Weather Related Football Game Postponement/Temporary Abandonment/Abandonment Policy

Purpose:
This policy provides guidelines for the postponement or abandonment of football matches due to severe weather conditions while our primary stadium is under construction, with all matches temporarily hosted at the Europa Point Stadium.

Scope:
This policy applies to all football matches organised by the Gibraltar FA. Matches will only be postponed or abandoned in extreme weather circumstances to ensure the safety of players, officials, and spectators.

1. General Weather Considerations
While football is a sport played in various weather conditions, player and spectator safety is our top priority. Matches will only be postponed or abandoned under extreme circumstances, and conditions like rain, wind, or cold will not automatically result in postponement or abandonment.

2. Extreme Weather Conditions
The following weather conditions may be considered extreme and could lead to the postponement or abandonment of matches:

- **High Winds:** Wind speeds that pose a danger to players, officials, or spectators.
- **Lightning:** Thunderstorms with lightning strikes that threaten the safety of those on or around the pitch.
- **Flooding:** Severe rainfall causing significant water accumulation on the pitch, making it unplayable.
- **Severe Sea Conditions:** Extremely high tides or waves breaching the stadium boundaries, creating hazardous conditions.
- **Extreme Heat:** Excessive heat that endangers players and officials.
- **Other Safety Hazards:** Any weather-related phenomena that present immediate risks to the health and safety of all involved.

3. Decision-Making Process

- **GFA Authority:** The Gibraltar FA retains the authority to make decisions on match postponement up to 3 hours before kick-off if severe weather is anticipated, providing flexibility to avoid unnecessary travel and preparation.
- **Match Officials:** In line with Law 5 of the Laws of the Game, the final decision on postponement, abandonment, or temporary abandonment rests solely with the appointed match officials once they arrive at the stadium. They will assess conditions and decide if they meet the extreme criteria outlined in this policy.

- **Pre-Match Assessment:** Officials will inspect the pitch and stadium area 75 minutes before the scheduled kick-off to conduct a risk assessment based on prevailing or forecasted weather.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Weather conditions will be continuously monitored throughout the match. If extreme conditions arise during the game, officials may temporarily abandon the match for safety. Teams and officials will return to their changing rooms, and if conditions improve within 45 minutes, play may resume. If conditions remain unsafe, the match may be abandoned.
- **Finality of Decision:** The referee's decision on match abandonment or postponement is final. In the event of abandonment, the procedures outlined in the Gibraltar FA Disciplinary Regulations (Section 37.9 & 37.10) will be implemented.

4. Communication Protocol

- **Advance Notifications:** When extreme weather is anticipated, the GFA will aim to notify clubs and spectators at least 3 hours prior to kick-off via official channels (social media, website, and club announcements).
- **On-the-Day Decisions:** Any decisions made by match officials will be announced accordingly on the relevant social media channels, with announcements at the stadium for those present.

5. Rescheduling of Postponed/Abandoned Matches

In cases where a match is postponed or abandoned due to extreme weather, the GFA will work to reschedule it at the earliest available date. In the case of abandonment, the procedures outlined in Section 37.9 & 37.10 of the Gibraltar FA Disciplinary Regulations will be implemented. Details of rescheduled matches will be shared via the club's official platforms.

Conclusion:

Football is resilient to various weather conditions, and every effort will be made to continue matches as scheduled. However, in extreme cases, decisions made by officials to postpone, abandon or proceed with a match will be respected and enforced. This policy ensures continuity in football activities with minimal disruption while prioritising safety.

In the event of a conflict between this Policy and the GFA Handbook, please note that the terms of the GFA Handbook shall always prevail.