constantly updating the different transfer window periods of the different associations. Normally, the first transfer window begins after the completion of the season and ends before the new season starts. The second transfer period normally occurs in the middle of the season and may not exceed four weeks. However, due to the pandemic, the worldwide registration periods calendar has been constantly changing in accordance with the developments of the health crisis in each country. For this reason, FIFA has also been constantly modifying the information about the transfer windows.²

The first period may not exceed 12 weeks, and the second one, may not exceed four weeks, whether for male or female competitions.

¹ From 1 January 2020 until 10 December 2020.

² resources.fifa.com