

World Championship 2018 & 2022

Awake the potential of our youth

We want to improve the football of Thailand and develop it over the next years to become one of the leading nations in Asia and a greatly respected part of the world football family.

The World Championship in 2018 and 2022 should be our immediate objective.

Qualifying for both tournaments and taking part alongside the best football nations may seem implausible today, but we all know that Thailand has the potential to achieve this goal.

To reach this goal, we have to be ready to change course and start a true reform.

The Football Association of Thailand (FAT), hand in hand with the TPL and the most influential clubs, must make it their responsibility to initiate a real change in Thai football.

As a country with great passion for football, Thailand undoubtedly has no shortage of young people who dream of becoming the next great football players, but for them to achieve this dream, which is ours as much as theirs, we need to create an environment and a structure to support and develop the young talents to become professional football players.

We believe the key to a successful reform is the development of the youth work in the clubs and the establishment of youth leagues. The role of the FAT and the TPL must therefore be to formulate and enforce a licensing procedure based on a forward-looking and professionally operated youth work that will serve as a foundation for the country's professional football.

To implement this, we need an agreement of cooperation between the clubs, the government, the FAT, and the major Thai and foreign corporations. The strong and powerful clubs will have to extend their support to the smaller clubs while the FAT should not only advise and head the planning, but also be a model of ethical responsibility; only then will we be able to awake the potential of the whole country.

Cooperation with the DFB

Since the late 90s, Germany has been famous for its outstanding youth work and the efficient structure of the leagues. Furthermore, we can see the success of the German system in Japan, whose Football Association very closely emulated the German model.

However, an exact copy would not make sense for us. It will be necessary to respect the circumstances we find here in Thailand, regarding the infrastructure and how young the league still is. So we want to adapt the useful and highly successful, innovative approaches of the youth work in Germany and Japan.

We are now in the process of negotiating an agreement of long-term cooperation between the DFB, the FAT, and the TPL. The main objectives in this cooperation should be:

- To support the development of well-structured and functional youth leagues for Thailand.
- To support the establishment of high-standard education for professional youth trainers.
- To support professional training of referees to achieve the international standard.

Licensing Requirements

A strict and detailed licensing is the crucial key to success and the necessary framework for the future. The FAT and the TPL must therefore formulate the mandatory licensing requirements for the clubs, communicate them, and strictly monitor their implementations.

The already-established licensing requirements must therefore be adjusted as followed:

1) Senior team and youth teams

- The Thai Premier League clubs are required to establish at least:
 - Senior team
 - A-Junior team (U 19/U 18)
 - B-Junior team (U 17/U 16)
 - C-Junior team (U 15/U 14)
 - D-Junior team (U 13/U 12)
 - The Division 1 clubs are required to establish at least:
 - Senior team
 - A-Junior team (U 19/U 18)
 - B-Junior team (U 17/U 16)
 - C-Junior team (U 15/U 14)
- **All teams are required to play in the league appropriate to the age category.**
- **These teams should not be established later than six weeks after the first game day of the actual season.**

2) Football Academies

- The Thai Premier League clubs are required to keep a **Football Academy Grade I**.
- The Division 1 clubs are required to keep a **Football Academy Grade II**.

Football Academy Grade I

- Training ground with appropriate changing room
- Three grass pitches (*or modern artificial grass pitch*)
- One of them with flood light.

Training Instructors

- A minimum of one trainer per team
- At least three of the trainers must be full-time trainers.
- At least two of the three trainers must have a license accepted by the FAT.
- One of them should serve as the head of the football academy.
- One goalkeeper trainer

- **The FAT will organize further training courses in football academies all over the country.**
- **The participation is mandatory for all training instructors.**

Medical Facility

- Treatment rooms for two massage-therapists
- Treatment room for one physician

Medical Care

- One physician (part-time) stationed close to the football academy.
- One physiotherapist (full-time) or at least two physiotherapists (part-time)
- One additional physiotherapist or graduate sport trainer operating as a rehabilitation and physical-coordination trainer

- **Mandatory annual medical assessment for all players.**

Football Academy Grade II

- Training ground with appropriate changing room
- Two grass pitches (*or modern artificial grass pitch*)
- One of them with flood light.

Trainings Instructors

- A minimum of one trainer per team
- At least two of the trainers must be full-time trainers.
- At least one of the two trainers must have a license accepted by the FAT.
- One of them should serve as the head of the football academy.
- One goalkeeper trainer

- **The FAT will organize further training courses in the Football Academies all over the country.**
- **The participation is mandatory for all training instructors.**

Medical Facility

- Treatment room for one massage-therapist
- Treatment room for one physician

Medical Care

- One physician (part-time) stationed close to the football academy.
- One physiotherapist (full-time) or at least two physiotherapists (part-time)
- One additional physiotherapist or certified sport trainer operating as a rehabilitation and physical-coordination trainer

- **Mandatory annual medical assessment of all players.**

The Development of Youth Leagues

It would be very unfair to expect the clubs to spend a lot of money on the youth program without the FAT and the TPL providing them with the appropriate structure.

1) The Youth Leagues

The youth leagues are the most important project when it comes to future development of Thai football. So it is very important to start this project with all the necessary know-how and in the best way possible.

The FAT and the TPL should establish:

- **A-Junior/Reserve League**
 - Games of the A-Junior/Reserve League take place one day after the regular Thai Premier League or Division 1 match.
 - Players from the senior team are allowed to play in the Reserve team and vice versa.
 - A-Juniors/Reserve teams should be open to not more than four players older than 19.
 - Red and yellow cards from the regular league don't count in the reserve league and vice versa.
- **B-Junior League**
 - B-Junior League should be organized as a regional league.
- **C-Junior League**
 - C-Junior League should be organized as a regional league.
- **D-Junior League**
 - D-Junior League should be organized as a regional league.

The regional leagues could be divided as followed:

- Bangkok
- Central Thailand
- Eastern Thailand
- Northeastern Thailand
- Northern Thailand
- Southern Thailand
- Western Thailand

It will perhaps be necessary to find another solution appropriate to Thailand's infrastructure.

2) The education of the youth trainers

The FAT and the TPL are required to:

- Establish an academy, possibly hand in hand with one of the universities of Thailand, where trainers be educated and become certified.
- Establish at least annual workshops and further education that should take place in the football academies of the clubs in a rotation.

We are currently negotiating with the DFB about holding an education seminar on a regular basis. This should be mandatory for all youth trainers in the Thai football leagues. Thailand should establish our own academy for football trainers as soon as possible.

The Financing

Such improvements and developments undoubtedly need considerable investment for every club but also for the FAT and the TPL. It is therefore important that we find a way of cooperation. We need a system that is transparent and accountable for the handling of all Thailand public funding, FIFA and AFC public funding, and membership fees and sponsorship.

So the first important step would be to create a financial plan for the youth leagues.

- This should be done by a council of FAT, selected representatives of Thai Premier League and Division 1 clubs.
- Complemented by representatives of the DFB
- Possibly complemented by selected representatives of the main sponsors of the FAT and the Thai Premier League