

Malaysian budget airline to sponsor English Premier League referees

Malaysia-based budget airline AirAsia has announced it is to sponsor the professional football referees in England for three years, the airline announced here Friday.

The exclusive deal with the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) will see AirAsia - the largest low cost carrier in Asia - display its logo on the sleeves of all referees officiating in English Premier League, Football League, League Cup, FA Cup and FA Vase matches.

The PGMOL was established in 2001 and is responsible for the training, development and monitoring of an elite group of 19 referees and 50 assistant referees, as well as a national list of 57 referees and 182 assistant referees.

The airline's logo will appear on the referees' sleeves for the first time at the Community Shield match Sunday between Manchester United and Chelsea refereed by Mark Halsey.

AirAsia chief executive officer Tony Fernandes said: 'With nearly 50 matches being played every week and a weekly average audience of nearly 100 million viewers across 200 territories this sponsorship is certainly a powerful global branding tool for us in enhancing our brand awareness.'

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