
The eight Presidents

In June 1998, Joseph S. Blatter (Switzerland) was elected to this office succeeding Dr João Havelange (Brazil). During its 100-year history, FIFA has had only eight Presidents. In several cases vacancies occurred due to the death of a President. On those occasions, other senior members took over until the next Congress.

The eight Presidents were elected as follows:

- **Robert Guérin** (France), *elected 23rd May 1904 in Paris (France)*. The election took place two days after FIFA had been founded by seven associations - France, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain (Madrid FC), Sweden and Switzerland - in Paris 21st May 1904.
- **Daniel Burley Woolfall** (England), *elected June 1906 in Berne (Switzerland)*, died in office 1918. Interim: Carl Anton Hirschman (Netherlands, FIFA Honorary Secretary).
- **Jules Rimet** (France), *elected 1920 in Antwerp (Belgium)*, first ad interim as of 1st March 1921 also confirmed in writing.
- **Rodolphe Seeldrayers** (Belgium), *elected 21st June 1954 in Berne (Switzerland)*, died in office October 1955. Interim: Arthur Drewry (England).
- **Arthur Drewry** (England), *elected 9th June 1956 in Lisbon (Portugal)*, died in office 25th March 1961. Interim: Ernst B. Thommen (Switzerland).
- **Sir Stanley Rous** (England), *elected 28th September 1961 in London (England)*.
- **Dr. João Havelange** (Brazil), *elected 11th June 1974 in Frankfurt (Germany FR)*.
- **Joseph S. Blatter** (Switzerland), *elected 8th June 1998 in Paris (France)*.

Tradition had it (until 2002) that the leaving President was given the privilege to continue through the FIFA World Cup Final Competition after the Congress before the new President took over.

Nowadays, his mandate begins at the end of the Congress which elected him.

Statutory provisions

As the supreme leader of FIFA, the President and his rights and duties are extensively dealt with in the FIFA Statutes.

First of all, the President shall represent the Federation legally (art. 32, § 1). He is primarily responsible for:

- (a) implementing the decisions passed by the Congress and the Executive Committee through the general secretariat;
- (b) supervising the work of the general secretariat;

- (c) relations between FIFA and the Confederations, Members, political bodies and international organisations (art. 32, § 2).

And, enshrined in article 32, § 3, only the President may propose the appointment or dismissal of the General Secretary. Also, he shall preside at the Congress, meetings of the Executive and Emergency Committees and committees of which he has been appointed chairman (art. 32, § 4). The President shall have an ordinary vote on the Executive Committee and, whenever votes are equal, shall have a casting vote (art. 32, § 5). Finally, if the President is absent or unavailable, the senior vice president who is available shall deputise (art. 32, § 6). The President's leading role is also underscored in art. 30, § 1 and 2 which state that

- "The Executive Committee consists of 24 members: 1 President, elected by the Congress, 8 vice-presidents, and 15 members, appointed by the Confederations and Associations."
- "The President shall be elected by the Congress for a period of four years in the year following a FIFA World Cup. His mandate shall begin after the end of the Congress which has elected him. A president may be re-elected."

Election of the President

As per art. 24, § 1 and 2 "Only Members may propose candidates for the office of president. Members shall notify the FIFA general secretariat in writing of the name of a candidate for the FIFA presidency at least two months before the date of the Congress."

The general secretariat shall notify the Members of the names of proposed candidates at least one month before the date of the Congress.

Voting

Voting for the elections shall be by secret ballot (art. 27, §1). The voting procedure is governed by art. 27, § 3: "For the election of the President, two-thirds of the votes recorded and valid are necessary in the first ballot. In the second and any other requisite ballot, an absolute majority of the votes recorded is sufficient. If there are more than two candidates, whoever obtains the lowest number of votes eliminated as from the second ballot until only two candidates are left."

Right to vote

Only Members with the right to vote can participate in the election of the President. The following criteria apply (as per FIFA Statutes, art. 23, § 1):

- Each Member has one vote in the Congress and is represented by its delegates. Only the Members present are entitled to vote. Voting by proxy or by letter is not permitted.

- However, as per art. 15, §1(a), the Congress may expel a Member if it fails to fulfil its financial obligations towards FIFA.
- Also, Members which do not participate in at least two of all FIFA competitions over a period of four consecutive years shall be suspended from voting at the Congress until they have fulfilled their obligations in this respect (14, § 4).

Other provisions

- If the President is permanently or temporarily prevented from performing his official function, the longest serving vice-president shall represent him until the next Congress. This Congress shall elect a new President, if necessary (art. 30, § 6).

The President shall conduct the Congress business in compliance with the Standing Orders of the Congress (art. 23 § 5).