HAMBURG BLASTERS FC

PRESENTS

HANSEATIC CHAMPIONSHIP 2026

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT REGULATION

Affiliated by: Kerala European Football Federation (KEFF)

Venue Partner: Harburger Türk-Sport e.V. (Baererstraße 45B, 21073 Hamburg)

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Tournament Date: Sunday, 11 October 2026 • Reporting: 07:30 AM | Kickoff: 08:00 AM CEST • Hamburg, Germany

I. GENERAL RULES

- Hamburg Blasters Execom and KEFF's Disciplinary Committee has the right to decide on any issues during the match day, for the betterment of the tournament's successful completion.
  - The committee has the power to expel players who play against the dignity of the other participants from the next match or the entire tournament. No other player can be taken on to the squad to replace the eliminated player.
  - Only team managers/captains may approach the organizing committee for off-field matters.
- No alcohol, cigarettes, or intoxicants are allowed in or near the dressing rooms, playing grounds, or resting areas.
- All teams are expected to maintain decorum and respect one another at all times during the tournament. All disciplinary violations that take place outside the playing field result in the team being expelled from the tournament.
- Teams are expected to maintain the cleanliness of the changing rooms, toilets, and other facilities provided to them and are expected to leave the premises in a tidy way after use.
- Unless otherwise stated, the tournament and all games played will be according to KEFF tournament rules and FIFA footballing rules.
- All teams are expected to report at the ground at 7.30 AM for allotment of Dressing Rooms and to initiate registration. Organizers will not be responsible for the safety of your equipment/valuables left in the dressing rooms.
- Teams are expected to report to the ground at least 10 minutes before KO time.
  - If a team doesn't report at least 2 minutes before kick-off time, the opposition team will be given a walkover with a scoreline of 2-0.
    - In case both teams do not report within this time, the match will be considered a draw with a score of 0-0
- Any other open advertisements other than championship sponsors are not allowed within the tournament venue
- Spectator offenses including invading pitch, physical or verbal abuse to officials, etc other players may lead to expulsion

II. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

1. GROUP STAGE REGULATIONS & MATCH PROTOCOL

- 18 premier European clubs participate in this championship edition, partitioned into **6 groups of 3 teams each (Groups A, B, C, D, E, F)**.
- The championship follows a structured two-phase format: a **Single Round-Robin Group Stage** followed by a **Single-Elimination Knockout Stage**.
- **Round-Robin Group Matches:** Each team plays 2 group matches against the other two clubs in their designated group (3 matches per group). Every team is guaranteed a minimum of 2 competitive games.
- **Group Stage Match Durations:** All group stage matches are played for a duration of **20 minutes** (two 10-minute halves, with a 3-minute halftime interval). The referee may add injury time as deemed appropriate.
- **Group Stage Point Allocation:** Points in the group stage are awarded strictly as:
  - **Win:** 3 points awarded to the victorious team.
  - **Draw:** 1 point awarded to each team.
  - **Loss:** 0 points awarded.
- **Group Stage Tie-Breaking Hierarchy:** If two or more teams finish level on points at the conclusion of all group stage encounters, their final group position will be determined applying the following criteria in strict sequential order:
  - **1. Superior Goal Difference:** Calculated as: *Goals Scored − Goals Conceded* across all group matches.
  - **2. Total Goals Scored:** The team that has scored the greatest aggregate number of goals.
  - **3. Head-to-Head Result:** The outcome of the direct head-to-head match contested between the tied teams.
  - **4. Disciplinary Fair-Play Record:** The team with the lower cumulative disciplinary penalty points (Yellow Card = 1 pt, Red Card = 3 pts).
  - **5. Coin Toss / Lot:** If teams remain perfectly tied after exhausting all four sporting criteria, group placement is decided by coin toss or draw of lots.

II. TOURNAMENT FORMAT (CONTINUED)

2. KNOCKOUT STAGE REGULATIONS & MATCH TIMING

- **Single-Elimination Knockout:** The 16 qualifying clubs compete in a single-elimination tournament progressing through Pre-Quarterfinals (Round of 16), Quarterfinals (QF), Semifinals (SF), to the Final.
- **Qualification to Knockout Stage (16 Qualifiers):** A total of 16 teams qualify for the championship knockout stage:
  - **Automatic Qualifiers (12 Teams):** The 1st place and 2nd place teams from each of the 6 groups (A, B, C, D, E, F) advance directly to the Pre-Quarterfinals (Round of 16).
  - **Best 4 Third-Placed Teams (4 Teams):** A dedicated cross-group 3rd-Place Standings table ranks all 6 third-placed teams across Groups A–F by: *Points → Goal Difference → Goals Scored → Fair Play → Coin Toss*. The top 4 ranked third-place teams advance to the Round of 16. Only 2 third-placed teams are eliminated.
- **Match Timings & Shootout Rules (No Extra Time):** If scores remain level at the end of regulation full-time in any knockout fixture, **NO extra time will be played**:
  - **Pre-Quarterfinals & Quarterfinals:** 20 minutes (two 10-minute halves, 3-minute halftime). If level at full time, an immediate penalty shootout of **3 kicks per team** begins, followed by sudden death until a winner is determined.
  - **Semifinals & Final:** 25 minutes (two 12.5-minute halves, 5-minute halftime). If level at full time, an immediate penalty shootout of **5 kicks per team** begins, followed by sudden death until a winner is determined.
  - **Penalty Taker Eligibility:** Penalties can be taken only by a player from the **playing 7** present on the pitch at the final whistle. No player may take a second penalty until all 7 have taken one.
- **Third-Place Match (Losers' Final):**
  - The losing teams from the Semifinal round will compete a penalty shootout of **5 kicks** for 3rd place, subject to available tournament time.
  - If scheduling/time constraints prevent the match from being played, the final 3rd place ranking will be determined based on the respective goal differences accumulated by the teams during the Semifinal round.
  - *Note: For 3rd place, teams are awarded Official Bronze Medals for the squad (no trophy).*

III. PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

- Each team can have a maximum of 12 players registered in the squad, with an additional 4 players in reserve. If any of the reserve players have to be moved to the first 12, this has to be notified by the team manager to the registration committe atleast 10 minutes before the respective match.
- Each squad can have a maximum of 3 players who are non-Keralites but of Indian Origin, of which 2 can be playing on the pitch at the same time.
  - If a team starts the game with three non-Keralites on the field, a goal will be awarded to the opposing team, and the team must substitute one of them immediately
  - Players are expected to have identification/documentation to prove their ethnicity in case the tournament organizers need to verify the same.
  - Teams can request updates to the squad on the matchday as long as it is related to injury/unavailability.
- The game requires at least 5 players, including the goalkeeper, to move forward. If a team doesn't have 5 players to field, they will forfeit the game to the opponent.
- All players must be 16 years of age or older
- All players must wear matching team jerseys, except the goalkeeper. If it is possible take your own bibs for hygiene reasons. If not, bibs will be provided which is common to all teams
- All players are advised to wear shin guards and knee-high socks. All players who play without shin pads play at their own risk. Metal studs and other accessories (chains, watches, bracelets etc) are not permitted.
- Teams receive free first aid and medical support in case of any need. In case of serious medical situations, player and their club are responsible for getting the required treatment. All players must have valid health insurance/ travel insurance valid in EU.
- The Committee is not responsible for the food, accommodation, and travel of the teams. There would be a catering service located at the premises, and you can book the food you need in advance.
- In case of any rules that are ambiguous, the referee and organizers will have the final say in consultation with the KEFF Disciplinary Committee on how they interpret the situation and make a decision.

IV. SUBSTITUTIONS

- Substitutions are rolling and can be made only when the ball is out of play.
- Substitutions must be communicated to the referee.
- If a substitution results in a third non-Keralite entering the field, the entering player will be shown a red card immediately.
- In the event that a Team has more than seven (7) players on the field at any time, the Match Referee may award a goal to the opposing Team's score or more, depending on the severity of the breach.

V. REFEREES AND MATCH CONTROL

- Respect the referee and remember the cause you are playing for. Dissent will not be tolerated, and all refereeing decisions are final.
- Requests to change referees by any participating team is strictly not allowed.
- Referees will handle all fouls and misconduct. This is done through:
  - Verbal warning
  - Yellow card: Caution for unsporting behavior, dissent, foul play, violent conduct, offensive behavior, etc. (2nd yellow card for the same player in the same match results in a red card)
  - Red card: Suspension for unsporting behavior, dissent, foul play, violent conduct, offensive behavior, etc. The player receiving a red card is sent off from the game immediately, and the team has to play with one less player.
- The player receiving a red card in a game is allowed to participate in the next game.
  - Referees and match officials can refer the red card incident for further review by the tournament disciplinary committee if they believe it to be a serious offense, based on which the committee can impose a further ban if necessary.
- If a player receives a second direct red card in the tournament, they will not be allowed to participate in any future games in the tournament
- Only team captains may approach referees regarding on-field concerns.

V. REFEREES AND MATCH CONTROL (CONTINUED)

- No players from the bench nor managers should interfere in any on-field disputes. The referee can caution players on the bench and managers if they enter the pitch unnecessarily, as deemed by the referee.
- Unruly conduct, including verbal abuse, fighting, or intentional time-wasting, will lead to a caution from the referee and can also result in disciplinary action by the tournament committee.
- Slide tackles are allowed, but must be within the rules.
- All free kicks, direct and indirect, are on the whistle. Defending players must retreat 5m for all free kicks.
- The back-pass rule applies – an indirect free kick will be awarded if a back-pass is played to the goalkeeper, as deemed by the referee.
- In case of penalty shootouts, penalties can be taken only by a player from the playing 7 at the end of the full-time whistle of the respective match squad. No player can take more than one penalty, unless every other player from the playing 7 has already taken one in the same shootout.
- The goalkeeper should strictly be on the goal line when a penalty is taken; failing this would result in a retake as deemed by the referee. This applies to normal penalties as well as during penalty shootouts.
- The penalty taker should not do any fake movements or stops while taking the penalty kick. Feinting to kick the ball once the player has completed his run-up would result in a yellow card for the penalty taker with no retakes. This applies to normal penalties as well as during penalty shootouts.
- No offside rule will be enforced in this tournament.
- Captain or Manager must record and report goal scorers and assist providers after each match.
- All referee reports (cards, cautions) must be submitted to the respective ground volunteer-in-charge post-match.
- For all matters not mentioned herein, the laws of KEFF and then FIFA will apply.

VI. CONTINGENCY & CANCELLATION

- In the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., extreme weather conditions, rain, venue issues, unexpected delays in schedule):
  - a. Matches may be rescheduled or format altered (e.g., shortened games, exclusion of pre-quarters, etc).
  - Groupings or venues may change to ensure the successful completion of the tournament.
  - If the entire tournament is cancelled, the registration fee will be refunded in full
- Any decision on cancellation or format changes will be made by the tournament committee, and all teams will be notified officially.

VII. SEEDINGS & OFFICIAL POT ALLOCATIONS

The 18 participating clubs are partitioned into 3 distinct qualification pots of 6 teams each, established strictly on the basis of official KEFF European rankings. Teams not currently registered in the KEFF ranking system (debutants and guest clubs) are automatically allotted to Pot 3:

POT 1 (TOP SEEDS)

#		OFFICIAL KEFF RANKING & SEEDING BASIS
#1	**Adlers Lombard FC**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed
#2	**Hamburg Blasters FC**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed
#3	**Kombans FC Germany**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed
#4	**Club De Swat**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed
#5	**Minnal Bayern**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed
#6	**Frankfurter FC**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 1 Seed

POT 2 (COMPETITIVE CONTENDERS)

#		OFFICIAL KEFF RANKING & SEEDING BASIS
#1	**Monsoon FC Berlin**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed
#2	**Dresden Drifters**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed
#3	**Viva Berlin**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed
#4	**Bremen Blasters FC**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed
#5	**Otto FC Magdeburg**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed
#6	**Hamburg Blasters Hawks**	Official KEFF European Ranking • Pot 2 Seed

POT 3 (CHALLENGERS & DEBUTANTS)

#		OFFICIAL KEFF RANKING & SEEDING BASIS
#1	**FC Emden**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)
#2	**NRW Blasters**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)
#3	**Aachen FC**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)
#4	**Cottbus Stürmer FC**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)
#5	**MSV Dortmund**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)
#6	**Hawks Kaunas**	Unranked / Non-KEFF Entrant (Allotted to Pot 3)

OFFICIAL DRAW MECHANICS & SEEDING PRINCIPLES

- **Neutral Pot Draw Protocol:** All 18 participating clubs enter the live draw strictly from their merit-based pots. No host anchor seeds or automatic group allocations are awarded to host squads.
- **Sequential Pot-by-Pot Draw:**
  - **1. Pot 1 Draw:** The 6 top seeds from Pot 1 are drawn sequentially into position 1 across **Group A (A1)**, **Group B (B1)**, **Group C (C1)**, **Group D (D1)**, **Group E (E1)**, and **Group F (F1)**.
  - **2. Pot 2 Draw:** The 6 clubs from Pot 2 are drawn sequentially into position 2 across **Group A (A2)**, **Group B (B2)**, **Group C (C2)**, **Group D (D2)**, **Group E (E2)**, and **Group F (F2)**.
  - **3. Pot 3 Draw:** The 6 clubs from Pot 3 are drawn sequentially into position 3 across **Group A (A3)**, **Group B (B3)**, **Group C (C3)**, **Group D (D3)**, **Group E (E3)**, and **Group F (F3)**.
- **Pot Integrity Principle:** Every group consists of exactly one team from Pot 1, one from Pot 2, and one from Pot 3. Under no circumstances may any group contain two clubs from the same qualification pot.

OFFICIAL GROUP MATRIX & KNOCKOUT PROGRESSION

OFFICIAL GROUP ALLOCATION MATRIX (GROUPS A TO F)

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	GROUP E	GROUP F
SLOT A1 (POT 1)	SLOT B1 (POT 1)	SLOT C1 (POT 1)	SLOT D1 (POT 1)	SLOT E1 (POT 1)	SLOT F1 (POT 1)
Pot 1 Draw	Pot 1 Draw	Pot 1 Draw	Pot 1 Draw	Pot 1 Draw	Pot 1 Draw
SLOT A2 (POT 2)	SLOT B2 (POT 2)	SLOT C2 (POT 2)	SLOT D2 (POT 2)	SLOT E2 (POT 2)	SLOT F2 (POT 2)
Pot 2 Draw	Pot 2 Draw	Pot 2 Draw	Pot 2 Draw	Pot 2 Draw	Pot 2 Draw
SLOT A3 (POT 3)	SLOT B3 (POT 3)	SLOT C3 (POT 3)	SLOT D3 (POT 3)	SLOT E3 (POT 3)	SLOT F3 (POT 3)
Pot 3 Draw	Pot 3 Draw	Pot 3 Draw	Pot 3 Draw	Pot 3 Draw	Pot 3 Draw

KNOCKOUT SEEDING & CATEGORY COMPARISON (SEEDS 1–16)

Teams are seeded strictly within their own category based on their group stage record:

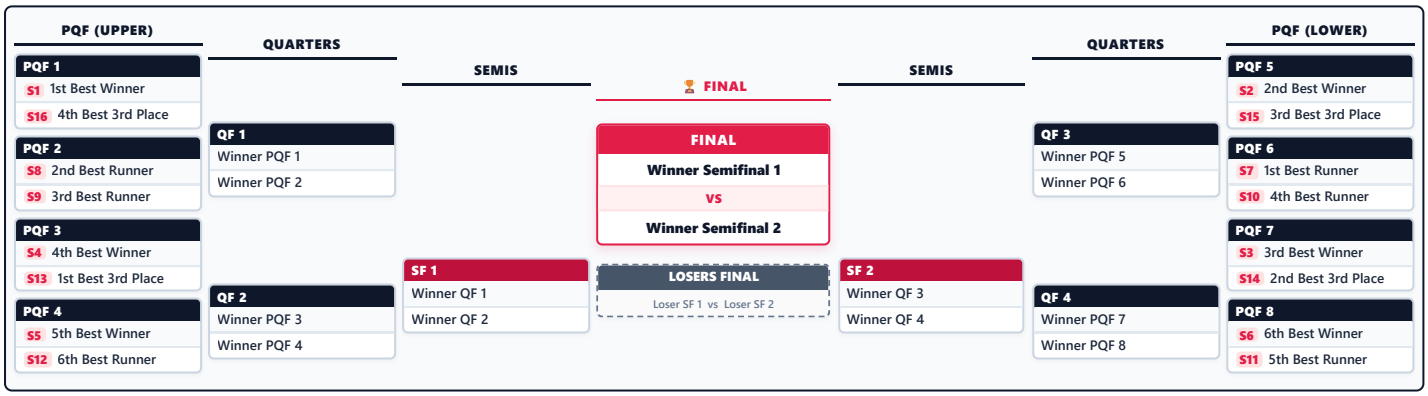
• **Tier 1 (Seeds 1–6):** The 6 Group Winners, ranked exclusively among each other from 1st to 6th.

• **Tier 2 (Seeds 7–12):** The 6 Group Runners-Up, ranked exclusively among each other from 7th to 12th.

• **Tier 3 (Seeds 13–16):** The 6 Third-Placed teams, ranked exclusively among each other to award the final 4 qualification seeds (Seeds 13–16).

• **Category Tie-Breaking:** If teams within the same tier finish level on points, they are ranked using the same tie-break sequence: *1. Superior Goal Difference → 2. Total Goals Scored → 3. Disciplinary Fair-Play Record → 4. Coin Toss / Lots*.

OFFICIAL KNOCKOUT STAGE BRACKET TREE (CONVERGING PATH TO GLORY)



- **Same-Group Rematch & Sister Team Protection:** Teams that faced each other in the group stage cannot play each other in the Pre-Quarterfinals. The same protection applies to sister squads from the same club (Hamburg Blasters FC & Hamburg Blasters Hawks) to avoid an early clash.
- **How the Automatic Seed Swap Works:** If the seeding produces an immediate rematch or sister-team clash, the lower-ranked team simply swaps match slots with the next qualifier in their same category (e.g., a 3rd-placed team swaps with the next 3rd-placed team; a runner-up swaps with the next runner-up) so both teams get fresh opponents.

VIII. TOURNAMENT PRIZE POOL & INDIVIDUAL HONORS

1. TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP HONORS & FINANCIAL REWARDS

GRAND CHAMPIONS

€1,000

Cash Prize + Hanseatic Rolling Trophy + Gold Medals

RUNNERS-UP

€500

Cash Prize + Runners-Up Trophy + Silver Medals

3RD PLACE PLAYOFF

MEDALS

Official Bronze Medals for Squad (No Trophy)

2. INDIVIDUAL PRESTIGE HONORS (OFFICIAL CRYSTAL TROPHIES)

GOLDEN BOOT (TOP GOALSCORER)
Awarded to the player with the highest total goals scored across the tournament.

GOLDEN GLOVE (BEST GOALKEEPER)
Awarded to the standout goalkeeper with the most clean sheets and shootout saves.

PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT (MVP)
Awarded to the most outstanding and influential player voted by the Committee.

BEST DEFENDER OF THE TOURNAMENT
Awarded to the top defender demonstrating tactical discipline and clean tackling.

BEST TEAM MANAGER / COACH
Awarded to the team coach/manager who displayed exemplary tactical leadership, sideline decorum, and upheld the highest spirit of fair play.

3. ADJUDICATION & DECIDING CRITERIA

- **Adjudication Panel:** All individual player awards are evaluated based on their performance by the tournamnet committe as per their individial and team stats and success.
- **Deciding Criteria:** In the event of a tie in goals scored for the Golden Boot, the player whose team advanced deeper in the tournament will be awarded the trophy; if still tied, the player with fewestdisciplinary points wins.

Date: _____

_____
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Hamburg Blasters FC