

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

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In partnership with

Programme

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| 12:30 | Doors Open |
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| 14:45 – 15:00 | Coffee Break |
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| 16:15 – 16:45 | Beyond the Podium: Investigating the Impact of the Legacy of the Summer Paralympic Games on Elite Para Sports Participation from Beijing to Rio (2008-2016) – Edith Finn (Ireland), Guilherme Polygrymas (Brazil & Lithuania), Linuosha Pan Sa (China), Abi Varghese Cheeran (India) |
| 16:45 – 17:15 | Beyond the Game: A Stakeholder Analysis of Match-Fixing in Brazilian Football – Felipe Aires (Brazil), Arjun Khanna (India), Alice Yoon (South Korea) |
| 17:15 – 17:30 | Closing Remarks – Denis Oswald, CIES Director |

REBUILDING TRUST

Assessing Safeguarding Response Efficacy in US, UK and Swiss Gymnastics



Philip BLACK (Chile & UK), Chiara DELSAUT (Belgium & Switzerland),
Rasha ELGHOROUR (Libya), Syed Asif HUSSAIN (Bangladesh)

Introduction

In the early 1990s, scientific studies regarding safeguarding began to emerge, and an increasing amount of safeguarding policies and regulations have been seen in recent years implemented across sports governing bodies. In sports settings, the term ‘safeguarding’ started to emerge to investigate athlete maltreatment. Safeguarding in sports refers to the process of protecting children and adults from harm by ensuring that they have a safe space in which to engage in sporting activities. This term encompasses not only the prevention of physical abuse but also the protection against psychological and emotional harm, ensuring a safe environment where athletes can thrive free from exploitation and abuse. As safeguarding becomes more standardised across the sports industry, cases continue to surface of past critical failures.

This paper, therefore, aims to investigate to what extent gymnastics governing bodies of the US, UK, and Switzerland enhanced their safeguarding practices. The insights gained will contribute to addressing our second research question, “How to ensure a safer environment for athletes in sports?”

Argument

Protecting athletes, especially children, has garnered significant attention to understanding the principles required for a safe sports culture. Athlete maltreatment prevention initiatives in sports are predominantly focused on individual-level actions rather than organisational systems. Owusu-Sekyere *et al.* developed an integrated approach that views safety culture as a result of interactions between organisational, personal, and behavioural factors. This model combines those factors, emphasising stakeholder engagement, leadership commitment, and a robust safety management system. Effective case management, addressing how organisations handle cases, is also crucial, and therefore this study has included case management in the existing model developed by Owusu-Sekyere *et al.*

There is a lack of research on organisational culture within national sports governing bodies (NGB). Consequently, this study targets NGBs' responses to safeguarding failures from an organisational perspective. Therefore, the paper argues that adopting a safety culture through an organisational approach, including safety management systems and case management procedures will improve safeguarding practices, and contribute to a safer environment for athletes.

Study Objective

This research is particularly timely due to recent high-profile cases and regulatory changes that have brought safeguarding in sports to the forefront of public and regulatory attention. Therefore, insights from this study could influence policymakers, sports organisations, and all relevant stakeholders, like athletes and coaches, to ensure a safer sporting environment.

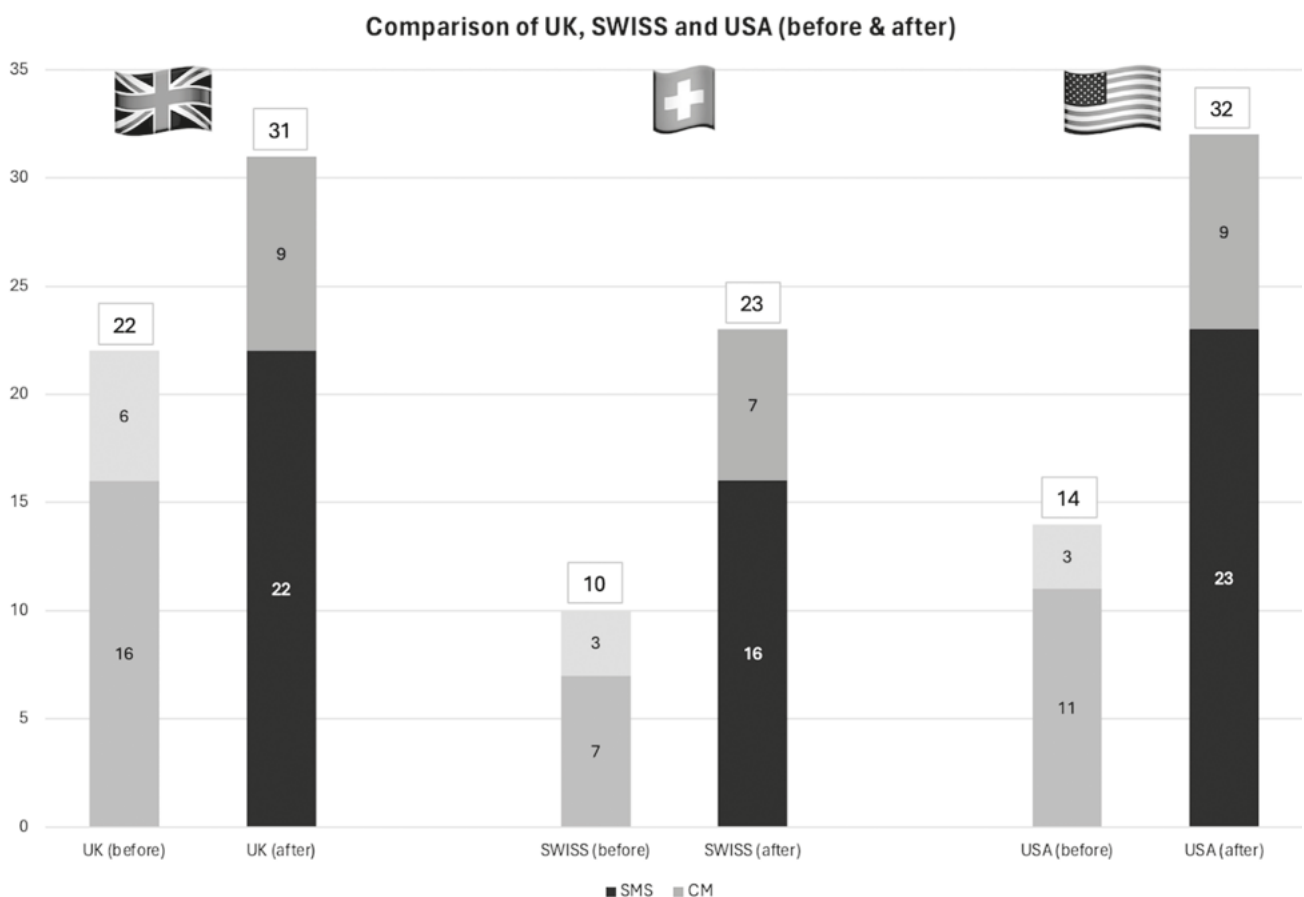


Figure 1. A comparison of scores of the UK, Swiss and US Gymnastics Federations for all criteria (safety management systems, and case management) comparing before versus after respective reform periods.

This paper will investigate the effectiveness of responses to critical safeguarding failures within US, UK and Swiss gymnastics. This study was conducted using case studies for the examination of these cases to provide a foundation to understand the factors that contribute to failures and the effectiveness of subsequent responses. This consisted of reviewing news reports, court documents, and publicly available information on the three federations and relevant stakeholders. This was then used to produce a timeline of events relating to the safeguarding cases within each of the three national gymnastics federations, as well as to establish the legal framework of these organisations. In order to collect the necessary information to evaluate how each NGB responded, an interview or survey was conducted with the participants of key stakeholders related to the three gymnastics federations. Despite extensive efforts in requesting responses from USA Gymnastics and British Gymnastics, we were unable to secure their participation as they stated their preoccupation with preparations for the upcoming 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Consequently, only the Swiss Gymnastics Federation participated in this study through an interview, as well as representatives from Swiss Sport Integrity, the Swiss Olympic Committee, and the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation. Research was thus done to collect the necessary information for USA and British Gymnastics. An explanatory approach was then used to explore how the three gymnastics federations adopted a safety culture through an organisational approach in their response.

Figure 1 showcases the safeguarding responses of the US, UK, and Swiss gymnastics federations before and after their respective reforms, which when comparing it, is clear that there is a visible trajectory of significant transformation, albeit from different starting points.

In terms of safety management systems and case management criteria, British Gymnastics largely showed neutral responses before 2020 with only one being ineffective; post-2020, all criteria achieved an effective response except for training programs evaluation, which improved from ineffective to neutral. Swiss Gymnastics had an ineffective response across all criteria before 2020, but after 2020, five criteria improved to a neutral response and four to an effective response, though the criteria of a safeguarding policy remained unchanged. Similarly, USA Gymnastics primarily exhibited ineffective responses before 2016, but after 2016, all criteria were rated as effective. When comparing the results between the three national gymnastics federations of Switzerland, the UK, and the USA, overall, the response scores improved following their respective reform periods. USA Gymnastics made the biggest improvement when comparing responses before and after their respective reform period. Out of the three national gymnastics federations, British Gymnastics had the most effective responses in terms of the criteria before their reform period, while Swiss Gymnastics had the least effective.

Switzerland initially had the least developed safeguarding framework with no formal policies or systems in place, highlighting a critical lack of awareness and infrastructure. The US, although having some policies, lacked depth and accountability, resulting in fragmented and ineffective safeguarding measures. The UK, while the most advanced initially, still faced significant challenges in the implementation and consistency of its safeguarding practices.

After reforms, Swiss Gymnastics made substantial improvements including the establishment of a Legal and Ethics Department in 2021, the introduction of training programs, the expansion of communication channels, and the initiation of monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. Swiss Gymnastics positioned themselves in a way in which they rely strongly on the Swiss Sports Integrity Commission which handles safeguarding matters, the dissemination of important information, the evaluation of processes and the training of those responsible at a club level. Similarly, the US also began to work with a government funded independent body, the Safe Sport Center, which handles all safeguarding investigations and sanctions and has significantly enhanced their safeguarding measures. British Gymnastics has brought in external expertise on various fronts, from a partnership with LimeCulture (an independent safeguarding agency), the implementation of Globocol (a database system for document management), and the close collaboration with UK Sport, Sport England and the Child Protection Services Unit. Swiss Gymnastics hired an ethics team who oversee ethics matters (including safeguarding) across the country, the US implemented dedicated safeguarding officers who receive yearly training and British Gymnastics made Club Welfare Officers mandatory, with mandatory training and certification as well as the inclusion of Regional and National Welfare Officers to create a more accessible chain of command.

Conclusion

Overall, this study investigated the effectiveness of responses to critical safeguarding failures within the gymnastics national governing bodies of the US, UK, and Switzerland, with a focus on Safety Management Systems (SMS) and Case Management (CM). We found that adopting a safety culture throughout the organisational systems approach (SMS, CM) enhanced safeguarding practices and provided a safer environment. This thus supports this study's argument, stating that adopting a safety culture throughout the organisational systems approach (SMS, CM) would enhance safeguarding practices and provide a safer environment.

To conclude, this study demonstrates the potential for significant improvements in athlete safety and welfare through the adoption of comprehensive safety cultures and organisational systems approaches.

BEHIND THE GLORY

Unveiling the Mental Health Challenges in the Professional Football's Ecosystem



Dominique Donghwun CHANG (South Korea), Ludovica GIORGETTI (Italy), Cassandra HESSELINK (Canada), Yair RANGEL (Mexico)

Executive summary

Professional football is all about incredible athletes strain themselves, showing off amazing skills, and leaving fans on the edge of their seats. But there is a hidden side to the game: the mental health of the players. We all know that pressure is intense, but what happens when it pushes too close to the limit? Our research delves into the often-overlooked realm of mental well-being in professional football, aiming to not just highlight the challenges players face, but to ignite a transformative movement within the sport itself.

In this perspective, a distinct contrast emerges. Mental health issues including anxiety, depression, and debilitating stress are prevalent among footballers. Yet, readily available and confidential support structures remain scarce. This lack of services is further exacerbated by a persistent and pervasive stigma surrounding mental health, particularly, within the culture of professional football, which often emphasises stoicism and unwavering mental toughness. Therefore, it creates a culture of silence that discourages players from seeking help, ultimately impacting not just their well-being, but potentially hindering their performance on the pitch. By analysing the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, our research aims to develop a framework for sport organisations to implement and improve mental health support systems.

With our benchmarking analysis, we have examined 35 organisations globally, including FIFA, National Federations, Players' Associations as well as some clubs. While a promising start has been made with 14% of organisations implementing formal policies that clearly outline strategies and visions for promoting mental health within football environments, these policies remain the exception rather than the rule. Essentially, this leaves a significant gap to be addressed. Still, the focus of many existing medical committees within the reviewed organisations rely heavily towards physical health and injury prevention, leaving mental health concerns largely unaddressed. A bright light emerges with players' associations which demonstrate a clearer commitment to proactive mental health support. These associations, when possible, employ full-time resources and assistant medical directors specifically focused on player well-being, showing a proactive approach

to addressing the mental health needs of their members. Nonetheless, over 60% of organisations have implemented mental health initiatives, a figure that contrasts the previous landscape. Therefore, these initiatives encompass a diverse range of activities with some organisations focusing on raising awareness through campaigns featuring football legends. The statistics paint a picture of growing recognition within professional football regarding the significance of positive mental health.

Throughout 10 months of qualitative data collection executing semi-structured interviews, we have achieved interviewing 33 experts and professionals in similar fields regarding the mental health of elite footballers. This represents 14 players' unions, 8 professional football players, 2 federations, 2 non-football organisations, 2 sport psychologists and 2 clubs, on a global scale. All continents are represented with both male and female perspectives. Their findings reveal a complex picture of responsibility and a clear need for a unified approach. At the heart of the issue lies the concept of shared responsibility. Players need to feel empowered to seek help with readily available resources. Coaches, family, and friends – the entire support network surrounding a footballer – should be educated on mental health challenges so they can create a safe space for players to open up. The good news is that the demand for mental health support is rising. In England, the number of players using the PFA's 24/7 helpline has increased six-fold over six years, with over 800 players using the service in 2023, compared to just 162 in 2017. Australia has seen a similar trend with funded therapy sessions jumping from 141 in 2020 to 1,082 in 2023. These statistics demonstrate a growing willingness among players to address their mental health; however, a major obstacle remains - confidentiality. Both players and experts worry about confidentiality with club psychologists. There is a fear that seeking help could impact playing opportunities. Essentially, an independent psychologist or coach, separate from the club, would foster greater trust and encourage players to prioritise their mental well-being.

Unfortunately, financial constraints pose another significant challenge. Budgets for mental health programs are often limited, and funding sources vary greatly depending on the country. While developed nations such as Germany, North America, Australia and New Zealand struggle to find enough resources and sponsors, some countries in South America and Africa are still prioritising basic salaries for players over mental health support. In Africa, some interviewees pointed out there are even greater social concerns that take precedence over funding mental health initiatives. Even with these limitations, players' unions are stepping up in offering free of charge or discounted counselling sessions framed into solid programs, as implemented by the English PFA. Unions also organise workshops, seminars as well as webinars to raise awareness and address a wider range of mental health issues. In general, players themselves believe clubs, as their employers, have a greater role to play. Fundamentally, they should hire staff with expertise in sport psychology and establish a culture that normalises seeking help for mental health struggles.

Overall, the message is clear: the responsibility for a footballer's mental health lies with the entire ecosystem – players, coaches, family, friends and most importantly, the clubs themselves. While limitations exist, overcoming them requires a collective effort of all

stakeholders. Only then can professional footballers truly thrive both on and off the pitch. The responsibility for addressing this crisis extends far beyond the individual player. It demands a collective transformation within the entire “ecological system” surrounding the athlete. This ecosystem encompasses the players themselves, their families and friends, the coaches and staff who guide them and the national and international footballing organisations that govern the sport. Each stakeholder plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of mental well-being. Furthermore, the athletes themselves must be empowered to prioritise their mental health. This involves recognizing the warning signs of potential issues, such as anxiety, depression, or struggles with performance pressure. Once identified, players must feel safe and supported when seeking help from readily available and confidential mental health professionals.

On the other hand, the onus cannot solely rest upon the shoulders of the players. The support system surrounding them needs to be robust and readily accessible. This is where the collective responsibility of other stakeholders comes into play. National and international footballing organisations, including federations and unions, have a vital role to play in establishing robust mental health frameworks and policies. Financial constraints often pose a significant hurdle particularly for developing countries. However, innovative approaches can be adopted. These could involve partnerships with mental health organisations, securing grants from national Olympic committees, or implementing creative fundraising initiatives. Developing standardised assessment tools is crucial for gathering reliable data on player mental health. This data can then be used to identify vulnerabilities and inform the creation of targeted interventions. Additionally, social media campaigns featuring prominent figures like current and former players can spark conversations and normalise help-seeking behaviour.

On the domestic level, national federations can establish dedicated working groups to develop comprehensive mental health policies. These policies should be informed by research, national and international best practices and consider the specific context of the domestic football landscape.

Furthermore, securing funding for clubs’ mental health initiatives is critical. Federations can explore various revenue streams such as governmental grants, partnerships with mental health organisations and inspiration from successful models.

At the club level, fostering a culture of open communication and trust between players, coaches, and staff is essential. This can be achieved through regularly scheduled feedback sessions that integrate team bonding activities with discussions on mental well-being. Tailoring the schedule to address the team’s specific needs on a monthly basis can create a safe and supportive environment where players feel comfortable discussing any mental health concerns they might be facing.

Clubs can further enhance their support by revising player contracts to explicitly include mental health as a club obligation. Therefore, covering documented costs for medication, treatment and rehabilitation deemed necessary by the club’s medical staff for mental health concerns. Additionally, maintaining confidential records of both physical and mental

health issues demonstrates the club's commitment to a holistic approach to player well-being. Integrating a dedicated sport psychologist into the technical staff can be a valuable asset. These specialists can offer individual sessions to help players manage pressure, anxiety and develop resilience. Participation in these sessions should be based on player choice, fostering a culture where seeking help is seen as a sign of strength rather than weakness.

In addition, the families and friends of players form another crucial pillar of support. By participating in mental health literacy workshops, they can equip themselves to recognize potential issues and encourage players to seek professional help. Cultivating a safe and supportive environment where players feel comfortable discussing their struggles is paramount.

Conclusively, the path forward needs a collaborative and culturally sensitive approach. By prioritising mental well-being alongside physical health, with collective efforts and adequate funding, the football community can create a transformative shift. We must move from a culture of silence to one of open communication and support.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Addressing Social Development Across Mega Sporting Events Lifecycle (*From Sportswashing to SROI*)



Pablo GALLEGO (Colombia & USA), Francesco Jian GUO (China),
Beatriz Loducca SIVIERI (Brazil & Italy)

The Context

Modern media narratives around mega sporting events have largely been influenced by issues that relate to nation states, human rights, and their relationship to sport. Criticism in these media narratives have accused host nations for using sports to obscure judgment surrounding these nations and internal issues relating to human rights abuses. The term “**sportswashing**”, which was coined back in 2015, has been the leading term used to describe how certain nation states have related to sports in recent years and have apparently abused this relationship between sports and politics.

While there are valid aspects in these criticism narratives, it has also been noteworthy that most of it has only been targeted to specific kinds of political regimes, which begged the question if the term sportswashing held any validity from an academic review and ultimately, if it had any relevance at all apart from a media narrative.

Initially, we rose to seek the understanding of what is sportswashing, question if it is properly defined, and comprehend what are the complications around the notion of this term. Yet, the vision of where this work would go evolved beyond those initial interest points. After understanding that:

- 1) Sportswashing can be defined as: “The use of sporting related activities by nation states to avoid criticism regarding controversial policies they enact”.
- 2) It is not a new dynamics in the world of sport, although it has only recently began to be addressed as “sportswashing”;
- 3) “Sportswashing” is part of a larger media narrative that mostly interests a small population—especially in the global North—and is frequently used in a targeted manner towards non-Western nations;
- 4) The spotlight around the term “Sportswashing”—in the context of mega event hosting—and how this argument is presented in the media actually might contribute to create distraction from more relevant issues such as human rights violations within host nations and diminish potential the demonstration of social development outcomes of hosting mega events;

And finally,

- 5) Sporting mega events show a demonstrated **gap** in investment, evaluation and reporting on safeguarding human rights and social development legacy in host nations, which ultimately contributes to the narrative around “sportswashing” and puts at risk the reputation of rights holders (and their commercial assets), host nations and stakeholders involved in the events.

The Gap

While major rights holders like FIFA and the IOC have been making greater commitments to uphold human rights and Social Development Goals (SDGs), a critical issue remains regarding the tangibility and legacy of these efforts. Through qualitative research with stakeholders within mega sporting event hosting and analysis of secondary data on the topic, it became clear that these institutions lack the tools and mechanisms to effectively demonstrate the impact of their events on social welfare and their relationship to human rights. This gap became the central focus of our project.

In this process of looking into the limitations sports institutions have in dealing with this issue, our project’s core question evolved into “**how can we evaluate and improve the social legacy of mega sports events in host communities?**”

The Bridge

From this point, we examined the concept of **Social Return on Investment** (SROI) and its application in sports. SROI is essentially a cost/benefit analysis, but it emphasizes understanding the social value and impact generated by organizations. We believe that an SROI tool—built within a framework bespoke for mega sporting event hosting—could be crucial for helping both sporting institutions and host nations demonstrate the benefits and social welfare outcomes produced by large sporting events throughout their entire lifecycle, preserving its reputation and safeguarding the commercial value of its most important assets: the major sporting events.

With that in mind and after extensive research on SROI, evaluative tools and frameworks, we endeavored into conceptualizing our own SROI tool that we believe could contribute towards creating a long-term solution catered to better approach human rights issues in hosting nations. The tool is based on a five-stage methodology:

- 1) Determining the Stakeholders & Expected Outcomes
- 2) Determining the Criteria & Baseline values of the model
- 3) Calculating the SROI
- 4) Evaluating Results
- 5) Reporting & Discussion

Such methodology to reach an SROI for a major sporting event takes into consideration the following factors and criteria below:

- 1) Human Rights have a universal value that can not be challenged under any given circumstance;
- 2) Social Development's value is heavily influenced by how well Human Rights are being adopted and applied in a country;
- 3) The impact of SROI in sports is not uniform, and the relevance of SROI also depends on the relevance of activities incurred. This means some results like impact on Education and Security will weigh in more than the impact on Leisure and Health under the context of major sporting events.

| CRITERIA | OBJECTIVES | KPIS |
|---|---|--|
| Education | Investment in local educational programs, use of event platforms for educational outreach, and legacy initiatives like constructing or upgrading educational facilities. | Number of local students engaged, types of educational activities implemented, and funding allocated to educational initiatives. |
| Health | Enhancement of local healthcare services and infrastructure, health promotion activities during the event, and long-term health initiatives post-event connected to sporting activity. | Accessibility improvements to healthcare, number of health-related events, and partnerships with local health organizations. |
| Income and Wealth Distribution | Contribution to reducing local income disparities, initiatives for wealth creation among underprivileged communities through the event, and equitable economic benefits distribution. | Changes in income inequality, job creation statistics. |
| Employment and Safeguarding of Work Conditions | Job creation statistics, quality and sustainability of jobs created around the event, adherence to labor standards, and worker safety measures during and after the event. | Number of job creation, types of jobs provided, and sustainability of jobs post-event. |
| Social Cohesion and Safety | Programs aimed at fostering community engagement and unity, safety enhancements in the community, and conflict resolution initiatives related to event impacts. | Number of programs made available, gender balance in programs, social strata balance, crime rates. |
| Housing and Living Conditions | Impact on local housing markets, initiatives to improve living conditions, and housing legacies such as the conversion of event facilities into affordable housing as done in previous events. | Housing projects initiated, improvements in living conditions. |
| Political Stability and Freedom | Impact of the event on local political conditions, contributions to democratic practices (e.g., community participation in event planning), and protection of individual freedoms during the event. | Levels of political engagement, protection of civil liberties. |
| Social Protection and Inclusion | Measures to protect vulnerable populations during the event, inclusion programs for marginalized groups, and legacies that enhance social welfare systems. | Accessibility to social services, number of programs available for marginalized groups. |

The sources of data on the criteria above to be used on the SROI calculation would be a balance between financial data collected from the event execution against leveraging existing data from reputable organizations, indexes, and tools in order to enhance its efficiency and credibility such as the United Nations (UN), Amnesty International, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and others, therefore building a robust and reliable metric.

During the process of our SROI tool we develop three different stages for calculation:

- 1) Criteria SROI: Where we calculate the SROI of each criteria we evaluate
- 2) Overall SROI: Where we calculate the total SROI with the combination of each Criteria SROI
- 3) Final SROI: Where we take the calculation of the Overall SROI and multiply it a Human Rights Metric that provides a weighted value

The final point of our tool in multiplying the SROI to a Human Rights Metric value is to demonstrate that if a hosting nation does not comply entirely to all human rights, then there can not be a true consideration of proper social investment and welfare regardless of the investment value and calculation presented by traditional SROI models.

The SROI conceptual tool proposed provides the greatest benefit for the sporting ecosystem if used on a framework of constant periodical evaluation, dialogue and cooperation between the stakeholders involved in the assessing, planning and delivery of mega sporting events—specially hosts and rights holders. To put this tool in this context is a way to guarantee that it is not used isolatedly, but part of an overarching collaborative strategy to guarantee fruitful and well-implemented investment in event hosting to achieve the desired social developments that starts from the host nation winning the bid to much beyond in the legacy of the event.

The Value

The SROI framework presented seeks to establish two key results. First, it enables event rights holders to work within a methodology that allows themselves as well as external observers to understand the values that mega sporting events create for society that reach far beyond the commercial values we know they already achieve. This creates a sense of accountability and transparency in reporting the final effects of investing in mega sporting events. It also can encourage nations to be more eager to host events if they can effectively predict and guide the expected social value of the event, as well as potentially look to reduce costs. This is especially important as the interest to host big events like the Summer and Winter Olympic games become more and more complex.

The second result is the significance of creating a measurable value for human rights in light of mega sporting events. The arguments and distance held by sporting institutions like FIFA during the 2010's amidst the 2018 Russia and 2022 Qatar World Cups showed a criticized relationship in the approach between FIFA and human rights. The indicator here conceptualized serves its purpose as a way to either evaluate a snapshot of a potential host

country at the time of bidding for a competition, evaluate these topics during the execution of the event, or understand from start to finish if and how human rights improved thanks to the hosting of the event, an approach focused on sport for development. The indicator could also be used as an evaluative method during bidding processes, informing rights holders of potential risks in awarding events to nations underprepared to tackle human rights concerns, as well as to better cooperate with hosts after events are in fact awarded. Other values related to the implementation of this framework are described as follows:

| Benefit | Priority |
|--|----------|
| Lowering the monitoring burden for stakeholders by coordinating results frameworks and key indicators with national, regional, and worldwide reporting and monitoring systems | High |
| Granting access to current global data sets for baseline information and enabling the usage of current data gathering instruments | Medium |
| Expanding access to resources for collaboration, support, and capacity building on tracking and assessing how athletic events affect socioeconomic development in host countries | High |
| Maximize the effectiveness of stakeholders and national and international sport “systems” to guarantee a significant social return on investment in sport | High |
| Encourage improved evidence-based policy and decision-making for all parties involved, followed by the promotion of result-based management techniques | Low |
| Preserving the prestige of major events and the international sports governing organizations that host them, since these events are their primary source of income. Through the events, these organizations may show that they are dedicated to real social development, which will increase their credibility and win over sponsors, stakeholders, and the international audience and community | Medium |

The Conclusion

Finally, this project takes from a theoretical analysis and shifts towards a hands-on approach in an attempt to conceptualize a tool within a framework of evaluation bespoke for sporting mega events. The interest is to increase transparency, foster greater collaboration between stakeholders as well as improve the legacy of mega sporting events by better evaluating and demonstrating their social impact during their entire life cycle. Such an approach can be used both to forecast expected outcomes as well as evaluate results as a way to help reduce the negative media narrative around nations and event hosting in relation to human rights and to help demonstrate the more important narrative that is: **mega sporting events are indeed a catalyst for the improvement of social welfare.**

BUILDING AND SELLING A UNIQUE GAME

How is Elite Women's Football Developing in Australia, Brazil, Mexico, and Japan?



Christopher CURULLI (Australia), Paola López YRIGOYEN (Mexico),
Lucas OAIGEN (Brazil & Canada), Takuma TOBINAGA (Japan)

Overview

Women's football growth in recent years has been exponential. However, since its inception, and more so during this period of strong momentum, questions on how the women's game can develop in an economically sustainable, and potentially unique way persist.

This project compares the development of elite women's football (defined as top-tier leagues and senior national teams) in Australia, Brazil, Japan, and Mexico. It investigates a diverse set of high-performing nations that are becoming increasingly relevant in the current landscape, especially considering that all have either hosted, are set to host, or have recently bid for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Analysis of these four case studies is supported by a benchmarking system that utilises figures from the FIFA Women's Football Benchmarking Report 2023 (FWBR23), FIFPro's "Raising Our Game" (ROGE) reports and surveys, as well as highly-ranked leagues and national teams. The objective of this targeted research design and comparative methodology is to analyse how elite women's football is being built and sold around the world and the specific ways it is developing and professionalising.

Research Design

This comparative case study focuses on how women's football is developing, alongside *what* this development entails. Therefore, it magnifies three pillars that shape the sport's development pathway (governance, competitions, and commercialisation), which link directly to the project's interdisciplinary requirements, incorporating humanities, management and legal aspects. This two-level framework consisting of an internal comparison between Australia, Brazil, Japan, and Mexico, and external benchmarking, aims to identify, contextualise and interpret many of the *why's* behind the differences and similarities in terms of professionalisation between this sample, and globally.

The paper begins with a background of elite women's football in each country and moves forward to describing and comparing them through a set of KPIs within each pillar. Finally, after detailed, extended, analysis of these KPIs, conclusions regarding governance, competitions, and commercialisation can be drawn, as well as localised recommendations acknowledging the specificities of each country.

Methodology

This project measures the development of elite women's football in terms of KPIs, across three main pillars (governance, competitions, and commercialisation), in four countries: (Australia, Brazil, Japan, and Mexico) as follows:

- Governance: Government and National Federation Support, Wage Pay Conditions, Member Protection and Safeguarding, and Administrative Structure.
- Competitions: Competitive Structure, Internationalisation, National Team Performance, Venues and Attendance.
- Commercialisation: Broadcasting, Social Media Presence, Sponsorships and Partnerships, Revenues.

Summary of Findings: Current Status and Trend Comparison Matrix

| ▼ Governance 4 | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| KPIs ↓ | AUS Status | AUS Trend | BRA Status | BRA Trend | JPN Status | JPN Trend | MEX Status | MEX Trend |
| Administrative Structure | Medium | Stable | Low | Up | High | Stable | Medium | Stable |
| Government and National Federation Support | Medium | Up | High | Up | Medium | Up | Medium | Up |
| Member Protection and Safeguarding | Medium | Stable | Low | Up | High | Up | Low | Up |
| Wage Pay Conditions | High | Stable | Low | Stable | Medium | Stable | Medium | Up |
| ▼ Competitions 4 | | | | | | | | |
| KPIs ↓ | AUS Status | AUS Trend | BRA Status | BRA Trend | JPN Status | JPN Trend | MEX Status | MEX Trend |
| Competitive Structure | Low | Up | Medium | Up | High | Up | High | Stable |
| Internationalisation | Medium | Stable | Medium | Up | Low | Stable | Medium | Up |
| National Team Performance | High | Stable | Medium | Stable | High | Up | Low | Stable |
| Venues and Attendance | High | Up | Medium | Up | Medium | Stable | High | Stable |

Commercialisation 4

| KPIs ↓ | AUS Status | AUS Trend | BRA Status | BRA Trend | JPN Status | JPN Trend | MEX Status | MEX Trend |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Broadcasting | Medium | Up | Medium | Up | Medium | Down | Medium | Down |
| Revenues | Medium | Up | Medium | Up | Medium | Stable | Medium | Stable |
| Social Media Presence | High | Up | Medium | Stable | Low | Stable | Medium | Up |
| Sponsorships and Partnerships | Medium | Up | Medium | Up | High | Stable | Medium | Up |

Overview of Conclusions

Internal comparison of these four nations reinforces how elite women's football is at a vastly different stage of development in every market. But what is clear is that, in one way or another, these markets are presenting something *unique*. From a governance perspective, wider societal and economic challenges require a greater emphasis on government support (as seen in Brazil), player safeguarding (as exemplified by Japan) and playing conditions (as Australia's CBA addresses). Additionally, the widespread differences in administrative and competition structure prove that, even when benchmarking globally, it remains difficult to make a normative judgement of the perfect model. This opens the door for creativity in the competitions realm that is simply not possible in more established sporting ecosystems. Finally, there are new challenges being faced in the commercialisation realm, which is experiencing growth within a fragmented broadcast landscape where social media influence is higher than ever before. Factors such as sponsorship revenues often exceeding broadcast income, evolving audience demographics (as seen in the differences between each nation), and the fact that almost one in three fans of women's football are new to the sport, suggests that the practice of bundling commercial deals still seen in countries like Australia, Brazil and Mexico may not be the way forward.

While each country has its own unique elements, perhaps the key takeaway from this report is that the current landscape presents a unique opportunity to make extraordinary change. With this in mind, this paper presents pillar-by-pillar conclusions that help clarify *how* the elite women's game can be managed in a unique and sustainable way.

Governance

The project's analysis of governance compiled a highly varied sample of strategies tackling different societal and organisational obstacles and, consequently, fostering development of women's football in different ways. From an organisational perspective, the immensely varying administrative structure of each league shows how women's football can be unique in some key areas and/or face different issues when compared to men's football such as:

- **Governance as a foundation for growth:** Women in sports have always yearned for permanence, but pragmatically and realistically, that foundation is governance. History has proven that women's football has periled because there have not been widely recognised working institutions ruling, promoting, and improving the game.
- **Connection with broader gender-based societal trends:** By acknowledging the intertwining relation between development and broader gender issues, this research suggests that lower gender equality in broader society correlates with higher direct government support for domestic women's football.
- **A lack of parity in the workforce:** While MA support is crucial, women's football must transition from being a socially responsible investment, to a strategic business investment – something that can be supported by the incorporation of specialised personnel (perhaps more women), to strategise and execute multifaceted and innovative plans.
- **Playing conditions require attention:** For football to be competitive and entertaining, sufficient conditions around issues such as wages and safeguarding must be in place. Borrowing “investments” notions, dignified and safe working conditions give certainty to players to remain in the industry and take it to another level.
- **The challenges of unbundling:** While growth within the industry and a focus on women's side economic growth might lead leagues to unbundle from MAs management, it does not guarantee success, particularly if the league is still bundled with the men's equivalent or is still not equipped in focus and employees to stand and generate revenues by itself.

Competitions

Analysis of competitions stressed that each nation is at relatively different stages of its evolution, particularly when comparing the current state of national teams and domestic leagues. Nevertheless, many similar challenges and potential growth areas exist, involving internationalisation, continental competitions and facilities. Another key theme that emerged was the closeness, or independence, of each nation from their existing men's structures. Specific takeaways from this pillar include:

- **No tried-and-tested solution, but independence has potential:** By detailing Japan's innovative approach to the WE-League, consisting of independent staff, clubs and commercial deals, this research points to the potential of a truly unique product emerging. While only three years since its inception, it is not yet possible to assess the true viability of this model, but the fact that many competitions KPIs already match global benchmarks is a promising sign.
- **Competitive foundations are in place, but not set:** On a broader level, analysis into the competitions pillar suggested that all four nations are reasonably developed, despite being so different in structure. However, all of them need to monitor the competitiveness of their leagues in order not to become uneven with just a

few notorious dominant clubs making results “certain”, and jeopardizing overall expectations and spectacle in women’s competitions.

- **Growing influence of confederations:** An area to watch in the future is the influence of burgeoning continental competitions. Which could potentially boost competitiveness in each country, while growing international attention and revenue for involved clubs.
- **Accommodating widespread attendance growth:** While all leagues are above the global attendance benchmark, there is still a need to keep pace, as these statistics are exponentially increasing, and it must be considered as attendances continue to grow, infrastructure needs to be appropriate for players, fans and broadcasters.

Commercialisation

Ultimately, it remains difficult to make a normative judgement on what would be better for women’s football development in terms of commercialisation, because economic markets are very dynamic. Nevertheless it is clear that commercialisation of the women’s game is starting to become a question of *how*, rather than *when*. KPIs of broadcasting, social media presence and sponsorships are central to this process and must work in tandem to create a sustainable product. The volume of broadcast exposure also influences the expansion of social media, with both working to generate greater revenues from sponsors. Specifically, this project emphasised:

- **The opportunities of a fragmented broadcast market:** Except for special events like the FWWC, terrestrial television ratings are yet to reach a point where the game can be commercialised in a traditional way. As such, the rise of prominence in paid streaming services addresses a relatively narrow and core target audience of ‘die-hards’, rather than free-to-air broadcasts which are linked to traditionally lucrative deals. These difficulties create opportunities; considering the fragmented broadcasting landscape it is emerging within, women’s football administrators are being forced to devise creative revenue-generating solutions.
- **Increased emphasis on a new online audience:** The same applies to social media and branding on a broader level, with the current landscape reflected by differing approaches between the likes of the bundled ‘A-Leagues,’ gendered Liga MX Femenil and Brasileirão Feminino and independent WE League. Ultimately, there is no perfect balance between independent and combined social media channels, but this research suggests that if a specific, defined audience can be successfully cultivated, higher engagement rates will follow.
- **Independent sale of sponsorships:** Finally, while independent sales of sponsorships and partnerships are still scarce, countries like Japan and the USA are setting a precedent in showcasing and selling unique elements of the game. Japan’s commercial link between the social issue of women’s empowerment and investment demonstrates a lesser-seen approach to selling a new competition that may appear high-risk, but high-reward.

Overview of Recommendations

The report concludes with country-by-country recommendations, which seek to inform tailor-made strategies that contribute to the sustainable development of elite women's football in each highlighted nation. These are detailed further in Chapter 8 of the full paper.

Australia

- More women as head coaches at club and national team level.
- Implementation of safeguarding policy at the elite level.
- A more truly independent league, structurally and commercially.
- Introduce cup competitions as a matter of urgency.
- Channelling national team success into the league product.

Brazil

- Increase transparency and strategic planning at federation level.
- Enhanced training and matchday facilities for league participants.
- Ensure fair wage conditions and professional contracts for all.
- Boost sponsorship and media coverage on a widespread level.
- Promote female leadership in football governance.

Japan

- Increase government support for WWC bids and empowerment initiatives.
- Grow internationalisation of the WE League.
- Expand broadcast rights to expose WE League to a wider audience.
- Maximising players' use of social media to grow profiles.

Mexico

- Seek government support for specific women's football initiatives.
- Foster increased independence from men's structures and effective inclusion of women in decision-making positions within institutions.
- Improve player labour conditions, introducing a minimum wage and a CBA.
- Maintain a competitive league aiming to improve results at the national team level and players' welfare.
- Capitalise on league popularity to grow broadcasting and sponsorship revenue.

SNOW AND HEAT

Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptive Actions in Outdoor Olympic Winter Sports



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The outdoor Olympic winter sports, and the Olympic Winter Games, cornerstones of international sport and cultural exchange, are facing an unprecedented challenge due to the effects of climate change. While sustainability has become a major pillar in the vision and long-term strategic plan of the International Olympic Committee and outdoor winter sports International Federations, there is still a significant gap in awareness regarding the survival of these sports under the serious impact of climate change. This comprehensive study examines the vulnerability of outdoor Olympic winter sports and proposes adaptive strategies to ensure their long-term viability and the survival of the Winter Olympics as a global event. Ultimately, without addressing the immediate threats posed by climate change, discussions about sustainable development become irrelevant if the sports themselves disappear.

This research fills gaps in the literature by incorporating the views of athletes and other stakeholders directly involved in winter sports, shifting the focus from general sustainability to specific sustainability adaptation to climate change. The study employs quantitative, qualitative, and explanatory approaches, collecting data through interviews and surveys with athletes and stakeholders, and contemplating this with secondary sources from existing literature to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

The study is chronologically structured into three main components, examining the historical, present, and future versions of the games and sports, while presenting practical adaptive actions through a multifaceted approach. A multidisciplinary approach is adopted, incorporating historical analysis, management strategies, and legal frameworks. The methodology involves a topic-related literature review, climate data analysis, case studies, and stakeholder insights gathered through surveys and interviews.

The historical analysis examines the Winter Olympic Games held in Salt Lake City 2002, Vancouver 2010, and Beijing 2022, assessing the evolving impact of climate change on these events. This analysis highlights the progression of environmental challenges over time and the measures taken in response.

Salt Lake – The Salt Lake Games did not encounter major climate issues during the event but as the first Olympic bid to be evaluated and awarded the Winter Olympics following the inclusion of environmental protection as an essential pillar of Olympism, it laid the foundation of the progress made to this day by organizations, federations and intergovernmental bodies involved in sport.

Vancouver – The event faced significant weather challenges due to unusually warm temperatures and a lack of natural snowfall, highlighting the necessity of additional adaptive measures.

Beijing – The recent games held in 2022 employed almost 100% artificial snow in outdoor venues, underscoring the increasing reliance on artificial measures to cope with climate variability.

Additionally, the analysis explores the evolution of legal interpretations and bidding processes, emphasizing how these documents have adapted to account for increased vulnerability due to climate change. It is worth noting that sustainability has always remained significant in the bidding documents but measures specifically addressing climate change are predominantly absent, echoing the motivation of the study.

In the section covering the present, interviews and surveys with major stakeholders were conducted to gather their viewpoints and experience on the impact of climate change on outdoor Olympic winter sports.

Targeting athletes for the survey, the study collects a total of forty-eight responses from athletes participating in international events, with surveys available in English, French, Chinese and Spanish. We chose athletes because, despite being at the heart of the problem and the first to suffer the consequences, our literature review revealed that their perspectives are often overlooked. The survey results reveal that the adverse impact of climate change on outdoor Olympic winter sports is widely recognized by most, notably as it has significantly affected the training and competition of athletes. However, many athletes are not fully aware of the long-term potential impact of climate change and the current decisions taken, indicating a need for increased education and publicity. At the same time, although respondents generally agree on the importance of sustainable development in mitigating the impact of climate change, there is no clear consensus on specific measures, such as the use of new technologies.

Interviews with diverse stakeholders from outdoor Olympic winter sports organizations and event organizers provided valuable insights into current policies and measures addressing climate change impacts. These discussions explored both existing and potential future financial and legal considerations related to climate adaptation in winter sports.

Subsequently, the study evaluated the preparedness of future host cities (i.e. Milan Cortina, Saudi Arabia's Trojena Winter Resort, set to host the 2029 Asian Winter Games, the French Alps) in facing climate-related challenges based on their own specificities.

Based on our comprehensive analysis and all the previous lessons learned, we arrived at the heart of our project, providing solutions. The recommendations aim to establish an adaptive framework for outdoor Olympic winter sports. This involves assessing legal landscapes, incorporating stakeholder input, harnessing technology, and ensuring rigorous monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations. We advocate for the implementation of legally binding standards to promote sustainable outdoor winter sports infrastructure.

Key Recommendations

Incorporate Climate Change Considerations: Sport governance regulations should be amended and legislation enacted purposely incorporating climate change as the centerpiece of decision-making processes.

Enhanced Climate Monitoring: Utilize advanced meteorological tools and data analytics for accurate, real-time weather forecasts and climate models to improve planning and response strategies.

Establish Environmental Standards Specific to the Sport Industry: Developing and implementing environmental standards tailored specifically to Winter Olympic Sports. Standards should incorporate all aspects of event planning and execution.

Sustainable Transport Solutions: Integrate public transit with event planning, promote electric vehicles, and optimize travel through strategic event clustering. Consider carbon offset programs for unavoidable travel.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engage local communities, athletes, and other stakeholders in planning and implementing adaptive measures. Strengthen education and publicity about the impacts of climate change on winter sports.

Legal and Policy Frameworks: Develop and enforce legally binding standards for sustainable outdoor winter sports infrastructure. Align with global climate treaties and ensure comprehensive environmental impact assessments are part of the event planning process.

This project offers a detailed analysis of the challenges posed by climate change to outdoor Olympic winter sports and proposes strategic adaptive measures to ensure their continuity amid the climate crisis. Through a practical policy framework that emphasizes technology, stakeholder collaboration, and robust legal standards, the study aims to contribute to the future of the games. Ensuring the survival of winter sports in the face of climate uncertainty is paramount, and this study provides keys for achieving this goal through informed proactive strategies.

BEYOND THE PODIUM

Investigating the Impact of the Legacy of the Summer Paralympic Games on Elite Para Sports Participation from Beijing to Rio (2008-2016)



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Executive summary

The Paralympic Games are often praised not only for the extraordinary athletic performances they showcase but also for their profound potential to leave lasting impacts. These impacts cover improvements in social perceptions, infrastructure, policies, and importantly, sports participation among people with disabilities. This study aims to investigate the Paralympic legacies and its potential impacts on elite para sports participation through case studies of the Paralympic Games hosted in Beijing (2008), London (2012), and Rio de Janeiro (2016). Our research question explores to what extent these Games successfully realized the proposed legacy objectives in para-sports participation, and what key factors influenced the success or shortfall in achieving these objectives post-event. In summary, this project seeks to provide a detailed analysis of the legacy impacts of the Beijing, London, and Rio Paralympics on elite para-sports participation. By examining the unique and common factors affecting these outcomes, our comparative study aims to offer valuable insights for future editions of the Games. We hope to highlight the ways Paralympic legacies can be achieved and maintained, fostering greater inclusion and participation in elite para-sports worldwide.

While each of the Paralympic Games made notable progress in promoting para-sports participation, the level of success varied greatly due to different social, political, economic, and infrastructural factors in each host country. By examining the legacy impacts in China, the United Kingdom, and Brazil, our research uncovers both similarities and differences in how these countries leveraged the Games to enhance elite para-sports. The project builds on this literature by offering a unique approach: unique not only because of its comparative analysis across three diverse contexts, but also because of its diverse authors. This project benefits from having native speakers from each of these countries, which greatly aids in accessing and understanding materials and interviewees from these regions, thereby enriching the research.

Our paper starts by establishing the historical context of para-sports in each country, providing a foundational understanding of the environment leading up to the Games. We then delve into the specific developments that occurred in the preparation for each edition of the Paralympics, followed by an analysis of the proposed legacies and the actual outcomes observed post-Games. This approach allows us to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of each event in fostering para-sports participation, supported by both primary and secondary research. Our research integrates three core interdisciplinary modules: Humanities, Management, and Law. From the Humanities perspective, we examine the history of the Paralympic Games and their legacy impacts. The Management module analyses organizational strategies when planning the legacies for the Games. Meanwhile, the Law module investigates legislative changes that improved access and support for para-athletes. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches the analysis but also highlights the multifaceted nature of legacy impacts. This project connects its findings to existing research on Paralympic legacies, disability studies, and sports policy. These connections show the importance of understanding legacy impacts from different viewpoints and using solid evidence. Balancing academic research with practical insights, our study is designed to offer both a thorough academic exploration and useful recommendations. Furthermore, our conclusions aim to provide practical guidance for future hosts of the Paralympic Games, helping them create lasting para-sports legacies.

In conducting the three case studies and comparing how successfully they delivered on their proposed legacy objectives several common issues were uncovered with respect to the success of their delivery long term. One of the common issues that arose was access to centralised facilities. In the research conducted looking at Beijing and Rio it was specifically highlighted how the development of centralised training facilities was in effect a barrier to those wishing to participate outside of those central locations. In the research conducted examining London many of the interviewees discussed the impact that an ineffective transportation network can have on disabled people being able to participate in sport at all levels including the elite level. While the ambition to deliver high level sporting facilities was a positive objective, delivering them in such a way that creates disparity in the level of access by athletes challenges their long-term effectiveness in increasing participation. Another common issue that was identified was the limitation of policy developments as a result of being undermined by wider government activity and policies more generally. There was a clear incompatibility in policies produced to increase participation with wider policies implemented that affect the lives of disabled people more generally in the countries studied. This was the case in London with the juxtaposition of the welfare reform policies in place at the time of introducing the legacy policy objectives for disabled people in sport prior to the 2012 Paralympics. There was also the issue where the policies introduced were not delivered upon due to activities of the government, such as was the case with corruption in the distribution of funding promised as part of the new athlete funding programme introduced in Brazil. This again is an example of limits being placed on the capacity of the introduced initiatives to have a positive long-term effect on increasing participation of para-athletes at the elite level.

The proposed objectives were underpinned with arguably good intentions but the ways in which these initiatives were planned to be introduced failed to account for social, financial and structural barriers that existed in wider society in all three countries studied and arguably hindered the participation of disabled people in their communities at large. This in parallel impacts their ability to participate in sport at all levels including those participating at the elite level. The need for clear, structured and detailed planning that specifically addresses the participation of disabled people in sport that is underpinned with clear leveraging activities was identified throughout this study. There is also a clear need for the setting of the legacy objectives to be delivered in a time frame that gives those who are responsible for delivering them adequate time to prepare to do so, particularly at the club and regional level. There needs to be clear accountability attributed to groups that are tasked with ensuring the delivery of the various legacy objectives also and that their progress is monitored and recorded to truly ensure their long-term viability. These are some of the considerations we propose future organisers of the Games should consider and can adopt to ensure that they deliver a genuinely impactful legacy programme that promotes participation in para sports on a long-term basis in the aftermath of the event itself.

BEYOND THE GAME

A Stakeholder Analysis of Match-Fixing in Brazilian Football



Felipe AIRES (Brazil), Arjun KHANNA (India), Alice YOON (South Korea)

This paper is a stakeholder analysis of sports betting-related match-fixing in men's professional football in Brazil and contributes to the ongoing discourse on the need for Brazil to take concrete steps, both proactively and reactively in tackling this issue. The commercialization of sports betting in Brazil coupled with increasing controversies of match-fixing has cast a negative spotlight on Brazil and reinforced the need for the footballing ecosystem to coordinate and collaborate efforts to combat match-fixing. This explanatory and exploratory research employed a mixed approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys and in-depth interviews with relevant off-the-pitch stakeholder groups were conducted to explore the potential gaps within match-fixing in Brazilian football and address what can be improved to combat the issue.

From the perspectives of each stakeholder, the researchers were able to analyze their viewpoints on the current scenario, the role they play and actions that must be taken to mitigate match-fixing in Brazil. As the current situation is evolving on a daily basis, the research also analyzes what steps Brazil is taking and provides holistic recommendations for all stakeholders to supplement their efforts.

Chapter 1: Betting, Sports Betting, and Match-Fixing

This chapter delves into the historical and contemporary dynamics of betting, sports betting and match-fixing. Betting has evolved from informal wagers to a sophisticated, multi-billion-dollar industry. Football's relationship with betting has deep historical roots, becoming more intertwined and controversial over time. Scandals, such as players endorsing bookmakers or engaging in betting activities, highlight the pervasive gambling culture in professional football. Match-fixing, a longstanding issue in sports, dates back to ancient Greek and Roman times, where athletes and officials were penalized for corruption. Modern match-fixing involves manipulating outcomes for betting profits, posing legal and ethical challenges.

Highlighting the various forms of match-fixing, being betting-related, non-betting-related and spot fixing, this chapter examines the existing global regulatory framework from

governing bodies, human rights groups and investigative bodies (FIFA, IOC, Council of Europe, Interpol, UNODC), such as the Macolin Convention, FIFA statutes and UNODC initiatives particularly in Brazil to identify actions Brazil can implement in their ecosystem to combat match-fixing.

Chapter 2: In a Brazilian Context

The principal aim of this chapter was to contextualize the betting scene in Brazil and justify the choice of the country as the study element selected by the group. The historical context of betting in Brazil was presented, and three main cases were selected for detailed analysis: the Sports Lottery Mafia, which took place in the 1980s; the Whistle Blowing Mafia, in 2005; and Operation Maximum Penalty, which was the most recent scandal to occur in Brazilian men's football. Following the detailed examination of these cases, the group proceeded to elucidate the ramifications for the sport from both a legal and a managerial perspective, culminating in the present moment, where it was imperative to afford visibility to the perspectives of the off-field stakeholders.

The existing legal framework in Brazil was presented in its entirety, including all relevant complexities. The subchapter addressed aspects such as transparency, sporting integrity, and the protection of athletes and competitions, highlighting the relevant laws, regulations, and entities responsible for safeguarding Brazilian football. The presentation of management concepts was informed by the preceding contextual analysis. The Blue Ocean concept was employed to illustrate the market opportunity that Brazil presents in the context of leadership in the fight against match-fixing, and to justify the choice of the country as the object of study. This was followed by a SWOT analysis, which facilitated an understanding of the external and internal environment.

Chapter 3: Stakeholder Management in Betting-Related Match-Fixing

Chapter 3 summarizes key findings from the primary research of the paper, analyzing data from the quantitative surveys and reflecting on responses collected from the qualitative interviews. It thereby explores the roles, responsibilities, and perspectives of various off-pitch stakeholders in Brazilian football, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts and the importance of integrating different stakeholder perspectives into comprehensive prevention strategies against match-fixing. The seven stakeholder groups studied are: 1) Governing bodies; 2) Sports betting companies; 3) Football leaders (i.e. leagues, clubs); 4) Data providers; 5) Third-party sports companies (i.e. agencies, sports marketing firms); 6) Academics; and 7) Legal advisors.

Through the qualitative interviews, 7 stakeholders—each representing a stakeholder group—expressed their perceptions of their own roles in the fight against match-fixing, summarized below.

| Stakeholder Represented | Perception of Role |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Governing Bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of integrity in sport |
| Sports Betting Companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First line of defense in detecting and alerting match-fixing • Communication of suspicious activity • Active engagement in educational initiatives |
| Football Leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on continuous education for players • Protection from lack of knowledge to commit match-fixing |
| Data Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with other stakeholders involved in sports betting • Active engagement in educational initiatives |
| Third-Party Sport Companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of image and reputation of athletes |
| Academics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive research and analysis of match-fixing • Key informant with authorities in implementation of best practices and public policies |
| Legal Advisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of suspicious activity in sports betting • Disciplinary action for any involved in match-fixing |

Through the quantitative surveys, each stakeholder group's overall sentiment towards various aspects of match-fixing in Brazilian football were gauged. In the extracted table below, each stakeholder rated how responsible he / she considered each stakeholder group to be in the fight against match-fixing, with 1 being most responsible to 6 being least responsible. On average, governing bodies (GB) were rated to be the most responsible while legal advisors (LA) were rated to be the least responsible.

| | GB | FL | BC | DP | TP | LA |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Governing Bodies | 2.7 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 4.3 |
| Betting Companies | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.7 |
| Football Leaders | 1.5 | 3.5 | 2.3 | 5.0 | 4.3 | 4.5 |
| Data Providers | 2.3 | 2.5 | 5.0 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 4.8 |
| Third-Party | 3.1 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Academics | 2.0 | 2.3 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 3.7 | 5.0 |
| Legal Advisor | 2.4 | 1.4 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 6.0 |
| Average | 2.4 | 2.7 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 4.7 |

Chapter 4: Final Thoughts

In this chapter, the information from the previous chapters is synthesized to offer actionable recommendations. The chapter is divided into three sections, each focusing on specific strategies to enhance the fight against match-fixing: legal and regulatory measures, awareness and promotion, and data and technology.

Legal and Regulatory Measures

Our analysis revealed that the majority of stakeholders don't believe in the effectiveness of Brazil's current regulatory framework in combating match-fixing, and support incorporating an international treaty like the Macolin Convention. We also advocate for its integration by Brazil and to strengthen their existing legal initiatives with the following actions:

1. Adopt an Integrity Policy and Create an Integrity Unit

Establishing a foundational policy to promote integrity and combat match-fixing and appoint an Integrity Officer and a specialized unit to lead initiatives and handle allegations independently.

2. Establish a Robust Legal Framework

The CBF has called for adopting the Macolin Convention and taken steps in its new betting legislation which inter alia mandating a betting monitoring, reporting and taxation regime for licensed operators. Revenue from taxes should fund monitoring lower leagues, investing in technology, and awareness campaigns. We also recommend implementing integrity-related clauses in labor contracts for players, referees, and officials directly imposing responsibility to abstain from manipulating the integrity of and/or be involved in any form betting-related activity related to football matches, competitions or any related football activities.

3. Reporting and Whistleblower Mechanism

Create user-friendly, anonymous reporting channels (websites, email, postal address, mobile app) across the ecosystem and ensure seamless information sharing amongst stakeholders and law enforcement agencies.

4. Preliminary Investigations and Adjudicatory Proceedings

Implement due processes in conducting investigations and adjudicatory proceedings including training responsible investigation and disciplinary bodies to collect evidence thoroughly, prepare reports and conduct international seminars for discussing best practices and develop capabilities in handling match-fixing cases.

Awareness and Promotion

The objective of this subchapter of recommendations is to raise awareness and promote the subject matter through two key pillars: The dissemination of knowledge and the facilitation of communication. These concepts are interrelated and require a feedback loop to effectively address match-fixing in Brazilian men's football. In the realm of education, while some clubs have established collaborative relationships with data and betting companies, as well as the support of the CBF in disseminating information to clubs in the A, B, C, and D series through their respective coaches and captains, the group deliberated on potential avenues for optimizing the awareness and promotion process. To this end, a single action based on five pillars was presented with the intention of optimizing reach, penetrating difficult environments and ensuring efficiency with different stakeholders. The five pillars of gamification, personalisation, artificial intelligence, updating and involvement were presented as a means of optimizing the awareness and promotion process.

From the perspective of communication, a comprehensive media strategy was presented, taking into account clearly defined objectives, target audiences, communication channels, and strategic and commercial partners. It was acknowledged that the message must be conveyed in a variety of ways and through a range of channels, including social networks and email marketing strategies for lead generation. The strategy also incorporates contemporary search engine optimisation (SEO) techniques, which are supported by clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) that facilitate the process and enhance its efficacy. The objective is to ensure the integrity of sporting activities while promoting tangible actions and a sense of collective responsibility among all stakeholders.

Data and Technology

1. Partnership with data providers

Collaboration with data providers is crucial for combating match-fixing in Brazilian football. Data providers supply essential betting data and integrity services to various stakeholders, including governing bodies and federal police. To strengthen these collaborations, it is recommended to establish a regular or special task force unit focused on cross-stakeholder partnerships and communication. This unit would ensure continuous and effective interconnection among stakeholders in Brazilian football, moving beyond ad hoc collaborations.

2. Alignment with latest technology and research

As digitalization advances, stakeholders in Brazilian football must stay updated and integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into their operations. Sportradar reports that 74% of suspicious activity on betting platforms is detected by AI, underscoring the importance of this technology in preventing match-fixing. Stakeholders not directly involved in technology development, such as academics, can benefit by collaborating with researchers studying advanced algorithms and anomaly detection technologies. Engaging with international studies can provide valuable insights and foster knowledge sharing with counterparts facing similar challenges.

Conclusion

The football ecosystem is nuanced and complex—with an added layer of complexity through match manipulation, the issue at hand is far from trivial. At a larger scale, the sport industry, and specifically the sports betting industry, is heavily affected in operational, financial, and legal ways. Brazil—a football nation by history and culture—has experienced precedent cases of match-fixing scandals, is experiencing ongoing cases of match-fixing scandals currently, and will experience future scandals if the situation is not assessed and prevented effectively.

From the research, the team was able to understand the perspectives of seven stakeholder groups to take a holistic approach in addressing match-fixing in Brazilian football. In the end, a three-pronged recommendation strategy revolving around legal and regulatory, awareness and promotion, and data and technology was devised to provide insight into potential solutions to combat match-fixing. As the project comes to a close, the team recognizes that there is deviance in the perspectives of on-pitch actors and off-pitch actors, and there is not a single approach that is a one-stop-shop to fix the issue. Multiple stakeholders will have to be engaged in a complex ecosystem, collaborating in an interconnected and digital world, to look beyond the game and combat match-fixing at all costs before it becomes a problem that is beyond repair.



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