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CENTRE FOR  
SPORTS STUDIES



by CIES Education

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

## Executive Summaries



### *Presentation of dissertations Class of 2019-2020*

In partnership with



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## Programme

- 08:45 – 09:00 **Welcome** - Prof. Denis OSWALD, CIES Director
- 09:00 – 09:45 ***Once It's Up There, There is No Taking it Back: How Can Football Stakeholders Make Use of Social Media in their Combat Against Racism?*** - Kevin GOCO (Philippines), Evita SCHIPPERS (The Netherlands), Muhammed Ziyaad DESAI (Botswana), Han Bits Yi (South Korea)
- 09:45 – 10:30 ***Para-Ganda, Cyborgification, and Ambiguous Success in Parasport: An Analysis of a Complex Relationship*** - Serge Arnaud ASSUME ASSUME (Gabon), Grégoire DAYDE (France), Stephanie HOLMES (Australia/Italy), Mahmoud QARAQRA (Palestine)
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Break**
- 11:00 – 11:45 ***They Are Not Referees But They Are Blowing The Whistle: How Are Whistleblowers Impacting The Integrity of Sporting Governance?*** - Sara BILALI (MOROCCO), Yash CHUGH (India), Igor MARKOVIC (Italy/Bosnia/Croatia/Serbia), Taizo UCHIDA (Japan)
- 11:45 – 12:30 ***Digitalization in Sports Organizations: Technological Trends and Innovations Driving Fan Engagement outside the Stadium*** - Sanaa DARAWSHA (Israel), Rishab KAPUR (India), Alexandre MATSUO (France/Japan), Caitkie Ranchhordas VAGHJEE (Mauritius)
- 12:30 – 14:15 **Lunch Break**
- 14:14 – 15:00 ***Balancing Books and Balls: An Athlete-centric Approach to Women's Football*** - Bonnie MUGABE (Rwanda), Tyson SCOTT (Australia), Erika URBINA ECHEVERRÍA (Costa Rica), Bruno VAN HELLEMONT (Belgium)
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- 17:00 – 17:45 ***The Globalized Game: Is FIFA's National Team Eligibility Criteria for Players Up to date with the World's Reality?*** - Luis BREVÉ MAZZONI (Honduras/USA), Pacôme GOÏC (France), Violet JUBANE (Zimbabwe), Gustav Maximo SALVESTRINI RASKOV (USA/Argentina/Italy)
- 17:45 – 18:00 **Closing remarks** - Prof. Denis OSWALD, CIES Director

# *Once It's Up There, There is No Taking it Back: How Can Football Stakeholders Make Use of Social Media in their Combat Against Racism?*



Kevin GOCO (Philippines), Evita SCHIPPERS (The Netherlands),  
Muhammed Ziyaad DESAI (Botswana), Han Bits Yi (South Korea)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Problem Statement and Background Information

Racism is a prominent and persistent problem in today's society that has been mirrored in the world's most popular sport – football. It has become more evident over the last decade that the problem is no longer limited to stadiums alone. A lot more can be visible through the medium of social media. Social media has amplified racist behavior in many ways, or at the very least, facilitated it. Scholars argue that racist incidents have increasingly migrated online-based mostly on the anonymity of social media users, as it allows them to feel invisible, empowered, safe, and protected.<sup>1</sup> In their 2018-2019 Annual Report, UK based anti-racism body, Kick it Out, highlighted that reported racism incidents increased by 12% compared to the previous year - from 520 to 581. Moreover, 27% of the latter figure was online racist incidents.<sup>2</sup> Also, FARE, a network of individuals and organizations that tackle inequality and discrimination in Europe, showed a 47% increase in online forms of discrimination from 2018 to 2019.

### Purpose of the Research Study

To facilitate a coordinated stance involving social media as the medium, the purpose of this study is to research the links between these social media platforms and racism in the world of football. The overall objective is to establish the challenges faced by football stakeholders in their attempt to combat the problem both in and through social media, thereby inherently recognizing the gaps for improvement. Without this overall understanding from different respective parties, the efficacy of stakeholders to implement positive changes is stifled.

<sup>1</sup> Kilvington, Daniel., & Price, John. 2017. "Tackling Social Media Abuse? Critically Assessing English Football's Response to Online Racism." *Communication and Sport Advance*

<sup>2</sup> *Discrimination Reports" Kick It Out Annual Review 2018/2019 (2019): 28*  
<https://www.kickitout.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=29d7d2f3-9889-4cfb-9d91-cd299b10bbcc>

## Main Arguments

Various stakeholders within the football pyramid have made their best attempts to remedy the problem, mainly through public relations communications campaigns. However, these campaigns look to be disjointed, and it appears that the respective stakeholders are operating in their silos, drowning each other out with different messages. Bearing in mind the fragmented nature underpinning the current remedies, one could argue that perhaps the first step needed to tackle the problem of racism is to create a coordinated stance throughout the football pyramid. Considering the demonstrated importance played by the 'online world' in contemporary times, this study propagates the idea that the palpably powerful social media platforms can be used as tools of unity for this coordinated stance rather than means of division. The most recent and clear example of social media's power as a force of good is the current social momentum globally in the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) movement. However, activism on social media should be taken with a grain of salt, as recent racial tensions across the world have highlighted the examples of "performative allyship," where organizations, clubs, leagues, and players ride the bandwagon effect in support of #BLMmovement for improved branding, public relations, and social standing. In many of these organizations, there are gaps and clear areas of improvement when they tackle discrimination in organizations and activities.

## Methods of Data Gathering and Analysis

A mixed-methods approach was used to collect the data for this study. To get a better understanding of the subject matter, the authors surveyed existing literature in online news articles, academic journals, and books on the intersection of racism, football, and social media across the three disciplines of humanities, management, and law. The research also interviewed a total of nine parties deemed relevant to get a practical perspective on the readings. As the study intended to answer the question of how football stakeholders can make use of social media to combat racism, there was a need to identify relevant stakeholders in the first place. As such, respective parties were categorized into primary and secondary stakeholders, where primary stakeholders would account for those within the football pyramid. On the other hand, secondary stakeholders were those that are not necessarily within the football pyramid but may provide useful insights to this problem.

As primary stakeholders, the following parties were identified:

- Football Governing Body: UEFA
- Football Association: English FA
- Football Club: AC Milan

These interviews were supplemented by further insights from the following secondary stakeholders:

- Football anti-racism body: Kick it Out
- Sports anti-racism body: Sports Against Racism Ireland

- Scholar in the field of football, racism, and social media: Dr. Daniel Kilvington, Senior Lecturer in Media, Communication, Cultures at Leeds Beckett University, UK.
- Scholar in a different industry (fashion): Professor Emanuela Prandelli, LVMH Associate Professor of Fashion and Luxury Management, Bocconi University, Italy
- Legal Expert: Professor Pierre Cornu, President, International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) Foundation; Judge, Swiss Court of Appeals.
- Technological Platform: Signify Group Limited

In addition to the interviews, an online survey was administered to gain a holistic global perspective of football fans and the general public. Before issuing the study, the researchers realized that the results could be biased towards the countries of domicile of the authors, but an attempt to get a global perspective was made. The survey returned a total of 368 responses from 59 different countries.

## Overview of Findings

Five (5) key points were evident in the findings of this study. These were as follows:

- (1) What constitutes as racism is not the same all over the world.
- (2) Football stakeholders are unaware of what role they should each be playing.
- (3) The ignorance, as mentioned above, has led to a duplication of efforts and operation of these stakeholders in silos.
- (4) Education is seen as half of the solution.
- (5) A uniform sanctioning system and a body that monitors racist behavior online together with all key actors in the football eco-system is potentially the other half.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study suggested the following recommendations:

*Create a Centralized Anti-Discriminatory Body – Football Anti-Discriminatory Observatory*  
*Rationale: Addressing findings number 1 and 5*

As the concept of racism has different connotations around the world, the study proposes a uniform sanctioning body called the Football Anti-Discriminatory Observatory (FADO), that will monitor online all discriminatory language coming from all actors in the football eco-system. These actors will include all Confederations affiliated with FIFA, FIFA itself, direct relationships with FIFA member Associations, social media companies, representation from professional football sector (FIFPRO, professional football leagues, and club associations), civil society (Fare Network, KIO), and a technology company (Signify) that will develop the software and data monitoring systems which can be used in a more proactive approach in dealing with racism online. FADO will primarily serve the same role as the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in terms of monitoring and sanctioning racist and discriminatory comments both online and offline.

## Educate Stakeholders through Affiliated Foundations and Civil Society Groups

*Rationale: Addressing finding number 4*

When it comes to tackling racism, the study believes sanctions are necessary, but a more effective solution is to educate fans and stakeholders coupled with tough sanctioning. It, therefore, recommends that FIFA can do education programs of schools, communities, and member associations on racism and discrimination through the FIFA Foundation. The FIFA Foundation will launch in 2020 a FIFA Football in Schools Program together with FIFA Forward and its Member Associations. It is argued that this can be an excellent opportunity for FIFA to also teach youth in communities in its member about racism and what is acceptable behavior online following FADO protocols and definitions. The role of education can also fall on to groups like Kick it Out, and FARE, whose extensive network of civil society organizations aimed at stamping out discrimination in football, can help conduct education programs across the entire development pyramid.

## Institutionalize FIFA's Anti-Discriminatory Strategies as Good Governance Criteria for FIFA Forward Funding Support

*Rationale: Addressing findings number 2 and 3*

The study suggests that stakeholders' role can be made clear by incorporating the tackling of racism as a requirement under the FIFA Forward solidarity and financial assistance program with member associations. Currently, FIFA has a well-crafted "FIFA Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Anti-Discrimination." However, it is not compulsory for FIFA's member associations to follow. To incentivize member associations to adopt the strategies outlined in FIFA's Good Practice Guide, the study recommends a required percentage of FIFA Forward funding is allocated to develop within member associations any of the five pillars that tackle discrimination. This can be done similarly as to how FIFA Forward guidelines mandate a portion of its funding goes to youth competitions and Women's Football. It also suggests that a part of FIFA Forward funding should be placed into building the member association's capacity to adopt technology to monitor and report online racial abuse to a centralized agency like FADO.

## Use Technology & Social Media to Combat Racism

*Rationale: Addressing all the findings*

The study's proposed centralized anti-racism body, whether it is an independent or regulatory body inside FIFA, needs a robust technological platform to flag and monitor racism. One possible solution is the service offered by a data technology company called "Signify." Through its software, Signify can flag and report racist accounts and groups to clubs. They can also identify potentially problematic matches based on the noise and comments made by fans and their social media networks before a game. Their proprietary

software called “Threat Matrix,” can map out a system of racist fans and even recognize racially offensive pictures and images. The company can create detailed analytical studies of racist activity in social media to use clubs, leagues, and federations who can then sanction members who are tagged in these reports for online racist behavior. The intentions of the study are not to endorse the services of Signify. Instead, the point is that the technology already exists for a centralized agency such as the proposed FADO to make use of to monitor and sanction online racist abuse. Therefore, our research findings suggest that FIFA Forward funding can be used to capacitate member associations of FIFA who wish to avail of such technological service. If a group like Sports Radar can use technology to take preventative and proactive measures to stop match-fixing across football, in a similar manner to a FADO, FIFA, or any agency powered by technology the same to Signify can use social media content to combat racism.

## Para-Ganda, Cyborgification, and Ambiguous Success in Paraspport: An Analysis of a Complex Relationship



Serge Arnaud ASSUME ASSUME (Gabon), Grégoire DAYDE (France),  
Stephanie HOLMES (Australia/Italy), Mahmoud QARAQRA (Palestine)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“When you look how far we have come in the last 30 years, just imagine where we can go next.”*

This statement from Mrs. Caz Walton (former UK Paralympic champion in wheelchair basketball, swimming and fencing) reflecting back on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) perfectly illustrates how the Paralympic Movement has been evolving since its creation in the late 1940s by Sir Ludwig Guttmann and the foundation of the IPC on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1989. The Movement has grown from a rehabilitation and social re-integration vehicle for spinal cord injured soldiers to a globally well-established organisation for disability sport.

The Paralympic Games, as the flagship event of the IPC have equally gained importance throughout the years by reaching heights in media exposure (if we compare a cumulative audience of **4.1 billion** people during Rio 2016 versus **3.8 billion** during London 2012) and commercial attractiveness (revenues of **EUR 19,977,822** from Rio 2016 versus **EUR 10,294,024** for London 2012).

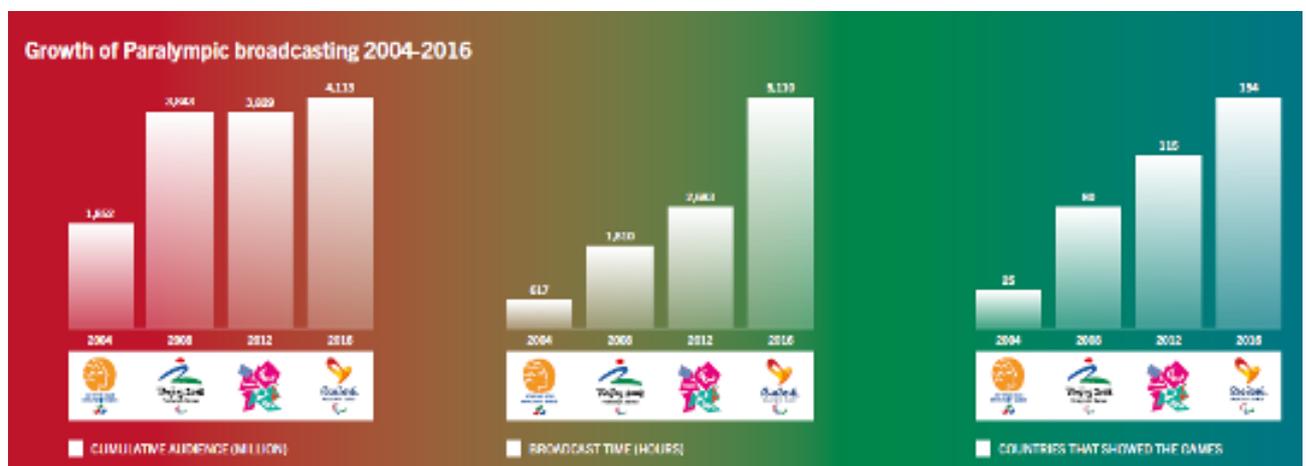


Figure 1. Growth of Paralympic Broadcasting 2004-2016 (Source: International Paralympic Committee: Annual Report 2016)

Such appealing figures have undoubtedly nurtured a growing interest from nations to invest in Paralympic sport for success in the international sporting scene as well as storytelling on their national agendas and/or policies regarding inclusion of people with disabilities. Ian Brittain, a UK Researcher in disability sport, introduced a new term in that regard: Para-ganda. Which can be defined as, ***national propaganda through Paralympics***.



Figure 2. Rio 2016 Paralympic Games Key Facts (Source: International Paralympic Committee: Annual Report 2016)

The concept of Para-ganda in the framework of our research encompasses other concepts, with specific focus on ***ambiguous success*** and ***cyborgification***.

We define success as ambiguous because, in the Paralympic Games, nations define success differently as a result of varying priorities; success can purely mean winning at all costs (via doping, corruption etc.), have rehabilitative purposes, or to change existing negative societal norms about the disabled. Cyborgification relates to the connection between the human and the machine. An intense use of assistive technology can influence the para-athlete's performance, giving them an unfair advantage over their competitors.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our project seeks to answer several necessary questions to understanding nations' soft power strategies in the Paralympic Games. We, however, focus on one main question that is the goal of our project.

### Main Question:

*How is technology and cyborgification being used as a soft power strategy to achieve success at international parasport events, specifically the Paralympic Games?*

The topic also raises the following sub-questions that we are aiming to respond:

- a. To what extent is technology acceptable in parasport?
- b. Is cyborgification of para-athletes the future of the Paralympic Games?
- c. From ethical and legal standpoints, is the cyborg athlete still considered as a human being?
- d. Is cyborgification good for competitive balance? Is cyborgification similar to doping?
- e. What is the importance of data management in the high performance of parasport?
- f. How can we define success, is it ambiguous?
- g. How can success be redefined in the context of the Paralympic Games?

## RESEARCH AIM

The objective of our research is to analyse what we perceived as a complex relationship in the future developments of Parasport by:

- a. Exploring key concepts including classification, cyborgification, definition of success and soft power.
- b. Examining how the Paralympics are being used as a tool for certain governments to promote their national agenda (i.e. Paralympic Propaganda or “Para-ganda”), and how this plays out through the media.
- c. Analysing the shift of the Paralympic movement from one concentrated on the cultural aspect to a performance driven approach highlighting the pivotal role technology would play.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our research was both qualitative and quantitative. In this section, we aim to describe different sources used throughout the paper and we explain our choices. We circulated a survey to the National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) worldwide. The original questionnaire in English was translated in French, Arabic and Spanish to obtain a wider response rate. We obtained a response from 47 NPCs. Our goal was to understand their functioning (governance, financing, relations with their stakeholders), among topics mentioned in our literature review, as well as potential, if not already existing, programs and investments on high-tech sporting equipment and technology. Survey results will be discussed below.

We conducted several interviews with various stakeholders within and outside the Paralympic Movement. These include former athletes, representatives of the IPC, Paralympics New Zealand, the French NPC, Paris 2024 Organising Committee, The Agitos Foundation and Ottobock staff. We chose case studies that we believed to be relevant to cover key aspects of our research. Disability sport was researched in the following countries: France, China, USA, New Zealand, Ghana, and Kenya. These countries were chosen as they provided interesting insights to gain a further understanding about the topic.

We found an extensive list of journal articles from specialised authors on disability and parasport. Books, blog and press releases, interview transcripts, and official websites articles were also an important source of information for our study.

## PARA-GANDA, CYBORGIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF SUCCESS IN PARASPORT

We analysed the implications cyborgification has in parasport from different angles: economics, law, ethics, and health of the athletes. While the IPC promotes the centrality of the athlete as firstly a human being in parasport, the use of technology remains accepted provided it is accessible and is enabling sporting performance, rather than enhancing it. This consequently could lead to doping, in this case techno-doping. If we compare the economic situation between developed and developing countries, the “Leg War” (the race to acquire state-of-the-art equipment to increase winning probabilities) creates a gap between these nations.

Our research explores different strategic approaches adopted by nations regarding their vision of success in Parasport. Below are examples of two cases analysed.



In France, the project **Sciences 2024**<sup>1</sup> was developed in September 2018 for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It utilises the 13 top engineering schools, 2 research centres and 1 university to succeed in the overall objective to design technological improvements that will allow France to win at least 80 medals in the Olympics (40 sports) and 15 gold medals in the Paralympics (20 sports). The estimated budget of the project amounts 20 million euros<sup>2</sup>.

The French political authorities, by backing the **Sciences 2024** project, want to maximise their benefits from hosting these Games, both in and outside of the tournament. The project also involves 3 ministries: Sports, Defence, and Higher Education & Research. There will be 500 projects delivered in total, with a focus on Paralympic athletes, not only to enhance their performance during the Games, but to also give them a better quality of life. As the project is still ongoing, we could not evaluate its success when submitting our research paper.



Launched by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) in 2004, the **Paralympic Military Program (PMP)** uses Paralympic sport opportunities to support wounded, ill and injured American service members and veterans, including those with amputations, traumatic brain injuries and visual impairments.

Additionally, this program is a way for the USA to continue to improve its elite performances by increasing the number of veterans in their Paralympic teams. In fact, the proportion of veterans in the US team has steadily increased in the Summer Paralympics from 7.51% in Beijing, to 12.4% in Rio. When we read between the lines, the government implements domestic Para-ganda by suggesting that through risking your life you will be rewarded

<sup>1</sup> Official website of the programme “Sciences 2024,” [sciences2024.polytechnique.fr](https://sciences2024.polytechnique.fr), Accessed June 10, 2020, <https://sciences2024.polytechnique.fr>.

<sup>2</sup> Sciences-2024, les grandes écoles dans la quête des médailles olympiques [https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/sport/sciences-2024-les-grandes-ecoles-dans-la-quete-des-medailles-olympiques\\_2033705.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/sport/sciences-2024-les-grandes-ecoles-dans-la-quete-des-medailles-olympiques_2033705.html). Accessed on July 8, 2020.

with additional benefits and other opportunities to defend your nation. It promotes the culture of militarisation through parasports where sporting prowess is averted away from the reality of physical disability caused in conflict.

Certain concepts are expressed through programs such as PMP. For example, when individuals risk their life to defend their country, returning alive will grant you hero status, and by returning injured you will be able to become an elite athlete with all the funds and opportunities provided. This gives you the chance to represent in another kind of “battlefield”. Over 2,000 athletes are annually served by the PMP, with grants being \$13 million USD per year. As stated by Nico Marcolongo, senior manager of **Operation Rebound**<sup>3</sup> at the Challenged Athletes’ Foundation, *“If all things are equal, it’s harder for a non-veteran to get their start and get their resources than it would be for a veteran.”* Rehabilitation encompasses more than military personnel; rehabilitation can be offered for different groups.

The role sponsors like Ottobock, Toyota and British Petroleum (BP) play in the Paralympic movement has also been highlighted because of their aims to enhance mobility for all through technical support (Ottobock) and funding (Toyota, BP and others).

The survey we directed to the NPCs was to better understand the role of technology and its impact on sporting performances, as well as legacy and media narratives of parasport and disability. In total 178 NPCs from every continent were emailed, and we received a total of 65 responses (with several reminders being sent), with at least one from every continent.

From the 65 responses, 18 were incomplete and removed from analysis, thus our final number of NPCs surveyed were 47.

One of our survey questions was specifically related to the investment in technologies. A significant majority (35) of NPCs do not have a partnership with a sports tech company or medical research institution. Upon understanding the importance of technology in parasports, we were astounded to learn that 35 NPCs do not have initiatives to develop parasport equipment. The remainder of NPCs (12) mentioned their existing partnerships with universities and medical clusters to improve prosthesis. Regarding a specific budget dedicated to technological development and innovation, the survey results were the same as the above.

Another important aspect of our topic that we sought to gain a greater understanding of was about the media. Our first question asked how the NPC analyses parasport and para-athlete media coverage and narratives in their respective countries. A clear majority described that the media coverage is average, but with a strong positive narrative. Only 4 NPCs described a negative, poor, or non-existing media coverage. This research aligns with

<sup>3</sup> Challenged Athletes’ Foundation’s Operation Rebound® program strengthens the mental and physical well-being of veterans, military personnel and first responders with permanent physical injuries by providing them opportunities to use sports and fitness to re-integrate into our communities and by empowering them through sports. <https://www.challengedathletes.org/programs/operation-rebound/#faq>

the narratives mentioned in our literature review. Our survey taught us that a majority of NPCs communicate their events through digital platforms and social media, which targets the youth to increase their disability perceptions. However traditional media (targeting the older demographic) is still important, with 20 NPCs preferring this medium to raise awareness. Only 6 NPCs outsource their sharing of contents, while the remainder have a dedicated person or team. 30 NPCs create and share content daily, and 17 share it weekly.

## CONCLUSION

Our research highlighted the necessity for the International Paralympic Committee as the world governing body for Paraspport to continuously adapt to the technology changes and usage within the regulatory framework the institution sets (through the classification system), maintaining the athlete at the core of the Movement.

The ongoing Governance Review of the IPC will also provide the opportunities to improve areas where failures have been identified (governance of the IPC, role of The Agitos Foundation, governance of parasports, funding, improvement of the classification system etc.) as well as foster collaboration with stakeholders that can have a say in the development of Paralympism despite not formally being part of the Paralympic family (Invictus Games, Cybathlon, Challenged Athletes Foundation etc).

Finally, the IPC has been proactive in what can be called, ***Paralympic Diplomacy***, via for example, the reinforcement of links with the IOC, engaging with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the engagement with governments. This diplomacy will become more relevant as the Movement continues to grow in popularity both socially and commercially and is becoming a new platform for political leadership expression similar to the Olympic Games.

# *They Are Not Referees But They Are Blowing The Whistle: How Are Whistleblowers Impacting The Integrity of Sporting Governance?*



Sara BILALI (MOROCCO), Yash CHUGH (India), Igor MARKOVIC (Italy/Bosnia/Croatia/Serbia),  
Taizo UCHIDA (Japan)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is a full-spectrum overview and analysis of whistleblowing in sport and the impact it has on governance, with a specific focus on the role that whistleblowers play in the integrity of the football industry. The purpose of this research project, aside from providing an analysis on the role that whistleblowers play towards achieving integrity and good governance within the sports industry, is to come up with a set of recommendations for the implementation of more effective integrity policies and develop more reliable reporting mechanisms. In doing so, we will look into the best practices adopted by other sports and other organisations in football because whistleblowing is not only observable in football but in the whole sporting world; whilst keeping in mind that these are often reactionary measures that were a consequence to scandals that have emerged in the last decades.

In recent times, whistleblowers have come under the spotlight for unearthing systems and practices in the global industry of sport that have been deemed as highly unethical and have caused a stir across industries. Traditional sports governing bodies and the integrity issues within their governance are one of the triggers for whistleblowers to fight against corruption. Nonetheless, the action of whistleblowing involves many factors and risks that have been evident even in cases outside of the sports industry. Despite the focus of this paper being on sports, we have decided to research and analyze a series of events, across various ecosystems, which have had a significant impact in the way whistleblowers are being perceived in different cultures.

In order to understand the action in itself, it was essential to complete an analysis of historical evidence and landmark cases that changed the global perspective on the whistleblower -knowing the past is necessary to understand the present and predict the future. Despite these cases having greatly impacted the industries and the organisations they occurred in, both positively and negatively, many have questioned the integrity and the possibility of whistleblowers having a hidden agenda, which related directly to the motives behind the decision to blow the whistle. Furthermore, more often than not, the whistleblower has

been involved, directly or indirectly, in the activity that is being labelled unethical, which makes further questions arise. Being aware of the fact that the topic in question has been trending in recent decades, it was surprising to find out that the literature present on whistleblowing in sports is very limited -academic sources specifically focusing on integrity, governance and whistleblowers are almost non-existent.

Considering the fact that the focus of this research has been the role of whistleblowing in sports, and especially in football, there was a need to understand the ecosystem in which we were operating. To this respect, we decided to look at the hierarchical pyramid existing in the most beautiful game, and analyze the way in which football governing bodies deal with integrity issues within their sport. It was interesting to see that, despite there being policies on integrity and collaborations on a national, continental and international level, there is no common approach on whistleblowing undertaken by the various stakeholders in the world of football. Interestingly enough, the term whistleblower has been used carefully by these organisations, some of which prefer to adopt a different terminology, because of the negative connotation that the term has -in different cultures, a whistleblower would be considered a negative figure, often associated with the concept of a snitch.

We have decided to focus mostly on football in the old continent and hence UEFA, the European governing body which has the most voluminous integrity policies. Of course, in order to understand the operations and activities in relation to integrity and whistleblowers, it was important to look into what has been implemented at international level by FIFA.

Furthermore, to make this research even more relevant, we thought it was relevant to include an institution that deals with similar themes in the context of the European Union. That is why we decided that it was necessary to look at the European Commission, as enforcer of competition law in the Union, and specifically the Directorate-General for Competition, responsible for enforcing these laws and regulations. In addition, we also researched the policies and activities in relation to whistleblowing, integrity and reporting mechanisms that are undertaken by other sports. This was done to compare the various sports within the industry, and to understand what can be learnt from other realities.

The insight into these organisations provides an analysis of their culture, structures on whistleblowing and their implementation activities with regard to whistleblowing as an action. All the organisations have a reporting mechanism in place, yet the context in each case is different. The stand-alone in those terms is the Court of Arbitration for Sports, for whom whistleblowers are a means of evidence generation, where the analysis involves applicability of the material and evidence provided. Some of the organisations are football governing bodies, while others have been recognised across the industry of sport to have the most robust mechanisms to protect against unethical activities.

The research also provides a framework of the stakeholders involved in the act of whistleblowing and how they are affected. This section leads into the suggestion of establishing what we expect to be a largely powerless global integrity agency and an analysis into the pros and cons of the same. However, in order to understand the reasoning behind the creation of an international independent whistleblowing agency, we ought to

look into the inherent need, process, motives and protection of whistleblowers, which are all essential aspects in acknowledging the current global context of whistleblowing in the sport industry.

Throughout the project, we have encountered a series of difficulties that were related not only to the limited literature present, but also to the sensitivity of the topic. This certainly affected the findings and the conclusions of the paper. We can safely state that there are mainly three points in relation to whistleblowers that need to be addressed by the relevant stakeholders in the sporting world.

Firstly, the presence of policies on integrity and whistleblowing is necessary towards improving the governance of all parties involved in the industry. However, even though a policy may be perfectly drafted, there is a need to apply it practically; meaning that without the right path to enforce it, these rules and regulations are only words on a blank paper.

Secondly, there is a need to establish reporting mechanisms that are reliable and confidential. By doing so, people would be incentivized to report wrongdoings and malpractices knowing that they will be protected against retaliation.

Finally, a topic that has been widely spoken about throughout our research and during all the interviews we conducted is the possible establishment of a World Anti-Corruption Agency (WACA), along the lines of WADA. The creation of said organisation would prevent differences in policies across the sport industry by providing a common approach to the issue at hand. WACA would need to be an international and independent agency, funded by its members and with no relationship to other stakeholders in sports but having partnerships with the relevant authorities that can investigate and prosecute.

Whistleblowers are actors that can assist all stakeholders in the sports industry in achieving integrity of its governance.

# *Digitalization in Sports Organizations: Technological Trends and Innovations Driving Fan Engagement outside the Stadium*



Sanaa DARAWSHA (Israel), Rishab KAPUR (India), Alexandre MATSUO (France/Japan), Caitkie Ranchhordas VAGHJEE (Mauritius)

## INTRODUCTION

Since the birth of modern sport in Victorian England in the late 18th century, Sport has always been more than just winning or losing on the field. Indeed, Sport has never operated in a vacuum and has always been linked with broader aspects and societal changes. From military purposes to gambling aspects of the games, including political propaganda power and finally being one aspect of modern capitalism, the face of Sport has evolved through times and is still more complex than putting a ball in the net or knowing who runs the fastest.

One must understand the macro-changes of the society in order to follow the micro-changes of the sport industries: Globalization, the birth of Internet, individual's consumption changes, the increasing competition of other Entertainment industry actors (Music, Fashion, Cinema...) and more recently the COVID-19 situation are impacting how Sport Organization attract and interact with the population. And those societal evolution are naturally leading sport organization toward a common denominator: The use of technology in Fan interaction or what industry experts commonly call Fan Engagement.

Therefore, this paper focus on technological trends, innovations and best practices driving Fan engagement, in the most recent context of Sport industry in 2020. The primary aim of the research is to analyze the broader picture of the different existing initiatives, in order to provide recommendations on the best way to use Technology to increase fan engagement and initial insights for potential future general trends in the industry.

## RESEARCH OUTCOMES

### 1. The modern "Fluid" Fan

A team or organization's popularity and status among fans is no longer only dependent on their win-loss ratio. It is also dependent on how the team is able to attract and retain the fans' attention. Fans' preferences are moving towards a demand for entertainment

in sport, and sports organisations are identifying opportunities to capitalise on this new demand. A new Age of the Fluid Fan is what we see evolving now onwards. These are fans who take sports as a source of entertainment and may shift allegiances between players and teams. They prioritize values, personalized content and consume information on the go via transmedia.

## 2. Technology and fan engagement as a priority

Entertainment and economic success have become the central elements and the sport business is more than ever customer oriented. Given the macro changes of the society (Globalization, internet, fluid fan, Entertainment attention competition COVID-19,), there has been an exponential effort on using Technology to increase fan engagement. The research from Proman (2019) summarize this prominent importance, as when experts were asked which technologies would make the biggest impact on the sports industry in the next 12 months, an overwhelming 78% selected fan engagement technologies, such as live streaming, eSports and content platforms.

## 3. The Digital Ecosystem

In order to maximize the efficacy of any measures taken, sport organizations must have a holistic vision with a broad strategy including all the technological tools in relation to fan engagement. Following the research of the nine key trends and innovations that are being applied in Sports Fan Engagement, we analyzed and synthesized this section into a framework that could serve as a broad guide for sports organisations to follow. This is what we call the Digital Ecosystem Framework:

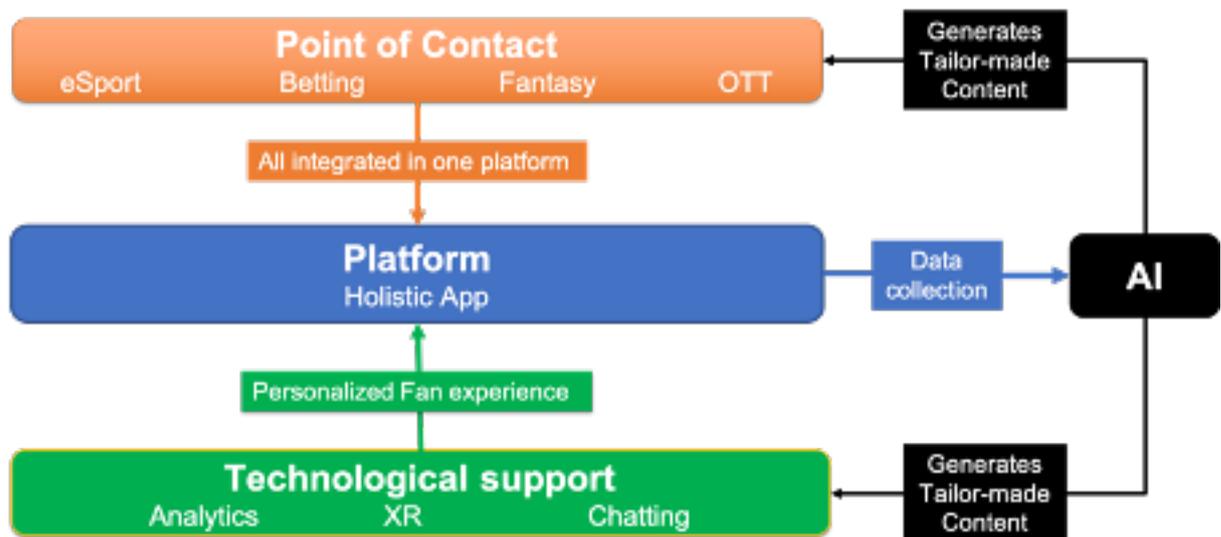


Figure 1: The Digital Ecosystem

### The Platform

The platform is a holistic destination which presents itself in the form of an application for smartphone/tablet/PC devices. It is an amalgamation of the underlying technologies (Point of Contact, Technological support and AI). This platform collects all the data from the fan's

behaviour.

### **Points of Contact**

This category containing 4 trends/innovations (eSport, Online Betting, Fantasy Game and OTT platforms), represents the main points of contact with the fans, involving an activity and interaction between the sport entity and the fans, through technology. All the points of contact are supported by AI, especially on the personalization side.

### **Technological Support**

This category containing 3 trends/innovations (Analytics, XR and Chatting), represents the more technical aspects. It plays a dual role of (a) supporting the different points of contact and (b) acting as an independent point of contact for some fans. All the technological support is backed by AI.

### **Artificial Intelligence**

AI (including Machine Learning), is the base of this Digital Ecosystem and at the centre of every single technological trend and innovation discussed throughout the research paper. The AI processes all the data obtained from the platforms and points of contact, in order to generate intelligent and comprehensive insights from the Fans' behaviour. Once these insights are interpreted, AI can then automatically generate personalized content for each fan which get communicated via Technological Support, Points of Contact and Platforms.

## **FINDINGS AND RESEARCH CONCLUSION**

It is clear that both the fields of sports and technology are constantly evolving. This along with the added concept of changing fan behavior, lead us to insights that are key, but are subject to evolution and disruption in the future. We have also ascertained that the realm of fan engagement and technology is one, where Data is King. The collection of big amounts of data, will in turn provide more points to understand fan preferences, and this understanding will then help organisations to leverage potential business opportunities. Below are the findings and insights related to technological trends and innovations, that we recommend sports organisations to consider while formulating their strategy to enhance Fan Engagement:

### **1. Benefit of Partnership with Technology Firms**

Sport Organisations are not pure Technological Players and collection of data will be optimum if the technology used to do so is best in class. Therefore, it makes sense to collaborate with specialists. Engagement and experience would also be optimum if sport organisations partner with firms with expertise in Consumer Engagement (a broader umbrella of Fan Engagement).

From our research, we find that such strong collaborations exist between those who hold expertise and sports and those who hold expertise in technology. From the case study on FIA, we see the partnership between Formula One and AWS that leverages Amazon's Sage Maker to help fans better understand decisions made during races. We also see long term partnerships from our NBA case study, between NBA and Intel, Microsoft, GameOn etc. FIA and NBA have been pioneers in the trend of cross functional partnering. It exemplifies that the top players take a Proactive approach to cross boundaries and do not simple react

to technological innovations around them.

## 2. Adapt Content for New Age Fan

In the earlier sections of this research we dwelled on the evolution of fan behavior. Fans, who earlier consumed off-site sports content from a stationary media like TV and Computer, are now constantly on the go and mobile. Fans want to be connected 24x7 and want to be connected across a multitude of platforms. This has raised the demand for content, and it would be in the best interests of the sports organisations to meet this demand. Additionally, given that fans associate not only loyalty, but also entertainment with the game, makes fan engagement more relevant than ever before and opens new opportunities for businesses to capitalize on. By focusing strongly on the delivery of the best User Experience directly in the user's hand, the sports organizations can gather a high amount of data to enhance fan engagement and therefore converting this into earning opportunities.

## 3. The Digital Ecosystem Framework

Our research and analysis allowed us to create the Digital Ecosystem, mentioned above. From our case studies, we saw how Juventus launched their own Digital Ecosystem, created to enhance Fan Engagement. All the trends and innovations are concentrated at one place. This, along with the understanding of the above mentioned nine key trends and innovations, nudged us to create the above skeletal framework. The case study on NBA also reveals how the association has covered all components of such an ecosystem, although separately. During our conversation with FIBA executives, they expressed how NBA is a role-model for many sports organisations in terms of fan engagement and that FIBA was already on the way to review their fan engagement strategies accordingly.

## 4. Harness the Use and Power of AI

Starting from the section on Trends and Innovations, we have explored and developed the concept of AI. From the Digital Ecosystem Framework, it is clear that AI is now the foundation from which technologies evolve. AI is a very crucial facilitator between Fans and Profits. Through AI, we are able to collect and process data. As we have repeatedly established, data is the important currency of today and is needed to understand fan preferences to further develop fan engagement.

Earlier, it took ages to collect and process data manually. Now, via AI, organisations can collect large volumes of data in seconds, and process/analyze this data much faster than before. AI also provides key strategical insights on best practices. This function of collection, processing and analyzing of data leads to a very desirable outcome- *personalization of data for each fan*. We saw how organisations like Juventus have used this tool to their advantage in order to customize shopping experiences for individual users via an Intergrated Online Store. Results from the survey we conducted, showed us that Fan Engagement and the demand of quality content varies geographically. The ability to personalize fan experience via AI can help organisations apply a *Glocal* framework to an overall global strategy.

Apart from helping us to directly understand Fan Engagement, AI can now also be used to create end use technological properties that enhance Fan Engagement. One such area of end use is Broadcasting and Media. As explained in the section on trends and innovations, Wimbledon with IMB Watson have harnessed AI to create Automated Highlights. AI is also

blazing the path for Automated Journalism.

It must be mentioned that the rapid development and nascent understanding of the AI world does raise concerns for data distribution and privacy. 55.3% of our survey takers expressed the importance of data protection for them, while accessing fan engagement platforms.

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, fans demand to be a part of the game, now more than ever. Their evolving preferences have reached a stage of desiring connectivity to sport, round the clock. We have moved past the years of blind loyalty. In order to address the demand of the New Age Fluid Fan, sports organisations must adapt and supply content across all stages of the fan engagement cycle (before, during and after the event). The changing face of sports, moving towards entertainment, has definitely created an uncharted situation. There is pressure on sports organisations to keep the fans hooked. However, this uncertainty also provides opportunities for businesses to gain popularity and revenues like never before. If sport organizations want to stay relevant in front of their fans in a more than ever competitive environment, they must embrace a holistic strategy.

The implementation of a digital ecosystem with AI at the center of their technologies and the fan at the center of their business model will help sports organisations formulate their fan engagement strategies. The advantage of the digital ecosystem framework is that it can be followed by different type of sport organizations, irrespective of their size and nature, and can be adapted as per their capabilities and limitations. The unfortunate onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic has accelerated the already developing technological trends in sports. Organisations are at a crossroads where they have to adapt their business models to engage fans or face the possibility of getting left behind. Now more than ever, is the time to focus on personalizing the fan experience. Data will play a central role in identifying fans, tracking their preferences and behaviors and creating tailor made experiences for them via technology. The aim is to use this moment of disruption to propel forward. Through this pandemic we may just be witnessing the beginning. Sports Organisations will have to partner, innovate and adapt to create an overall higher game experience, in the pursuit of success.

## *Balancing Books and Balls: An Athlete-centric Approach to Women's Football*



Bonnie MUGABE (Rwanda), Tyson SCOTT (Australia), Erika URBINA ECHEVERRÍA (Costa Rica),  
Bruno VAN HELLEMONT (Belgium)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The traditional concept of success in football seems like a simple one: winning is success, losing is failure. This research project explores whether it is plausible for “success” in women’s football to go beyond winning trophies and demonstrates how balancing education with football can develop successful women who are well equipped to tackle life on and off the pitch.

By doing this, our research group explored an alternative approach that fosters the long-term success of the game, by prioritising the game’s greatest asset: the player.

The starting point of our research was based on an anecdote that was utilised to personify this concern in football: a traditional notion of success would deem George Best, Manchester United Legend, a “success”. Based on football credentials alone George Best is a “success” – having won European Cups and a swathe of individual accolades. However, by broadening “success” to take Best’s off-pitch misdemeanours into account, which led to a decline in his overall quality of life and premature death, the key performance indicators traditionally used to measure success in men’s football can be challenged. In contrast, former female Australian footballer Moya Dodd went on to become a successful lawyer and Board Member of Football Federation Australia (FFA); Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA after her playing career. Which individual is deemed more successful?

With the men’s game so rigid in structure, this research project analyses the opportunity that exists in women’s football to improve the overall quality of life of the athlete – focusing on their “life-span health”. With 1.12 billion viewers tuning in to watch the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup, the numbers don’t lie. However, the custodians of the game must ensure that the growth is sustainable and happens more than once every four years.

By analysing the traditional pyramid model of association football which rarely offers any decision-making power to the players; combined with the issue that only 40 of FIFPro’s members represent women, whilst noting the lack of women in senior management, we

are left with an environment that makes it almost impossible to prioritise female football players. This offers reasoning to challenge the foundations that football was built upon, to understand why a “player centric approach to women’s football” has, up until this point, been almost impossible.

At the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup: 16 out of the 24 teams had connections with the US collegiate system, including 99 players and four managers. This demonstrates that women who are playing at the highest level are placing a dual-focus on their education. With the guidance of primary and secondary research, it became clear that although education was valued in women’s football, there were still too many cases whereby winning a football game was pursued to the detriment of the individual’s “life-span health”.

With women’s football booming in popularity, this research project comes to explore the concept of an alternative approach that challenges the traditional notion of football success. Men and women play the same game; however, a different approach could be considered to ensure the game’s sustainable growth and develop women’s football in such a way that it responds to the game’s current needs, rather than copying and pasting what happens in the men’s game.

This project addresses the following research question:

**A holistic view of women’s football: Can an alternative approach, combining football with education, broaden the concept of success to sustainably grow the women’s game?**

Our research analyses four key sub-topics: (i) the concept of **dual careers** and its humanities-related aspects; (ii) **professionalisation** within the context of dual careers; (iii) **governance**, by understanding the players’ perception of their respective football governing bodies and potential influence of women representation in the executive committees; and (iv) the notion of **success**.

Through insights gathered from stakeholder feedback, literature review and a country comparative analysis between **Costa Rica, Rwanda, Australia and Belgium** (also referred to as The CRAB Nations) our research group drew important conclusions on the current approach to women’s football and discussed the opportunity for an alternative model.

Various sources quoted the benefits of following a dual career path, whilst others addressed the pitfalls, which allowed us to create our own definition of a dual career: *“Any activity simultaneously undertaken by an athlete, who is competing at a national or international level, that positively impacts his/her life-span health, in addition to their sporting commitments.”*

From the questionnaires responded by players from the CRAB Nations, it became evident that almost all female players highlight the need for education. When asked to describe their careers, similar results were found between the countries in scope. Not only did players

almost exclusively use words with a negative connotation, they all used similar words to point out the challenging career of a female football player. The typical (dual) career can be characterised as hard and financially unviable, where the need for the combination of education or work and football is essential yet challenging.

As it is lived today, the dual career is a demanding experience, often associated with too many sacrifices and little financial support.

Nonetheless, full professionalisation and visibility of the game are currently being prioritised by the sport's governing bodies. Despite not being at the top of the priority list, coaches & administrators attested to the importance of education or work alongside the football activities, which posed a contradiction with the views of the players. They indicated that dual careers are a realistic expectation in the women's game, whilst players said it was very challenging. Displaying a mismatch in terms of expectations regarding dual careers, this inconsistency from both perspectives ultimately led to a concern of the viability of the current model from a players' perspective.

We extended our research to the governance of women's football and the alarming underrepresentation of females at the decision-tables regarding the development of the game. The moral aspect seems to be fulfilled across the board of directors however, the few female members remain under tight control of the dominant male group, thereby limiting female influence.

In that respect, the research strived to take this issue beyond the moral discussion of gender equality, and particularly evaluate the potential impact of increased female representation on the development of women's football. More women in senior management positions or within the technical staff may influence the current model which is largely based on the training model of the male player, thereby contributing to a more player-centric development of the women's game.

The above showed that the application of appropriate governance principles could potentially lead to a more player-centric development. From there, the traditional notion of success in sports based on the principle of on-pitch achievements, could be challenged. To finalise and give our contribution to the industry and the development of the women's game, we came up with a series of recommendations for the key stakeholders that influence the women's game, FIFA, National Federations, Player Associations, Clubs and Coaches & Administrators.

# A study of Fan Control: Should fans be more than spectators?



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“The new twenty-first century sport consumer who is accustomed to controlling the action through fantasy leagues and video games can no longer be expected to passively watch a sporting contest as just a spectator”<sup>1</sup>*

## CONTEXT

The Fan Controlled Football League is an interactive American Football competition where the fans can call the plays in real time through a smartphone app. This is not the only example of fans being involved in in-game decisions. Arguably the most prominent case is Formula E. Since its inception in 2014, Formula E has implemented FanBoost, which allows fans to vote before a race for their favourite driver to receive an additional in-race boost<sup>2</sup>. Even football already has forms of allowing the fans to decide on in-game matters. In the Major League Soccer’s All-Stars annual game fans are involved in selecting the player lineups.

What are the reasons for such a phenomenon that attempts to make the fans, actors instead of just customers? Based on the last study of CANVAS8 on The Future of the Sports Fans, *“Fans are no longer passive spectators. They’re active, vocal, creative and expressive – sharing content, protesting and having a greater influence on sporting outcomes”<sup>3</sup>*. Nowadays technology and fan behavior is changing at a rapid pace, with direct correlations between both. The new generations are constantly changing; they want more participation in everything and they do not want to lose much time watching sports competitions.

<sup>1</sup> Hyatt et al., “Fan Involvement in a Professional Sport Team’s Decision Making.” *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal* 3, no. 3 (2013): 189–204..

<sup>2</sup> Formula E Fanboost. “How Fanboost Works”.

<sup>3</sup> CANVAS8. *The Future Of The Sports Fan*. London, 2020.

And not only are behaviours changing, but so is the landscape. Whilst sports steep initial development is diminishing, other forms of entertainment appear to be on a boom. Within 10 years, eSports has grown from a basement free-time activity to global spectacles that fill stadiums up to 50,000 people.<sup>4</sup> Twitch, the world's leading live streaming platform for gamers, has surpassed the amount of viewers of sports broadcasters such as Sky Sports and ESPN. This year, Netflix has reached 182 million subscribers, easily trumping the amount of DAZN, sports most subscribed OTT platform.<sup>5</sup> The increase of technology and globalisation have given people easier accessibility and more choice.

Gamification, storytelling and behind-the-scenes are being incorporated increasingly more into sports and how they are reported to appeal to the fans like movies do. Social media presence, apps and OTT have been developed by the rights holders to engage the fans not only during game time, but also in off-time. These platforms have given fans a place to share their opinions and to engage with a sport. Building on this idea of giving the fans a voice, appeared a new fan engagement form: fan control.<sup>6</sup> In theory, various studies and data shows that *"if fans are involved with a sport, the fans are much more likely to engage with it."*<sup>7</sup> Therefore, such forms of involving the fans in the decision making permit them to feel as part of the game. This can be seen not only in the sports industry but also in other industries.

How successful have past cases of involving the fan in decision making been? How successful are the current cases? Is this phenomenon something that is going to be a part of the future of sports?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This thesis investigates fan control strategies and their viability in the sports industry. It addresses questions such as whether it could work for attracting old or young fans, to traditional or emerging sports, in the United States or in Europe. Mostly, it attempts to lay further stones to a topic that has long been present in the sports industry, but has received little academic attention.

In order to tackle these research objectives, the study assesses fan control as a mechanism of fan engagement. Employing this framework, the study explores fan control, starting with the description of the fan, the concept of fan engagement and the emergence of fan involvement (see Figure 1). Furthermore, this thesis validates these concepts through case studies, expert interviews and fan surveys.

<sup>4</sup> Bloom. "Esports Stadiums Are Popping Up Everywhere"

<sup>5</sup> Trefis. "Netflix Subscriber Growth 2x Expectations".

<sup>6</sup> Park et al. "The Measurement of Sport Fan Exploratory Curiosity." 434–55.

<sup>7</sup> Dell, interview.

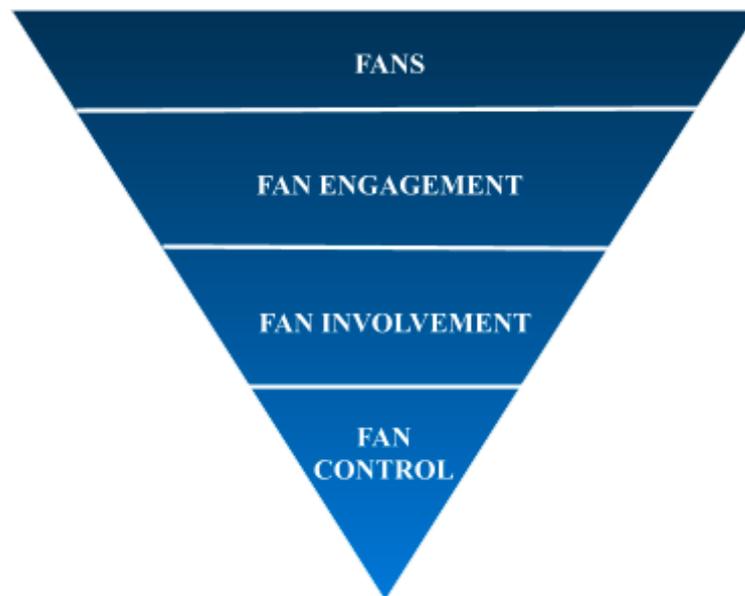


Figure 1: The structure of this report

## FINDINGS

The study was driven to conceptualise and explore fan control and if it was 'a viable fan engagement strategy for emerging sports to implement to attract fans'. Previous cases of fan involvement and fan control were studied. Moreover, various industry professionals were interviewed and two fan surveys were conducted to understand the fans interest in fan control.

From interviews with industry experts it was found that even though there was a general interest in fan control, the implementation of it brought hesitation. The main fear of the interviewees was that introducing fan control could take the integrity of the game away. Furthermore, it could open up many technical and legal questions in regards to the technological implementation and the threat of match manipulation. Nevertheless, fan control was seen as a possibility to attract new fans and as a potential solution for new competitions or formats.

From a fan perspective, fan control was neutrally received and the interest in fan control decreased as examples were introduced. Ultimately, neither the sports professionals nor the fans are fully convinced of fan control in sports yet. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that younger fans (Gen Z) showed more interest in fan control than the older generations.

From the analysis of the academic literature, interviews and surveys this thesis proposes 10 recommendations to sport right holders:

- 1) For sports with a subjective evaluation, the introduction of fan control could be interesting to attract new fans. However, it would be recommended to still have a panel of a set number of judges and having the fan votes as an average of an additional judge - hybrid model.

- 2) For established sports with a traditional fan base, it is suggested to consider launching a separate format or league to introduce fan control.
- 3) In order to trial fan control, a sport right holder can attempt to organise an exhibition and implement it at that level first before integrating it in the main competition.
- 4) Each sport should evaluate and consider different forms of fan control and only use those that do not put the integrity or essence of the sport at risk.
- 5) Fan voting that does not actually have an influence on the game could be an interesting strategy for sports to benefit from some of fan controls' opportunities without putting too much at risk.
- 6) Fan coaching or judging through fan control could be used by sport rights holders to educate people on the sport.
- 7) The more controllable the environment of the sport is, the easier it should be to implement fan control. Sports such as chess, where there is a limited amount of choices is one of those examples.
- 8) Research should be performed before introducing fan control as this study showed that the opinion of the fans towards it is actually quite neutral.
- 9) It is worth considering whether fan control strategies should be introduced before, during or after the sport event and what impact that has.
- 10) Sport right holders should consider targeting their younger audiences if they decide to implement fan control, as they showed most interest in the concept.

From these findings one can assume that fan control is still a phenomenon that needs to be further researched and attempted by a few more lower profile competitions, before any major sport rights holder introduces it. Future research should continue to further investigate this subject, as it is still at an initial phase of its development and integration into the sports industry.

# *Should the Olympics Engage with Esports to Attract the Next Generation? Exploring Scenarios for a Possible Alliance*



James CRONIN (UK), Isak HWANG (South Korea), Diego MARTINEZ (Chile),  
Alexe VIAUD (France)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Defining the situation and stakeholders**

At the conclusion of every Olympic Games, the IOC President 'calls on the youth of the world to assemble four years from now'. Despite the tradition behind this repeated call, it highlights an ongoing concern of the Olympic movement, and indeed all sports organisations. How do you adapt to engage young people and stay relevant in a fast-changing entertainment industry? During its 126-year history, the IOC has continually balanced the preservation of their heritage and values against innovation and new ideas to engage young people, and that process is ongoing today.

The growth of the esports phenomenon, from amateur gaming to competitive international sport, is a major disruptor in the sports and entertainment landscape. Now a \$1 billion industry, it has successfully tapped into new models of broadcasting and audience engagement that speaks to younger generations and challenges the status quo. Despite debates over whether or not video gaming constitutes sport, and whether or not the esports industry is ethically viable, it is a real and growing powerhouse in the entertainment industry, and in the eyes of a youthful, Gen-Z audience.

This paper assesses the growing relationship between the Olympic movement and the esports community, asking a series of questions about their ongoing collaboration. Should the IOC, engage in esports partnerships to help them evolve and engage young people? What are the risks and opportunities of such relationships? How should the IOC prioritise esports in its growing sphere of digital activities?

### **Summary of our analysis**

We begin by defining esports (simply as competitive online video gaming) and introduce the ways in which players and fans can engage with it. Debates over the status of esports 'as a sport' are acknowledged but then dismissed, as they proved limiting when trying to

address practical scenarios and partnership opportunities between the two stakeholder groups. We continue to classify esports in more detail, before introducing the scope of the growing industry and outlining the key stakeholders involved.

To define the youth engagement challenge faced by the IOC in more detail, we share evidence of their ageing television audience, before explaining the various measures already in place to try and attract new audiences. We explore the case studies of the inclusion of action sports in the summer Games, and the continued evolution of the Youth Olympic Games, showing that the IOC are willing to adapt and make changes to cater for the youth, but that there is still work to be done. Subsequently, we introduce the IOC's growing digital agenda, through their partnership with Alibaba, and their focus on building more effective and engaging relationships with their audience.

Having established the IOC's desire to continue engaging young people digitally, we explore in more detail the effectiveness of esports as a youth engagement tool, noting the success of its interactive delivery through platforms such as Twitch. Examples from sport and the wider entertainment industry further highlight the effectiveness of esports for digital youth engagement. Through a case study of FIFA's ongoing successful relationship with EA Sports in building their gaming audience and esports portfolio, and reference to examples from the fashion and music industries, we highlight good practice in this area. However, there are many risks and dangers involved in the digital engagement of youth, and we elaborate on some of the issues around abuse and addiction that are present in the esports industry.

To assess the ongoing relationships between the IOC and esports stakeholders, we introduce the work and aims of the collaborative 'Esports Liaison Group', which includes figures from across both groups and has issued advice and guidance on how the Olympic movement perceives and is acting on esports. Analysing the Intel World Open esports tournament, the IOC's very first steps to build their brand in gaming, we explore the challenges of working with private publishers and event promoters when attempting to build direct relationships with young people.

We share the results of our survey, which asked esports and gaming enthusiasts what their perception of collaborations with the Olympics was. Reaching a young, global audience of 362 people, the results (although from a small sample size) showed positive opinions for the continued partnership between the two. In order to explore the risks and challenges of such partnerships, we first analysed commercial, sporting and institutional opportunities from the perspective of the IOC, before assessing the risks in relation to governance and intellectual property. From the esports stakeholder perspective, we analysed their internal disagreements over governance, as well as areas in which Olympic expertise and collaboration could support them, discussing issues of recognition, solidarity and the protection of young people.

## Scenarios and Recommendations

After exploring the key considerations in the growing ties between the two, and satisfied that there are opportunities worthwhile pursuing, our final section details three specific scenarios for continued engagement, detailing risks and opportunities for each. The first assesses how esports can be used as a marketing tool to attract new audiences, suggesting that the Intel World Open model can evolve to help the IOC cautiously build credibility and direct relationships in the gaming world. The second discusses the development of digital and virtual sport for the International Federations, following the examples of the cycling and golf federations, but highlighting the uncertainty over whether this will actually help to attract young audiences. The third scenario analyses esports for development, looking at the role it can play as part of the IOC's educational and social programmes, and how the IOC can in turn support esports stakeholders to develop and protect young athletes and fans.

The paper concludes with an assertion that there are opportunities worth exploring from the perspective of stakeholders, but that gradual, specific steps need to be taken collaboratively in order to see benefits. Esport, rather than being positioned as a risky, disruptive industry, can play a part as a new tool in the ongoing digital strategy of the IOC, who in turn can help their esports partners to fill gaps in their operations when deemed valuable.

## *The Globalized Game: Is FIFA's National Team Eligibility Criteria for Players Up to date with the World's Reality?*



Luis BREVÉ MAZZONI (Honduras/USA), Pacôme GOÏC (France), Violet JUBANE (Zimbabwe), Gustav Maximo SALVESTRINI RASKOV (USA/Argentina/Italy)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concepts of globalization and nationality often clash. Borders constantly change, appear and disappear, people migrate from one continent to another and individuals are born with multiple cultural heritages and passports. States and the nationality they convey follow a clear line, either one is a national or not, there is no in-between. However, in the increasingly globalizing world we live in, more and more people have strong bonds with at least two countries, whether it is through their place of birth, their parents and forefathers, or their marriage. In most cases, these persons are entitled to have more than one nationality or one citizenship. Nevertheless, when looking at sports and the idea of sporting nationality, rules prove to be much stricter and less tolerant. Why can an athlete hold several passports but encounter so many obstacles when it comes down to swapping sporting nationality and represent one of its countries? Could sport governing bodies adapt better to current realities and come out with a model closer to state nationality?

These are the questions that are studied, analyzed and answered in this final project, with a particular focus on football and the FIFA eligibility criteria. In order to do so, this work has been divided in five main parts: the definition of the concept of sporting nationality, the FIFA eligibility criteria compared to those of other sport governing bodies, the examination of the choice-making process of athletes, an illustration of sporting nationality and its complexity through cases of footballers and other athletes, and the analysis of a survey specially created for this research leading to recommendations to FIFA.

First, the concept of sporting nationality is discussed and is put into perspective compared to state nationality. Indeed, these two are different notions that do not necessarily overlap. Sporting nationality is peculiar because it implies more than simply geopolitical borders and country of birth. Also, it is different from citizenship, which relates to the relationship between individuals and states to which they owe allegiance to and in return are entitled to its protection. Another important element of sporting nationality is its relationship with international competitions. During the latter, such a concept is fundamental because athletes represent a given country depending on their sporting

nationality. If they could change nationality as they can change clubs for instance, these events would lose most of their prestige and start being seen as any other yearly common competition. Also, given our globalized world, there is a need to see identities, which are one of the main constituents defining sporting nationality, as fluid and flexible rather than fixed and unchanged. Indeed, athletes swapping nationalities' cases will keep on increasing significantly in the future and sport governing bodies thus need to adapt. One of the best examples of the necessity to adjust to current globalizing trends is the Refugee Olympic Team at the 2016 Summer Olympics. In this way, the lag presented by the concept of sporting nationality compared to present realities has forced the IOC to create such a team in order to allow athletes to compete at the Olympics, which they could not have done otherwise.

Second, over the years FIFA has refined its rules and regulations regarding the eligibility of players for national teams. Henceforth, players wishing to switch nationality and represent another country have to hold the nationality of the country in question and fulfill one of the following conditions: being born on the territory of the relevant association, having a mother or a father born on the territory of the relevant association, having a grandmother or grandfather born on the territory of the relevant association, or having lived continuously for at least two years on the territory of the relevant association. In addition, players that have played in an official competition of any category or any type of football for a country are then cap-tied to the given association for the rest of their career. This rule does not apply to junior categories, a player being able to represent country A up until the under 20 category and then country B at senior level. Exception for nationality swapping at senior level can still be granted if a series of objectives and mandatory prerequisites is fulfilled and if the Players' Status Committee approves it.

Furthermore, other sport governing bodies prove to have very different sets of rules regarding the definition of sporting nationality and the possibility to switch allegiance during an athlete's career. The items highlighted in order to appropriately compare the bodies examined are connecting factors, the rule on election of sporting nationality and the rule on change of eligibility. Connecting factors are a nationality, a citizenship, or a license. The rule on election of sporting nationality, if any, is usually the participation in an official international competition for or the holding of a license in a given country, which ties the athlete to the latter. As for the rule on change of eligibility, it varies widely between the different bodies. Among the most common conditions before a switch are spending a given period of time as a resident of the new country, or waiting a given amount of time before starting to represent another nation.

Third, the choice-making process and the principal motivations of athletes to represent a country or swap nationality were examined and proved to be essential to later interpret the results of the survey and spot what are the gaps not covered by the FIFA eligibility criteria. While doing this, five main motivations were highlighted: the feeling of belonging to the country of birth or of residence or of parents/spouse, the amount of participation the athlete estimates that it will have in the national team, the international exposure and world-wide recognition, the economic and marketing benefits, and the fact the given country is the only one that has made an offer to the athlete.

Fourth, cases of football players and athletes of other sports that have multiple nationalities or operated a nationality swap are discussed. The goal is to illustrate the complexity of the choice-making process of athletes as well as the variety of ways to change nationality across sports and the multiple factors involved. Also, it is the opportunity to put into perspective FIFA eligibility criteria compared to the ones of other governing bodies and show to what extent they are sometimes not adapted to a player's situation.

Fifth, the survey completed by 110 football players gave great insights on their perspective about the FIFA eligibility criteria. One of the survey's purposes was getting the opinion of footballers on potential amendments FIFA could do to its international eligibility criteria. First, we asked: "A player has up to 4 official matches in 3 consecutive international windows whilst competing at senior international level to be cap-tied to a country". As anticipated, the responses reflected 65.5% of the surveyed players were in agreement with such potential amendment. Secondly, we asked: "A player who FIFA has allowed to change National Association from Country "X" to Country "Y", and has not played for Country "Y" in a period of 2 years, will be able to reverse its decision to represent Country "X"". Once again, as expected the majority were in agreement, with 56.3% of the responses reflecting this. The responses on these two questions further illustrate the point that footballers with multiple nationalities mostly believe that FIFA should update their eligibility criteria, and are in favor of amendments such as the ones mentioned in this project.

After carefully gathering and analyzing the responses from the survey we recommend to FIFA that they amend their eligibility criteria and to FIFA and FIFPro that they educate football players on the aforementioned criteria. First, we must note that there is a lack of awareness of FIFA's one-time change of National Association process, with 74.5% of those surveyed responding that they had none to medium knowledge of such process. FIFA must do a better job at communicating and informing its 211 member associations about their eligibility criteria. The same can be said for FIFPro and its player associations. Only half of the footballers surveyed really know how the eligibility criteria works before committing permanently to a national association. And more than two thirds of the surveyed players believe that FIFA's eligibility criteria is out of date and needs reform.



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