

WFS/20

WORLD FOOTBALL SUMMIT

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WFS/19

CONFERENCE CONCEPT

GOVERNING THE WORLD: MEASURES FOR GOOD GLOBAL GAME ADMINISTRATION

For years, the governance debate has been increasingly normative and prescriptive, bringing the current global quest for so-called “good governance”. This in turn has led to the demand for international cooperation, which is now greater than ever. As the world begins to move towards a tomorrow like no other, the global administration of the game needs the best possible oversight. And as one of the most prominent actors in global sports, the likes of FIFA and UEFA play a critical role in bringing about positive, transformative change. Through the pillars of strict integrity, and focus on global development for the game, it’s time to rediscover the best measures for a clinically efficient football administration team.

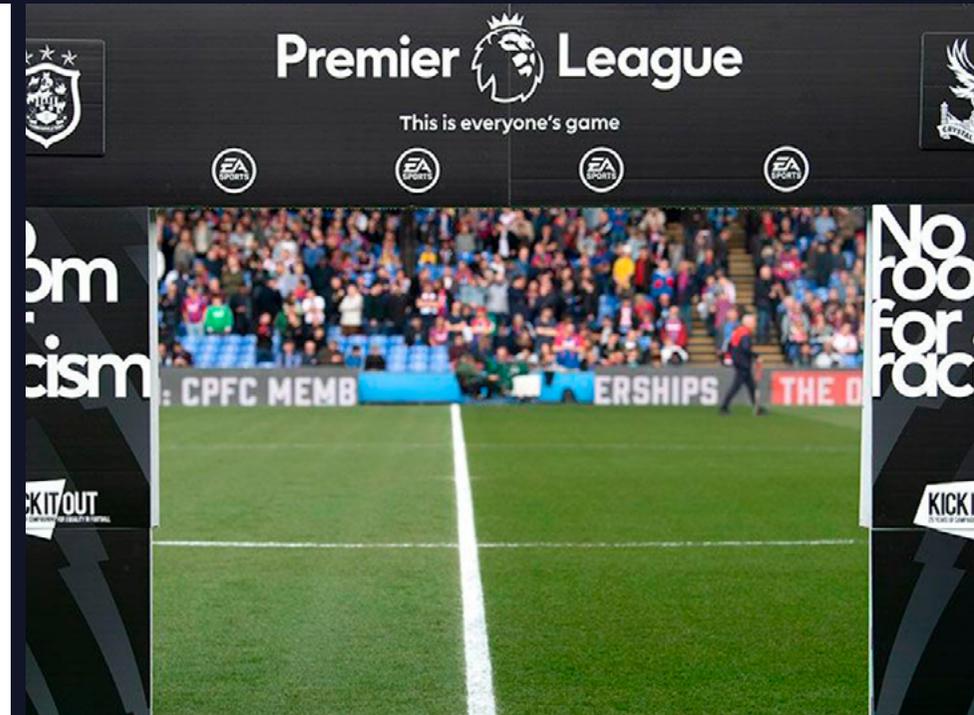


RAISING THE STAKES: UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE SPORTS BETTING LANDSCAPE

When it comes to global sports: whatever happens in Vegas, no longer stays in Vegas. As a result of the total globalisation of sports we have witnessed, and the ever-intensifying reaches of the Internet, sports betting has grown exponentially during the last 15 years and will continue to do so reaching an estimated market value of over \$155 billion by 2024. And yet as the US market liberalises, Europe could be heading in the opposite direction and new technologies like cryptocurrencies could change the picture entirely. We open the conversation to identify the most intriguing trends which could help you get ahead of the curve in the coming decade.

FOOTBALL FOR ALL: NO TOLERANCE FOR RACISM IN THE WORLD'S MOST FOLLOWED SPORT

As old as the inception of the game, the acts of racism and gender biases at grounds were far worse in the past. Sadly, the recent events have shown it to spike again, leading to the collective efforts of bodies like FIFA and UEFA to kick it out of football, with severe enough deterrents. The "No to Racism" message from UEFA and "Kick it Out" campaign from FIFA have aimed to increase public awareness of intolerance and discrimination in football, as well as develop ideas and strategies on how to fight them. However, is it high time to consider even stricter measures like closed-off games, before we witness players walking off the pitch sometime in the future?



IMPROVING THE GAME, ONE STEP AT A TIME: THE CASE MADE BY THE REFEREES

With the introduction of the Virtual Assistant Referee (VAR) in full flow over the course of the 2019-20 season, top footballing leagues and clubs experienced a new form of officiating. Not all of it was sunshine and rainbows as different leagues chose to implement the technology in different ways. In any event, with the concept of human error always a factor when it comes to refereeing football, the time has come to look back and address the pros and cons of incoming technology into the world's most followed sport. Are these the steps needed for a fairer game or is there another possibility we have yet to come to terms with?

PLAYER AGENTS AND THE NEW MODEL FOR TRANSFERS

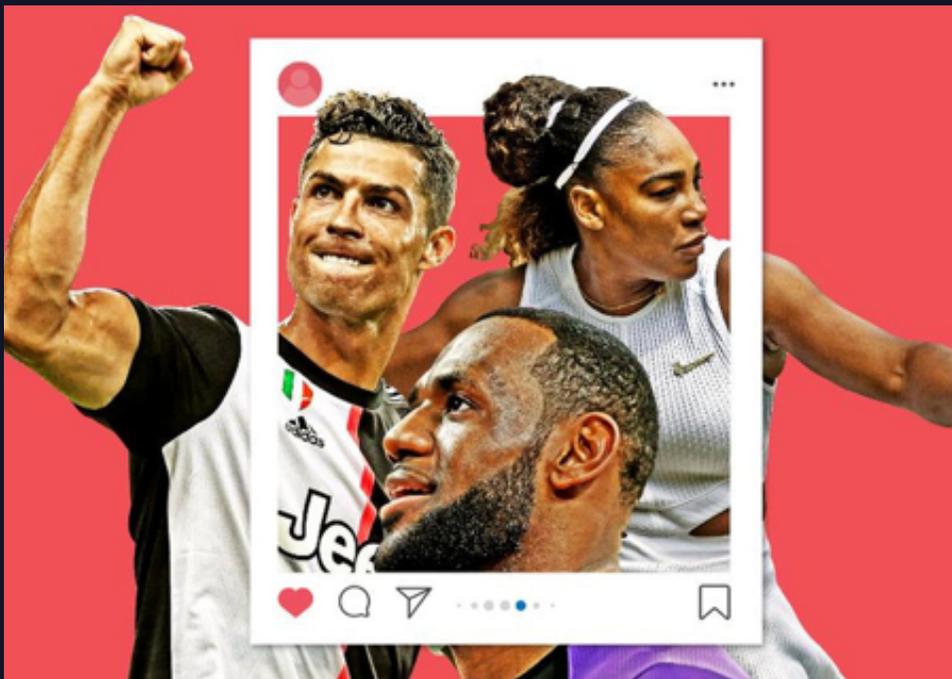
Football today is as much about the ball and the field as it is about the agents that oversee players coming into the sport from all over the globe. After a key committee at FIFA looked into multiple proposals that would seek to reform the multibillion-dollar player transfer market by limiting the influence of the sport's biggest agents, a lot was said about its possible fallouts. While this move was made in an effort to help UEFA's Financial Fair Play system and to also aid young talent from being targeted for profit through scams, a new model for player transfer remains undefined. Will football be able to find a fair balance that serves all athletes, clubs and agents?



FAN ENGAGEMENT & MORE

INFLUENCERS AND MORE: ATHLETES OR ALL-AROUND CONTENT CREATORS?

In the better half of the last decade, we have seen the curvature of mass media dictating what it means to be an athlete in today's world. Footballers are no longer just athletes – they are brand ambassadors who represent a lot more than their club and country. This development peaked in 2019 when Cristiano Ronaldo's move to Juventus nearly doubled the Italian club's following. This meant the Portuguese superstar earns more from media deals than his actual footballing contract. Will this trend further boom in the coming decade or is there a breaking-point to the deity-status of these athletes? And what does this mean for the business dynamics of the industry?



A CHANGE OF APPROACH: FANS TAKING CONTROL OF CONTENT

Every fan has an opinion, and while these were previously discussed in bars, today they are now debated across the internet. Fan-centric mass media is a reality, where the local football fan has taken the medium of social channels available to him and brought his voice for the world to see. Sites like Fantasy Premier League allow fans to continue the conversation anywhere, while setting up channels to offer 'expert advice' online in order to understand their athlete's performances better – and monetize them. This presents the traditional sports media with an important dilemma: is this new manner of fan engagement one they can control? Or is this the start of fans taking control over post-match sports content?



THE #AFTEREFFECT: INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF FAN ENGAGEMENT: EUROPEAN CLUBS' INTEREST IN ESPORTS

Many high-profile European football teams have recently invested in building up their own eSports squads. Competitive gaming has become hugely popular in the past decade with gamers competing for millions of dollars, on first-person shooters like Counter Strike, battle arena titles like League of Legends, and the ever-popular EA Sports' FIFA franchise. In time of a global lockdown due to COVID-19, initiatives like the #LaLigaSantanderChallenge were a blast, with traditional media covering the games live which had a lot of non-eSports fans peeking in for the first time. World's top sports properties now want to hop on the gravy train by understanding the needs of Generation Z for years to come. Is this the future of fan engagement? If so, how can football properties monetize this new audience?



RIDING THE CONTENT WAVE: EUROPEAN CLUBS' FOLLOWING LALIGA APPROACH TO DIGITAL CONTENT AND OTT PLATFORMS

With a global recorded reach of over 100 million, LaLiga has quickly become a reference for European clubs seeking to increase their worldwide reach with diverse content, sometimes even beyond football. This competition for attention brings along the need for continued creativity and personalised “behind the scenes” material, seen recently on Liverpool’s new YouTube subscription channel and Benfica Play, their own OTT platform. As other major European teams start to catch up with the Spanish league, like Juventus and Man City’s Netflix shows series, making fans feel closer than ever to their favourite players, and even the business managers of the club, what is the crucial next step to maintain this growth in digital fan engagement?



UNDERSTANDING THE GEN Z FAN – WHAT COMPANIES NEED TO KNOW, TO GROW

In order for any new sporting brand to introduce its product into market, it has become essential for them to get the lay of the land – literally. However, the new demographics of today’s consumers are not so much on the land as they are based off the World Wide Web. Consumption of football for Generation Z is no longer restricted in the face of when and where, with experts pointing out that brands can make better commercial decisions by understanding their consumers’ everyday need for content. With this dynamic state of a new and growing fan, what really are the drivers of consumer spending power and how does it affect their spend on sport?



THE #AFTEREFFECT: STRAIGHT FROM THE MIND: THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH

In recent times, a growing number of athletes, sports organizations, and top programs have publicly addressed a topic that affects us all: mental health. This year it became a more than a hot-button societal issue as there were wide-spread quarantines for athletes – both active and retired – and their families, which brought this topic to light again. It gives us the opportunity to discuss key long-term competitive advantages for the teams and countries that effectively engaged, supported, and worked with their athletes in such times. More than the pandemic, athletes were affected by symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. The time has come to remove the final slither of negative stigma on the topic and discuss it openly for the collective benefit of our ever-growing sports industry.



THE #AFTEREFFECT: IS THE TIME RIPE FOR REDUCING DOMESTIC CALENDARS?

In the aftermath of COVID-19, the sporting calendar will be changed forever. The question arises, will it be for the best? With the Olympic Games finally pushed to 2021, there is an obvious jam-packed calendar that lies ahead in terms of sports competitions. Take the Euros, the Copa America and also the FIFA Club World Cup. The idea of making domestic leagues shorter – reducing the number of clubs or weeks of competition – is once again being raised. Have we finally reached the moment to consider reducing domestic calendars? Is this the path towards an eased fixture congestion for clubs and players' alike?

THE #AFTEREFFECT: FOOTBALL AND THE CASE FOR DOING MORE FOR SOCIETY

The popularity of football is so vast that majority of fans live out their dreams vicariously from the stands of their favourite professional teams – and this brings them a joy which cannot be explained. And thus, when a global pandemic took over these dreams, it became important for the footballing community to come out and address it together. Athletes like Lionel Messi & Cristiano Ronaldo alongside coaches like Pep Guardiola were at the forefront of philanthropy in combatting the war against COVID-19. Over the years, footballers in particular have changed the way they show themselves towards society, not only through charity but also becoming involved in political and social issues. Has the role of athletes changed in in society for good?

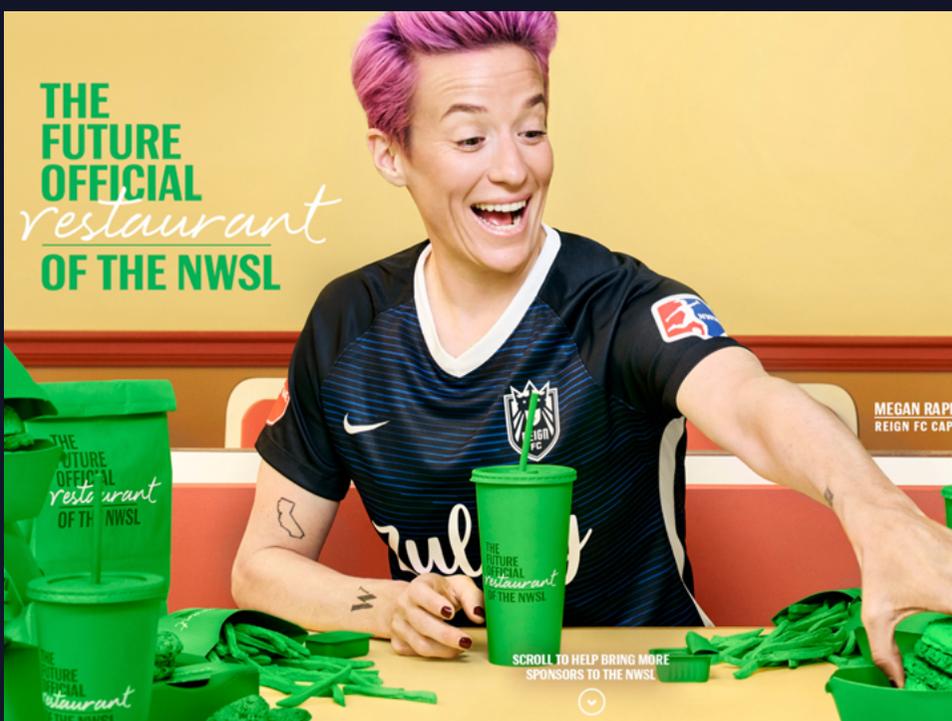


THE #AFTEREFFECT: PARTNER UP - HOW ARE FOOTBALL SPONSORSHIPS MOVING WITH THE TIMES

The market for football sponsorship continues to grow and globalise, but the demands of brand partners are changing and the multi-year bundle of off-the-shelf rights is starting to look historic. 2020's early financial quarter showed drastic changes due to a global economic meltdown which changed the industry forever. Under this backdrop, examples of innovation across the industry are more necessary than ever, especially when it comes to targeting new audiences via digital media. From short-term tactical partnerships that support a brand's Christmas sales goals to campaigns built around data and unique activation ideas, creativity and flexibility have never been more important. What does the future hold for marketing in football and how should the industry adapt?

THE #AFTEREFFECT: INTREPID WATERS AHEAD: GROWING NEED OF DIVERSE REVENUE STREAMS IN AN UNCERTAIN BROADCASTING FUTURE

According to the latest Deloitte Money League report, FC Barcelona became the first club ever to surpass the €800m revenue barrier. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, FCB were one of the many clubs to take budget cuts to maintain revenue streams in the off season when there was no football being played. Meanwhile, athletes creating content from the luxury of their homes was not monetized by broadcasters or clubs during that time. As the demands of sponsors seek to demonstrate real value in the evolving digital environment, the challenges for broadcasters to respond and sustain their revenue growth are unprecedented. Is it time for clubs and broadcasters to secure access to creating more non-match content with the players?



THE #AFTEREFFECT: HOW DID THE PANDEMIC RESHAPE WHAT SPONSORSHIP WILL BE 5 YEARS FROM NOW?

In an effort to prevent massive casualties, the economies of states across the world took a pause in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the biggest hits in terms of sports came onto that of sponsorships and their revenue with the lack of games and pretty much anything else. Pushed into a corner, we saw innovative strategies from top companies that reflect work years ahead of time. Now that they are working on targets for 2021 onwards, how have the tactics in sponsorship changed for the future? And how will the sports industry catch on to this new-futuristic blend of sponsoring techniques?

FROM THE FAR EAST TO THE FAR WEST: THE GROWTH OF US SOCCER AND CHINESE FOOTBALL

The global reach of football, or soccer, is unequalled among sports. Whether it is in terms of value to media, sponsors, brands or even local communities, there is no rival to football. And yet the United States of America and China – the world’s two largest economies – for a long time, have not been among them. These markets were both largely untapped and ripe for growth. Now, with new football franchises taking off, including David Beckham’s efforts with Inter Miami FC or City Football Group’s deal with Sichuan Jiuniu FC, are we finally ready to see the two sleeping giants join the world’s most popular sport at the grand stage?



RAISING CHAMPIONS: WHAT THE REST OF THE WORLD LEARN FROM THE USA’S APPROACH TO WOMEN’S FOOTBALL

The year of 2019 belonged to one team in women’s football: United States of America. The Megan Rapinoe-led revolution shook the world into noticing the quality of the women’s game and rightly so. The Women’s World Cup pulled together unheard-of numbers and the shape of the sport has been changed forever. This comes to no one’s surprise as USA has more registered young female players than all other countries combined – over 3 million girls are registered with U.S. Soccer. Whether it’s sponsors, brands or even new upcoming social media content-based channels, everyone wants to know one thing: what does USA do for women’s football development that other countries should follow?

CHANGE IN CHAMPIONS: WHAT IS UEFA'S NEW DIRECTION FOR CLUB FOOTBALL'S GREATEST PRIZE?

Football's purists have long argued against too many changes in a happily functioning wheel that is the UEFA Champions League. From once being a tournament that only allowed reigning champions from domestic leagues to participate, only teams from five leagues have made it to the knockout stage this season. This trend clearly shows the increasing imbalance between Europe's top five leagues and the rest. Still, some of the wealthiest clubs claim an even bigger part of the pie while discussing a potential "Super League" of their own. Now with the implications of the postponement of the 2019-20 European competitions, can Europe's football stakeholders come to a balanced agreement?



THE #AFTEREFFECT: A NEW CLUB WORLD CUP: HOW WILL A NEW TOURNAMENT FARE IN THE POST-COVID FOOTBALL INDUSTRY?

In October 2019, the newly developed FIFA Council appointed China as host of the first edition of the new FIFA Club World Cup in 2021. This, however was a decision remapped due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 in early 2020. A venture of the new FIFA direction and focus on Asian football, the ideals behind its renewed date remain the same. With the footballing industry changed in a fashion that is unprecedented, how will the innovative format of 24 clubs from the six continental confederations, fare on an annual basis?

THE #AFTEREFFECT: 2020 MEGA EVENTS: HOW CAN SPORT RECOVER FROM A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

The start of a new decade in sport could not have been bigger than 2020: The Olympic Games in Tokyo, the UEFA EURO and another edition of CONMEBOL's Copa America, all in the space of 12 months. Or so we thought – with the onset of the novel COVID-19, sport, like the entire world, took a pause. In unpredictable times like these, everything took a back seat but the plans for recovery were put into place early on. It is time to take a look back and analyse the lessons learned by the organisers of these mega events, as well as the major points of discussion wherein the industry can improve and grow for the better, should we find ourselves in a similar situation in the future.



ROTATING TRANSFER DOORS AND BUILDING PROFITS: A RENEWED BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS?

Portugal's FC Benfica has made the very best of their develop-to-sell strategy, they seem to have found a way to beat the biggest drawback of selling the best players. By bringing in record profits and finding success on the pitch, FC Benfica and clubs like Ajax and Olympique Lyonnais have changed the meaning of a 'successful transfer window'. Despite losing players of the talent of Joao Felix and Matthijs de Ligt to bigger clubs and richer leagues, these European clubs have prospered domestically. Is this a new way of building sustainable clubs while moving beyond the usual revenue streams of ticketing, sponsorship and media rights?

DAWN OF TECHNOLOGY: HOW CAN FOOTBALL UNLOCK THE OPPORTUNITIES OF AR, VR AND 5G?

Sport today has become more than just the athletes on the field of play and the fans in the stands. An era of unprecedented technological innovation arrived at the dawn of the century, which has now matured to the point where its applicability to sports is a reality – and beyond. Whether it is 5G or VAR, tech-based solutions and developments present new business opportunities for the football industry, while simultaneously offering fans innovative ways to engage better with their favourite clubs and players. Will Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and 5G-enabled wearables change the way fans follow football and the sport itself in the coming years?



VISION 2030: WHAT WILL FOOTBALL BE LIKE IN 10 YEARS?

“In 20 years, a robot will sit in front of you.” Arsene Wenger’s wise words are never far off the mark. The Professor of the modern game spoke about the changes our beautiful game will go through in the coming decade and it has us wondering what else may just happen. While technological developments in football seem increasingly for the benefit of the worldwide TV audience rather than the match-going fan, by 2028, the ability to squeeze HD camera technology into tiny spaces could well have caught up with broadcasters’ tireless desire to get a closer look at the action. Is that what the future holds for football in 2030?



A FASHION STATEMENT: THE NEW AGE OF FOOTBALL AND BRAND COLLABORATIONS

Football is about style, make no mistake about that. The athletes like Cristiano Ronaldo, Paul Pogba and Neymar are all style icons today with dedicated deals signed with top fashion companies. Similarly, the likes of West Ham signing with Iron Maiden, PSG with Jordan and BAPE, as well as Nike working with Off-White for a special 'Mon Amour' line of clothes. The fashion industry is well and truly engaged in a successful collaboration with the football industry – the question remains, is this the new age of brand collaborations and if so, where do we go from here?

