



Reliance Foundation Development League kicks off with over 50 Clubs from Hero ISL, I-League I&II and State Federation Associations

Top 4 teams to qualify for the Premier League Next Generation, in joint collaboration with Reliance Foundation

Mumbai, March 06, 2023: The second edition of the Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) has kicked-off with over 50 teams competing for national and international honours. Given the success of RFDL last year, the tournament is set to be India's largest and most inclusive U-21 youth tournament comprising of teams across 9 regions in India from Hero Indian Super League, I-League division I&II and Independent Academies nominated by the State Football Associations.

The top four teams from RFDL will qualify to take on selected Premier League Clubs and South Africa's PSL youth teams in the annual Premier League Next Generation, in joint collaboration with Reliance Foundation, to be played later this year. The exposure and competitiveness of the Next Generation Cup is aimed at developing the elite youth football talent in India.

Reliance Foundation Spokesperson, said, *"The Reliance Foundation Development League was conceptualised to provide young footballers a competitive platform to test themselves against the best players in their age group. With its success, we have now expanded the league across the country and it is heartening to see the participation of so many teams across various leagues and academies. This season is a testament to Reliance Foundation's continued efforts towards moving forward as an inclusive force focusing on the development of Indian football."*

Through the Reliance Foundation Development League and with the support of our partners - Premier League, we remain committed towards growing the entire football ecosystem in India and providing the maximum exposure to young Indian talent to improve their skills and showcase their potential.”

The league will be played across three phases – Regional Qualifiers, National Group Stage and National Championship. The regional qualifiers will see over 250 matches being played, out of which the top 20 teams will go to the National Group Stage. The top 4 teams from the group stage will compete for the coveted RFDL National Championship. Players born on or after January 1, 2002 will be eligible to participate in the league. Each team has been granted permission to include up to 5 players born on or after January 1, 2000, in their squads. No more than three such players will be permitted to be part of the playing XI at all times. The extensive schedule will also provide youngsters in this age group more game time and experience, leading to their overall growth as athletes and footballers.

The first-ever RFDL saw seven Indian Super League clubs and Reliance Foundation Young Champs compete for the top honours, with the top two teams getting a chance to participate in the Next Generation Cup. Last year, Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC, participated in the Next Generation Cup where the young Indian boys impressed the academy coaches and scouts of the Premier League clubs. RFDL is part of Reliance Foundation’s continued commitment towards supporting young athletes in India to evolve their skills by providing them more opportunities, world-class infrastructure, sports science expertise and coaching, contributing to the growth of Indian sports.

Catch the season kick-off video here: <https://bit.ly/3EZa8Ue>

Reliance Foundation has continued to work towards ensuring that an increasing number of children and youth from all sections of society can play sports and, in the process, build a fitter, stronger and more active India. The initiatives have touched the lives of over 21.5 million young people since 2013 across the country from 13,000+ schools and colleges, starting from the age category of five years, enabling an opportunity for a talented kid anywhere to be able to achieve their dream of a career/glory in sports. Reliance Foundation aims to be the wind beneath the wings of Indian sportspersons and help them reach their true potential.

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