

36TH FAS ANNUAL CONGRESS
SATURDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2018, 10.00AM
BEGONIA BALLROOM, MARINA BAY SANDS CONVENTION CENTRE
ADDRESS BY MR LIM KIA TONG
PRESIDENT, FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

1. Professor **Ho Peng Kee**, FAS Advisor
2. **Purushottam Kattel** – Asian Football Confederation’s representative
3. **Todd Vladich** – Director, Sport Singapore
4. FAS Executive Committee and Council members
5. Chairman and Representatives of SPL Clubs
6. Chairman and Representatives of NFL Clubs
7. FAS Affiliates
8. Sponsors and Partners
9. FAS Staff
10. Friends from the Media
11. Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. A very good morning to all.
2. Welcome to the **36th Annual Congress** of the Football Association of Singapore (FAS).

Name change to Annual Congress

3. Last year, we **re-named the FAS Annual General Meeting to the FAS Annual Congress** following the amendment to the Constitution which follows the practice of FIFA and AFC. The Congress represents the **supreme and legislative authority of FAS**. Accordingly, we also relooked the layout and conduct of the Congress. This year, we are continuing in this vein, to hold the Congress at a venue where all Affiliates are properly and comfortably seated and given full professional recognition of their membership of the FAS.

Congress Cup 2018

4. This year, recognising that opportunities for our football fraternity to come together were rare, we mooted the idea of the Congress Cup as a platform for us **to foster and to strengthen our ties with our stakeholders and football fraternity** through our Beautiful Game as a prelude to the Congress. The inaugural **FAS Congress Cup** held last evening was a great success. The **SPL Lions** were crowned the Champion of the inaugural Cup whilst **NFL County** was the 1st Runners Up. The **NFL Rangers** and **NFL City** came in 3rd and 4th respectively. All who participated thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure have cemented their relationship in the process.

Annual Report

5. We have also taken a look at how we present the **Annual Report** to you. In an effort to keep up with the changing times, you may access our Annual Report on our FAS website. A copy of it is also in the USB flash drive in the Congress pack on your table.

6. You also have with you the **key highlights** of the year where we have distilled the key information for you to access it at a glance. These changes signify our commitment to carrying out the administration of football differently.

Governance

7. One area in which we have taken a closer look at is the governance of the FAS. Within days of being elected, we formed a **Governance Task Force**, headed by Deputy President Bernard Tan to improve the governance throughout the FAS. We also commissioned Deloitte & Touche LLP to review the processes and procedures at the FAS. The key recommendations have been accepted and we are in the process of implementing them.

8. We have made changes to **enhance checks and balances** within FAS, between the Council and Management and within the Council. These changes have now been in operation for several months and while it will require some time for the system to stabilise, this has laid the foundation for a more accountable and well governed FAS.

9. In our next phase of work, we will be looking at helping our Member Associates, especially those that receive public funding, to raise their level of governance as well, and to be accountable. The details of the Governance shall be highlighted by Bernard Tan in his presentation.

Singapore Premier League 2018

10. A major project we have undertaken is the **revamp of the S.League to the Singapore Premier League (SPL)**. The new League was officially launched on 31 March 2018, by Mdm Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore, at the National Stadium. Six months into the SPL, we are pleased to see that some of the changes we implemented have borne fruit.

11. In the most recent call up to the National Team for the friendlies against Mauritius and Fiji in early September 2018, Head Coach Fandi Ahmad called up **five uncapped players** – including **four who are Under-23**.

12. With the new competition rules, we have seen the **emergence of several bright young players** who previously had less opportunity to shine in the League. One of these players is **Irfan Najeed** from Tampines Rovers FC who has impressed his club enough for them to offer him a three-year deal.

13. In the SPL, we also have put an emphasis on **community outreach** and with the clubs, we have reached out to **56 community groups** and **49 different schools**. Clubs have also been regularly organising pre-match activities to engage the community in their vicinity and enhance the match-day experience.

14. Apart from the match-day experience, we have also looked into enhancing the **online reach** of the League. Moving the broadcast of our matches to an online stream, we have managed to **live stream over 80% of the SPL matches**, with a **total viewership over almost 1 million** to date.

15. We have also ramped up our efforts on social media – with a new look and more diverse content. This has accordingly resulted in a **38% increase in social media impressions** within six months of the revamp.

Organisational restructure

16. Just earlier this month, we announced the appointment of **Yazeen Buhari** as the FAS General Secretary. Yazeen had been the Association's Acting General Secretary since 1 January this year. Given his capabilities, Yazeen will spearhead the various initiatives, both internal and external to the FAS as we look forward to achieving our vision.

17. With the **reprioritisation** of resources within the FAS, we have been streamlining our manpower and operations. At the same time, we have also appointed several key personnel to oversee important portfolios including Governance, Technical development, stakeholders and organisational development.

18. The restructuring is an ongoing process and we will continue to improve our processes so that we can better serve the fraternity.

Referees

19. 2017 also saw our referees achieving new heights. Our top **FIFA referee Muhammad Taqi** flew the Singapore flag high at both the FIFA Under-20 World Cup in Korea Republic and the FIFA Under-17 World Cup in India. Notably, he was joined by Assistant Referees Edwin Lee and Ronnie Koh for the latter tournament. They are the **first Singaporean refereeing trio** to be appointed for a FIFA World Cup tournament and were the only representatives from Southeast Asia.

20. The woman referee also measured up to their male counterparts. FIFA Assistant Woman Referee, Rohaidah Nasir has also done us proud, having been appointed to officiate at the Women's football final in the 2018 Asian Games. She also officiated the opening match as well as the semi-final between Korea Republic and China. She also officiated at other AFC Competitions.

21. In the past year, our referees have made their mark at the AFC Asian Cup 2019 qualifiers, AFC Under-16 Men's and Women's Championship qualifiers, and other international friendly matches. There has been an **increase in the number of registered FIFA Referees**, which provides a wider pool of referees for AFC tournaments.

Women's Football

22. In the domestic women's leagues, we have seen an **increase from 11 participating teams** in 2016 to **14** in 2017. This increase in interest prompted us to revamp the Women's league to allow for better competition among the teams.

23. This increase in interest and participation in Women's football also corresponds with our **Lionesses' rise in the FIFA Women's football rankings** from a low of **141** in 2015 to our current standing of **101**, with only one match played so far this year.

24. The Lionesses' also marked a milestone, playing their **first match at the National Stadium** on 5 March 2018 against Maldives. They won 2-0, a fitting way to celebrate their first match there.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

25. We have often highlighted that football is a team sport, and so is the administration of it. We are fortunate to have the **strong support from all our stakeholders** throughout the implementation of FAS' new initiatives. We have seen several **new partners** come on board with their belief in our vision for Singapore football. We are also humbled by the **continuous support from our existing partners**, several of whom have renewed their faith in us and what we are doing for Singapore football this year.

AFC

26. One of our key partners is the **AFC** who have given us immense support, especially through the **AFC President's Development Initiatives**. With the expertise from AFC Consultant, Anter Isaac and AFC Development Officer (ASEAN), Visakan Subramaniam, we reviewed our League and it was with their assistance that we implemented the revamp to the Singapore Premier League. We will continue to work closely with the AFC in the implementations of our programmes and ensure that we are closely aligned in terms of the goals we want to achieve for football in the region.

FIFA

27. Another of our key partners is **FIFA**, with whom we have embarked on the **FIFA Forward Programme**, a programme to support Member Associations with grants for **long-term football development**. We will be tapping on the funding for the areas of infrastructure, competitions, capacity building, youth development and National Teams. This year, we have utilized the funding for football performance analysis software, and projects to develop FAS' referees.

28. In the pipeline, we have two more projects upcoming – **Equipment and Technology Refresh** and to improve and upgrade the **FAS headquarters**. The FIFA Forward Programme will go a long way in ensuring that we are able to offer high-quality football programme locally.

Memorandum of Understandings

a. Republic Polytechnic and PSB Academy.

29. Closer to home, we have signed Memorandums of Understanding with academic partners **Republic Polytechnic** and **PSB Academy**. With **Republic Polytechnic**, we sought to facilitate the sharing of best practices between our two organisations. The

partnership also provides us an opportunity to educate and engage the youth on sport science. With **PSB Academy**, we are looking at promoting continuous learning among players and staff by offering study grants for higher education. It was also our first collaboration with a Private Education Institution.

b. Japan Football Association

30. We also renewed our partnership with the **Japan Football Association** so that we can take advantage of the opportunities for further collaborations. The MOU has contributed to the development of football at various levels – from the grassroots, to Women’s football to our senior Men’s National Team

c. Singapore Sports Hub

31. One key announcement we made in end of February – which I first shared at this very platform last year – was the **Memorandum of Understanding with the Singapore Sports Hub**, where we committed to playing a minimum of seven football matches at the National Stadium. To date, we have already played seven matches, with at least two more matches with the ASEAN Football Federation Suzuki Cup coming up this November 2018. Alongside the MOU, we also launched the **Home of the Lions initiative**.

32. In the past eight months, our **Men’s National ‘A’ Team, Men’s Under-23 National Team, Women’s National Team** and **all nine Singapore Premier League teams** have had the opportunity to play in the iconic dome. This was only possible with the concerted effort from all of us to build a strong Singapore football culture.

With Singapore Pools – Football With A Heart [FWAH]

33. We also partnered with Singapore Pools for the **Football With A Heart (FWAH)** event and **raised more than \$700,000** for charity and community sectors. Singapore

Pools has been generous in their support of the FAS and for our various events and we are happy to be able to give back to the community with Singapore Pools through FWAH.

Relationship with Sport SG

34. We are also pleased to say that our relationship with our key partner, **Sport Singapore**, has grown from strength to strength. Since last year, the ActiveSG Football Academy has been managing what was previously known as the FAS Cubs Programme. The Active Cubs programme has seen high participation numbers owing to ActiveSG's ability to reach out to a wider community. We will be looking at more opportunities to further collaborate with the ActiveSG Football Academy so that, together we can develop more youth players.

New Kallang Football Hub

35. Also, we are looking forward to the **new Kallang Football Hub**. Sport Singapore has updated us that the new Kallang Football Hub near Singapore Sports Hub is expected to be ready in phases by the third quarter of 2019. It will be the **National Training Centre for National Teams** across all age-groups and will host international tournaments for youths and division leagues in partnership with regional academies. It will include one full-sized natural sports turf pitch; two full-sized artificial turf pitches; one half-sized artificial turf pitch; four sheltered small-sided pitches; a running track; and a gym. Together with the ActiveSG Football Academy's programmes and milestone events, the Kallang Football Hub will add vibrancy to the overall football ecosystem.

Corporate and Professionals Football League

36. We will be looking at working closely with more partners in various capacities and one of the ideas is to look into introducing a **Corporate and Professionals Football League** next year. We have set up a taskforce led by our Council member, Kelvin Teo

and the plan is for the League to see participation from both businesses and professional associations. We would like to have the corporate sector involved in football again.

Fan support for the National Team

37. A vibrant football culture would also be anchored by **strong fan support for the National Team**. This is something we hope to rebuild.

38. Just last week, we saw an **attractive brand of football from the Lions** With unshakeable optimism and faith in the youth players, Fandi **handed out debuts to four players in the squad**. Three of them – Zulfadhmi and Zulqarnaen Suzliman and Jacob Mahler – are Under-23.

39. Having more younger players in the squad is part of our desire to **groom younger players**. With the League giving more opportunities to the Under-23 players, likewise our National Team set-up must follow suit so that the young players are aware that they can aspire towards earning a spot in the National Team. The younger players can also benefit from the guidance of the experienced players, as evident in the recent two friendly matches.

Head coach for National Team

40. This is a **period of transition for the National Team**, as we also are on the **lookout for a National Team head coach**. The search is ongoing, with a panel to help us in the selection process. The decision on the National Team head coach will be announced in due course.

41. The focus now of course is on **November's AFF Suzuki Cup**. Admittedly, we have not been performing to expectations at the competition in recent years. However, this is a new start and I believe all of us present at the friendlies last week could sense the determination and spirit in the National Team to achieve better results in this tournament.

So I would like to call upon all of us here to **support our Lions** on their journey to the AFF Suzuki Cup.

42. On this note, I would like to thank all present for your continued support of Singapore football. I would also like to express my appreciation to the staff and management of the FAS for their hard work and commitment.

43. In the past year, we have laid the foundations to achieve our shared goal for Singapore football, and in the coming year we will be fine-tuning our plans to ensure that we can make a positive difference in Singapore football and together, achieve our common goal of football excellence.

Thank you.