



PRESS STATEMENT

STAG ELITE LEAGUE (SEASON TWO)

The Guyana Football Federation (GFF) will launch Season 2 of the Stag Elite League on Sunday November 13, 2016 at the Demerara Cricket Club Ground, Queenstown. The undermentioned outlines the factors that occasioned the delay in its commencement.

ISSUE: The GFF decided to increase the number of participating clubs in the Stag Elite League from eight to ten. This was met with objections by some of the clubs who raised three objections:

Objection 1: There was a contract between the Normalization Committee and Clubs stipulating there would be no relegation and promotion for a two-year period

Facts: There was no contract. Instead there were Regulations for the 2015–2016 season and these do not constitute a contract. This was made clear by CONCACAF. “The Regulations are not a contract. The Regulations are issued on the sole authority of the GFF Executive Committee based on the power conferred by the Statutes. That being said, the GFF Executive Committee has the authority to modify the Competition Regulations and would be entitled to add additional clubs with a purely sporting objective.”

Objection 2: Game Day management being outsourced to the Clubs that are venue owners.

Facts: Most venue-owning clubs have indicated a willingness to execute this activity; one is reviewing the proposal. The objective of this proposal is to allow clubs the opportunity to earn and reinvest the money in their growth and in other development programmes

Objection 3: Clubs were not consulted on the additional rules and regulations

Facts: The following were the stages followed during the review process:

1. A correspondence was sent to all stakeholders of the Elite League on Wednesday 15th June, 2016, requesting written Elite League Review submissions, which would be used to inform upcoming Review Meetings. Submissions were received from the League Management Team on 24th June, 2016, COURTS Guyana Incorporated on 24th June, 2016, and Fruta Conquerors FC on 27th June, 2016.



Submissions were later received from Buxton United FC and Georgetown Football Club. No other stakeholder has submitted a Review Report.

2. An Elite League Review Meeting was called and hosted by the Guyana Football Federation (GFF) on Tuesday 9th August, 2016, which involved The Match Commissioners Body, the Referees' Department, the League Management Team, the Finance Department, the Public Relations Department, and all of the Elite League Clubs. Among the decisions made at this meeting was, as suggested by the Georgetown Football Club (GFC) Representative, that a comprehensive Elite League Plan, to guide the way forward, be drafted by the GFF and brought to all stakeholders for discussion and consensus.
3. A comprehensive Elite League Plan was then distributed to all of the Elite League Clubs on Friday 2nd September, 2016, for their perusal prior to a meeting being called to discuss same.
4. An Elite League Planning Committee meeting was then called and hosted by the GFF on Friday 9th September, 2016, to discuss the draft Elite League Plan. All of the Elite League Clubs and the two (2) proposed additional Clubs were all represented at this meeting.
5. A meeting with the four (4) Elite Clubs that had already indicated their willingness to participate in Elite League 2016 / 2017 under the conditions as stipulated by the GFF, was called and hosted by the GFF on Friday 7th October, 2016.
6. Additionally, from that time there has been several informal one-on-one engagements with all of the Elite Clubs in the Federation's continued efforts to garner consensus going forward.

Findings following the review process

The following were the salient points made by the Clubs, and the accompanying proposed solutions (*in italics*) from the GFF standpoint:

7. The process used to determine the inclusion of the two (2) additional clubs into the



League was questioned.

It was then explained that the selection had to be made from the three (3) clubs that had already acquired their 2015 / 2016 Club Licenses, and that demographics then guided the choice of a Linden club and an E.C.D. club. The two (2) additional clubs will therefore be retained for League 2016 / 2017.

8. The registration of only twenty-five (25) Elite League Players with an increased number of matches was opined as not enough.

However, the proposed reduction in the number of Rounds to be played in the League, and the resulting adjustments to the Fixtures would automatically address this issue.

9. The reduction of the number of registered non-nationals from five (5) to three (3) was objected to, and it was decided that *the Rule concerning the non-nationals would remain the same as for Elite League 2015 / 2016, which is that "Clubs will be allowed to register twenty five (25) players. This quota includes three (3) spots which must be reserved for goal keepers and up to a maximum of 5 Roster Spots to foreign players who must have their international/local transfers/releases or loan agreements"*.

10. *It was suggested that the League be reduced to only one (1) Round because of the time constraint. This recommendation was adopted in the revised Plan and Fixtures.*

11. It was requested that the non-payment of the Elite League Players stipend be addressed.

The GFF undertook to have this resolved by the end of the month.

12. It was suggested that the players' stipend be increased because of the increased number of matches. However, *the reduction of the League to one (1) Round only, as stated above, automatically addressed this matter.*

13. It was asked how the GFF planned to execute the random drug testing of players. *The meeting was advised that the Guyana Olympic Association (GOA) WADA Certified Personnel had offered to assist in this respect.*



14. The payment of the Registration Fee by the first eight (8) Elite Clubs for this second Elite League was objected to. The view was expressed that the clubs should not pay to play in their own tournament.

The Executive Committee is deliberating on this matter and will make a pronouncement shortly.

CONCLUSION: The GFF, after consultations with the relevant regulatory bodies of FIFA and CONCACAF, and supported by the GFF's Constitution, will proceed with the Stag Elite League.

PROPOSED COMMENCEMENT DATE: Sunday, 13th November, 2016

VENUE: Demerara Cricket Club Ground, Queenstown.