



INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE FOR  
SPORTS STUDIES



## INTERNATIONAL MASTER IN MANAGEMENT, LAW AND HUMANITIES OF SPORT

## Executive Summaries



### *Presentation of dissertations Class of 2016-2017*

In partnership with



SDA Bocconi  
School of Management

unine  
UNIVERSITÉ DE  
NEUCHÂTEL



## Programme

- 12:45 **Door opening**
- 12:55 – 13:00 **Welcome** - Prof. Denis OSWALD, CIES Director
- 13:00 – 13:30 **Awakening India's "sleeping giant": Establishing an applicable league model for a non-dominant football market** – Ali AHMADI KHATIR (Iran), Mike-David BURKHARD (Switzerland), Sebastian HASSETT (Australia), Srinivasan SAIMANI (India), Shoko TSUJI (Japan)
- 13:30 – 14:00 **The Cuban anomaly: to what degree is a nation's sporting success attributable to its political system?** – Ammar ABBAS (Palestine), Anna Lena BUCHWALTER (France & Germany), Ivan DUBININ (Russia), Sebastian PERMAIN (Australia)
- 14:00 – 14:30 **Exploring the Potential of Cross-Border Leagues in European Club Football** – Lili BORISOVA (Bulgaria), Serafino INGARDIA (Italy), Kiomari LOPEZ TORRES (Puerto Rico), Doojin SA (South Korea)
- 14:30 – 15:00 **Coffee break**
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Off the pitch player's education in European football: A study of Professional Footballers' Associations' initiatives and best practices** – Javier GONZALEZ (Venezuela & Chile), Dudley LANGELIER (United Kingdom), Francis MOLASOKO (France & Congo), Ami OTAKI (Japan), Michael WANNER (Germany)
- 15:30 – 16:00 **The US Closed League System and its Potential Effect on European Football** – Nigel DAVIES (USA & United Kingdom), Sebastian FRINGS (Germany), Ya "Agnes" GAO (China), Pia MACKENZIE (United Kingdom & Germany)
- 16:00 – 16:15 **Coffee break**
- 16:15 – 16:45 **A 21st Century Love Triangle: Sports Broadcasting, Technology and Law** – Manuel CID GONCALVES (Portugal), Ashley HUGHES (USA), Sara PANIZO CENCERRADO (Spain), Ruggero RAYMO (Switzerland & Italy)
- 16:45 – 17:15 **The evolution of the security paradigm at sport mega events in the twenty-first century** – Bhaveshan MOORGHEN (Mauritius), Ji Sung PARK (South Korea), Daria SMIRNOVA (Russia), Zaira STARNAI (Italy)
- 17:15 – 17:20 **Closing remarks** - Prof. Denis OSWALD, CIES Director
- 17:20 – 18:30 **Apéritif**



# ***Awakening India's "sleeping giant": Establishing an applicable league model for a non-dominant football market***



Ali AHMADI KHATIR (Iran), Mike-David BURKHARD (Switzerland),  
Sebastian HASSETT (Australia), Srinivasan SAIMANI (India), Shoko TSUJI (Japan)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

***"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people." – Mahatma Gandhi***

The lack of excellence in international competitions by teams representing India in sports other than cricket has puzzled many experts, in the context of its population. India has had successful phases in team sports like field hockey and football extending up to the 1960s. However, the rise of cricket in India coincided with the decline and administrative apathy in various other sports.

In the past few years, driven by innovative packaging by broadcasters, the introduction of professional sports leagues in sports like kabaddi, hockey, badminton and football has breathed a fresh lease of life into the interest levels and participation in these sports. Football, however, faces a peculiar situation where India has two professional football leagues, the I-League and the ISL which are both recognised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA. In a recent decision, the All India Football Federation and the AFC approved the simultaneous functioning of the two leagues. However, the presence of the two rival football leagues has posed more issues to the sport in the country than solutions. There have been stakeholders who have been disillusioned with the way the sport is being carried about, threats of pull-outs and concerns being raised over the availability of quality players to play in two simultaneous leagues. In light of the same, we chose to conduct a study on both 'new' football leagues and football leagues in countries where football was a non-dominant sport. The aim of this study was to help propose a football league model which could be applied in countries where football was not the dominant sport and establish a commercially sustainable football league which increased the popularity of the sport.

For the purposes of this research, 'new' football leagues referred to football leagues that had been established in the last 20 years and 'non-dominant' sport meant a sport which did not attract maximum viewership, sponsorship and investment in a country. We selected football leagues in countries including Australia, China, Iran, Japan, Thailand, USA and Germany. These leagues were benchmarked against the Indian football leagues and the

extremely popular Indian Premier League (cricket) on 23 different indicators. The football leagues in Iran, China and Thailand were chosen for being Asian countries with similar demographic features like ethnicity, population density and the total population itself. The football leagues in Australia and Japan were chosen on the basis of these being successful leagues in countries where football was a non-dominant sport. The leagues of USA and Germany were chosen as best practice leagues with each being an example of a closed league and an open league respectively.

Based on the data collected for the benchmark analysis, the indicators were tested using a strength and weaknesses analysis of football in India. The indicators were analysed using a Fishbein matrix on account of their relative strength and strategic importance to identify the key strengths, superfluous strengths and key weaknesses of football in India. The indicators were then classified into three different categories, viz. Category A (mandatory indicators), Category B (relatively mandatory indicators) and Category C (optional indicators). The Category A indicators, including the duration of the league, the distribution of revenue, approaches to youth development and mechanisms for hero-building, were identified as absolutely essential to the development of a league that aspires to succeed. The importance of these indicators was further tested by conducting interviews with stakeholders and experts in the Indian football industry.

On the basis of our findings and the current scenario of the Indian football landscape, we have proposed a football league structure which will come into being over a period of six years. In our proposed model, the Indian Super League shall be the premier division of football in India. The Indian Super League, currently a closed league, shall become a partially closed league, where it will accept the entry of teams in two manners. First, the owners of the league shall release tenders for the acceptance of new teams into the ISL in a staggered manner once every two years. This shall help the stabilisation of the league and development of players. Secondly, the champions of the second division, the I-League, have the option to join the ISL provided they fulfill certain club licensing criteria that are being complied with by teams that are participating in the ISL. However, upon reaching the completion of the 2023-2024 season, a promotion-relegation system shall be put in place and the ISL shall become an open league.

The I-League and I-League 2nd Division shall form the second and third tier of Indian football. As explained above, the champions of the I-League have the option of joining the ISL at the end of every season. The I-League and I-League 2nd Division are open leagues themselves and there is promotion-relegation between the two leagues from the first season. The introduction of teams into the I-League and I-League 2nd division shall focus on the geographical spread of the nation itself. New teams shall be introduced from cities that do not have representation in the three tiers of Indian football. The cities that are not represented shall be divided on the basis of population. Cities with a population of over five million shall be granted direct entry to the I-League and cities with a population below five million shall be granted direct entry into the I-League 2nd Division. However, the teams that enter the I-League 2nd Division will have the opportunity to join the premier division at a particular point of time.

The continental qualification positions have been of intense debate in the months leading to the time of writing of this Project. Under this proposed league structure, assuming India has two continental qualification positions, one shall be handed to the winner of the premier division, the ISL and the second position shall be handed to the winner of the cup competition. The cup competition is proposed to be held in a knock out format where teams from all three divisions will take part.

We believe that the application of this football league structure would help in stabilising the club football competitions, developing the talent pool at the disposal of the national team and establishing a sustainable football league model in India.





# ***The Cuban anomaly: to what degree is a nation's sporting success attributable to its political system?***



Ammar ABBAS (Palestine), Anna Lena BUCHWALTER (France & Germany),  
Ivan DUBININ (Russia), Sebastian PERMAIN (Australia)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This research paper analyses and highlights the 'Cuban anomaly' and its standing as a 'positive outlier' in relation to its sporting success, and explores to what extent, this is attributable to its political system. Firstly, primary and secondary research highlighting the political ideologies of communism and capitalism in both a sporting and non-sporting context was undertaken. Secondly, a review of Cuba's sporting history and political ideologies was informed through primary research, aiming to elaborate on the intangible aspects of the 'Cuban anomaly', above and beyond what is achievable with secondary research.

Thirdly, a Toolkit introduced by the Group identifies 'key success factors' in each political system (i.e. from communism and capitalism) and defines 'sporting success' which is argued to be representative of Cuba's unique political system. Recommendations are provided on the basis of the Toolkit with a view to inform managers of change and encourage future research into the link between other outlier nations and their political systems. The Group's research question analyses:

***"To what degree is a nation's sporting success attributable to its political system?"***

### **2. SPORT IN CUBA**

Cuban sport very significantly switched from professional to amateur after the revolution of 1959. Fidel Castro and the newly brought socialist values saw the implementation of nationwide plans to improve the nation's sporting performance, starting with free access to sports schools and facilities for all citizens. Cuba also improved the quality and services of Cuba's sporting facilities, manufacturing its own sports equipment and expanding research in sports science.

Cuba succeeded in convincing its population to choose national pride, embodied in amateurism, over multi-million contracts, which was linked to greed and considered dangerous and corrupt. Three-time gold medallist boxer Teófilo Stevenson, after turning down the “fight of the century” against Muhammad Ali, famously said: “What are eight million dollars compared to the love of eight million Cubans?”

Despite the influence of other socialist nations on Cuba, Cuba had developed its own system. Its new-found strength was indeed a consequence of its conversion to Socialism. The Cuban government emulated the Soviet Union of using sport as a political tool and incorporated this system into its ideology after seeing the results made by the Soviet Union. However, Cuba did one thing differently. While the Soviet Union first gained sporting success and overtime turned it to policy and saw how this could be used to their advantage, Cuba laid down the policy first that led to future success and victories.

The results of Cuba’s sporting success are not limited to its impressive records at the Olympic, Pan American or Central & Caribbean Games, and its sporting overachievements have not gone unnoticed internationally. Thousands of Cuban trainers, teachers and researches were sent to work closely with over 100 countries. In fact, nine countries at Barcelona 1992 had Cuban boxing coaches while 36 Cuban coaches participated at the 2000 Sydney Olympics representing teams of other nations.

At the Olympics, Cuba is 18th in the gold medals standings ahead of great sporting nations like Brazil, Spain, Argentina and others. Cuba is ranked 5th in the medal count of nations that have never hosted the Olympic Games and is the most successful nation never to compete at the Winter Olympics. Cuba is 2nd in the standings of gold medals won at the Pan American Games, and ranked first in gold medals at the Central & Caribbean Games.

### **3. SPORTING SUCCESS**

The most vital component of the Group’s research question revolves around providing a definition and understanding of what constitutes ‘success’ for a sporting nation, particularly given the subjective nature of such a concept. Notwithstanding the inherent links between the tangible and intangible elements of success, the Group categorises sporting success as either ‘tangible’ and more objective, or ‘intangible’ and more subjective to inform its recommendations, Toolkit and conclusions.

#### **TANGIBLE**

1. **INTERNATIONAL SPORTING RESULTS:** The most common and popular measure of sporting success has traditionally been identified through the participation in, and success experienced at major international sporting events. This element includes events such as the football, cricket and rugby World Cups. Arguably however, the Olympic Games, the most recognisable and widely participated in international sporting event, is the most prestigious and tangible measure of a nation’s sporting success.

2. **MASS PARTICIPATION IN SPORT:** Participation in sport is often represented and measured in a quantitative manner, as opposed to a qualitatively, and used as a key performance indicator that dictates the amount of funding a government may allocate to sports development or a particular sport. Mandatory mass participation in sport, particularly when embedded in education systems, has the benefit of fostering a development pathway for all athletes and creating a higher level of internal competition in a nation and statistically increasing the nation's chances of success.

## **INTANGIBLE**

3. **HEALTH BENEFITS:** The health benefits of sports are widely publicised and scientifically proven, yet are seldom considered as a success factor when analysing the sporting success of a nation. Cruz Hernandez (2017) stated that "the health care system was the strongest component by making the compulsory of all sport and physical education ... that made people athletic. Very seldom you saw someone overweight; everybody was athletic, there was always the incentive, motivation of looking good".
4. **NATIONAL IDENTITY:** As in many countries, sport is an essential part of Cuba's national identity. It has been a way for the Cuban population to differentiate itself from the Spanish occupation and became a way to express national identity, especially when under foreign control of Spain and the United States. The Cuban government's emphasis on sport leads to a strong visibility of sport related efforts, events and victories.
5. **INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND PROWESS:** Cuba cooperated with over 100 countries around the world and with sports projects was effectively acting as a sports agency promoting its athletes and coaches. It hosted the Pan American Games at a particularly difficult time to showcase its sporting power and due to its need to develop foreign relations and earn hard currency.
6. **UNIFICATION:** History suggests that sport can play a pivotal role in the process of unification of a nation. Well known examples include the hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa or the 1998 Football World Cup in France, where each nation respectively felt represented and unified through a national team that consisted of players from very different backgrounds. Sport also strongly influences the image of a country, not only from an international perspective, but also for the citizens themselves. The unifying power of sport also has a strong presence in Cuba.

## **4. TOOLKIT**

The Toolkit primary aims to identify the key success factors historically present in each sporting system, whether communist or capitalist, with a view to add new and more intangible elements collected during the Group's research, most notably drawing on the

case study of Cuba. Further, the Toolkit aims to inform of the framework that has been uniquely successful for Cuba and strives to recommend elements that may be adopted or implemented by other countries, or sporting entities and lower-level government agencies responsible for the governance of sport.

<b>TOOLKIT: KEY SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	
<b>1. Promote physical activity to the entire population:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the implementation of specialist government departments devoted to all sports, for people of all ages (non-elite sport).</li> <li>• These government departments:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. require clear, assigned goals;</li> <li>ii. expose the population to sports (traditional or new);</li> <li>iii. promote a physical culture; and</li> <li>iv. enhance the moral qualities of sport.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>2. State Support:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sporting success requires a certain level of state involvement, backing and commitment.</li> <li>• This aspect does not relate to the level of control the state has over sports programs, but rather facilitation.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Funding and Investment:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This aspect relates to tangible investments in 'soft legacy', such as the benefits associated with hosting a major event.</li> <li>• This 'soft legacy' should extend to sustained investment in youth coaching, development pathways and adequate facilities.</li> <li>• This aspect relates to the development of services that are consistent with plans to promote physical activity to the entire population.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Specialised Sports and Expertise:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and leverage sports that hold traditional and historical value to the nation and avoid the introduction of sports that may be irrelevant. For example, Cuba are prominent in boxing and baseball, and are the most successful Summer Olympics nation that has not competed in the Winter Olympics.</li> <li>• Share expertise, and cooperate with nations that are prominent in the same sports. This aspect includes sharing coach and athlete knowledge, such as services and facilities, manufacturing equipment and expanding sport science research.</li> </ul>

<b>5. Early Talent Identification:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify talented youth at a grassroots level. This is best achieved when sport is embedded within the education system and interschool sports competitions.</li> <li>• Provide these athletes the support and provide them with the opportunity to reach their full potential.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Government Policy:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the right to participate in, and access to sport through legislative and policy instruments.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Removal of Entry Barrier to Sport:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to reduce discriminatory measures preventing access to sport, including financial, social, infrastructure, religion or gender based elements.</li> <li>• Reduce financial burdens associated with participating in sport.</li> <li>• Increase access to, and development of parasport initiatives.</li> </ul>

## 5. CONCLUSION

After analysing the differences and similarities between communism, capitalism and a unique state such as Cuba, there is scope and cause to suggest that a nation's sporting success is significantly attributable to its political system. However, what differs between these political systems is 'how' a nation's government uses politics to influence sport. Each political system analysed and presented different key success factors, yet these differences are more so in relation to the form and method of implementation of such policies, as opposed to differing conceptually in nature.

Differing political systems influence sporting success in more similar ways than anticipated by the Group when forming its research question. The Group's impression and bias, on face value, was that communism and capitalism in particular would provide vastly different policies that impact sporting success. However, these concepts and policies, such as international sporting results, mass participation in sport, state control of elite sport, funding and investment, early talent identification, removal of entry barriers and specialisation and expertise, remain common elements regardless of the political system in question.

It is the government policies of unique nations, such as Cuba, that have been identified and outlined in the Toolkit that influence sport and redefine sporting success, in a more intangible manner, that in fact enable a country to excel in a sporting setting. The Toolkit recommends a framework for implementing sporting success through politics and informs a variety of audiences, ranging from academics to international sporting federations, and arguably most importantly, 'managers of change' from a political perspective, being policy makers and government departments.

A unique and fascinatingly successful sporting legacy exists in Cuba. The death of Fidel Castro may see further political change in the country. In order to effectively manage this change, the Cuban government is encouraged to maintain its strong promotion of the health benefits and cultural link with sport and further promote mass participation in sport, whilst having a view to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics where its two national pastime sports of boxing and baseball will be hotly contested.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations have been formulated with a view to promote future research on the link between politics and sport:

1. There is a need to look at close relationship between political economy and sport systems through academic research. All sports managers are advised to study the history and the political economy of the systems they are working in.
2. Increase awareness of how political change can lead to change in sport systems and analyse whether these may be mitigated as part of a transition within systems.
3. Analyse the extent to which sport managers can help sport, and how sport can play a positive role, in periods of political transition.
4. Following the research conducted on Cuba, other interesting nations that were excluded from the scope of this research include China and Jamaica. Further research will provide a broader and more in-depth understanding of the concepts introduced in the Group's Toolkit.
5. Analyse how best to promote the role of sport in society by reconsidering the definition of sporting success, and what it entails for different nations.

# *Exploring the Potential of Cross-Border Leagues in European Club Football*



Lili BORISOVA (Bulgaria), Serafino INGARDIA (Italy), Kiomari LOPEZ TORRES (Puerto Rico),  
Doojin SA (South Korea)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

When looking at the sporting and financial trends of European club football, there seems to be a convergence between the two: big clubs and leagues are getting bigger while small clubs and leagues are getting smaller. This has been confirmed through analysing sporting results in European club competition, which have been dominated by a handful number of clubs in the last decade. Moreover, through exploring financial growth, the research also finds that a premium number of clubs and leagues are outperforming competition.

Even though this phenomenon has been widely acknowledged, it seems European club football is moving towards a point of no return. In this sense, the 2018-21 reform to the UEFA Champions League and Europa League has been identified as a further step towards that point.

The recurring idea of establishing Cross-Border Leagues in European club football, which has been at the centre of discussions between stakeholders, has attracted the attention of media and supporters. Although a lot has been said on the matter, no concrete research and plans have been explored.

### **Aim**

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of a Cross-Border League model in minor European football leagues both looking at the perspective of stakeholders and analysing a specific case: Scandinavian football.

The proposal of a Cross-Border model to be established in Europe has often been overlooked due to the enormous challenges it faces, but also because of the lack of knowledge and understanding of its potential.

Whilst football has not really offered many opportunities for this model to be experimented, other sports such as basketball, ice hockey and rugby have recorded many benefits and

thus continue to make use of it. The aim of this research is also to provide indications on how to successfully establish a Cross-Border League on the basis of the findings from current/discontinues practical cases.

## **Methodology**

In order to have a full view of Cross-Border Leagues across several sports, a number of practical cases were selected and the authors relied both on existing literature and the contribution of relevant stakeholders in order to get a better understanding of the outcomes.

The cases of the ABA League and the Baltic Basketball League were used in basketball due to their success and the fact that they serve as an example and model to follow in specific European regions. The Asia League Ice Hockey was chosen as it demonstrated how National Associations which wanted to develop and promote ice hockey worked together to make such a league successful with teams from countries as diverse as Russia, China, South Korea and Japan all under one competition.

In addition to that, two cases from rugby were also used, the Guinness Pro 12 and the Super Rugby, to demonstrate how vast and expanded the system of Cross-Border Leagues is in the world of sport and how these have promoted local talent. Lastly, cases from football were also examined in order to further understand and identify reasons for inception, strengths and weaknesses of Cross-Border Leagues.

Further to analysing specific practical cases, key stakeholders for European club football were interviewed either personally, by email or telephone in order to gain their insight, views and opinions into Cross-Border Leagues. These ranged from to stakeholders such as FIFA (Boban & Johnson), the ECA (Dewaele), the EPFL (Thomsen), Danish and Norwegians Leagues and Federations as well as journalists, football scholars and athletes. One main limitation was the inability to obtain a primary source of information from UEFA.

## **Lessons Learned from Cross-Border Leagues**

Given the aim of this paper, with our findings from primary and secondary research, a list of "Lessons to Learn" for European club football was drawn. The lessons covered key concepts on how to form a Cross-Border League, how to run it properly and how to make it successful.

All three lessons highlighted one key-determining factor: stakeholders' harmonisation, which must be promoted constantly throughout the process in order for this model to be effectively implemented. Ultimately, this factor could be the difference between a successful Cross-Border League and one that fails.



## The Potential of Cross-Border Leagues in European Club Football

Throughout this research it has become evident that the philosophical question - and trade-offs - between growth and control must be debated in order to understand whether Cross-Border Leagues can be seriously considered in football. If growth was to be prioritised, the Cross-Border Leagues could arguably be successful in achieving commercial and sporting growth. On the other hand, with control being prioritised, there would be little space for a model which would dramatically alter the structure of the game.

In the current European scenario, UEFA appears to have chosen a two-sided approach. The potential establishment of a SuperLeague, which is the foreseeable outcome of an historical trend in professional football in which empowered clubs become more independent from governing bodies, is to be avoided by UEFA in order to keep hold of its leading position. As such the European Governing Body is attempting to delay it by devolving more and more power, allowing big clubs to grow dramatically. The partnership with ECA and their close collaboration - resulting in the new 2018-21 format - is also an indication of this. In the meantime, control is still the rule for the rest of Europe which is gradually falling behind.

Interviews revealed that this a pressing issue for most of the participants. However, stakeholders had difficulties in formulating solutions to this problem. Stakeholders expressed interest in the concept of a Cross-Border model whilst they were simultaneously extremely cautious.

James Johnson, FIFA Head of Professional Football, believes it is inevitable that we will see so called Cross-Border/Regional Leagues. Furthermore, Claus Thomsen, EPFL Deputy Chairman, underlined that there is an obligation from UEFA to approve a Cross-Border competition if Leagues agree to it.

Interesting opinions, like the one of FIFA Deputy Secretary General, Zvonimir Boban, in regard to regions such as the Balkans for which nostalgic views of past leagues as well as historical and cultural heritage may be a reason to overlook that we now live in different realities. He wisely notes that: "Football can be a tool to bring nations together but sometimes it can also create distance between them".

On the other hand, several stakeholders expressed excitement to ideas and a strong belief that it would lead both to financial and sporting success.

Yet, there are still several limits such as the inability to pinpoint clear benefits beyond general assumptions. The number of evident challenges such as governance, European spots allocation and working around a congested calendar, are also a significant disincentive. However, considering trends in European club football and the benefits recorded in other sports, all these challenges should not be the reason for disregarding such a concept a priori.

Ultimately, as this research reveals, a governance issue is the first hurdle that prevents stakeholders from proceeding to fully explore this model and, as it appears from all stakeholders involved, none is particularly clear on who should take the lead and allow this model to take-off.

### **Scandinavian Case Study**

In addition to the outlined above, out of many European regions that could be considered for a Cross-Border model, the Scandinavian case-study was analysed in-depth as it fulfilled a number of criteria. The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Leagues appeared particularly interesting based on their stagnated markets, declining performances and decreasing attendances, among others factors currently affecting Scandinavian club football. Because the region is so similar in numerous aspects, it seemed possible that the governance, calendar and format of the league could be structured in a way that would allow for a Cross Border League to flourish. It was also taken into consideration how the region has potential in terms of performing successfully when it comes to sporting and commercial benefits if such a League was to be formed.

This research confirms significant flaws in the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Leagues in terms of sporting performance, national teams and clubs coefficients and attendance and reveals indications of a fertile environment in which this model could prosper. Indeed, the findings of this research show that there is potential for improvement to the Scandinavian region, both in sporting and commercial terms.

However, the views of local stakeholders were generally against a Cross-Border Model suggesting, to an extent, a clear resistance towards radical innovation and an inclination to maintain the status quo. As this research identified that harmonisation between stakeholders was a fundamental requirement to successful implementation of Cross-Border Leagues, it becomes evident that the Scandinavian region would struggle to successfully implement this model. Even though several factors indicate the potential within the region that a Cross-Border League could successfully take-off, it most probably will not.

# *Off the pitch player's education in European football: A study of Professional Footballers' Associations' initiatives and best practices*



Javier GONZALEZ (Venezuela & Chile), Dudley LANGELIER (United Kingdom), Francis MOLASOKO (France & Congo), Ami OTAKI (Japan), Michael WANNER (Germany)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Over the recent years, there has been a growing interest into the lives of professional football players off-the-pitch and how they are preparing for the unavoidable, voluntary or involuntary transition into retirement. As in the case with all careers, a football player will ultimately have to hang up his or her boots and integrate back into the normal environment of society. This transition has proved very difficult for many players, who struggle to adequately prepare for this change in their life which leads to issues such as unemployment, bankruptcy and depression.

Along the way in professional football players' career they are involved with many different stakeholders in the game from football clubs to national associations. However, a key stakeholder for the players is the players' associations in their respective countries, who look to positively represent and support the players throughout their career and beyond. Moreover, they play an increasingly important role in helping prepare the professional players for the transition phase into retirement, especially in regard to raising awareness of the need for preparation. In particular, the players' associations look to provide educational opportunities during the players' career to ensure they are capable of undertaking a second career upon retirement.

## **RESEARCH PURPOSE:**

The main purpose of this final project is to provide a descriptive and explanatory research paper to establish a detailed understand of the educational support systems being implemented by the players' associations in England, France, Germany and Italy and how they could potentially improve in the future. Moreover, best practice educational initiatives in the sporting industry from Australia, Denmark, FIFPro, the IOC and New Zealand were analysed with the aim of providing a comparison between their support systems compared to the selected players' associations. There has been very limited research carried out into the subject of football players' education, and thus, this paper aims to be the first of its

kind through providing a detailed analysis of the current players' educational landscape within Europe and in particular for the selected players' associations.

#### RESEARCH APPROACH:

The research and data throughout this paper was collected using both primary and secondary qualitative research including interviews, case studies, research journals and relevant books. The qualitative research method enabled to gain a deeper insight into the subject area through using detailed experiences and evidence relating to the topic. The main source of information was in depth interviews from both employees within the selected players' associations and experts within the field. The data gathered from the interviews serves as the main base of information and analysis throughout this paper.

The players' associations are now a key stakeholder in the football industry and it was essential to understand why they were established and key achievements which have led to them becoming such influential organisations today. Therefore, research was carried out into the history of the selected players' associations as well as the legal status under which they are formed.

The qualitative interviews with the players' associations and experts involved in the best practices provided an overview into the current educational support systems being put in place and how the associations are managing their resources. The data collected was then analysed through comparative analysis, first individually and then across the different players' associations. Combining both the best practices and the analysis from the players' associations suggestions, a five-pillar framework was developed which can be utilised by the players' associations to further develop their educational support systems.

The players' associations and best practice initiatives were selected by judgemental and convenience sampling due to recommendations received from leading experts in the sports industry. The players' associations are within the scope of the top five leagues in the European football landscape and thus provided a high chance to gather information as well the potential access for interviews.

#### ANALYSIS:

Across all the players' associations there were varying similarities and differences which were analysed. All the associations have some sort of educational support systems being implemented for their members to help with their personal educational development, however, they vary in nature and scope. A key finding is that the associations are restricted by their budget, which ultimately impacts the level of support system in place. The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) in England have the highest budget and are therefore more able to raise awareness and offer more educational pathways for their players.

The current main trend is to provide two types of programmes, either organised directly

by the association themselves or in collaboration with educational institutions. Through the collaboration with educational institutions the players' associations provide access to higher level programmes in the forms of Bachelor degrees or Masters, which enables the player to be better prepared for a second career after retirement. These collaborations are especially useful for the German players' associations who would not be able to provide opportunities to their members otherwise due to the very restricted budget.

There was also the need identified to provide awareness and educational support across all age ranges. There are many forms of transitions in the life of a professional player from the academy stage to the first team then onto retirement. Therefore, education is not a short-term process and needs to be integrated at key stages throughout the players' careers. The French players' association UNFP are actively looking to target younger players, mainly between the 16 to 18 age range as they will dedicate a large amount of time to playing football but most of them will not succeed.

The growth in technology is being effectively integrated in certain programmes through the use of online and distance educational programmes. These initiatives enable the players to undertake programmes from theoretically anywhere through online platforms. Moreover, they can be more effectively integrated within the players' busy footballing schedule as they are not required to be present at a given time in a classroom. However, as learning styles among players differ, online education requires a large amount of self-motivation whereas certain players would prefer to learn through face to face methods.

The chosen best practices within the sports industry were as follows: The IOC Athlete Career Programme; Study4Player programme from the Danish association; FIFPro Online Academy; New Zealand Rugby and Australian Sport Institutions. The key data and analysis gathered by all these best practices is the need to offer individualised, career-long services and a broad curriculum of educational initiatives. It was found that is not only enough offering educational programmes but providing an all-round package that facilitates the personal development of athletes to help athletes prepare for career transition.

#### SUGGESTIONS:

Through the collection and analysis of data from both the players' associations and the best practice institutions, the group developed a five-pillar development framework that can be utilised and initiated by the players' associations for the enhancement of their support systems. The five-pillar framework was developed from a collection of the analysed initiatives and activities within associations which have a proven track record of being successful. The five pillars in the framework are as follows:

- 1) Raise awareness, increase motivation and create player engagement
- 2) Lifelong development process
- 3) Tailor made career and transition support
- 4) Collaboration with educational and other institutions
- 5) Flexibility to adjust to players' mobility

The five-pillars in the framework look to initiate player career development programmes that are individualised, motivating, provide opportunities for reputable educational programmes and are adaptable to the players' footballing schedule. Through the implementation of this five-pillar framework, players' associations will be able to provide a support system that enhances the players' development off the pitch throughout their career which will ultimately lead to a more successful career transition into retirement. Moreover, in order for this framework to be successful it will require the active engagement from the players as well as all stakeholders involved in the players' environment such as the football clubs and coaches among others.

## CONCLUSION:

This project has looked to be the first of its kind by providing a detailed analysis of the current landscape of football players' education and which support systems the selected players' associations are putting in place while also providing a new guiding framework to be implemented in the support systems. A key area identified is the need for life long development programmes for players that will support them throughout their career and beyond rather than just at certain stages. It is essential moving forward that the players' associations continue to develop their support systems which will ultimately benefit the lives of professional players in the future.

Moreover, the analysis gathered has highlighted the limited research available in the subject of football players' education. This project although limited to a European scope, serves as basis for further academic, qualitative and quantitative research to be carried out on a more holistic scale that will be essential to gain an even deeper insight into the subject area. The lives of professional footballers after retirement should not be disregarded as they have as much of a place in society as any other member of the public.

# *The US Closed League System and its Potential Effect on European Football*



Nigel DAVIES (USA & United Kingdom), Sebastian FRINGS (Germany),  
Ya "Agnes" GAO (China), Pia MACKENZIE (United Kingdom & Germany)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In our research paper, we historically examine the development of the US closed league system to answer the question of what would be the effect of implementing aspects of the closed league system on the sporting, strategic, commercial, and legal landscapes of European football. Regarding our methodology, we as a group individually and collectively researched empirical and theoretical data regarding the US closed league system while focusing on legal developments, operational functions, league/franchise relations, and commercial viability. In addition, we gather firsthand data through interviews and questionnaires from industry representatives from the club, agency, broadcaster, and fan spheres.

First, we will go over the historical development of the three predominant closed leagues in the United States. The focus thereby will be on the NFL (National Football League), NBA (National Basketball Association), and MLB (Major League Baseball). We have done exploratory research into the origins and development of these leagues to find similarities and differences in their processes to become global revenue leaders.

After, we will give a general overview of the effects in regards to the strategic side, in particular competitive balance, the commercial side, including commercial and marketing financial differences, and the legal differences between the open and closed league structures. We had to focus on the general terms of these areas in order to keep the scope realistic. The basis of our analysis is not to favor one league structure but rather give the audience an overview of the general differences between the league structures.

Furthermore, we will present a case study from EuroLeague basketball where a closed/open league hybrid system was recently developed. The study sought to understand the characteristics and evolution of EuroLeague regarding its history, structure, and economic impact. Even though EuroLeague represents a different sport, it serves as a good indicator for the potential benefits and challenges of a closed league application on a historically and culturally open league landscape.

Finally, our group will introduce a subjective analysis of both league structures and will raise potential benefits and challenges of a closed league implementation in European football.

We will also introduce some recommendations that could potentially be applied when realizing such an implementation.



## *A 21st Century Love Triangle: Sports Broadcasting, Technology and Law*



Manuel CID GONCALVES (Portugal), Ashley HUGHES (USA), Sara PANIZO CENCERRADO (Spain),  
Ruggero RAYMO (Switzerland & Italy)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The research project “A 21st Century Love Triangle: Sports Broadcasting, Technology and Law” questions how the sport industry will adapt innovative technology while respecting European law. Research was supported with various primary and secondary sources including in-person interviews with The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the European Commission, as well as an international survey conducted personally by Group Six.

To understand how the sports industry will move forward with new platforms and devices, Group Six first analysed the digital evolution of sports broadcast ranging from the first radio broadcast to the infinite opportunities made available today via the Internet. History proved broadcast, sport and technology need one another as each industry creates unique opportunities for not only revenue streams, but for innovation and greater fan bases.

From history, Group Six provided a situational analysis that reviewed consumer preferences, potential new entries into the sport broadcast industry, and law. Consumer preferences were supported by a survey of 200 sports fans world-wide who noted they would be willing to pay an average of \$10.00/month for sport related content on their favourite digital platforms such as Netflix. Potential new entries scoured new players with prospective bids on sports rights in the future such as e-commerce companies like Amazon, social media giants including Facebook and Twitter, as well as new live stream start-ups from the FIFA Master’s own, mycujoo.com.

Yet, the tech industry is not the only outfit to dramatically impact sports broadcasting. The European Union (EU) is in the process of implementing portability and creating a digital single market (DSM) across all 28 member states. As EU law stipulates the freedom of goods, capital, people and services, Internet, which is considered a service, should be able to openly cross European borders. Julia Reda, an anti-geoblocking advocate described Europe’s late to the game approach on portability and a digital single market as “it’s like going to a store and not being able to buy something because you have the wrong

passport.” (European Commission Speech, 2016).

Portability will allow EU residents to access their home country content anywhere within the EU for up to two weeks. Portability laws were recently passed and it is anticipated that all EU residents will have portable digital access by early 2018. A DSM would stop the process of geoblocking and reduce piracy, something many EU consumers and content providers would like. However, on the flip side, a DSM could significantly reduce broadcast revenue streams, and would be challenged by language barriers, issues of national identity and would need to combat broadcast giants like Sky and Eurosport from putting smaller broadcast companies out of business.

To better understand a DSM, a current model, the United States (U.S) was analysed. The U.S. and EU are comparable in that all state and member states have their own laws, but are under the umbrella of either federal jurisdiction or EU law. The one major difference is that all 50 states in America are in one country, with one official language. However, the ways in which rights are sold in the U.S. where leagues bid regionally, and nationally to both English and Spanish speaking networks to ensure the correct markets have access, could potentially be applied to the EU single market.

After reviewing the digital landscape, laws, and studying a current and functional DSM, Group Six sought to make policy recommendations to safeguard the revenue streams of the sport broadcasting industry by utilizing new technology without breaking any laws. Recommendations were divided by each sector.

The tech industry is encouraged to continue enhancing video quality and bandwidth capabilities. Consumers noted their biggest complaint when watching sports online is still image quality and buffering issues, while UEFA noted potential players like Netflix, which may have 100 million subscribers is still unable to stream one game at the same time to all users.

Recommendations for the sport broadcasting industry included creative packaging on behalf of rights holders and broadcasters, exclusivity assurances and further development of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms.

Creative package design can help the industry profit from portability laws. Rights sold by holders would increase prices based on the number of countries or regions in which content can be viewed. Broadcasters would capitalize by selling subscription levels. Subscribers would have the opportunity to pay for portability for 12 weeks a year at one premium, or unlimited portability targeted towards frequent travellers for a higher premium. All packages sold by both rights holders and broadcasters should geolocalize pricing to maintain fair market values in respect to member state's individual GDPs.

Exclusivity is a driving force for increased revenue for federations as it inflates prices between bidders. As a DSM could limit the amount of bidders with the financial capital to pay for rights, prices could go down. Therefore, it is suggested that rights are sold exclusively both internationally and regionally as done in the U.S.

As autonomy is the goal for any business, OTT is a way for teams, leagues and federations to better divide revenue. The sport industry is reliant on rights revenues and consistently on the lookout to increase financial flexibility. OTT platforms would be content produced and managed in house which would insist consumers pay federations and leagues directly. Additionally, if implemented team, league and federation wide in Europe, OTT platforms would create a new job market. One of the EU's primary interests in sport is that of economic benefits. As the sport industry boasts 2 percent of Europe's annual GDP, the increase in job demand would also satisfy the needs of the EU.

The EU itself is advised to create a working group that will voice the concerns of all stakeholders and establish a specific sport sector within the European Commission. Additionally, the geoblocking of sports, with the acceptance of free-to-air matches is also suggested.

In sum, Group Six believes that with a greater understanding of the symbiotic relationship between sports broadcasting, technology and law, the sport industry will be able to capitalize on the digital ecosystem well within the lines of EU law. While most love triangles end in tears, this one can and should end with a happy ending.



# *The evolution of the security paradigm at sport mega events in the twenty-first century*



Bhaveshan MOORGHEN (Mauritius), Ji Sung PARK (South Korea),  
Daria SMIRNOVA (Russia), Zaira STARNAI (Italy)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Sport mega events represent a cornerstone of the sports industry. They gather millions of fans, give exposure to athletes, spread the values of sport and create a peculiar joyful atmosphere. At the same time, they receive huge attention by the media and foster business opportunities, but require as well a great amount of investment.

In recent years, security issues have threatened this scenario, putting event organisers in the position of having to dedicate increasing attention and energies to the security field. The security expenditure has consistently risen, and the measures adopted have become more and more strict. Local authorities and international security actors have started working together to face the most relevant challenges, trying to develop their security strategies as much as possible.

It is within this framework that this project is collocated. As security remains a central priority for the hosting of sport mega events, the aim of this research is to identify the main challenges characterising security management, with the purpose of providing a set of recommendations in relation to security cost, governance and ethics.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In line with the research aim, a series of objectives was identified:

1. to define the concept of sport mega event, on the basis of its characteristics and historical establishment;
2. to investigate the phenomenon of security, from the perspectives of costs, governance and ethics;
3. to review the relevant literature, needed to gain familiarity with the sports security field and to leverage on previous findings;
4. to analyse the evolution of security management at the two biggest sport events in the world: The Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup;
5. to conduct a questionnaire with sports security experts, in order to gather their opinions and benefit from their professional experience;

6. to provide a set of recommendations and prospective security challenges that may arise at sport mega events in the future.

## METHODOLOGY

Within the sports security framework, three topics were identified as very relevant for event organisers, and studied in their evolution throughout the years. Firstly, the theme of cost, which often prevents cities and countries from hosting sport mega events. Secondly, the subject of governance, defined as the way in which organisers decide to coordinate the different agencies working on securitisation. Thirdly, the ethical issues related to security, namely the impact of security checks, data collection and surveillance activities on fan experience.

The events to be analysed were selected according to their global exposure and historical relevance, thus including the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. As for the time frame, the attacks of 9/11 were considered as the turning point after which the concept of security became increasingly relevant on a global scale, with a tremendous impact on security at sport mega events. Therefore, the study includes all the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups held after 2001.

To thoroughly analyse the evolution of the three topics selected, a research approach based on both primary and secondary data was devised. In this respect, the first step consisted in the analysis of the relevant literature, from both a broad perspective on the topic of security and a specific focus on sport mega events. The second step, on the other hand, entailed the collection of primary data.

A quantitative approach supported the gathering of figures related to security cost. However, qualitative research was chosen as the primary method to collect information on the themes of interest. A questionnaire composed of open questions was selected as the most appropriate method for data gathering, while the interviewees were chosen according to their experience in sports security management. The questionnaires received were analysed from two different perspectives. On the one hand, key-word analysis was useful to deal with such a large amount of content; on the other hand, content analysis allowed to examine the responses in their specificity and to indicate the presence of significant patterns.

## FINDINGS

### Security cost

Security expenditure represents an increasingly relevant issue for event organisers, who are faced with a situation of "limited budget versus infinite demands". In this respect, the characteristics of sport mega events, the national and international security frameworks and the presence of extant security infrastructures are just some of the factors able to affect security cost. While, on the one hand, the hypothesis of excessive security spending is counterbalanced by the organisers' duty of care in terms of securitisation, on the other

hand the high costs of technology installation and implementation are faced with the current impossibility of assessing its actual efficacy.

### **Security governance**

International cooperation is one of the most relevant security trends emerged in the twenty-first century, as it is crucial for the implementation of counter-terrorism measures. Its peculiar benefit is knowledge-sharing amongst different security subjects, performed through briefings, shadow-trainings and consultations. Private agencies, public forces, law enforcement personnel, police and military are the other actors involved in security operations, whose success strictly depends on high levels of coordination, transparent communication, role division and solid hierarchy. Moreover, the possible involvement of international federations in security operations is also being currently debated.

### **Security ethics**

Three are the aspects of security operations making spectators uncomfortable at sport mega events. Firstly, the type of personnel found at the gates for purposes of security checks. Secondly, the time spent at the gates for security searches. Thirdly, the lack of communications providing spectators with detailed information on all security procedures to be performed at the venues. In this respect, transparent communication strategies also improve the efficiency of other practices, such as surveillance and data collection. The phenomenon of hyper securitisation, concerning the increasing strictness of security measures, is currently being discussed with reference to the concepts of human rights and fan experience.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Security cost**

To cut cost, event organisers should adopt risk assessment methods and reviewing systems for security operations. Indeed, the former help effectively allocate funds and manage risk levels, while the latter help identify best practices and areas of improvement within the security strategy. Moreover, organisers should use as much as possible the extant security infrastructures, and cooperate with national authorities in bringing forward state projects as security legacies, to get access to governmental funds.

To save money on the long-term, event organisers could be involved in venue design and embed security systems in sporting infrastructures. On the same line, they could invest in "fit for purpose" technology, especially for the security overlay, and devise the optimum ratio between technology and personnel. In addition, organisers could adopt mixed financial models to avoid lack of security funds.

In case of wide security budgets, event organisers may be involved in research activities to identify and combat emerging methodologies in the field of security threats. In case of low budgets, and depending on the host country, they may try to get cost recovery for the deployment of governmental forces.

### **Security governance**

Event organisers should rely on multi-agency collaboration, and dedicate close attention

to the communication and integration activities amongst different subjects. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined, along with the key decision-makers and a solid hierarchical structure. Organisers should highly value the function of international cooperation, especially dedicated to intelligence-sharing, and private agencies, expert in the areas of consultation, face-to-face operations, and fan requirements.

They could establish pre-intelligence programmes to gather security knowledge before delicate sporting events. Moreover, within the governance structure, two specific units could be dedicated to field of play security and drone detection and denial.

Event organisers may seek the involvement of international federations, if the host city and country allow this procedure. To gather security knowledge, they may contact external organisations dedicated specifically to the sharing of best practices. From an operational perspective, organisers may adopt a Geographical Information System to locate security personnel and identify vulnerable areas.

### **Security ethics**

Event organisers should make sure that security checks are performed according to the standard procedures, and that security looks quick, efficient, positive and responsive in the eyes of the participants. Moreover, security measures should be thoroughly communicated to supporters, to avoid damaging their fan experience.

Organisers could expand the security area to include fan zones and festivals, which are increasingly more popular and, therefore, in danger. In addition, they could avoid employing police or military officials at the gates, to make attendees more comfortable. They could as well improve the systems of data collection, whose acceptance strongly relies on transparent communication with fans.

Event organisers may try to reduce the time spent by supporters at the gates for security checks. In this respect, advanced systems for single security checks may be implemented, allowing spectators to reach clean venues by travelling on clean means of transport, thus being searched only once.

This project, devised in line with the relevant literature and the current trends in the sports security sector, generates areas for future research. Firstly, the evolution of sports security could be analysed from perspectives different to cost, governance or ethics. Secondly, a quantitative research on fan experience could clarify the current situation in terms of supposed violation of human and civil rights. Finally, the security sector would significantly benefit from a study concerning the applications of the principles recommended to sport events of a smaller scale.











INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE FOR  
SPORTS STUDIES

Avenue DuPeyrou 1 | Phone +41 (0)32 718 39 00  
2000 Neuchâtel | [events@cies.ch](mailto:events@cies.ch)  
Switzerland | [www.cies.ch](http://www.cies.ch)