

Aiming active participation in all European football programs as well as continuous development of Armenian clubs and national association, the FFA actively took part in adaptation and application of UEFA club licensing system within the FFA since 2002.

The 1<sup>st</sup> licensing season started in November 2003, and clubs which had a right to participate in UEFA club competitions for 2004/2005 season, took part in it: “Pyunik”, “Banants”, “Shirak” and “Mika”. The official opening of the season was done by the 1<sup>st</sup> annual statement of the FFA President, Mr. Ruben Hayrapetyan (12 December 2003).

During its meetings on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2004 Licensing Committee (1<sup>st</sup> Instance Body) of the FFA club licensing system took decisions, according which the 1<sup>st</sup> time in the history of Armenian football licences were granted to the aforesaid clubs. It granted them possibility to participate in UEFA club competitions (season 2004/2005). FFA President Ruben Hayrapetyan granted the licenses to the clubs’ presidents.

It was a period when everything seemed to be impossible, difficult and unreachable. But in any case, both Football Federation of Armenia and Armenian 4 “swallows” withstood to that challenge and got a huge practice.

That season also was very important for the future development of club licensing system. The thing was that FC “Mika” won UEFA Fair Play Competition and was allowed to participate in UEFA Cup, instead of UEFA Intertoto Cup. FC “Kotayk” should have replaced FC “Mika” in UEFA Intertoto Cup, but due to the fact that “Kotayk” had not taken part in licensing process, it dismissed the competition without participation.

Taking into the consideration this, the FFA Top Management made a decision, according which starting from season 2005/2006 not only the clubs, which were allowed to participate in UEFA club competitions, but all the clubs of Top Division League must take part in licensing processes. It was planned that these processes would be experimental which would allow our clubs to get more practice until 2008/2009 season, when only licensed clubs would be allowed to participate in both UEFA club competitions and Top Division League. It needs to be said that all the planned works were done in due time.

New annual statement of the FFA President was published on 22 November 2004, and the number of participants for 2005/2006 season increased up to 9 clubs: “Pyunik”, “Mika”, “Banants”, “Kilikia”, “Kotayk”, “Dinamo-2000”, “Lernagorts”, “Shirak” and “Hayq”. Only the last one’s licence was refused, as the club had suspended its participation in all FFA-sponsored activities just before the start of Top Division League and had been eliminated de facto because of financial conditions. Meanwhile, “Pyunik”, “Mika”, “Banants” and “Lernagorts” were granted the licenses and took part in UEFA club competitions.

The FFA President’s annual statement the season 2006/2007 was spreaded to the Football Family on 28 November 2005. That season can be considered both as the most extensive due to participation of 10 license applicants (“Pyunik”, “Mika”, “Banants”, “Kilikia”, “Shirak”, “Ararat”, “Gandzasar”, “Kotayk”, “Lernagorts” and “Dinamo-2000” football clubs) and as the most subversive (“Kotayk”, “Lernagorts” and “Dinamo-2000” were de facto eliminated).

In any case, it needs to be mentioned that the clubs, which dismissed the process on the later stage, showed the appropriate attitude, carrying out all the requirements of the FFA Licensing department and actively cooperating with it. 4 clubs participated in UEFA club competitions 2006/2007 (“Pyunik”, “Mika”, “Banants” and “Kilikia”).

Season 2007/2008 was the last experimental one for clubs who were not involved in UEFA club competitions and for this reason necessity of preparedness and vigilance of the clubs were stressed in the FFA President’s annual statement dd 11 December 2006. There were 8 licence applicants: “Pyunik”, “Banants”, “Mika”, “Ararat”, “Kilikia”, “Shirak”, “Gandzasar” and “Ulisses”.

During its meeting on 27 April 2007 Licensing Committee made a decision according which 7 clubs were granted the licenses and only the license of FC “Shirak” was refused.

Such extraordinary situation had few reasons. “Shirak” was the 1<sup>st</sup> operating club, whose license was refused not because of its elimination, but due to other circumstances. This fact made a real disturbance in Armenian Football Family. Nevertheless, that refusal did not have any influence on FC “Shirak” plans as it was not involved in UEFA club competitions. The main reason of that problem was the crisis in which the club had been for last 3-4 years.

New licensing cycle (UEFA season 2008/2009) was expected with a great impatience, as it could be fatal for our clubs. Finally, licensing procedures must be applied not only on international (clubs-participants of UEFA club competitions), but also on national level (all clubs of Top Division).

That's why numerous seminars, workshops and meetings have been organized for clubs' representatives and experts before the season. During those meetings requirements and specificities of UEFA and FFA Manuals were explained and discussed.

The FFA President's annual statement published on 16 November 2007 initiated not only new licensing cycle, but a basement for short-term planning either.

Like in the previous licensing cycle, the same 8 clubs were involved in this one: "Pyunik", "Banants", "Mika", "Ararat", "Kilikia", "Shirak", "Gandzasar" and "Ulisses" football clubs.

At the same time, in 2008/2009 season clubs first had to provide with their non-financial documents in order to get their "national" licences ([See "FFA Manual"](#)), and then licence applicants for UEFA club competitions had to provide with their financial documentation.

Thus the FFA Licensing Committee had 2 meetings. During the 1<sup>st</sup> one (07.03.2008) it granted licenses to all 8 clubs giving their first teams an opportunity to play in 2008 Top Division championship. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting (08.05.2008) it gave the opportunity to "Pyunik", "Banants", "Mika" and "Ararat" football clubs to participate in UEFA club competitions of season 2008/2009.

Current 2009/2010 licensing season also officially started by FFA President annual statement (08.12.2008). At present it approaches to the "equator". Now the clubs are providing FFA Licensing department with their documents in order to get "national" license, which will allow their first teams to participate in Top Division championship. Then, clubs-candidates for UEFA club competitions participation will provide the Licensing department with additional documents (financial criteria), in order to get one more license.