

The FIFA Futsal World Ranking

Overview

The ranking system for women's and men's futsal is based on the existing men's and women's football ranking but includes some adaptations which reflect the specifics of futsal.

The algorithm

The formula for both the men's and women's futsal rankings use the following algorithm:

$$P = P_{\text{before}} + I * (W - W_e)$$

P: Point total after the match

P_{before}: Point total before the match

I: importance of match

I= 15 Friendly matches

I= 30 Qualification matches for Confederations futsal final competitions

I= 40 Confederation futsal final competition matches

I= 40 Qualification matches for FIFA Futsal World Cup final competitions

I= 60 FIFA Futsal World Cup final competition matches

W: result of the match

1 = win; 0.5 = draw; 0 = defeat

W_e: expected result of the match

$$W_e = 1 / (10^{(-dr/400)} + 1)$$

with dr=difference in ratings of the two playing teams, i.e., dr = [P_{before} of Team A – P_{before} of Team B]

Example: Team A has 1500 points before the match and wins a FIFA Futsal World Cup qualifier against team B that has 1700 points.

For team A the formula is: $P = 1500 + 40 * (1 - (1 / (10^{-(1500-1700)/400} + 1)))$

For team B the formula is: $P = 1700 + 40 * (0 - (1 / (10^{-(1700-1500)/400} + 1)))$

Thus, team A wins about 30 points and has $P = 1530$ points after the match. Team B loses 30 points and thus ends up with 1670 points after the match.

Additional conditions

A few additional conditions were implemented to address specific issues:

- **Penalty shoot-out (PSO)**: Matches decided in a PSO are treated as a draw for the losing team ($W = 0.5$) and as a «half-win» ($W = 0.75$) for the winning team.

Note: In some instances, matches end with a winner after regular or extended time, but still include a PSO to determine the team that eventually will get to the next round (e.g. cases in which two play-off matches are played). These matches are treated as normal wins and defeats.

- **Knock-out rounds** of final competitions: Teams that earn negative points in the knock-out round of a final competition because of losing the match do not lose any points, i.e. their point total does not change.

This condition was introduced to protect the point totals of teams that have progressed to the knock-out round.

- **Inactive teams**: Teams that have not played for 8 or more years are not included in the ranking table. Once they start playing again, they will re-enter the table at the point total before they were omitted from the reporting.

Starting the ranking

One important property of the ranking algorithm is that a team can win points by winning or drawing matches whereas it loses points when it is defeated in a match. As a result, if the ranking is started with 0 points for every participating team, some teams will soon have a negative point total which might be somewhat discouraging. Against this background, the algorithm contains an additional rule that negative point totals will be rounded to 0 points.

The rounding of negative point totals will lead to a substantial number of teams that will have 0 points and be placed at the bottom of the ranking table, however. To avoid this effect, and considering that some futsal teams do not play on a yearly basis, some additional conditions were used when the ranking calculation was started:

- For the first two years of the calculation, i.e. from August 2015 until July 2017, teams playing for the first time start at 1000 points.
- During this two-year period, point totals below 1000 points are rounded to 1000 points.

- From August 2017 onward, new teams start at the point total of the lowest ranked team of the last available ranking. Until 2023, the lowest point total is based on provisional rankings at the end of the respective years. From 2024 onwards, the last published ranking table is being used.

These three provisions ensure that teams playing at least one match during the first few years will start in a similar situation. The later a team enters international futsal the lower the point total at which it starts will be, however. Yet, due to the calculation formula used, a team with a low point total will win a lot of points if it wins against better placed teams and will thus move up in the ranking table quite quickly.

Matches used for the calculation

Another issue that needed to be addressed when developing the futsal ranking system was which matches to use and how to weight them according to their importance. All international matches of futsal teams are considered regardless of whether they are friendlies or played in the framework of a competition. Matches played in the framework of international competitions have a higher «I»-value, however. It is also important to note that only confederation championships and World Cups were classified as «competitions» whereas smaller regional tournaments have been classified as friendlies.

An analysis of data on futsal matches shows that in men's futsal the number of teams and matches was quite low until the early 2000s. Playing activity started to pick up from 2007 onwards. In women's futsal the process started considerably later: The first year on record in which more than 100 matches were played was 2017. In both, women's, and men's futsal the number of active teams and matches is well below the corresponding number in football, but numbers are slowly increasing. Starting the calculation of the futsal ranking at an early stage would thus put teams that have been playing successfully for a long time at a considerable advantage in comparison to teams newly engaging in futsal.

Therefore, it was decided to start the calculation of both rankings from **01 August 2015**. For the men's ranking this means that it includes two full World Cup cycles (2016 and 2021, including qualifying rounds) as well as the 2015 final round of the CONMEBOL championship. In women's futsal the first World Cup will be played in 2025. However, starting the women's ranking in August 2015 ensures that the final rounds of the 2015 AFC and CONMEBOL championships are considered.