

CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF FOOTBALL

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

ASEAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION

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back on track. We made a quick and successful recovery thanks primarily to the exhaustive efforts of our Member Associations and their dedicated officials.

The desire to see football back to its glory days was clearly the driving force for Member Associations. I hope they will continue to push the boundaries, elevate the game and lift it to new heights in the coming year. There is still so much for us to do for our region and communities.

While we resumed our events and activities, we remained vigilant and took the necessary precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved in our events.

In May last year, AFF heralded the beginning of a new era in our history when we announced Mitsubishi Electric as the title sponsor of our flagship tournament.

This landmark partnership with Mitsubishi Electric, one of the world's leading names in the manufacture and sales of electrical and electronic products and systems used in a broad range of fields and applications, will propel our tournament to greater heights and

FOREWORD BY THE AFF PRESIDENT

IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT TO SEE OUR BELOVED SPORT RETURN WITH A BLAST TO OUR REGION AND FANS PACKING THE STADIUMS, CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF OUR BEAUTIFUL GAME IN ITS FULL GLORY.

Major General Khiev Sameth • AFF President

2022 was a thrilling year for football in our region. It was an absolute delight to see our beloved sport return with a blast to our region and fans packing the stadiums, celebrating the return of our beautiful game in its full glory. I could hardly contain myself watching thousands of fans cheering, singing and enjoying themselves in stadia across our region this past year.

As the COVID-19 situation improved, we resumed work to get football in our region and respective countries

further lift the game in the region. On behalf of the AFF, I would like to record our appreciation to Mitsubishi Electric for their support. I also thank our partner, Sportfive for their role in concluding this partnership.

The first-ever AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022 was an instant hit with Southeast Asian fans who were ecstatic with the return of the home and away format.



After missing out on the previous tournament, fans could once again attend matches and support their teams.

Prior to the start of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022, we launched a new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative focused on supporting underprivileged children around the region.

This CSR initiative, which involved the AFF, Member Associations, Mitsubishi Electric and local charity partners, was a series of exciting activities for children in each of the five countries, namely Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

The CSR activities focused on three essential components – football clinics for children hosted by local football legends, attendance at home matches to support their national teams and participation in the Player Escort Programme at selected matches.

As with previous editions, the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup matches were broadcast to millions of die-hard fans. This was only possible through the efforts of Sportfive who secured broadcasters from the region, among them Thailand, Brunei DS, Indonesia, Malaysia,

South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Thailand on a record-breaking seventh AFF title following their triumphant victory over Vietnam in a thrilling final. I especially want to express my appreciation and gratitude to FIFA President Gianni Infantino for his presence at the final which signifies the importance of our tournament.

In the final analysis, the tournament was a resounding success because of the committed and untiring work of the Member Associations and their staff. I know many of you worked long hours preparing for the matches to ensure they were held without any hitches and, at the same time, looking out for the safety and health of everyone. AFF delivered another stunning edition, our 14th, to the fans. Thank you all.

The AFF had other competitions last year and I am pleased to note that they were all well-staged and received good response from the various Member Associations. The AFF Beach Soccer Championship in Pattaya, AFF Futsal Club Championship in Korat, the AFF Futsal Championship in Bangkok, the AFF U-16 Championship in Yogyakarta, the AFF U-18 Women's Championship in Palembang, the AFF U-19 Championship in Jakarta, the AFF U-23 Championship in Phnom Penh and the AFF Women's Championship in Manila were professionally managed and successfully delivered by the respective host Member Associations and the AFF Secretariat staff.

Finally, I would like to record my sincerest gratitude to all Member Associations for giving me the trust and mandate to lead you as President for another term. I am humbled at being returned unopposed and will focus my attention on ensuring the continued success of the AFF. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to the AFF Secretariat staff under the astute leadership of General Secretary, Winston Lee, for their tireless and excellent work.

I will strive to serve the AFF, Member Associations and the regional football community to the best of my ability.

Thank you.

Major General Khiev Sameth
AFF President



FOREWORD BY THE AFF GENERAL SECRETARY

As the world emerged from two years of COVID winter, football in the ASEAN region sprang back to life stronger and better than ever last year.

With restrictions either reduced or lifted in some countries, we were able to fully resume our critical work in the region. This included development activities that are fundamental to our sport. We were more than back to pre-pandemic levels which was evident judging from the extraordinary response the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022 received throughout the region.

Millions of fans tuned in to follow their favourite teams in action on live broadcasts while hundreds of thousands were thrilled to have the opportunity to watch matches live in the stadiums.

The current format continues to be a hit with fans as

it gives them all the chance to follow their teams at home. After being starved of live action, fans were excited and eager to watch their heroes in the flesh.

Fans across the region were enthralled by the quality performances of the teams who produced their best in their hunt to claim the honours. This was due to the efforts of the Member Associations which had invested substantially in preparing their teams for the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022.

In the end, Thailand lifted the trophy for a record seventh time. We congratulate the Football Association of Thailand and their team for their remarkable success.

I want to take this opportunity to express

our appreciation to Mitsubishi Electric and we look forward to working together with them on many more editions of our tournament. I also wish to express my gratitude to all Member Associations for their commitment to preparing their respective teams and for delivering excellent venues for home matches.

I also wish to congratulate Sportfive, our exclusive commercial rights partner, for their role in the event's success which included producing impressive broadcast packages viewed by millions around the world.

We thank all our stakeholders, sponsors, the media and everyone involved for contributing to the very successful organisation of the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022. We must strive to continuously improve and take this tournament to even greater heights in the future.

Prior to the AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022, AFF

successfully organised numerous other competitions

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——— **Winston Lee • AFF General Secretary**

including the AFF U-23 Championship, AFF Futsal Championship, AFF Women's Championship, AFF U-19 Championship, AFF U-18 Women's Championship, AFF U-16 Championship, AFF Futsal Club Championship and AFF Beach Soccer Championship. Although some were age-group competitions, these events were closely followed by the fans.

I congratulate the hosts for delivering on their promises and providing ideal venues, accommodation, training facilities and other amenities for these competitions. The efforts of the Member Associations were critical and I thank the Football Federation of Cambodia, the Football Association of Thailand, the Philippine Football Federation and also the Football Association of Indonesia for hosting these events.

On another note, we applaud the winners of our competitions: Bintang Timur Surabaya Futsal Club from Indonesia (AFF Futsal Club Championship 2022), Thailand (AFF Futsal Championship 2022), Thailand (AFF Beach Soccer Championship 2022), Indonesia (AFF U-16 Championship 2022), Malaysia (AFF U-19 Championship 2022), and Vietnam (AFF U-23 Championship 2022).

Congratulations to the Philippines for winning their first-ever AFF Women's Championship trophy and also to Australia for picking up the crown in the AFF U-18 Women's Championship 2022.

Off the pitch, we embarked on outreach programmes, helping communities and children through various activities to make them part of the football ecosystem. We will continue to engage communities and be involved in similar programmes in the coming year.

We look forward to another outstanding term under the progressive leadership of Major General Khiev Sameth as the AFF President. We will build on his good work and ensure AFF continues to thrive.

Under Major General Khiev Sameth and with the support of the AFF Council, the AFF will remain at the forefront of championing the sport in our region and work diligently to raise the level of the game.

The Member Associations have been truly amazing this past year despite their many domestic obligations. They made the time to partner with the AFF on the many AFF-organised competitions and activities. For the Member Associations' support and the untiring efforts and passion of their officials, I thank them all.

Looking to the year ahead, our objectives are clear and our commitment is unwavering.

For AFF to enjoy another successful and commanding year, we need the continued support of our most important partners, the Member Associations. Our solidarity makes us strong and we must continue to use this to propel us forward and achieve even greater successes in the coming year.

Thank you.

Winston Lee
AFF General Secretary



AFF U-23 CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 14-26 FEBRUARY 2022 PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

It was the second time in a row that Cambodia played host to this all-important age group competition after first organising it in 2019.

Other than wanting to hold this tournament which is really the second most important meet after the blue-riband event of the AFF Championship, the competition was also used as a testing ground for the newly-built Morodok Techo National Stadium.

The Morodok Techo National Stadium will be used as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies of the SEA Games which Cambodia will host in 2023. The other venue which was used for the AFF U-23 Championship 2022 was the Prince Stadium which belongs to Cambodian Premier League side Visakha Football Club.

The Morodok Techo National Stadium has a capacity of 60,000 while the Prince Stadium can accommodate 15,000.

The AFF U-23 Championship 2022 was an important tournament given that some of the players had taken part in the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020 just several weeks before in Singapore.

Given that health protocols due to COVID-19 were still in place, the issues with the non-availability of players were overcome with the agreement and cooperation of the competing teams who allowed teams to bring in reinforcements.

This showed the ASEAN spirit in full flight.

GROUP A – Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Philippines and Brunei DS

Host Cambodia started strongly enough with a big

win over Brunei DS and then sidestepped the Philippines in their second game.

But their loss to Timor-Leste meant that they missed the cut to the semifinals of the Championship – much to the dismay of the local fans who had thronged the stadium in their first two matches of the group.

Timor-Leste, riding on the fact that they were utilising several players from the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020, played with confidence and in spite of their 2-2 draw in their first game against the Philippines, bounced back to beat Brunei DS and then Cambodia to win the group.

GROUP B – Malaysia and Laos

Malaysia's gamble on a highly experimental side was their undoing when they took on a Laos side that had

several players who played in the AFF Suzuki Cup 2020. Laos captain Bounphachan Bounkong controlled the midfield while the pacey Chony Waenpaseuth ran the Malaysian defence ragged.

In the end, it was Laos who made the cut to the semifinals when they beat Malaysia twice – 2-1 and then 2-0.

GROUP C – Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore

Given that Thailand was the inaugural winner in 2005 while Vietnam came in third in 2019, the competition was always going to be between these two teams.

As such, Singapore was at the receiving end of Thailand and Vietnam when they conceded ten goals and scored just once against the Thais.

In the battle to decide which team would win Group C, it was Vietnam who emerged victorious with a close 1-0 win over Thailand.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

With Teerasak Poeiphimai in form, Thailand was really in no danger of losing the plot when he struck in the

early goal before Kroekphon Arbram converted a penalty to send the team through to their third final in three editions.

On the other hand, Vietnam was made to sweat against a hard-running Timor-Leste side that frustrated them for much of the match as both teams played to a scoreless draw until extra time.

But in the penalty shootout, Vietnam held their nerves to win 5-3 for their first final of the AFF U-23 Championship.

IN THE FINAL, a lone strike from Tran Bao Tuan just before the break was pivotal for a Vietnam side that had to bring in several reinforcements as Thailand struggled without the inspirational Teerasak in the middle of the park. As it turned out, the single goal was enough to give Vietnam the win and their first-ever crown in the history of the championship.

CONCLUSION

Given the several difficulties the tournament had to endure, the close cooperation between countries and the spirit of sportsmanship ensured the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC) another successful edition.

The Football Federation of Cambodia should be commended for their efforts in delivering a quality competition especially the playing venues of Morodok Techo National Stadium and Prince Stadium. Well done, Football Federation of Cambodia.

Teams were generally well prepared but there was still some disparity in terms of quality between players and this can only be overcome with constant exposure.

A special mention should be given to Timor-Leste for their spirit of Fair Play when they agreed to share the third spot with Laos, who had faced difficulty in putting up a squad of players for the third and fourth placing match due to COVID-19 infections.

Teams may be competitive on the pitch but off it, they stayed true to the spirit of ASEAN. Well done, Timor-Leste and Laos.



AFF FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

**2-10 APRIL 2022
BANGKOK, THAILAND**



It was one of the best and most exciting editions of the AFF Futsal Championship in recent years as the tournament culminated in an explosive finale that dragged the game into penalties.

Even the battle for third had to be decided through the luck of the penalties which further underlined the tournament's steady rise in quality and action.

As a qualifying round for the AFC Futsal Championship, the tournament proved as competitive as ever with nine teams vying for the only three available slots to the regional meet.

Divided into two groups, the nine teams battled it out for honours at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in Bangkok.

Once again, there was no denying the fact that when it comes to Futsal in the region, Football Association of Thailand are the kingpins on and off the pitch.

With COVID-19 still looming and remaining a threat, stringent measures were taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone concerned.

GROUP A – Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Brunei DS

The disparity between the big teams and the lesser teams was still prevalent, with Thailand and Indonesia piling the goals against their opponents.

The biggest score line was Thailand's 16-0 win over Cambodia in spite of the latter's bright start to almost beating Malaysia in their opening tie.

The drawn match between Thailand and Indonesia meant that it would be down to goal difference to decide the two teams that would make the

passage to the next round.

Thailand won the group as Indonesia settled for the runners-up spot.

GROUP B – Vietnam, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Australia

Expectations that Australia would loom large in this group soon fizzled out.

In spite of their positive start against Timor-Leste, the four-time finalist failed to rise to the occasion, with huge losses at the hands of Myanmar and Vietnam.

And once again, the drawn game between Vietnam and Myanmar would be the decider but in the end, Myanmar were through to the top on better goal difference. Vietnam settled for the second-best position in the group.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

With four teams battling for the three slots to the AFC Futsal Championship 2022, the level of competitiveness went up a notch.

Indonesia was just in their element when they overwhelmed Myanmar by half a dozen goals.

It was to be Indonesia's fourth appearance in the final of the championship.



With Muhammad Osamanmusa driving the front line, defending champions Thailand cruised past Vietnam with ease as they booked their ninth successive final appearance.

IN THE FINAL, Indonesia stretched the home team all the way to the penalty shootouts.

Two early goals gave Indonesia the confidence, but it was Osamanmusa who once again proved pivotal with an assist and then a late equaliser for Thailand.

In the shootout, the home team played well to hold their nerves, eventually winning their 16th title.

In the fight for the third spot and a place in the AFC Futsal Championship 2022 in Kuwait, Vietnam had to slog it out before overcoming Myanmar in a penalty shootout after both teams found themselves tied at the end of regulation.

CONCLUSION

It was heartening to see that this year's level of competition had reached greater heights with Indonesia showing their capabilities of challenging kingpins Thailand for the title.

This augurs well for the sport in the ASEAN region.

However, the rest of the countries in the region will have to beef up their standards and preparations to follow suit and close the widening gap with the big boys in the sport.

It was another successful outing as Football Association of Thailand (FAT) yet again lived up to great expectations of delivering a quality tournament. Kudos to Football Association of Thailand!

AFF U19 CHAMPIONSHIP

2022

2-15 JULY 2022
JAKARTA, INDONESIA

REPORT

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 18th edition of the AFF U-19 Championship was brought back on AFF's competition calendar. This time, Indonesia's capital city of Jakarta welcomed 11 teams, with the exception of defending champions Australia, for the two-week battle at the Patriot Stadium (in Bekasi some 28km away) and the Madya Stadium (located in Senayan, Central Jakarta).

The 11 teams were divided into two groups and played their matches at their respective assigned stadiums.

Full marks for the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) in the hosting of the competition which concluded safely and seamlessly, despite the famously challenging traffic conditions to and from the Patriot Stadium situated some distance from Jakarta where teams were housed.

All in all, the AFF U-19 Championship ended on a high note with matches involving the host team Indonesia always well-attended despite the reduction in stadium capacity due to the existing health protocols.

GROUP A – Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei DS, Philippines

It was a close affair involving the six teams in this group, host Indonesia (winners in 2013), spearheading the contention as favourites apart from the likes of five-time winners Thailand, double champions Myanmar and 2007 champions Vietnam.

Myanmar started strongly with a huge win over Brunei DS, but soon fizzled out after falling to Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia.

The Philippines fared no better, picking up their only win over Brunei DS as the latter finished at the bottom

of the group without a win and without scoring a goal.

The attention diverted to the on-pitch battle involving Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. However, the host failed to live up to the great expectation after fumbling against both of their rivals without any goals.

Head-to-head count back involving Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand had to be applied as all three teams

were tied on the same points. In the end, the 1-1 draw between Vietnam and Thailand mattered most as they confirmed their passage to the next round.

GROUP B – Malaysia, Laos, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Singapore



Having a team less did not make the group any easier and certainly not predictable.

Laos, with head coach Michael Weiss helming the team, had started on the right note with an outright win over Timor-Leste but their win over Malaysia proved pivotal as they came out tops.

Malaysia, on the other hand, started well enough but following their scoreless draw against traditional rivals Singapore and the loss to Singapore meant that the former champions had to settle for the runners-up spot.

Timor-Leste may not have started well with a loss to Laos but they soon bounced back into contention to give Malaysia a hard time before conceding defeat as they settled for the third spot in the group.



Cambodia completed their campaign in fourth as they rode on their win over Singapore earlier in the competition.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

There was no drama or upsets in the semifinal matches as had been expected given the quality of the four teams involved.

The Malaysians put up a more disciplined performance to win 3-0 against Vietnam as the latter was left frustrated against a disciplined defensive line.

On the other hand, Thailand was left disjointed against a fast-running Laos side that caught them twice on the break for them to win 2-0.

IN THE FINAL, Malaysia was eager to make up for their defeat to Laos in the group stage while the latter was keen to prove that under Weiss, they had made significant inroads into the ASEAN level competition.

But final matches are always a different ball game. As Laos struggled to reproduce the confidence they showed in the group stage, the Malaysians were brimming after their win over Vietnam.

A goal in each half was enough for the Malaysians to seal the match and lift their second crown. Laos, despite the loss, should be given a pat on their back for their improved performance this year.

CONCLUSION

The successful hosting of the AFF U-19 Championship is proof that the sporting world is fighting hard to get back a certain level of normalcy after the long struggle with COVID-19.

Generally, the quality of the competing teams was good and this, considering the fact that for much of last year, teams or Member Associations struggled to find ways and means to get football back on track.

Thankfully, the Football Association of Indonesia succeeded in putting up a good show and deserve credit for accommodating the 11 teams and officials throughout the two-week tournament.

Certainly, it was a painstaking effort both from the organisational and financial perspective, and was made even more challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic which loomed in the background. But in the end, all is well and for that, kudos to Football Association of Indonesia!

AFF WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 4-17 JULY 2022 MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Riding on the crest of qualifying for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, the Philippine Football Federation (PFF) made the decision to host the AFF Women's Championship for the first time ever.

The Philippine Football Federation is no stranger to hosting major events as in 2019, they were part-organisers of the 30th SEA Games which meant that they were well-versed in the organisational requirements at this level.

The AFF Women's Championship has been growing from strength to strength over the years with the current tournament in its 13th edition.

With the exception of Brunei DS, a total of 11 teams took part in the meet, divided into two groups.

The Rizal Memorial Stadium, with a capacity of 12,873, was chosen as the main venue

while the 3,000 capacity Binan Football Stadium was the secondary venue.

Overall, the Philippine Football Federation delivered a well-organised championship.

GROUP A – Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia U23 and Malaysia

Realistically, the competition was always going to be between powerhouses Thailand, the Philippines and the Australian U-23 side.

And while Thailand could only afford a draw against the Australian U-23, their 1-0 win over the Philippines made sure that they won the group.



The Philippines' narrow 1-0 win over the Australian U-23 gave them the runners-up spot in the group.

However, it is pertinent to point out that the so-called lesser teams have made significant improvements in performance with the biggest scoreline in the group being the Philippines' 7-0 win over Singapore.

Previously, double-digit scores were quite common and certainly, it showed that teams are now willing to put in the work to narrow the gap against the bigger teams in the region.

GROUP B – Myanmar, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Cambodia and Laos

Defending champions Vietnam was very well-prepared, having gone to France to play a friendly prior to their arrival in Manila.

And this was evident when they scored a whopping 18 goals in four matches and conceding none to win the group.

Myanmar emerged as the runners-up as they scored the biggest score line with a 7-0 win over Timor-Leste.

With Vietnam and Myanmar heads and shoulders above the rest, the disparity between Laos, Cambodia and Timor-Leste was not that far off.

It certainly bodes well for future tournaments.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

While Vietnam was the heavy favourites to get into the final, the Philippines brought their 'A' game in the semifinals to deny the defending champions with a comprehensive 4-0 beating.

A double from Philippines' star Sarina Bolden underlined the team's confidence as they inched closer to their first-ever title.

On the other hand, Thailand was in full control against Myanmar as they ran out 2-0 winners to book their fifth final appearance in a row.

A goal in each half from Kanyanat Chetthabutr and Saowalak Pengngam put Thailand well on the way as they looked to regain the title they last won in 2018.

IN THE FINAL, the early goal from Jessika Cowart was just what the Philippines needed as they then grew in confidence to score twice more for the win. Other than Katrina Guillou, the goal from Bolden gave the Philippines the well-deserved win for their first-ever title since the tournament's inception in 2004.

CONCLUSION

It can be considered one of the most competitive tournaments in recent memory.

There were at least five teams quite capable of winning the title and this certainly showed that women's football in ASEAN is on the right track.

But at the end of the day, a well-organised Philippines side proved the difference as playing at home gave them all the confidence they needed to win the title. And this will certainly go a long way to injecting more confidence into the Philippines squad that will be playing in the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023.

In terms of delivering quality competition, the Philippine Football Federation should be lauded for their commitment and also their ability to make the experience as seamless as possible.

With 11 teams taking part, certainly the logistical demands would have been tremendous.

Well done, Philippine Football Federation!



AFF U-18 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 22 JULY TO 4 AUGUST 2022 PALEMBANG, INDONESIA

AFF launched the inaugural AFF U18 Women's Championship in the city of Palembang on Indonesia's Sumatra island.

Having hosted the AFF Women's Championship in 2018, there was certainly no doubt as to the ability of the city to host an age-group competition.

For the record, the 2014 AFF Women's Championship in Thailand was organised with U-19 teams taking part but it was not known as an age-group meet then, so this edition in Palembang was the first competition under the new U-18 category.

Women's football has been on the rise and gained traction over the last few years. It was no surprise that the tournament received overwhelming support with nine teams taking part this year, including powerhouse Australia.

While teams were housed in several locations around the city, the two competition venues for the two groups were the Gelora Sriwijaya Stadium and the nearby Jakabaring Athletic Field located some 25 minutes away from the city centre.

GROUP A – Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore and Indonesia

Despite being an age-group competition and teams being relatively unknown, the presence of traditional powerhouses Vietnam and Thailand in this group meant that other teams stood little chance of cruising through to the semifinals.

And true enough, Thailand clinched a win over Cambodia in their opening campaign, while Vietnam stamped their mark after

beating Singapore on the second match day.



In the final count as Vietnam edged Thailand by a solitary goal to take the group and leave the latter as the runners-up, both teams scored a whopping 31 goals between them against their other three opponents.

A worthy mention was the progress achieved by Indonesia since last year, after coming in third in the group following victories over Singapore and Cambodia respectively.

GROUP B – Australia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines

All eyes were on Australia, given their pedigree in the sport. While there was hope that the success of the Philippines senior side would have rubbed off on the youth team, it did not pan out as expected.

Australia beat the Philippines in the opening game, following it up with a win over Malaysia in their second tie.

The finale in the group saw Myanmar putting up a fighting display but the Australian girls were not about to be denied as they fought back to win the game and the group.

Notable mention was Malaysia's win over the Philippines.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

Vietnam was never in any real danger of losing the plot, as given the several quality players on their side, Myanmar had a tall order to turn things around.

A well-taken lead in the first half was given further importance into the second half as Vietnam walked away 4-1 winners over Myanmar. On the other hand, Australia was made to toil before scoring a close 1-0 victory over Thailand.

Thailand held out for long periods to force the game into extra time before Australia managed to fire in the solitary goal.

IN THE FINAL, Australia was in confident mode as Vietnam seemed to struggle to push their way forward.



In the end, a goal in each half was enough to give Australia their first-ever crown in this first-ever competition in this age-group.

CONCLUSION

Having an age-group competition for women's football certainly went a long way in promoting the game in this region.

Given the fact that several teams from ASEAN are already playing in the FIFA Women's World Cup, there is now a real need to develop the game in the lower divisions.

There were several players worthy of mention from this competition like Ella O'Grady for Australia, Ngọc Minh Chuyen for Vietnam, Jeena Thongpan for Thailand and Su Myat Noe for Myanmar – just to name a few.

Certainly, the future looks bright for women's football in ASEAN.

Organisation-wise, the Football Association of Indonesia rose to the occasion, proving its capabilities again in delivering a high quality tournament at this level.

Kudos to Football Association of Indonesia!

AFF U-16 CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

31 JULY - 12 AUGUST 2022
YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA

The special region of Yogyakarta hosted the tournament for the first time ever and once again, nothing but praise for Football Association of Indonesia which delivered a quality championship worthy of this historic city.

There was another milestone at this year's tournament as, for the first time, the 12 participating teams were divided into three groups as compared to just two in the previous editions.

In this context, AFF's initiative should be lauded, considering that young players in this age group need a longer recovery period and what better way than playing fewer matches.

The matches were played at either the Sultan Agung Bantul Stadium or the Maguwoharjo Stadium (24km and 10km from the team hotels respectively).

GROUP A – Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Philippines
Host Indonesia, with inspirational former national captain Bima Sakti as coach, had prepared intensively for quite some time and this was evident from the display of quality play on the pitch.

A confident win over the Philippines was followed up with a victory over Singapore and they then won the group after beating Vietnam.

For Vietnam, the loss to the host meant that they had to wait with bated breath for a few days for the results from the other groups before knowing if they had made the cut as the best runners-up team.

The Philippines beat Singapore in the decisive group stage to take third spot while the latter finished fourth.

GROUP B – Thailand, Timor-Leste, Laos,

Brunei DS
Thailand, having won three times previously (in 2007, 2011 and 2015), started well with a big win over Brunei DS.

But the draw against Laos in their second game must have given the other teams some afterthoughts even though Thailand still managed to win the group after beating Timor-Leste.

The deadlock between Laos and Thailand was crucial for the former to take second while Timor-Leste finished third after conceding defeat to the Thais. Brunei DS was fourth.

However, in the final count with Laos' five points against Vietnam's six points from Group A, it was still not enough for them to make the cut into the semifinals.

GROUP C – Malaysia, Australia, Myanmar, Cambodia
Myanmar opened their campaign with a bang, edging Australia in their opening game as the two-time winners (in 2002 and 2005) before following it up with a draw against Malaysia and a close win over Cambodia to win the group.

In comparison, former champions Australia (in 2008 and 2016) found themselves bundled out when they fell to their second defeat with a loss to Cambodia. With Cambodia picking up their only full points against the Australians, they assured themselves of the third spot.

The Malaysians failed to make the cut to the next round when after their win over Cambodia and then a draw against Myanmar, a second stalemate against Australia meant that they picked up only five points



On the other hand, host Indonesia had to dig deep before confirming their spot in the decisive tie as Myanmar showed that their performance in the group stage was no fluke.

After absorbing much of the pressure, it was Myanmar who went ahead first before the host equalised.

In the decisive penalty shootout, Indonesia stayed perfect 5-4 to beat Myanmar and won a place in the decider as their reward.

IN THE FINAL, Vietnam put up an improved performance as they matched the host in almost all areas except finding the back of the net.



A solitary strike just before the break caught Vietnam's defence off guard as Indonesia went on to lift the trophy for only the second time in their history.

CONCLUSION
Clearly significant in this year's tournament was the decision to split the teams into three groups, as compared to the previous years' two groups.

from three matches to emerge as runners-up.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL
The much-touted Thai side fell a little short against a determined Vietnam squad determined to improve on their showing in the group stage.

A goal in each half was enough to propel Vietnam to their second final in five years.

This change allowed players more recovery time and to concentrate on playing fewer matches.

The AFF has created an invaluable and practical platform for teams to gear up for the AFC qualifiers. Teams should take up the challenge and make full use of such opportunities.

Organisation wise, heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Football Association of Indonesia for the great efforts and commitment in organising three major tournaments seamlessly within such a short period of time, an impressive feat indeed.

Well done yet again, Football Association of Indonesia!

AFF BEACH SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

28 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER 2022
PATTAYA, THAILAND

The fourth edition of the AFF Beach Soccer Championship featured three teams this year that had always been consistent performers throughout the years.

The city of Pattaya was chosen as the host with the Football Association of Thailand once again delivering a quality competition with lots of exciting action.

Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have all started domestic competitions and with that, a high-level competitive atmosphere was expected.

A round-robin competition format was adopted this time round with the team winning the most points to be crowned champions.

ROUND-ROBIN FORMAT

Defending champions Thailand started on a strong note, with a brace from Natee Jeepon turning out to be the crucial element in disposing off Indonesia.

For Indonesia, a hard-fought first game and given the nature of Beach Soccer where the rotation of players is crucial, their having to play Malaysia immediately the next day proved to be a test of their mettle.

Indonesia's inability to recover from the hard first game against the hosts led them to a huge defeat against the Malaysians.



A 9-2 loss put paid to Indonesia's ambition as the Malaysians made sure of their decisive match-up against the Thais at the back of a hat-trick from Mohd Hasrol.

In the pivotal match, it was hosts Thailand who grabbed a close 3-1 win to make it a perfect two wins from two matches.

With that, Thailand won their second AFF Beach Soccer Championship title in four years.

CONCLUSION

Given the experience of the Football Association of Thailand in organising tournaments at this level, it came as no surprise that the AFF Beach Soccer Championship 2022 was successfully concluded,

a quality competition with the presence of three of the biggest teams.

At the AFC level, Beach Soccer is already into its tenth edition next year, with Thailand set to play host in 2023, while at the FIFA level, it is already into its 12th year. Beach Soccer needs to be given more exposure in the ASEAN region for it to continue its progress.



AFF FUTSAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

4-10 SEPTEMBER 2022 KORAT, THAILAND

The AFF Futsal Club Championship has been gaining prestige over the years with Korat in Thailand once again chosen as the venue for the third time in three years.

It could be said with a certain degree of accuracy that this year's participants are the cream of the respective domestic competitions and they each provided a certain flavour to the meet.

Other than the usual powerhouses Thailand and Indonesia, the AFF Futsal Club Championship also welcomed debutants Timor-Leste and Brunei DS, which augurs well for the continued growth of club futsal in the region.

The competition hall at the topmost floor of Terminal 21 Shopping Centre is strategically located with easy access to the shopping arena within the complex, thus allowing better spectator attendance.

Kudos to the Football Association of Thailand which, once again, successfully delivered yet another seamless competition given their experience in hosting tournaments at this level.

GROUP A – Hongyen Thakam (THAILAND), Down Town Sport (CAMBODIA); Bintang Timur Surabaya (INDONESIA) and Perwira (BRUNEI DS)

The pressure was on Hongyen Thakam to continue Thailand's proud tradition of winning the last six (in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021) out of seven championships.

They started well enough when they pulverised Perwira from Brunei DS before making short work of Indonesia's Bintang Timur Surabaya and then smashing Down Town Sport from Cambodia to win the group.

Bintang Timur Surabaya would follow suit as the group runners-up scoring big wins over both Down Town Sport and then Perwira.

Down Town Sport were no newcomers to this tournament but they seemed to be a little lacking

when compared to their previous performances while Perwira needed to be more self-composed.

GROUP B – Selangor MAC (MALAYSIA), Sahako (VIETNAM) and Ramelau (TIMOR-LESTE)

With Timor-Leste's Ramelau making their first-ever appearance at this level, the battle was set for either Selangor MAC from Malaysia or Vietnam's Sahako to win the group.

And even though Sahako did not score as many goals against Ramelau when compared to Selangor MAC, it was the decisive game in the group that was all-important.

Sahako showed their pedigree to edge their Malaysian counterparts with a slim win to win the group.

Ramelau would certainly have picked up certain pointers playing against the seasoned campaigners as they look to come back stronger in 2023.

SEMIFINALS / FINAL

There was just too much quality in Hongyen Thakam in the semifinals in spite of the hard resistance from Selangor MAC.

The match was competitive up until the early part of the second half when both teams were neck to neck.

However, in the closing stages, Hongyen Thakam then turned on the power to put down Selangor MAC and win their place in the final.

Bintang Timur Surabaya, meanwhile, showed improvements from the group stage to fend off the onslaught from Sahako.

Two quick goals from Bintang Timur Surabaya put them well on the way even though Sahako tried to get back into the match late in the second half.

But it was not to be as Bintang Timur Surabaya booked their first-ever appearance

in the final of the AFF Futsal Club Championship.

IN THE FINAL, Bintang Timur Surabaya certainly showed that they had learnt from their loss to Hongyen Thakam in the group stage.

They were more composed and were not over-zealous so as to leave gaps at the back for Hongyen Thakam to capitalise on.

With the score tied two apiece into the second half, put

further pressure to score two quick goals as the match went up a notch in terms of temperament.

But Bintang Timur Surabaya was not about to be denied as they kept their emotions intact to win the title and delivered Indonesia their second AFF Futsal Club Championship in eight years.

CONCLUSION

As one of the fastest-growing sports in the region with most Member Associations having already initiated domestic competitions of their own, futsal must be given more exposure to ensure the ASEAN region is not left far behind when it comes to club futsal.

Currently, only a handful of countries are playing club futsal at a reasonably high level but with further exposure and top level tournaments, the standard could reach even greater heights.

The Football Association of Thailand has remained committed to the sport of futsal and of late, Indonesia seems to have made a positive stride in the same direction.

This was evident by their feat in this year's AFF Futsal Club Championship after coming out tops over teams from Thailand and Vietnam.

From an organisational aspect, the Football Association of Thailand once again beyond doubt delivered on all points.

Well done, Football Association of Thailand.



AFF MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC CUP 2022

20 DECEMBER 2022
- 16 JANUARY 2023

A new chapter unfolded as the excitement for the biggest football extravaganza in Asia moved up several notches when the **AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2022**, with a new title sponsor, made a return to the home-and-away format that was first introduced in 2018.

The last edition in 2020 was held in a centralised location in Singapore due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But with the virus affecting the world showing a let-up as it moved towards the tail end of the disease, the decision was made to return to the much-anticipated home-and-away format.

However, strict adherence to the prevailing health protocols of each country was still observed to minimise the continued spread of the disease.

A qualification round before the tournament proper consisting of playoff matches between Brunei DS and Timor-Leste, was held in Bandar Seri Begawan.

In the end, Brunei DS emerged victorious on a 6-3 aggregate, returning to the biennial event after a 26-year hiatus.

GROUP A – THAILAND, INDONESIA, CAMBODIA, PHILIPPINES, BRUNEI DS
Defending champions, Thailand was always the team to beat.

Much was expected from Indonesia, which had made the final in 2020, while Cambodia and the Philippines were undergoing a rebuilding period.

While they may not have made the cut to the semifinals, Cambodia made a strong impact in the

group following their win over the Philippines.

The Cambodians narrowly lost to Indonesia in Jakarta, proof of the progress they had made the past year and finished third in the group. The Philippines and Brunei DS finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Thailand finished top of the group due to a better goal difference hinging on their 2-2 draw in Jakarta, as Indonesia took the runners-up spot.



GROUP B – VIETNAM, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, MYANMAR, LAOS

With two-time champions Vietnam in the fray, it was up to the rest of the teams in the group to vie for the only runners-up spot to the next round.

It was no surprise that Vietnam won the group as they remained unbeaten with three wins and a draw, all without conceding a single goal in four matches.

Four-time winners Singapore started well enough with two wins and then a draw against Vietnam at home.

But Singapore's hope of making the next round was denied when they crashed to Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur as the latter punched the only remaining ticket to the semifinals.

For Myanmar and Laos, the losses suffered in their opening games dictated the rest of their campaign as they settled for the fourth and fifth spots respectively.

SEMIFINALS

Indonesia's inability to win at home in the first leg in Jakarta handed the initiative to Vietnam to book their second final appearance in three editions.

Striker Nguyen Tien Linh's double finish in Hanoi ensured Vietnam only their fourth final since the tournament's inception in 1996 as Indonesia fell short of repeating their commendable performance in the last edition.

In contrast, Thailand proved that they just have too much quality on their side when they brought the goods against a determined Malaysian set-up.

A 1-0 win for the Malaysians in Kuala Lumpur was not enough to guarantee their passage as Thailand staged a magnificent comeback in Bangkok to win back-to-back final appearances.

IN THE FINAL, Thailand showed their confidence in the first leg in Hanoi when they clawed back from a goal down to hold the host to a 2-2 draw.

In the return tie in Bangkok, captain Theerathon Bunmathan made all the difference with a superb lone strike to give the home team the narrow 1-0 win and their seventh ASEAN crown.

CONCLUSION

The month-long championship provided not only sporting enjoyment but also managed to give some semblance of a return to normalcy after the region and the whole world grappled with the insidious effect of COVID-19 over the last two years.

A home-and-away format injected further excitement into an already well-conceived tournament for the ASEAN region.

Ten stadia around the region played hosts to the championship this year and it was heartening to note that most matches were well-attended.

All in all, the 14th edition of the ASEAN Championship and the first AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup was well received as the Member Associations continue to grow, among other things, their organisational capabilities and capacities.



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