

Football

The world's most popular sport, football, captivates us with its fluid teamwork, strategic play, and passionate energy. Masters players will thrill fans with their experience, skill, and love for the beautiful game.

Competition dates

The Football competition for Open Masters Games Abu Dhabi 2026 (OMGAD2026) offers Competitive and Recreational divisions for men and women in 11-a-side and 7-a-side Football.

The Football competition schedule is as follows:

Event	February 7 Saturday	February 8 Sunday	February 9 Monday	February 10 Tuesday	February 11 Wednesday	February 12 Thursday	February 13 Friday	February 14 Saturday
11 v 11								
7 v 7								

All dates and times are subject to change, pending final entries received. A detailed schedule of matches will be developed throughout 2025 and early 2026.

Competition venue:

7v7

Abu Dhabi Cricket and Sports Hub

 [Pin Location](#)

11v11

321Sports Hudayriyat Island

 [Pin Location](#)

Team structures

11v11

The events, divisions and age categories for Football at OMGAD2026 are as follows:

Sport	Division	Age Categories
Football 11 a-side	Competitive	30+, 40+, 50+

Sport	Division	Age Categories
Men/Women	Recreational	30+, 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+

For each team to be confirmed, a minimum of 14 athletes need to be registered. The age of the youngest registered team member determines which age category the team will compete in and for the Games, your age is determined as of 31 December 2026. Each athlete can only enter to compete in one team.

There is no maximum number of players per team, although prior to each match, each team is only permitted to name a maximum of 18 players (11 selected players and up to seven substitutes) on the official Start List for each match.

7v7

Sport	Division	Age Categories
Football 7-a-side Men/Women	Competitive	30+, 40+, 50+
	Recreational	30+, 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+

For each team in 7-a side to be confirmed, a minimum of 10 athletes need to be registered. The age of the youngest registered team member determines which age category the team will compete in and for the Games, your age is determined as of 31 December 2026. Each athlete can only enter to compete in one team.

There is no maximum number of players per team, although prior to each match, each team is only permitted to name a maximum of 12 players (7 selected players and up to five substitutes) on the official Start List for each match.

Competition Levels

The following grade definitions have been determined for OMGAD2026 Football competition:

- **Competitive:** Teams that have three or more senior players with international, national or state representative open experience. Teams without international, national and state representatives are still encouraged to enter the competitive grade but should expect matches of a very competitive nature.
- **Recreational:** Open to everyone, including teams/individuals that participate or have participated, at a local competition level.

The Open Masters Games Football Organising Committee reserves the right to move teams between grades.

Competition format

The following format for play has been identified for the Open Masters Games Football competition:

- a) There will be a round robin tournament, with finals and playoff matches to determine final placings. Where sufficient entries are received, teams will be split into two groups of four teams for preliminary rounds.
- b) Final draw format will be determined once number of teams are confirmed. To produce a viable draw some grades and ages will be combined at the discretion of the Open Master Games Abu Dhabi 2026 Football Organising Committee.

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- c) All pool matches, semi-final matches, and final matches will consist of 20-minute halves with a five-minute break at half time. All matches requiring a winner will proceed directly to kicks from the penalty spot. Each team will have five penalties, if scores are still tied then it will proceed to “sudden death” penalties.

Uniform and accessories

- All outfield players of the same team should wear a matching kit with unique numbers on the back.
- Goalkeepers must wear colours that distinguish them from all other players and match officials. A goalkeeper can wear a bib to differentiate them if necessary. If, in the opinion of the referee, two teams have the same or similar colours, the home team (first named team from left to right) shall wear bibs.
- Shinpads should be worn with socks covering the shin pad fully.
- All jewellery and fitness trackers must be removed prior to kick-off.
- Games will be played on firm ground grass and astro, so moulded studs are recommended.

Team Sheets

All teams should present their match day team sheet prior to kick off. All players should have a first name and last name and their shirt number.

Game Equipment

OMGAD will provide size 5 footballs for all competitions.

Technical Information

Officials

11v11 games will have one central referee and two linesmen or lineswomen.

7v7 games will have one referee.

All referees will be appointed by the UAE Football Federation.

Substitutions

- Substitutions will be on a roll-on, roll-off basis. Substitutions can only take place during a break in play (free kick, corner, thrown-in or restarts)
- You must have permission from the referee or assistant to make the substitution
- Players being substituted out of the game can exit at the nearest sideline or end/goal line
- The player being substituted into the game **MUST** enter the field from the teams technical area and after the player being substituted out has left the field

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Offside

Offside will be in effect for the 11v11 format.

Offside will **NOT** be in effect for the 7v7 format.

Back Passes to the Goalkeeper

If the goalkeeper picks up a pass from his own teammate, an indirect free kick will be awarded. This will apply to all formats of football in the Open Masters Games.

Technical Meeting

One representative from each team is expected to attend the Football Technical Meeting prior to the commencement of the event. Further information will be confirmed closer to the start of the competition.

Technical delegate

The Technical Delegate, endorsed by UAE Football Association, will oversee the implementation of all sport specific rules and requirements at the Games.

Updates

The final version of the competition guide will be released by December 1st. Important additional information, including the sports schedule, will be available at that time. In the meantime, please address all inquiries to: sports@omgad2026.ae

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