

FIFPRO Merit Awards: Honouring players who are improving the lives of others

The FIFPRO Merit Awards are a recognition of professional footballers who have done outstanding work to help improve the lives of others in their community. The **Merit Awards** are also a recognition of all professional footballers dedicating time and resources for the benefit of a cause or marginalised group, using their platform to elevate the voices of others in a way that brings attention and change through conversation and action.

FIFPRO is aware that, away from the field, numerous professional footballers are engaging with their communities, using their status, contacts, exposure, resources, and personality to benefit less-fortunate people; or to fight for improvements and changes to the world they are living in. We pay tribute to those players who are helping others, lifting their voice or engaging in social justice activism.

Since 2008, FIFPRO has honoured these footballers through the Merit Awards. We aim to build on this strong tradition of recognition through further acknowledging the work and desire of players to make positive contributions to the world around them. This document aims to provide all necessary information about the FIFPRO Merit Awards and the selection procedures.

There are three Merit Awards:

Player Activism

This category recognises players as activists, wherein they campaign to bring about political or social change through advocacy for a cause. This activism must be aligned to critical issues, such as those outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and/or critical human rights issues.

Player Impact

This category acknowledges players who seek to create impact in the lives of others, or have created a movement that makes an impactful difference. FIFPRO recognises that there is an opportunity to influence, establish and redefine the relationship between the football industry and society at large, as nations and sport go through change. This goes beyond players just joining a movement; they are creating the movement themselves for others to follow. It also recognises those players who have worked tirelessly to bring light and support to an issue that has negatively affected a community or disempowered group.

Player Voice

FIFPRO unites the voice of professional football players to ensure they are represented in the decisions affecting their working environments and the sport overall. This section highlights players who use their platform to raise their voice and/or voices of others to positively influence the development, governance and growth of their national or international football landscape, or to discuss and engage on topics of great importance which require influence and change.

The voting process

1. **Nominees:** FIFPRO invites all member unions to nominate candidates for the Merit Awards. The nominated player should be still active or has been retired for no longer than three years before the nomination. There is a preference to nominate individual players, however exceptions are allowed in case of a team or group effort.
2. **Form:** Member unions need to provide information about their nominee by filling in a form that must be shared with the FIFPRO staff organising the Merit Awards. If the staff is of the opinion that the provided information is insufficient, it can ask the member union to provide additional information. The staff will not add any information on its own initiative in order to remain neutral. The information must be provided in one of the three official FIFPRO languages.
3. **Selection Committee:** A special committee will select the winners of the Merit Awards. This committee consists of representatives of each of the four FIFPRO Divisions, one FIFPRO staff member, and two members of the Global Player Council (at least one man and one woman). The previous year's winners of the Merit Award and Union Impact Award will also be invited to join the committee. During a private meeting, the selection committee decides which three nominees are the winners of the three Merit Awards. Every committee member has one vote. The nominee with the most votes wins. In case two or more nominees have the same amount of votes, there will be a new vote with these nominees until there is a winner.

The ceremony and trophy handover

The winners of the FIFPRO Merit Awards will be officially announced and presented during the annual FIFPRO general assembly. If the circumstances allow it, the players will be invited to collect their award at the ceremony. If the player is not present, then a representative of the union that nominated the player will receive the award on the player's behalf. Each of the Merit Award winners will receive a physical award and a financial reward of USD 10,000.

For the following general assembly, the winners of the FIFPRO Merit Awards and the player unions should help provide a video report that illustrates how the players invested the award's money in their cause or charity.

Union Impact Award: Honouring outstanding initiatives

FIFPRO and all national member unions strive to improve working conditions for professional footballers worldwide. Approximately 70 unions and associations are working each day to support players by improving their working environment and wellbeing. Many of their initiatives are ground-breaking and serve as an inspiration to their fellow unions.

FIFPRO recognises the most outstanding initiatives through the **Union Impact Award**, which was introduced during the 2022 FIFPRO general assembly.

Union Impact Award

The Union Impact Award is a recognition for a union/association that organised an outstanding activity that is of great benefit for their members. This honour is awarded annually by the members, through a vote during the general assembly.

The prize is all about the recognition coming from peer organisations who know best how to validate the impact of union activities. The members can judge the nominated entries on originality, effectiveness, impact on players, importance for the union movement, and good-practice quality.

The voting process

1. **Nominees:** FIFPRO invites all member unions to nominate their most outstanding initiative from the previous 12 months. Results of the initiative should already be noticeable or measurable. Unions can only nominate one initiative.
2. **Form:** Member unions need to provide information about their nomination by filling in a form that must be shared with the FIFPRO administration organising the Merit Awards. If the staff is of the opinion that the provided information is insufficient, it can ask the member union to provide additional information. The staff will not add any information in order to remain neutral. The information must be provided in one of the three official FIFPRO languages.
3. **Selection Committee:** A committee will decide which three union initiatives will be nominated for the Union Impact Award. This selection committee consists of representatives of each of the five FIFPRO regions, one FIFPRO staff member, two members of the Global Player Council (at least one man and one woman), a representative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the winner of the previous Union Impact Award. This means a total of nine committee members. They all have one voice in the voting process.
4. **During a private meeting,** the selection committee decides which three unions will be nominated for the Union Impact Award. Every committee member has one vote. The nominee with the most votes wins. In case two or more nominees have the same amount of votes, there will be a new vote with these nominees until it is clear which three unions advance. The meeting

will be led by FIFPRO administration.

5. During the FIFPRO general assembly, the member unions decide who is the winner of the Union Impact Award. FIFPRO will inform the unions with articles about the initiatives of the three candidates on the FIFPRO website (which will be published before the general assembly), and a video presentation during the general assembly. After the presentations, FIFPRO will ask all member unions present to vote for the initiative they would like to see honoured with the award. Each union has one vote and all votes are equal and secret. In case two or more nominees have the same amount of votes, there will be a new vote with these nominees until there is a winner.

The ceremony and trophy handover

The winner of the Union Impact Award will be officially presented with the award immediately after the aforementioned vote. There will only be a physical award, there is no financial reward attached to the Union Impact Award.