



**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
İSTANBUL NİŞANTAŞI UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS DEPARTMENT
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (THESIS) PROGRAM**

A decorative background graphic consisting of several overlapping, light gray, stylized 'X' or chevron shapes.

**THE IMPACT OF SPORTS EVENT MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC
RELATIONS ON CLUBS AND FEDERATIONS**

Imane EL FILALI

Master's Thesis

**İSTANBUL
January 2025**

THE IMPACT OF SPORTS EVENT MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC
RELATIONS ON CLUBS AND FEDERATIONS

Imane EL FILALI

Republic of Türkiye
Istanbul Nişantaşı University
Graduate School of Education
Business Department
International Business Administration (Thesis) Program

Master's Thesis

ORCID ID: 0009-0006-0821-772

Advisor: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu ULUDAĞ

İstanbul
January 2025

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The study titled “The Impact of Sports Event Management and Public Relations on Clubs and Federations,” prepared by IMANE EL FILALI, has been accepted by our jury as a Master’s Thesis, following a successful defense examination conducted on January 29, 2025.

Jury Member: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hazar DÖRDÜNCÜ _____
Istanbul Okan University

Jury Member: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Melis SOYER _____
Istanbul Nişantaşı University

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu ULUDAĞ _____
Istanbul Nişantaşı University

I hereby certify that this work, accepted by the committee, fulfills the necessary requirements to be considered a Master’s Thesis.

Institute Board of Directors;

Decision Date :

Decision Number :

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerafettin SEVGİLİ
Director of the Institute

ETHICS STATEMENT

I hereby declare that the rules of scientific ethics were followed in writing this thesis, that if the works of others were used, they were cited in accordance with scientific norms, that there was no distortion of the data used and that no part of the thesis was presented as another thesis work at this university or another university.

29.01.2025

Imane EL FILALI

PRE-DEFENSE/DELIVERY APPROVALS

| SIMILARITY APPROVAL | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Title | The Impact of Sports Event Management and Public Relations on Clubs and Federations | |
| Defense Date | 29.01.2025 | |
| Number of Pages | 253 | |
| Similarity Percentage (%) | 5% | |
| Scanning Program | Turnitin | |
| <p>The cover page, introduction, abstract, main sections, and conclusion of my thesis/work with the title mentioned above have been scanned using a plagiarism detection program under the supervision of myself and my thesis advisor/Institute Responsible. I hereby declare that my work, which I have completed under the supervision of my thesis advisor, does not contain any plagiarism according to the maximum similarity thresholds; and I accept any legal responsibility that may arise if otherwise detected. I also declare that the information provided above is accurate.</p> | | |
| Student Imane EL FILALI | Advisor Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu ULUDAĞ | Institute Responsible |

| ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Title | The Impact of Sports Events Management and Public Relations on Clubs and Federations. | |
| Ethics Committee Meeting Date | 04.01.2024 | |
| Ethics Committee Decision Number | 20240104-089 | |
| | Institute Secretary's Signature | |

| EXCLUDED PUBLICATION FROM THESIS | | |
|---|---|--|
| Publication Title | El Filali, I. (2024, May). <i>The impact of sports event management and Public Relations on clubs and federations</i> . Abstract from the 12th International GAP Summit Scientific Research Congress – Abstract Book, Gaziantep, Turkey. | |
| Publication Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Article in a National Peer-Reviewed Journal <input type="checkbox"/> Article in an International Peer-Reviewed Journal <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Presented at a National Conference/Symposium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper Presented at an International Conference/Symposium | |
| | Institute Secretary's Signature | |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis represents the culmination of a challenging yet immensely rewarding academic journey, and I am profoundly grateful to those who have extended their unwavering support and guidance along the way.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, **Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Duygu ULUDAĞ**, whose exceptional expertise, constructive feedback, and steadfast encouragement have been indispensable throughout this process. Her unwavering dedication and insightful guidance have been instrumental in shaping this work, and I consider myself privileged to have had her as my supervisor. If given the choice, I would not have entrusted this crucial role to anyone else.

I am especially indebted to the interview participants, whose significant professional responsibilities and demanding schedules underscore the value of their contributions to this research. Despite their numerous commitments, they graciously extended their time and patience, engaging with me with open hearts and without expecting anything in return. Their generosity and invaluable insights have provided the foundation for this thesis, and I remain eternally grateful for their support.

To my friends and family, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for their boundless support and encouragement throughout this endeavor. In particular, I am profoundly thankful to my mother, whose unwavering belief in me and financial sacrifices made this academic pursuit possible. Without her steadfast support, I would not have had the opportunity to study in Istanbul or pursue my master's degree at Nişantaşı University.

I also wish to acknowledge my coworkers and supervisor in the International Office for their understanding and encouragement. Their flexibility and willingness to accommodate my academic commitments afforded me the time and space necessary to complete this thesis.

Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to all those who, in one way or another, have contributed to the successful completion of this thesis. Your support and encouragement have been invaluable, and I will always hold them in the highest regard.

January, 2025

Imane EL FILALI

ÖZET

Imane EL FILALI

Sportif Etkinlik Yönetimi ve Stratejik İletişimin Kulüp ve Federasyonların Başarısına
Etkisi

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İstanbul, 2025

Spor etkinliklerinin dünya genelinde taraftarlar arasında yarattığı coşku ve heyecan, başarılı organizasyonlar ve etkili iletişim stratejilerinin sonucudur. Bu etkinliklerin perde arkasında, spor kulüpleri ve federasyonların başarısını destekleyen kapsamlı bir planlama ve halkla ilişkiler süreci yer almaktadır. Bu tez, etkinlik yönetimi ve yenilikçi halkla ilişkiler stratejilerinin nasıl uyumlu bir şekilde çalışarak spor organizasyonlarına uluslararası başarı kazandırdığını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, futbol ve basketbol etkinliklerini organize eden uzmanlarla yapılan detaylı görüşmeler ve 2023 İstanbul UEFA Şampiyonlar Ligi Finali üzerine gerçekleştirilen bir vaka analizi ile şekillenmiştir. Büyük ölçekli spor etkinliklerinin dinamik yapısına odaklanılarak, titizlikle hazırlanan planlama süreçlerinin, dikkat çekici halkla ilişkiler kampanyalarının ve taraftar etkileşimini artırmaya yönelik girişimlerin bir araya gelerek unutulmaz deneyimler yarattığı ve kulüplerin görünürlüğünü artırıp sürdürülebilir başarı sağladığı ortaya konulmaktadır. Anahtar Kelimeler: Etkinlik yönetimi, Stratejik iletişim, Spor kulüpleri, Halkla ilişkiler.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Spor yönetimi, futbol, dünya kupası, mega etkinlikler.

ABSTRACT

Imane EL FILALI

The Impact of Sports Event Management and Public Relations on Clubs and
Federations

Master's Thesis

Istanbul, 2025

Behind the scenes of the cheers and fireworks at fans' favorite sporting events around the globe, a hidden orchestra of meticulous planning and strategic communication plays a crucial role. Behind the curtains lies a complex interplay of event management and public relations, shaping the success of sports clubs and federations. This thesis delves into the powerful and dynamic synergy between effective event management and innovative public relations strategies, revealing their magic touch in propelling sports clubs and federations to international stardom.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with professional organizers of football and basketball events and a detailed case study of the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul 2023, this research provides a backstage pass and a nuanced understanding of the challenges and triumphs of navigating the dynamic world of major sporting events. By analyzing strategies across three distinct sports—football, basketball, and volleyball—this study reveals the roadmap to how meticulous planning, impactful PR campaigns, and fan engagement initiatives converge to forge unforgettable experiences, boost visibility, and secure sustainable success for clubs and federations on the global stage.

Keywords

Sports management, football, world cup, mega-events.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL | i |
| ETHICS STATEMENT | ii |
| PRE-DEFENSE/DELIVERY APPROVALS | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iv |
| ÖZET..... | vi |
| ABSTRACT | vii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | viii |
| TABLE OF TABLES | xi |
| INDEX OF FIGURES..... | xii |
| INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS | xiii |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPORTS BUSINESS INDUSTRY..... | 5 |
| 1.1. The Importance of Sports Events | 9 |
| 1.1.1. The Economic Impact of Sports Events..... | 10 |
| 1.1.2. Cultural and Social Impact of Sports Events | 11 |
| 1.1.3. The Impact of Covid-19 on Sports Events..... | 14 |
| 1.2. Sponsorship’s Role in Elevating Sports Events..... | 16 |
| 1.2.1. Sponsorship as a Strategic Platform for Branding | 16 |
| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW | 19 |
| 2.1. Purpose and Scope of the Literature Review..... | 19 |
| 2.2. Overview of Event Management and Public Relations in Sports..... | 20 |
| 2.2.1. Event Management: Definition and Significance | 20 |
| 2.2.2. Public Relations (PR): Definition and Significance..... | 21 |
| 2.3. Overview of Sports Organizations..... | 23 |
| 2.3.1. Key Global Governing Bodies in Sports | 26 |
| 2.3.2. Roles of National Federations and Leagues..... | 33 |
| 2.4. Key Strategies in Sports Event Management | 60 |
| 2.4.1. Key Frameworks in Event Management..... | 61 |
| 2.4.2. Case Study of a Successful Sports Event: Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 | 77 |
| 2.5. Public Relations in Mega Sports Events..... | 79 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 2.5.1. Strategic Communication Frameworks in Mega Events..... | 80 |
| 2.5.2. Case Studies in Sports PR: Paris Basketball Club - Fan Engagement..... | 93 |
| 2.6. Significance of Volunteering in Sports Events..... | 110 |
| 2.6.1. Supporting Operations and Event Execution | 110 |
| 2.6.2. Enhancing the Quality of Events | 110 |
| 2.6.3. Addressing Resource Constraints in Sports Organizations..... | 111 |
| 2.6.4. Impact on Volunteers, Communities, and Sports Organizations | 112 |
| CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY..... | 116 |
| 3.1. Research Purpose..... | 116 |
| 3.2. The Research Method | 116 |
| 3.3. Data Collection | 117 |
| 3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews..... | 117 |
| 3.3.2. Case Study – UEFA Champions League Final, Istanbul 2023 | 118 |
| 3.4. Research Questions and Hypothesis | 121 |
| 3.5. Sampling Procedure..... | 123 |
| 3.5.1. Sampling Strategy | 123 |
| 3.5.2. Interview Process | 125 |
| 3.6. Data Analysis..... | 126 |
| 3.6.1. Analytical Framework..... | 126 |
| 3.6.2. Combining Data from Multiple Sources..... | 126 |
| 3.7. Ethical Considerations | 127 |
| 3.7.1. Informed Consent..... | 128 |
| 3.7.2. Confidentiality and Data Security..... | 128 |
| 3.7.3. Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity..... | 128 |
| CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS..... | 130 |
| 4.1. Case Study - UEFA UCL Final Istanbul 2023 | 130 |
| 4.1.1. Venue Preparation and Logistics | 131 |
| 4.1.2. Fan Engagement and the Yenikapı Fan Festival..... | 133 |
| 4.1.3. Media and Broadcasting Infrastructure | 136 |
| 4.1.4. Economic and Legacy Impacts | 138 |
| 4.1.5. Security and Emergency Management..... | 139 |
| 4.1.6. Volunteer Management..... | 141 |
| 4.1.7. Public Relations and Branding..... | 142 |
| 4.1.8. Key Takeaways from the Case Study | 146 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 4.1.9. Conclusion of the Case Study | 150 |
| 4.2. Thematic Analysis of Interview Data | 151 |
| 4.2.1. Sports Event Operations..... | 152 |
| 4.2.2. Public Relations Campaigns | 156 |
| 4.2.3. Sponsorship Strategies | 161 |
| 4.2.4. Fan Engagement Initiatives..... | 165 |
| 4.2.5. Volunteer Contributions..... | 169 |
| 4.2.6. Crisis Management | 174 |
| 4.2.7. Impact on Host Countries and Federations | 177 |
| CONCLUSION | 181 |
| REFERENCES | 185 |
| APPENDICES | 200 |
| Appendix A: Interview Transcripts | 200 |

TABLE OF TABLES

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 1. Infrastructure and Operational Zones in Sports Event Venues..... | 62 |
| Table 2. Comprehensive Risk Management Framework for Sports Events | 67 |
| Table 3. Risk Assessment and Management Frameworks for Sports Events events | 72 |
| Table 4. Roles and Coordination Strategies for Event Stakeholders..... | 73 |
| Table 5. Economic and Social Impacts of Sports Events: Key Aspects and Examples.... | 75 |
| Table 6. Key Elements of Public Relations in Sports | 79 |
| Table 7. SWOT Analysis | 107 |
| Table 8. Profiles of interview participants | 124 |



INDEX OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1. Fifa forward: Copa Federal in Argentina funded by FIFA | 27 |
| Figure 2. Fifa football for hope programme – supporting change | 27 |
| Figure 3. Ioc sustainability strategy at a glance | 28 |
| Figure 4. Ioc sustainability strategy | 29 |
| Figure 5. Itf 2024 strategy | 32 |
| Figure 6. Pyramid chart of organisational structure of sports federations | 37 |
| Figure 7. All soccer leagues explained | 41 |
| Figure 8. European football | 44 |
| Figure 9. Camp nou – fc Barcelona | 45 |
| Figure 10. Kk Partizan basketball club in Belgrade, Serbia | 49 |
| Figure 11. Kk Partizan basketball club in Belgrade, Serbia | 50 |
| Figure 12. Japan vs Italy at the Olympic games Paris 2024 | 53 |
| Figure 13. Australia vs Norway – the Olympic beach games Tokyo 2020 | 54 |
| Figure 14. Türkiye women’s volleyball team vs Argentina–Paris 24 Olympic games | 56 |
| Figure 15. Liverpool Hillsborough 97 logo | 82 |
| Figure 16. NBA Lakers dedicate two seats for Kobe and his daughter to honor them | 83 |
| Figure 17. #Wekickcorona campaign led by Bayern Munich FC | 85 |
| Figure 18. Solidarity by fc Bayern Hilfe eV | 88 |
| Figure 19. Historical overview of Gatorade’s relationship with the NFL | 88 |
| Figure 20. Annual revenue earned from shirt sponsorship deals by clubs in the Premier League in 2024/25, by club | 89 |
| Figure 21 - 22. Paris basketball club Xmas game 23 December 2024..... | 95 |
| Figure 23. Paris Basketball Club new logo..... | 97 |
| Figure 24. Uefa UCL’s fan festival concerts’ poster | 133 |
| Figure 25. Istanbul’s UCL final 23 – brand identity, by Tolga Tarhan | 142 |
| Figure 26. Pr campaign – UCL cup – Bosphorus, Istanbul | 143 |
| Figure 27. Gayrettepe metro station, Istanbul, 27 May 2023 | 144 |
| Figure 28. Pr campaign – UCL cup – Taksim Square, Istanbul 2023 | 144 |
| Figure 29 - 30. Promotional murals in famous districts (Kadikoy and Karakoy) – Istanbul, 2023 | 149 |
| Figure 31: Mind Map of Themes and Codes for Thematic Analysis | 151 |

INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

| ABBREVIATION | Explanation |
|---------------------|--|
| BWF | Badminton World Federation |
| FA | Football Association |
| FIBA | Fédération Internationale de Basketball |
| FIFA | Fédération Internationale de Football Association |
| FIVB | Fédération Internationale de Volleyball |
| FRMF | Fédération Royale Marocaine de Football |
| IAAF | International Association of Athletics Federations |
| IOC | International Olympic Committee |
| ITF | International Tennis Federation |
| MLS | Major League Soccer |
| NBA | National Basketball Association |
| NSF | National Sport Federation |
| NSGBs | National Sport-Governing Bodies |
| PR | Public Relations |
| TBF | Türkiye Basketbol Federasyonu |
| UEFA | Union of European Football Associations |
| VNL | Volleyball Nations League |
| WC | World Cup |

INTRODUCTION

Sports serve as powerful drivers of economic growth, cultural exchange, and community development. Beyond their competitive nature, sporting events act as platforms for marketing, international cooperation, and cultural unity. These events contribute to the reputation of participating organizations and leave a lasting legacy for host communities and cities. Their success is contingent on the seamless collaboration between event management and public relations (PR), which collectively enhance visibility, audience engagement, financial performance, and long-term sustainability (Leeds, von Allmen and Matheson, 2022: 4).

Despite their increasing prominence, existing literature often addresses PR and event management separately, overlooking their interdependent effects on sports organizations. This fragmented perspective presents challenges for stakeholders seeking to develop comprehensive strategies that optimize branding, fan engagement, and financial stability. This study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring the interconnected roles of PR and event management in driving the success of sports organizations, with a particular focus on branding, economic impact, and legacy outcomes (Slattery, 2019: 4).

The economic and cultural significance of sports events calls for a thorough examination of their impact on local and global communities. In the contemporary interconnected landscape, these events serve as engines for economic stimulation and cultural interaction (Ovechkin, 2024: 23). They offer host regions opportunities to build international connections, attract tourists, and create employment. Studies underscore the potential of sports events to generate economic benefits by drawing visitors, encouraging business activities, and enhancing regional visibility. To maximize these opportunities, a strategic approach integrating event management with PR is essential for ensuring effective execution and widespread outreach.

This research delves into how PR and event management collaboratively shape meaningful experiences for sports organizations and federations. By analyzing strategies implemented in football, basketball, and volleyball, the study investigates how each sport employs PR and event management techniques to enhance audience engagement,

stimulate economic growth, and influence cultural perceptions. Football, with its extensive global reach and financial influence, serves as a compelling case for understanding the complexities of organizing large-scale events. Prestigious tournaments such as the UEFA Champions League Final and the FIFA World Cup attract millions of viewers and provide substantial contributions to local economies through tourism, job creation, and heightened national pride.

In addition to their economic impact, sports events contribute significantly to the cultural and social dimensions of host communities. They serve as avenues for showcasing local heritage while engaging with a global audience, facilitating cultural integration and brand development. The involvement of volunteers is instrumental in this process, as their dedication enhances the event atmosphere and strengthens public engagement (Maennig and Zimbalist, 2012). This study explores how strategic event management and PR initiatives build relationships among key stakeholders and enrich the experience of participants, highlighting the broader cultural relevance of sports.

Moreover, the study highlights the essential interplay between event management and PR in planning successful sports events. Effective PR strategies are vital for ensuring audience engagement (Stan, 2019: 535), while strong management practices are crucial for seamless execution. An event with weak PR efforts may fail to attract sufficient attention, whereas excessive promotion without efficient management could harm the organization's reputation. By examining real-world instances such as the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul, this research illustrates the significance of harmonizing PR initiatives with meticulous event planning to achieve successful outcomes.

Building on these insights, this study investigates the role of PR strategies in strengthening the international presence of sports federations and examines the essential event management practices that contribute to the achievements of sports clubs. Furthermore, it explores how the synergy between PR and event management influences overall organizational success, offering practical applications for industry professionals and contributions to academic discourse.

Key research questions include:

Question 1: How do public relations (PR) strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations?

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): There is a significant and positive relationship between the implementation of PR strategies and the success and international visibility of sports federations.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between PR strategies and the success or visibility of sports federations.

Question 2: What are the fundamental event management strategies employed by successful sports clubs?

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Implementing fundamental event management strategies has a significant and positive impact on the success of sports clubs.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between event management strategies and the success of sports clubs.

Question 3: What is the impact of integrated sports event management and PR on the overall performance of sports clubs and federations?

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Integrated sports event management and PR strategies significantly enhance sports clubs and federations' performance and brand value.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant impact of event management and PR integration on the performance of sports clubs and federations.

This study employs a qualitative research approach, featuring a case study of the UEFA Champions League Final 2023 and semi-structured interviews with industry professionals. This approach provides an in-depth exploration of event management and PR strategies by capturing detailed insights into their effectiveness. The data collection process includes an extensive review of event reports, media coverage, and organizational documents, with thematic analysis applied to identify recurring patterns and key insights.

The UEFA Champions League Final 2023 serves as an insightful case study, offering valuable perspectives on an internationally recognized event known for its strategic PR

and event management practices. However, the study acknowledges several limitations, including challenges in obtaining interviews with industry professionals and accessing proprietary data. These constraints impact the depth of qualitative insights but do not diminish the overall relevance and contributions of the research.

This thesis follows a structured format, beginning with an exploration of the historical evolution of sports events, followed by a literature review that presents theoretical perspectives on event management and PR. The research methodology outlines the study's design and data collection strategies. The findings section provides interpretations and insights, leading to a discussion that highlights key conclusions and potential future directions in sports event management and PR.



CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPORTS BUSINESS INDUSTRY

Sports transitioned from a free source of entertainment to a billion-dollar industry during the 19th century. To understand this shift, let's take a trip through time to the origins of sports, where physical activities played a significant role in society. Ancient Egyptians engaged in various sports, including wrestling, archery, and swimming, as early as 2000 BCE. However, the Greeks are often credited with pioneering organized sports, most notably through the ancient Olympic Games, which began in 776 BCE. These games not only showcased athletic prowess but also fostered a sense of unity among Greek city-states (Yellowbrick, 2023).

This historical background established the foundation for sports to become the commercialized industry we know it today. The revival of the Olympic Games to their birthplace at the end of the 19th century was a pivotal moment in this evolution. The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896 due to a significant effort initiated by the French educator Pierre de Coubertin, who promoted the value of athletics in education. Through competitive sports, he sought to foster peace and international understanding. The popularity of this event served as a catalyst for the development of the contemporary Olympic Games, which are now a worldwide festival held every four years that brings together athletes from all over the world to celebrate friendship, solidarity, and the pursuit of sporting greatness (Global Sports, 2023).

Before the resurrection of the Olympic Games, sports underwent a revolutionary period in the 19th century, primarily due to the extensive impact of the British Empire. Sports like rugby, football, and cricket had a sharp rise in popularity during this time, becoming popular not only in Britain but also in many other countries. The transformation of these pastimes into organized, professional sports required the development of regulating organizations and uniform regulations. Early in the 20th century, major international sporting events that captivated the public's attention began to emerge in the wake of the Olympic Renaissance. Football rose to prominence as the world's most popular sport due in particular to the inaugural FIFA World Cup in 1930. In parallel, sporting events such as the Super Bowl, Wimbledon, and the Tour de France surfaced, hence increasing sports' worldwide appeal. These contests became significant economic drivers that shaped the

sports business's financial structure and delivered a source of entertainment. (Yellowbrick, 2023).

Building on the historical context, it is essential to recognize that sports have evolved into a complex and lucrative business. The commercialization of sports has transformed the landscape from amateur competitions to a professional arena where financial considerations play a crucial role. This shift is characterized by significant investments in sponsorships and advertising, which are vital revenue streams for clubs and federations. According to Statista, the sports market is projected to generate approximately \$112.40 billion in revenue in 2024. This figure underscores the industry's substantial economic impact, as it reflects the income from ticket sales, merchandise, broadcasting rights, and more.

Furthermore, from 2024 to 2029, the industry is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.16%. This indicates that a 4.16% annual growth rate is expected in the sports industry on average over this time, resulting in a projected market volume of around \$137.80 billion by 2029. The statistics show the sports industry's growing financial value and demonstrate that it contributes significantly to the economy in addition to being a major source of entertainment. An increase in revenue indicates that there may be additional opportunities, investments, and employment possibilities within the sector, all of which can help clubs, federations, and the overall economy.

As this economic powerhouse expands, professional leagues have become critical in shaping the sports business. Following the establishment of the English Football League (EFL) in 1888, which marked the first organized football league (EFL, n.d.), FIFA was created in 1904 to unify international football governance (Blackstar, 2024). Significant milestones continued with the formation of the National Football League (NFL) in 1920 (NFL 100, n.d.) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 1949 (NBA, 2024), both of which played vital roles in the commercialization of sports.

As football's popularity grew throughout Europe, it became critical to establish a regulatory body to efficiently oversee the sport. This necessity led to the formation of UEFA in 1954, which was tasked with regulating competitions between European national teams and clubs. The advent of the European Cup in 1955, later renamed the

UEFA Champions League, constituted a watershed moment in club football, transforming it into a premier competition. (The Birth of UEFA, 2024) This league has since produced significant cash through lucrative television rights and sponsorship deals, emphasizing its essential role in the sports industry's financial picture.

Speaking of television, the rise of broadcasts as a transformative force in the mid-20th century significantly impacted sports commerce; the first major international sporting event to be globally broadcast was the 1936 Summer Olympics held in Berlin, Germany, marking a pivotal moment in how sports could reach global audiences (IOC, n.d).

As professional leagues and television reshaped the landscape, sports clubs and federations evolved into prominent brands. This transformation allowed clubs to capitalize on their popularity, engaging fans through targeted marketing and public relations strategies that enhanced revenue streams. Meanwhile, federations adopted a more commercial mindset, actively seeking sponsorships that aligned with their brand identities. This evolution underscores the interconnectedness of leagues, media, and commercial interests, which collectively contribute to the sports industry's status as a significant economic powerhouse today (Greenfly, 2023).

Building on the role of leagues and media, sports events represent the backbone of the sports industry. These events serve as the primary platforms for fan engagement, revenue generation, and branding opportunities for clubs, athletes, and sponsors. Global spectacles like the FIFA World Cup, the Olympics, and the Super Bowl fuel economic activity through ticket sales, media rights, sponsorships, and merchandise (Evens et al., 2013). Additionally, these events foster fan loyalty, stimulate local economies, and attract widespread media attention.

The absence of these major events would lead to a sharp decline in revenue and global exposure for the sports industry. Without live competitions, fan interest would wane, reducing the appeal of sponsorships and media coverage. This would have a direct impact on the financial health and visibility of clubs and federations, diminishing opportunities in marketing, merchandise, and broadcasting rights. Moreover, the entire ecosystem—including sports venues, broadcasters, and advertisers—would face economic setbacks.

In essence, sports events are the lifeblood of the industry, propelling its growth, investments, and long-term sustainability (Baltic Times, 2023).

In addition to their economic and cultural importance, the success of sports events hinges on how well their communication strategies are executed. Public Relations (PR) is vital in managing the public perception, increasing visibility, and ensuring global awareness of the event. As the sports industry continues to grow, the necessity of strong PR strategies becomes even more apparent, especially in shaping how fans, sponsors, and media engage with the event (Zinn, 2015).

PR is critical to sports events because it shapes the public image, manages communications, and amplifies the visibility of the event. Effective PR ensures that the event reaches a global audience, attracts media attention, and builds positive narratives around the teams, athletes, and sponsors involved. PR also manages potential crises, such as negative press or controversies, and ensures that the brand of the event remains intact. It drives fan engagement through strategic campaigns, social media, and collaborations with influencers, enhancing the overall fan experience. PR not only promotes the event but also sustains its legacy after it ends, ensuring continued relevance for future editions (Zinn, 2015).

Without PR, sports events would struggle to attract attention and convey their significance to the public. Sponsorship deals might be harder to secure, as brands rely on PR to showcase their association with the event in a positive light. Fans might not be as engaged, and the media might not cover the event as extensively, reducing its reach and impact. Negative incidents could go unmanaged, potentially damaging the event's reputation (Evens et al., 2013).

While PR could exist without live sports events—for instance, by promoting athletes, clubs, or sports organizations independently—it would lose a significant portion of its impact. Events provide the primary opportunity for PR campaigns to drive narratives and build excitement. Without events, PR would lack the dynamic, real-time platform that fuels fan engagement, media coverage, and sponsorship interest. Therefore, while PR can operate outside of events, its effectiveness is deeply tied to the success and visibility of live competitions (Evens et al., 2013).

To conclude, both sports events and PR are foundational pillars in the evolution of sports as an economic and cultural force (Evens et al., 2013). While sports events provide the stage for competition and global engagement, PR ensures that these moments transcend the field, building lasting connections with fans, media, and sponsors. The synergy between the two not only drives financial growth but also nurtures the long-term legacy and influence of sports in society. Without this dynamic relationship, the sports industry would lack the cohesive force that propels it forward, both commercially and culturally (Evens et al., 2013).

1.1. The Importance of Sports Events

Sporting events hold immense significance, both personally and within the broader sports industry. As a dedicated football, basketball, and volleyball fan, I perceive these events as essential experiences that extend beyond mere entertainment. They provide an emotional refuge, facilitating an escape from daily pressures and immersing individuals in the thrill of competition. The anticipation and excitement surrounding major tournaments, particularly the FIFA World Cup, evoke a profound sense of pride and nationalism. This sense of belonging transcends individual support for a team; it fosters connections with fellow fans who share similar passions. The collective joy and camaraderie experienced during these events create a unique atmosphere that strengthens community ties and enhances social cohesion.

From a stakeholder viewpoint, sporting events offer a distinct and valuable chance to reach a wide-ranging audience in a way that few other platforms can. As I aspire to build a career in this lively field, I appreciate how these occasions enable brands to forge authentic connections with fans. They serve as exceptional venues for deploying innovative marketing tactics, where the roles of sponsorship and advertising become pivotal in boosting brand awareness. The strong emotional connections fans develop with their teams create an ideal setting for stakeholders to engage meaningfully, cultivating brand loyalty and driving economic success.

Furthermore, sporting events significantly contribute to the enhancement of mental well-being. The intense emotions and adrenaline that accompany competitive sports provide individuals with a profound sense of joy and purpose, thereby improving their overall

quality of life. The thrill of watching a game can uplift spirits and offer a much-needed escape from everyday stresses. Consequently, sporting events are not merely forms of entertainment; they play a vital role in our lives, influencing us socially, mentally, and economically.

1.1.1. The Economic Impact of Sports Events

In addition to immediate revenue gains, large-scale sporting events like the Olympics, FIBA tournaments, and FIFA World Cup offer lasting economic benefits to host countries. FIFA reports that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar set a new financial benchmark for the tournament, generating roughly \$7.5 billion across diverse revenue streams. Approximately \$6.314 billion stemmed from media rights, licensing, and sponsorships, while ticket sales and hospitality rights contributed an additional \$929 million, underscoring the substantial revenue potential of international sports events (Annual Report FIFA, 2022).

Alongside immediate financial gains, major sporting events as global spectacles provide substantial long-term economic benefits for host nations. These high-profile competitions attract international audiences, resulting in increased tourism as visitors spend on accommodations, dining, and entertainment, which stimulates local businesses and enhances economic activity in the area (AISTS, 2023).

Moreover, hosting such prestigious events often necessitates significant investments in infrastructure, including upgrades to transportation networks, improvements to hospitality facilities, and the construction of modern sports venues. These enhancements not only improve the quality of life for local residents but also position the host city favorably for future events and business opportunities (AISTS, 2023).

The economic legacy of these global sports spectacles is profound, as the visibility and prestige associated with hosting can attract increased foreign investments and strengthen trade relations. Thus, the overall impact of these events extends beyond immediate revenues, laying the groundwork for sustained economic growth and development in the host country (Luo, 2024).

1.1.2. Cultural and Social Impact of Sports Events

At both the national and international levels, sports act as a significant unifying force, enabling individuals, communities, and nations to celebrate their identities, values, and accomplishments (Truswell, 2022). Major sporting events, including the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, carry immense cultural importance for host nations and their communities. Beyond their athletic significance, these events serve as vital platforms for the expression of national identity, the fostering of social cohesion, and the stimulation of economic development. Nonetheless, they also present challenges and controversies that necessitate thorough consideration.

1.1.2.1. Positive Cultural Impacts

- **National Identity and Pride:** Mega-events present a distinctive platform for countries to exhibit their cultural heritage and accomplishments to a global audience. Events like the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup elicit profound feelings of national pride, bringing citizens together as they passionately support their teams and engage in the collective experience of national representation. Hosting these prestigious events allows nations to highlight their cultural values through diverse expressions—ranging from vibrant opening ceremonies and traditional performances to showcasing local culinary specialties. Such presentations not only reinforce national identity but also cultivate a deep sense of unity and shared purpose among the populace, fostering solidarity across various segments of society. This celebration of cultural uniqueness enhances the emotional connection citizens feel toward their nation, transforming sports events into moments of national significance that resonate long after the final whistle is blown.
- **Social Cohesion:** Major sporting events have a remarkable ability to foster community spirit and strengthen social connections among residents. The excitement and festivities that accompany these occasions create an atmosphere of togetherness, uniting individuals from various backgrounds in a shared celebration. These events often serve as focal points for community engagement, encouraging interactions among people who might not typically cross paths.

Activities such as public screenings of matches, local festivals, and neighborhood gatherings generate shared experiences that enhance camaraderie and solidarity within the community. By bringing together diverse groups, sporting events help to bridge social divides and promote a sense of belonging, creating lasting bonds that extend well beyond the duration of the event. The collective experience of supporting a team or celebrating a victory transforms the event into a significant social occasion, reinforcing the fabric of community life and contributing to a vibrant local culture.

- **Cultural Legacy:** The long-term advantages of hosting mega-events frequently encompass enduring cultural legacies. Infrastructure enhancements—such as cutting-edge sports facilities, improved public transportation systems, and urban development projects—can substantially elevate the quality of life for residents long after the events conclude. These investments may lead to greater accessibility to sports and recreational activities, contributing to healthier lifestyles and fostering ongoing community engagement in athletic pursuits.
- **Inspiration for Future Generations:** Mega-events possess the ability to inspire younger audiences to participate in sports and physical activities. By showcasing elite athletes and their commitment to excellence, these events can motivate youth to engage in sports, develop their skills, and embrace healthier lifestyles. Initiatives associated with mega-events, such as sports clinics and educational outreach programs, can create pathways for aspiring athletes and cultivate a culture of fitness and well-being within host communities.

1.1.2.2. Negative Cultural Impacts

- **Displacement and inequality:** The organization of mega-events frequently results in the displacement of local populations, with marginalized groups often bearing the brunt of these changes. Infrastructure projects designed to enhance the visitor experience can prioritize the needs of tourists at the expense of local communities, intensifying pre-existing social disparities. This displacement can disrupt established communities and sever social connections, leading to a significant erosion of cultural heritage as neighborhoods are altered or destroyed.

The transformations that accompany mega-events can result in a profound sense of loss for residents, as their cultural landscapes and historical ties are compromised (Bourg and Gouguet, 2023).

- **Commercialization of Culture:** The presence of mega-events often leads to the commercialization of local cultures, where international brands and corporations overshadow indigenous traditions and practices. This phenomenon can result in a dilution of cultural authenticity as the emphasis shifts from the unique cultural elements of the host nation to the interests of global sponsors. Consequently, local communities may feel marginalized or disconnected from the celebrations, as the focus on commercial objectives can overshadow the rich cultural narratives that define their identity. This dynamic raises concerns about the preservation of local culture amid the overwhelming influence of global commercialization.
- **Environmental Concerns:** The hosting of mega-events can significantly harm cultural landscapes due to environmental degradation. Issues such as pollution, habitat destruction, and the depletion of natural resources often emerge as a result of constructing venues and infrastructure for these events. These environmental challenges can disrupt local ecosystems, diminishing the cultural value of natural landscapes. As a consequence, the community's identity and heritage may be negatively affected, leading to a disconnection between residents and their surrounding environment.
- **Nationalism and Exclusion:** While mega-events often encourage national pride, they can simultaneously foster exclusionary nationalism. Certain groups within the host country may feel marginalized or unwelcome during celebrations, especially if national identity is portrayed in a manner that excludes cultural minorities or immigrant populations. This exclusion can lead to social tensions and undermine the potential for these events to unify diverse communities.

The cultural implications of sports mega-events are multifaceted, presenting both positive and negative effects. On one hand, these events can enhance national pride, foster community cohesion, and inspire young people to engage in sports. On the other hand, they may lead to community displacement, the commercialization of cultural expressions,

and environmental degradation. As countries compete for the privilege of hosting such prestigious events, it is vital to find a middle ground that maximizes the benefits while addressing the drawbacks. The experience of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar serves as an important case study in this context. By taking proactive measures to mitigate adverse effects and actively showcasing its local culture, religion, and identity, Qatar managed to celebrate its heritage on an international stage while reinforcing national pride. This balanced approach not only enriched the overall experience for participants and spectators but also offered a valuable template for future hosts in navigating the intricate challenges associated with mega-events.

1.1.3. The Impact of Covid-19 on Sports Events

This passage emphasizes the critical importance of live sports events by illustrating the profound impact their absence had on the sports industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than analyzing the pandemic as a case study, the aim is to shed light on the economic and social disruptions that emerged without live events, underscoring the essential role they play.

When the pandemic forced cancellations worldwide, sports revenue plummeted by approximately 28%, dropping from an estimated \$135 billion in 2019 to under \$97 billion in 2020 (Skinner and Smith, 2021: 2). Stadiums were emptied, tournaments delayed, and both fan engagement and economic activities tied to sports—from ticket sales to local hospitality—were severely affected. This period served as a stark reminder of the essential value that live sports bring, not only to the industry’s financial ecosystem but also to communities and fans on a global scale (Satı et al., 2022: 126).

During this pandemic, several major sports events, including the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and UEFA Euro 2020, were postponed to curb the virus spread. This postponement caused significant economic disruptions and highlighted the unique role of live sports events in maintaining industry stability. For the Tokyo Olympics alone, the rescheduling imposed additional costs of over \$2 billion beyond the initial \$10 billion already spent on preparations. The financial impact extended to ticketing, sponsorship, and broadcasting revenues, which collectively fund a substantial portion of event-related expenses and contribute to the host nation’s economic boost (Statista, 2024).

Similarly, UEFA faced challenges with Euro 2020, as contracts with sponsors, broadcasters, and vendors had to be renegotiated, leading to substantial revenue losses. Postponing such mega-events demonstrated that sports events' financial success relies heavily on uninterrupted scheduling, as their unique position in the calendar minimizes direct competition with other events and supports significant economic activity through short-term job creation and tourism spending (UEFA, 2020).

The absence of live fans during the pandemic also deeply affected team performance and morale. Teams across sports leagues faced the psychological challenge of playing in empty stadiums without the vocal support that fans typically provide. This lack of in-person encouragement removed a crucial energy boost that players often rely on, especially in high-stakes moments. Research even indicates that home-court advantage decreased significantly during this period, underscoring how the dynamic of fan support influences game outcomes. Clubs like Liverpool in the English Premier League and various NBA teams reported that the lack of fan presence impacted their performances, as the "12th man" effect—where fans serve as an extra motivator—was noticeably missing. NBA star LeBron James captured this sentiment powerfully, saying, "If I show up to an arena and there ain't no fans in there, I ain't playing" (Bleacher Report, 2020), underscoring how vital fan presence is to the sport itself.

The shift also affected media coverage and fan engagement, as organizations pivoted to virtual fan experiences and modified broadcasting techniques. Notably, the NBA introduced a "virtual fan wall," allowing fans to appear live on large screens surrounding the court. This innovation offered an interactive experience that helped mimic a live audience's atmosphere, albeit digitally. Although digital platforms attempted to replicate in-stadium experiences, these measures highlighted the irreplaceable nature of live audiences. This period revealed that fans contribute more than just financial support to sports events; their presence is a powerful component that directly influences the game atmosphere, players' performance, and fan connection (Kirsch, 2024).

By addressing these postponements, we underscore the sports sector's vulnerability to external disruptions and the far-reaching consequences for economies reliant on these events as part of broader tourism and entertainment ecosystems.

1.2. Sponsorship's Role in Elevating Sports Events

Sponsorship serves as a vital mechanism that enhances the value of sports events while simultaneously providing brands with significant marketing opportunities. For sports organizations, securing sponsorship deals can lead to substantial revenue generation, funding essential operations, and improving event experiences. These partnerships also enable event managers to enhance the visibility and reach of their events, attracting larger audiences and engaging communities (Leng and Zhang, 2023: 7).

On the other hand, sponsors leverage these high-profile platforms to amplify their brand visibility and connect with target demographics. The association with renowned sports events allows brands to enhance their reputation, foster consumer loyalty, and gain competitive advantages in the marketplace. Through strategic sponsorships, both parties achieve mutual benefits—event managers gain financial support and operational resources, while sponsors secure prominent exposure and enhanced brand recognition. This symbiotic relationship underlines the significance of sponsorships in the sports industry, shaping the landscape of global visibility and commercial success (Leng and Zhang, 2023: 3).

1.2.1. Sponsorship as a Strategic Platform for Branding

Sports events present a unique avenue for sponsors to promote their brands, enhance global visibility, and engage with a diverse array of passionate fans. These events act as prominent platforms where brands can connect with millions, if not billions, of potential consumers. By partnering with well-known teams or prestigious tournaments, sponsors not only amplify their visibility but also foster stronger loyalty among supporters. Research indicates that aligning with reputable sports organizations allows sponsors to tap into the emotional connections fans have with their teams, which can lead to lasting brand loyalty (Smith and Stewart, 2019).

The global appeal of football has resulted in significant sponsorship deals within the industry. According to FIFA, the organization generated record revenues of \$7.5 billion in the commercial cycle from 2019 to 2022, culminating with the Qatar 2022 World Cup, which surpassed the previous cycle's earnings by over \$1 billion following the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Additionally, the Qatar World Cup saw extraordinary viewership,

with approximately 1.5 billion people watching the finals, and related social media content garnered an astounding cumulative reach of 262 billion across various platforms (Jessicageer, 2023).

According to both FIFA and IOC, high-profile global events, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games, significantly magnify this effect. For example, Coca-Cola's long-standing collaboration with the Olympics has greatly enhanced its global brand presence, while Visa's partnership with FIFA has facilitated its expansion into new markets and improved customer engagement across various regions. Such associations are critical for brands looking to penetrate new demographics or strengthen their foothold in emerging markets (FIFA, 2022) (Olympic.org, 2023).

1.2.1.1. Mutual Financial Benefits

Sponsorship agreements represent a significant financial resource for event organizers, clubs, and federations. The financial support from sponsors is essential for covering various event-related costs, including logistics and marketing, which helps ensure the event's overall quality and success. For instance, top-tier sponsorship contracts can contribute more than 20% of the total revenue generated by major events, enabling organizations to sustain their operations and reinvest in their initiatives. In exchange, sponsors achieve considerable exposure, with their visibility amplified through media coverage and promotional efforts during the events (Deloitte, 2022: 30).

These collaborations establish a mutually beneficial financial framework: sponsor investments improve the event experience, leading to increased audience attendance and greater visibility for sponsors. This reciprocal revenue generation model motivates both sponsors and event organizers to enhance the quality and engagement of their events (Statista, 2023).

1.2.1.2. Enhanced Digital and Global Reach

With advancements in media and technology, sports sponsorships have evolved to meet changing consumer engagement trends. Digital platforms now allow sponsors to connect with fans in real time, expanding their reach to global audiences. Contemporary sponsorship agreements frequently include digital marketing rights, social media

collaborations, and interactive initiatives that directly link fans to sponsors' offerings. During the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, for instance, numerous brands executed interactive digital campaigns, enabling global fan participation despite travel restrictions. This digital strategy not only broadens reach but also strengthens connections between fans and brands, fostering a sense of community (IOC, 2021).

In conclusion, the relationships formed between sponsors and sports events highlight the strategic importance of these collaborations, creating substantial opportunities for both branding and financial growth. This synergy exemplifies the critical role of sponsorships in enhancing the scale, quality, and global reach of sports events.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Purpose and Scope of the Literature Review

The global sports industry has become a powerhouse, thriving on effective event management and public relations (PR) to achieve operational efficiency and build strong brand identities. This literature review seeks to explore how both fields—event management and PR—drive critical aspects of sports organizations' success, including their operational impact, community relations, and international reputation. By synthesizing studies from various sources, this review will offer insights into how these strategies foster fan engagement, brand loyalty, and visibility for sports clubs and federations on a worldwide scale.

This literature review will take a thematic approach, analyzing both the theoretical frameworks and practical strategies within the domains of sports event management and public relations (PR). The first chapter will explore sports event management, discussing key frameworks such as logistics planning, stakeholder coordination, and risk management. Additionally, this chapter will investigate how sporting events contribute to economic development and social cohesion within host communities, emphasizing their role in enhancing community engagement.

The second chapter will concentrate on PR in the sports sector, addressing critical elements like media relations, crisis management, brand promotion, and digital fan engagement. This section will also highlight the necessity of PR strategies in building and maintaining relationships with various stakeholders, including fans, sponsors, and the media, which ultimately contributes to the visibility and reputation of sports organizations.

Before delving into these primary chapters, the review will provide an overview of sports organizations to contextualize the sports industry. This section will define the roles and structures of various entities, such as clubs, federations, and governing bodies, illustrating their influence on event management and PR practices.

Additionally, the review will feature a focused examination of three prominent sports—football, basketball, and volleyball—detailing how each sport employs events and PR

strategies to engage audiences and strengthen their brand identities. This section will include relevant case studies and examples of successful events and PR initiatives within these sports.

Finally, the literature review will address the significance of volunteering in sports events, underscoring the vital contributions of volunteers to the successful execution of events and their impact on the overall event management and PR strategies.

In summary, this literature review seeks to explore the dynamic interplay between event management and public relations within the sports industry. By examining these two critical areas, the review will highlight their collaborative impact on the success and sustainability of sports organizations, particularly focusing on how they benefit clubs, federations, and the broader sports community. This thematic analysis aims to uncover insights that illustrate the importance of effective strategies in enhancing brand visibility, fostering community engagement, and driving operational success in sports events.

2.2. Overview of Event Management and Public Relations in Sports

2.2.1. Event Management: Definition and Significance

Event management constitutes a multifaceted discipline indispensable for orchestrating diverse activities across numerous sectors. Ranging from corporate conferences and trade exhibitions to music festivals, weddings, and sporting events, the domain of event management encompasses a rich array of occasions that foster social engagement, cultural exchange, and economic development. It encompasses a wide range of tasks, including venue selection, budgeting, logistics coordination, parking and shuttle services, stakeholder engagement, contacting and coordinating with vendors and venues, promoting the event through various marketing channels, and developing safety and emergency plans, including contingency plans for potential disruptions (risk assessment), securing necessary permits from city officials, and ensuring compliance with regulations (Airtable, n.d.).

2.2.1.1. Event Management in Sports

In recent years, event management has become a pivotal component of the sports industry, transforming how audiences experience competitions and how these events impact

communities. Sporting events, ranging from local tournaments to global championships, captivate audiences worldwide, transcending borders and cultural boundaries to foster collective enthusiasm. Behind the scenes, a sophisticated event management framework meticulously coordinates logistics, enhances spectator experiences, and ensures the smooth execution of each event.

Sporting events stand out from other event types due to their focus on physical performance and the diverse structures they offer, from single-sport competitions to large, multi-sport gatherings like the Olympics. These events appeal to a wide audience by attracting both top-tier athletes and recreational participants. What truly distinguishes sports events, however, is their profound emotional impact. They foster a unique sense of unity, bringing fans and communities together in collective excitement, loyalty, and pride—qualities that make these events a powerful tool for social bonding and identity (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell and Shonk, 2024).

2.2.2. Public Relations (PR): Definition and Significance

Public relations (PR) are an essential communication discipline focused on shaping public perception and building strategic relationships. According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), PR involves a systematic process designed to establish beneficial connections between organizations and their audiences. This approach highlights the dual nature of PR in managing an organization's image and encouraging meaningful engagement with stakeholders, aiming to foster trust and enhance the organization's reputation (Austin, 2024).

PR professionals operate as storytellers, crafting compelling narratives that captivate and engage audiences. Their work is integral to creating brand stories, navigating crises, and setting the tone for organizational messaging. In this role, PR practitioners act as a vital link between organizations and a diverse array of stakeholders, from customers and investors to media outlets. By skillfully leveraging communication channels—such as social media, press releases, and community events—PR professionals shape perceptions and create a resonant impact that extends beyond individual events, ultimately supporting the broader objectives of the organization.

Beyond storytelling, PR is also an essential tool for **relationship-building**. Through efforts like customer engagement programs, employee communications, and community outreach, PR helps organizations establish trust and foster loyalty. This aspect of PR is instrumental in building long-term brand value and ensuring that the public perceives the organization positively (Larkins, 2024).

Crisis management is another key function within PR. In moments of organizational challenges, PR professionals play a central role in delivering transparent and empathetic communications that can significantly reduce reputational damage. Research indicates that organizations with effective crisis communication frameworks can protect and even strengthen their reputational standing during challenging times (Zhiyuan, L et. al, 2023).

Furthermore, PR involves **media engagement and content creation**. By developing thought leadership articles, managing social media, and crafting multimedia campaigns, PR practitioners enhance brand visibility and credibility. This role as a trusted source of information within an industry positions organizations as thought leaders, increasing their reach and reinforcing their reputational standing (Bergström and Bäckman, 2013).

Lastly, PR's impact on **brand perception and organizational outcomes** has been well documented. Studies suggest that strong PR campaigns directly influence purchasing intent and overall brand favorability, making PR a cost-effective way to drive business success (Rahi. S., 2016).

This foundation on PR's role in shaping perception, managing crises, and creating impactful stories leads us to explore its application in sports. Public relations in sports, as a specialization, adopts these principles to foster fan loyalty, manage brand image, and promote sports organizations and events on a global stage.

2.2.2.1. Public Relations in Sports

The field of public relations within sports has evolved significantly, becoming a cornerstone for sports organizations managing an increasing number of complex crises. From doping scandals and off-field controversies to organizational issues, sports PR professionals now face the challenge of safeguarding an organization's reputation under unprecedented public scrutiny. A survey conducted by Mabile Delatte (2003) revealed

that 70% of surveyed sports professionals had faced crises, highlighting the need for robust and effective crisis management within the industry. This study underscores the critical role of PR specialists in managing crises, offering organizations a framework to assess their crisis communication strengths and address potential weaknesses.

In parallel with crisis management, sports public relations now navigate the expectations of the media, particularly with the advent of social media platforms that demand rapid and ongoing engagement. According to research by Walsh (2017), sports information directors (SIDs) are now expected to engage audiences proactively through these channels. This study found that while many media professionals acknowledge the importance of assessing social media's impact on public perceptions, few athletic departments currently conduct systematic research on media engagement. This presents a considerable opportunity for sports organizations to refine PR strategies through structured evaluations and closer collaboration with journalists. Furthermore, Walsh's study highlights the behavioral competencies PR professionals need to cultivate productive media relationships, which are crucial in controlling narratives and maintaining organizational trust.

With these developments, PR in sports has progressed beyond traditional media management to include advanced relationship-building, digital engagement, and proactive communication strategies. By leveraging social media effectively and fostering strong media relationships, sports PR professionals can help organizations navigate crises, shape public perceptions, and build lasting connections with audiences.

2.3. Overview of Sports Organizations

An organization can be broadly defined as a collection of human, financial, and otherwise resources working in concert to achieve a common goal (Ruibley and Bo Li, 2021). Scholars have provided various perspectives on what constitutes an organization, all of which underscore its coordinated and purposeful nature. For instance:

"Organizations are goal-directed social entities, designed as deliberately structured, coordinated activity systems and linked to the external environment"
(Daft, 2016: 13).

"An organization is a tool people use to coordinate their actions to obtain something they desire or value—that is, to achieve their goals" (Jones, 2013: 2).

"Organizations are interconnected sets of individuals and groups who attempt to accomplish common goals through differentiated functions and intended coordination" (Hitt, Black and Porter, 2009: 8).

These definitions reflect the essential structure and purpose behind sports organizations, which range from local clubs and leagues to international governing bodies. Each plays a pivotal role in organizing and promoting sports events while managing public perception through targeted PR strategies.

The sports industry encompasses a vast network of organizations, each uniquely contributing to the global sports landscape. While renowned teams like Real Madrid, the Houston Rockets, and Liverpool often dominate media attention, the industry extends far beyond these high-profile clubs. National governing bodies and federations, such as Olympic committees, are critical players, particularly in developing and managing national teams that inspire widespread pride. Teams like the U.S. basketball team, the Turkish women's volleyball team, and the Spanish football team capture global attention during international events like the Olympics and World Cup, spotlighting athletic talent and bolstering the visibility of sports worldwide.

Beyond elite-level teams, community-based organizations are essential to fostering sports participation and community ties. High school and college athletic programs nurture young talent and build local pride, while parks and recreation departments create accessible sports and recreation opportunities. By offering leagues, classes, and programs, these organizations promote health, well-being, and a culture of community involvement, ensuring that sports remain inclusive and engaging for everyone.

Media outlets also play a transformative role in the sports industry, enhancing fan engagement and expanding global reach. Networks like ESPN and Sports Illustrated bring in-depth analysis, real-time coverage, and exclusive content to fans. Additionally, CBS Sports' Champions League show has become a staple for fans of international football, offering dedicated coverage, insights, and commentary on one of the most prestigious tournaments in club soccer. Through live broadcasts, feature stories, and digital content,

these media platforms meet fans' demand for immersive experiences, connecting audiences to the heart of sports.

Collectively, these organizations—spanning elite clubs, national teams, community programs, and media networks—form a dynamic and interconnected web that sustains and advances the sports industry on both local and global levels.

Chelladurai (2014) categorized sports organizations into three types based on funding sources: public, private, and third-sector organizations. Public sports organizations, like parks and recreation departments, aim to serve the community, providing sports facilities and programs funded primarily by taxpayers. Private sports organizations, such as professional sports teams, focus on revenue generation and rely on private investment and ownership. Third-sector organizations operate in partnership with public or private bodies, often providing community services with some government support, as seen in organizations like the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club (Ruihley and Bo Li, 2021).

Additionally, sports organizations can be classified as either nonprofit or for-profit. Nonprofits, like the IOC and USA Basketball, pursue social or educational missions and are exempt from many taxes, which allows them to foster strong community relationships. While these organizations don't aim for profit, they must still generate revenue to cover operational costs and ensure service delivery (Ruihley and Bo Li, 2021).

Moving from a general framework of sports organizations, this section will delve into the global governing bodies that set universal standards, enforce competition rules, and drive the international growth of their respective sports.

International governing bodies hold the utmost authority, setting standardized rules, organizing elite competitions, and overseeing the growth of their sports on a global scale. These organizations are essential for maintaining fairness, facilitating international participation, and driving sport-specific development initiatives that engage fans and athletes across continents.

The sports industry is driven by a number of influential international governing bodies, which hold the highest authority in the realm of sports. These organizations play a central role in setting standardized rules, organizing prestigious competitions, and overseeing the

global growth and development of their respective sports. Each governing body is tasked with managing, regulating, and fostering the advancement of its sport, shaping competitive structures, ensuring fair play, and promoting participation at all levels, from grassroots initiatives to the professional arena. Their efforts are crucial in facilitating international participation while driving sport-specific development initiatives that engage fans and athletes across the globe. By overseeing the expansion and accessibility of sports, these organizations are instrumental in increasing their global reach and ensuring inclusivity across diverse regions.

This section delves into the key governing bodies that play a central role in the global sports landscape, beginning with FIFA and continuing with other major organizations such as the IOC, FIBA, FIVB, and more.

2.3.1. Key Global Governing Bodies in Sports

FIFA (International Federation of Association Football)

FIFA, founded in 1904 and based in Zurich, Switzerland, governs international football (soccer) and is one of the most prominent bodies in the sports world. FIFA's flagship event, the FIFA World Cup, is a global spectacle that draws immense international attention (FIFA, n.d).

Key Responsibilities:

- **Global Competitions:** FIFA organizes various global tournaments, including the FIFA World Cup and the Women's World Cup, as well as youth and futsal events.
- **Regulation of Rules:** FIFA collaborates with IFAB to create and uphold the Laws of the Game.
- **Development and Support:** Through its FIFA Forward Program, FIFA invests in football infrastructure and youth development, particularly in underserved regions.



Figure 1. Fifa forward: Copa Federal in Argentina funded by FIFA

Source: InsideFIFA, 2023

Social Programs: FIFA uses football as a platform for promoting health, education, and social inclusion, exemplified through its "Football for Hope" initiatives (InsideFifa, 2017).



The organisations that run the programmes on the ground are the driving force behind Football for Hope, and the communities where they work are its main beneficiaries.

Figure 2. Fifa football for hope program – supporting change P.6

Source: FIFA and Sport and Dev, 2008

IOC (International Olympic Committee)

The IOC, founded in 1894 and headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, governs the Olympic Movement, which includes national Olympic committees, international

federations, and the Olympic Games. It is dedicated to promoting peace and unity through sport (IOC, n.d).

Key Responsibilities:

- **Olympic Games Management:** The IOC oversees the organization and scheduling of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.
- **Promoting Olympic Values:** It enforces the Olympic Charter to uphold the values of excellence, friendship, and respect.
- **Athlete Support:** Through Olympic Solidarity, the IOC aids athletes from developing countries, ensuring greater inclusivity.

Environmental and Ethical Initiatives: The IOC emphasizes sustainability in the bidding process for the Games and works with host cities to implement green practices (IOC Sustainability Strategy, 2017).



Figure 3. IOC Sustainability Strategy at a Glance, P. 3

Source: IOC, 2017: 3

Strategic intents for 2030 are defined for each sphere of responsibility and each focus area

Strategic intents for 2030 per sphere of responsibility



Figure 4. IOC Sustainability Strategy, P.4

Source: IOC, 2017: 4

FIBA (International Basketball Federation)

Founded in 1932 and based in Mies, Switzerland, FIBA governs international basketball. Its key objectives are to maintain the integrity of the sport and foster its development across the globe (FIBA, n.d).

Key Roles:

- **Global Competitions:** FIBA organizes the Basketball World Cup and Olympic basketball events.
- **Regulation and Standardization:** FIBA sets international basketball rules and enforces consistency across national and regional competitions.
- **Development and Outreach:** FIBA funds grassroots programs and offers training for coaches, referees, and players.
- **Fan Engagement:** FIBA uses digital platforms to increase engagement and expand basketball's global footprint.

FIVB (International Volleyball Federation)

The FIVB, founded in 1947 and based in Lausanne, Switzerland, governs volleyball at the global level. The organization's mission is to promote volleyball and its variants worldwide (FIVB, n.d).

Key Functions:

- **Major Tournaments:** FIVB organizes the Volleyball World Championships and the Olympic volleyball events.
- **Youth Programs:** FIVB runs development programs to nurture young talent, and its initiatives reach grassroots levels, encouraging participation.
- **Regulation:** FIVB standardizes the rules for both indoor and beach volleyball.
- **Digital Expansion:** FIVB amplifies its reach through digital media, making volleyball more accessible to fans globally.

World Rugby

World Rugby, established in 1886 and based in Dublin, Ireland, governs rugby union and rugby sevens. The organization works to expand the sport and ensure its integrity on a global scale (World Rugby, 2021).

Main Roles:

- **Global Competitions:** World Rugby organizes the Rugby World Cup and Olympic rugby events.
- **Player Welfare and Safety:** The organization emphasizes injury prevention, with a focus on player health.
- **Promotion and Development:** World Rugby supports emerging markets and helps foster rugby's growth in new regions.
- **Governance:** The body ensures consistent application of the sport's laws across member countries.

World Athletics (formerly IAAF)

World Athletics, founded in 1912 and based in Monaco, is the governing body for track and field athletics. It promotes the sport globally and organizes some of the most prestigious competitions (IAAF, n.d).

Responsibilities:

- **International Competitions:** World Athletics runs the World Championships and oversees Olympic track and field events.

- **Athlete Health:** It is at the forefront of athlete welfare and upholds rigorous anti-doping policies.
- **Promotion and Grassroots Programs:** World Athletics supports community-level participation, encouraging youth involvement in athletics.
- **Digital Engagement:** The organization makes use of digital platforms to broadcast competitions and expand athletics' reach globally.

International Tennis Federation (ITF)

Established in 1913 and headquartered in London, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) serves as the primary global organization overseeing tennis competitions. Its mission includes promoting accessible and fair opportunities for tennis players worldwide.

Key Roles:

- **Event Management:** The ITF organizes significant tournaments, such as the Davis Cup and the Billie Jean King Cup (formerly Fed Cup), which feature top talents from around the world.
- **Setting Standards:** It establishes uniform rules and guidelines, creating consistency and ensuring fair competition across all levels of play.
- **Community and Youth Programs:** Through initiatives like "Play Tennis," the ITF funds projects that introduce tennis to schools, community centers, and youth organizations globally.
- **The ITF's Vision for the Future-ITF2024 Plan:** In 2016, the ITF introduced "ITF2024," a comprehensive strategy designed to promote sustainable growth for both the organization and tennis as a whole. Launched during the ITF's Annual General Meeting, this initiative highlights eight key priorities that aim to broaden tennis's global impact, improve competitive standards, and ensure long-term organizational stability. This forward-looking plan embodies the ITF's dedication to creating a more inclusive and progressive path for the sport.

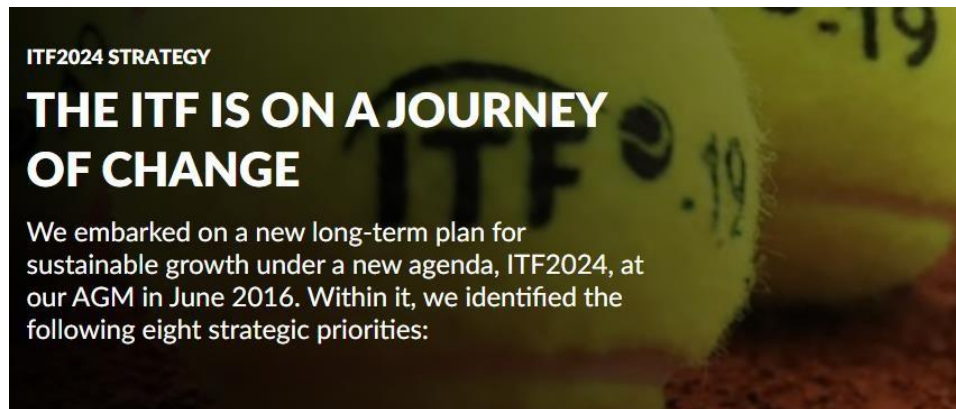


Figure 5. ITF 2024 Strategy

Source: International Tennis Federation, 2024

Digital Expansion: To maintain an international fanbase, the ITF leverages digital streaming and social media platforms, making tennis content widely accessible.

Badminton World Federation (BWF)

Formed in 1934 and based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) governs badminton on a global scale, including para-badminton. Its efforts focus on expanding access to the sport while maintaining competitive integrity.

Key Roles:

- **Event Coordination:** BWF oversees high-profile competitions, such as the BWF World Championships and Olympic badminton events, drawing widespread international viewership.
- **Standards and Fairness:** By setting clear rules and officiating standards, BWF ensures fair play and consistent competition across its tournaments.
- **Development Initiatives:** It invests in youth engagement programs and community training academies that nurture emerging talent worldwide.
- **Digital and Fan Engagement:** BWF employs online broadcasting and social media channels to engage fans, offering live coverage and interactive content to broaden its audience reach.

Collectively, these governing bodies extend sports' influence across borders, promoting values of inclusivity, fair play, and health. Through initiatives like FIFA's youth

programs or the IOC's Olympic Solidarity, they bring sports to underserved communities, fueling a shared sense of global sportsmanship.

2.3.2. Roles of National Federations and Leagues

2.3.2.1. Structure and Interactions

Global sports governance is uniquely centered in Switzerland, home to several prominent international sports federations such as the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, **Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)**, **Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA)**, **Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)**, and the **Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)**. The concentration of these organizations in Switzerland is no coincidence; the country's political neutrality, stability, and business-friendly environment make it an ideal location for international governance. Additionally, the choice of French names reflects Switzerland's multilingual culture and emphasizes the organizations' global reach and inclusive approach. These federations aim not only to organize major events and regulate their respective sports but also to foster values of fair play, inclusivity, and cultural exchange.

Each organization operates with a governance structure designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and continuous development in sports. Their presidents are elected through specific systems, involving representatives from affiliated member nations, ensuring that leadership is representative and accountable. Below, I provide a detailed look at the structures of each organization, their current presidents, and the processes that drive their leadership decisions and day-to-day operations.

2.3.2.2. Structure and Roles of Leading Sports Organizations

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- **Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland
- **Current President:** Thomas Bach (since 2013)
- **Election Process:** The IOC President is elected by the IOC Session, a body comprising all IOC members. Elections take place every eight years, with a possible re-election for an additional four-year term.

The IOC serves as the primary governing body of the Olympic Movement, overseeing both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games and promoting Olympism on a global scale. Its structure is organized as follows:

- **The Session:** The highest authority within the IOC, this body meets annually to make critical decisions, such as selecting host cities and ratifying new sports. Each member of the IOC has one vote in these sessions.
- **The Executive Board:** This board, including the President, four Vice Presidents, and ten additional members elected by the Session, oversees operational matters, strategic planning, and policy implementation.
- **Commissions:** Specialized groups that focus on critical aspects of the Olympic Movement, such as athlete welfare, ethics, and sustainability.

Through the Olympic Solidarity program, the IOC provides funding and training opportunities for athletes worldwide, supporting its mission of accessibility and inclusivity.

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

- **Headquarters:** Zurich, Switzerland
- **Current President:** Gianni Infantino (since 2016)
- **Election Process:** FIFA's President is elected every four years by the FIFA Congress, where representatives from its 211 member associations vote.

FIFA governs international football and plays a crucial role in global sports, managing events like the FIFA World Cup and implementing development programs to grow the game worldwide. Its structure is as follows:

- **Congress:** FIFA's highest authority, this body meets annually to make significant decisions, including budget approvals, policy ratifications, and the election of the President.
- **Council:** This body includes the President and representatives from each of FIFA's six continental confederations, setting the strategic vision for global football and ensuring that policies align with FIFA's mission.
- **General Secretariat:** Responsible for day-to-day operations, including event management, marketing, and broadcasting, as well as coordinating FIFA's various development initiatives.

FIFA also has several standing committees, such as the Finance Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, which contribute to maintaining the organization's integrity and operational efficiency.

Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA)

- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Current President:** Sheikh Saud Ali Al Thani (since 2023)
- **Election Process:** FIBA's President is elected by the Congress, which meets every four years to set policies and elect the President and Central Board members.

FIBA oversees international basketball competitions and development initiatives, working to make the sport more accessible across various demographics. Its structure is composed of:

- **Congress:** The supreme authority within FIBA, this body gathers every four years to discuss policy, approve budgets, and elect the President.
- **Central Board:** This board handles FIBA's policies and strategic direction, comprising regional representatives and elected officials who ensure the organization's mission is carried out.
- **Executive Committee:** A smaller decision-making body within the Central Board, focusing on operational issues and day-to-day management.
- Through grassroots programs and partnerships, FIBA engages youth audiences and supports the growth of basketball globally, especially through digital platforms and live-streaming events.

Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)

- **Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland
- **Current President:** Ary Graça (since 2016)
- **Election Process:** FIVB's President is elected by the World Congress for an 8-year term. Representatives from member federations vote on significant decisions, including the election of officials.

FIVB is responsible for managing and developing both volleyball and beach volleyball internationally, with a structure that enables widespread engagement and rigorous standards:

- **World Congress:** Held every two years, the Congress is FIVB's highest authority, where policy decisions and official elections take place.
- **Executive Committee:** A decision-making body that manages the daily operations of FIVB, ensuring that all decisions align with the objectives set by the World Congress.
- **Commissions and Working Groups:** These groups focus on specific aspects of volleyball, from athlete health to event organization, providing expert oversight in their areas of focus.

FIVB emphasizes global engagement through initiatives targeting young athletes and emerging regions, and its advanced broadcasting techniques have helped grow the sport's popularity.

Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)

- **Headquarters:** Nyon, Switzerland
- **Current President:** Aleksander Čeferin (since 2016)
- **Election Process:** UEFA's President is elected every four years by the UEFA Congress, which includes representatives from UEFA's 55 member associations. UEFA manages European football and organizes some of the world's most prestigious tournaments, including the Champions League and the European Championship. Its structure is organized as follows:
 - **Congress:** The highest decision-making body, this assembly of representatives meets annually to discuss policy, approve the budget, and elect officials.
 - **Executive Committee:** This committee, headed by the President, sets UEFA's policies and oversees its operations. It includes representatives from various European football federations.
 - **Administrative and Specialist Units:** These departments handle various operational tasks, from marketing and broadcasting to disciplinary issues, ensuring that UEFA's objectives are met efficiently.

UEFA actively supports social programs through the UEFA Foundation for Children, using football as a means of positive change within communities across Europe.

These global sports organizations play a vital role in the development and regulation of their respective sports. Based in Switzerland, they uphold principles of neutrality and inclusivity, fostering an environment for sports diplomacy that highlights the unifying power of sport across the world. Through strong leadership, strategic planning, and initiatives focused on fair play and youth development, they significantly shape sports' positive global impact.

However, the reach of these organizations extends beyond their global regulatory roles. Global organizations such as the IOC, FIFA, FIBA, FIVB, and UEFA not only govern international competitions but also set the framework for sports at the national level. They provide the foundation upon which national federations and local clubs are built, ensuring the implementation of development programs, adherence to global standards, and the promotion of core values like inclusivity and innovation (IOC, 2020; FIFA, 2022).

2.3.2.3. National Federations Overview

Global governing bodies like the IOC, FIFA, and FIVB set the standards and frameworks that shape sports culture and management worldwide. They further their influence through initiatives like the Olympic Solidarity Program and FIFA's Global Football Development, which rely on National Sports Federations (NSFs) to implement these standards at the country level.

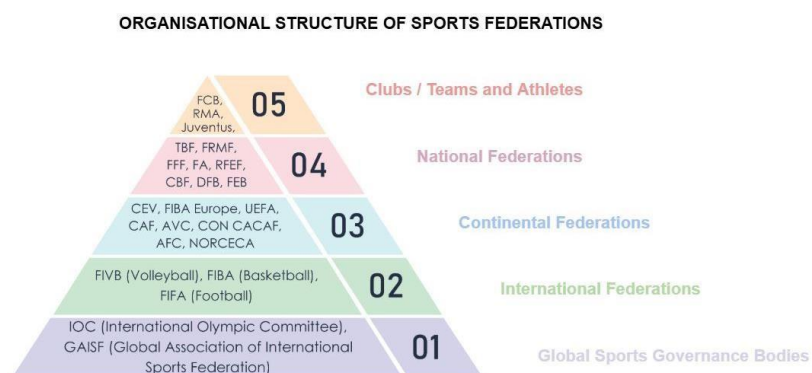


Figure 6. Pyramid Chart of Organisational Structure of Sports Federations

Source: Original

their activities with both national and international principles, such as those outlined in the Olympic Charter. Additionally, NSFs adhere to local government guidelines, ensuring that sports governance aligns with ethical and developmental standards. Their responsibilities include organizing competitions, regulating coaching, creating talent pathways, and upholding ethical standards, including anti-doping and fair play initiatives (Jain, 2020).

Beyond administrative duties, NSFs are essential to grassroots sports development. They provide accessible pathways for individuals at all levels—from recreational to elite athletes—through structured training programs and youth competitions. NSFs also select athletes for international representation, ensuring they meet global standards, and contribute to making sports inclusive and accessible to people from diverse backgrounds. This collaboration, extending from global governing bodies to NSFs and local clubs, is vital for the sustainable growth of sports. It enables the coexistence of grassroots initiatives and elite competitions, fostering a dynamic ecosystem where benefits are felt across all levels of participation.

Roles of National Federations

Regulation of Domestic Competitions: NSFs organize and oversee national leagues and tournaments, ensuring compliance with standards set by global bodies (Heritage, 2024).

Development of Athlete Pathways: They build structured pathways for athletes' development, from grassroots to elite levels, ensuring a continuous pipeline of talent through training, competitions, and talent identification (Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, 2014).

Coaching Education and Standards: Federations develop coaching education programs, training coaches according to internationally recognized standards, which elevates coaching quality across all levels (Heritage, 2024).

Representation and International Participation: NSFs select and prepare national teams for international competitions, aligning them with global standards and ensuring competitive participation on the world stage (Chelladurai and Zintz, 2015).

Promotion of Ethics and Integrity: They uphold ethical standards, including anti-doping policies, fair play, and anti-corruption measures, which preserve the integrity of the sport (IOC, 2020).

Grassroots Engagement and Accessibility: NSFs play a crucial role in promoting accessibility and inclusivity in sports, engaging individuals from all backgrounds and abilities through local and community programs (Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, 2014).

The Consequences of the Absence of Federations

Without federations, the global sports landscape would experience fragmentation and disarray. Key consequences would include:

Lack of Unified Regulations: In the absence of federations, there would be no enforcement of uniform rules across leagues, leading to inconsistencies, especially in international competitions (AISTS, 2021).

Disruption of Talent Development: Federations are vital to structured athlete development. Without them, there would be no cohesive pathway for nurturing young talent, diminishing competitive standards (Giannoulakis et al., 2017).

Challenges in International Competition: Federations organize and support national teams in events like the Olympics, world, and regional cups. Their absence would jeopardize participation and the prestige of these global events (Chelladurai and Zintz 2015).

Weakening of Ethical Oversight: Without federations, ethical governance, including anti-doping and fair play, would lack accountability, potentially increasing corruption and misconduct (Chelladurai and Zintz, 2015).

Economic Impact: Federations secure essential sponsorships and funding, enabling professional competition organizations. Their absence would reduce financial support for clubs, athletes, and leagues, compromising sports sustainability (AISTS, 2021).

Reduced Global Collaboration: Federations facilitate international knowledge exchange and best practices. Without them, global sports would lose unity and innovation, reducing inclusivity and progress (Chelladurai and Zintz, 2015).

In summary, national federations are irreplaceable in ensuring structured growth, ethical standards, and accessibility in sports. Without them, the sports landscape would face disintegration, diminishing cohesion and quality at all levels, from grassroots to international competitions.

2.3.2.4. Leagues and Clubs Overview

Sports leagues are essential frameworks that enable organized competition among teams and players. They serve as a platform where teams compete in a structured environment, ensuring competitive balance and player development. While the structure of leagues can vary significantly across different sports, they generally share key features such as tiers, divisions, and competition formats that cater to the dynamics of each sport. Football (soccer), basketball, and volleyball leagues, for example, all adopt structured systems that include multiple levels, promotion and relegation, and mechanisms for player movement, which make them integral to the sport ecosystem globally.

Roles of Leagues and Clubs: Football (Soccer) Leagues:

The football league system, especially in England, is referred to as the football pyramid. It consists of multiple interconnected leagues that allow clubs to be promoted or relegated based on their performance. The tiered structure promotes competitiveness and provides pathways for smaller clubs to rise to the top levels.



Figure 7. All Soccer Leagues Explained

Source: Progressive Soccer Training, 2023

Football leagues across the globe showcase diverse structures, yet they commonly emphasize competition, promotion, and relegation. These elements ensure dynamic tournaments, encourage the development of players and clubs, and captivate audiences worldwide.

- **European Leagues:** Europe hosts some of the most renowned football leagues, setting standards for excellence in the sport.
- **English Premier League (EPL):** Known for its competitive nature, widespread fanbase, and substantial broadcasting revenue, the EPL stands out as a leader in global football.
- **La Liga (Spain):** Celebrated for its emphasis on technical ability and artistry, La Liga features historic teams like FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, fostering intense rivalries and unforgettable moments.
- **Serie A (Italy):** Esteemed for its tactical sophistication, Serie A boasts iconic clubs such as Juventus, AC Milan, and Inter Milan.
- **Bundesliga (Germany):** Renowned for its efficient structure, fan-centric policies, and high-level competition, the Bundesliga combines financial stability with thrilling matches in its 18-team single-division format.

- **Ligue 1 (France):** Highlighting a mix of emerging local talent and international superstars, Ligue 1 has become synonymous with clubs like Paris Saint-Germain, which draw significant global attention.
- **South American Leagues:** South America, a hub of football passion, has leagues that not only develop local talent but also influence global football dynamics.
- **Brazil's Série A:** With a reputation for skillful and entertaining play, Série A serves as a primary source of international football talent.
- **Argentina's Primera División:** Known for its vibrant rivalries and a strong focus on youth development, this league has produced world-class players and unforgettable matches.

These leagues play a pivotal role in shaping the football ecosystem by consistently exporting players to European and other global leagues.

Asian and Middle Eastern Leagues

Football's rapid growth in Asia and the Middle East has led to increasing investment and global recognition.

- **Saudi Pro League:** Strategic recruitment of internationally acclaimed players has heightened the league's global profile.
- **J-League (Japan):** Recognized for its professional management and emphasis on quality gameplay, the J-League sets an example in Asia.
- **Indian Super League (ISL):** By blending grassroots initiatives with marquee international players, the ISL is fostering the sport's growth in the region.
- **African Leagues**

Leagues across Africa, such as Egypt's Premier League and South Africa's Premier Soccer League (PSL), are critical to nurturing talent. These competitions often serve as stepping stones for players transitioning to more competitive leagues abroad (CAF, 2023).

- **North American Leagues**

In North America, Major League Soccer (MLS) deviates from the traditional league model by adopting a conference-based system without promotion or

relegation. Its playoff format aligns with other American sports and helps expand football's popularity in the region (Benjamin, 2019).

Global Competitions and Integration: Uniting Football's Elite

Global football tournaments like the UEFA Champions League, Copa Libertadores, and AFC Champions League are more than just competitions; they serve as grand stages where the world's most talented players and prestigious clubs converge. These tournaments elevate the sport, bridging diverse cultures and offering fans thrilling, high-stakes drama (The Sporting Blog, 2024).

- **UEFA Champions League:** As Europe's premier club competition, the Champions League showcases tactical brilliance and star-studded matchups that captivate billions annually. Clubs like Real Madrid and Manchester City battle not just for the trophy but for global supremacy, solidifying their legacies (Kruskic, 2019).
- **Copa Libertadores:** The "South American Champions League" offers raw passion and fierce rivalries. It combines flair with fiery intensity, epitomized by clashes such as Boca Juniors vs. River Plate, bringing the continent's football culture to life (Extv, 2018).
- **AFC Champions League:** Emerging as a powerhouse platform, this tournament highlights Asia's football growth. Teams like Al-Hilal and Urawa Red Diamonds prove that excellence in the sport is no longer confined to traditional strongholds (Church, 2024).

These intercontinental clashes not only elevate club prestige but also amplify football's global appeal, drawing audiences from every corner of the world. Such tournaments symbolize unity, showcasing how a shared love for the sport transcends borders and fosters international camaraderie.



Figure 8. European Football
Source: Progressive Soccer Training, 2023

The Transfer Market: Football's Grand Stage

The transfer market is where football meets drama and strategy. **Europe** dominates as the hub for big-money moves, with clubs like Real Madrid and Manchester City shaping the sport's future. **South America** serves as a talent factory, exporting stars like Messi and Neymar to Europe's elite leagues. Meanwhile, the **Middle East** is emerging as a new powerhouse, offering massive contracts to attract global icons like Ronaldo and Benzema. Transfers aren't just business—they bring fresh energy, shift balances, and create the moments fans live for. Football's theater never rests (Bajaj, 2024).

What is a Football Club?

A football club is an organization dedicated to playing football (soccer) competitively, representing a community, city, or even a country. Clubs are more than just teams; they are complex entities blending sports performance, business operations, and cultural influence.

Key Elements of a Football Club

- **Teams and Players**

Clubs typically field multiple teams, including senior men's, women's, and youth squads.

Players range from local talent to global superstars. For instance, Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) features household names like Lionel Messi, Neymar, and Kylian Mbappé (formerly).

- **Stadiums and Facilities**

Clubs own or lease stadiums, which serve as venues for matches and symbols of pride.

Example: FC Barcelona's Camp Nou, the largest stadium in Europe, holds nearly 100,000 fans (FC Barcelona, n.d.).



Figure 9. Camp Nou - Fc Barcelona

Source : FC Barcelona, 2021

- **Ownership and Management:** Clubs can be privately owned, fan-owned, or publicly traded companies.

Example: Manchester United is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, while Real Madrid is owned by its fans (socios) (The Sporting News, 2022) (NewsNow, 2021).

They are run by a board of directors, managers, and a coaching team overseeing operations and player development.

Revenue Streams: Clubs generate income through:

- **Broadcasting rights:** Deals with networks to televise matches (e.g., the Premier League's \$10 billion broadcast deals) (Premier League, 2023).
- **Sponsorships and partnerships:** Nike and Adidas frequently sponsor top clubs, while Puma is the official manufacturer of national teams jerseys (Puma, 2024).
- **Ticket sales and matchday revenue:** Match attendance is a vital income source.
- **Merchandising:** Selling branded items like jerseys, scarves, and memorabilia.
- **Fan Base:** Clubs thrive on loyal supporters, often forming communities or "ultras" known for passionate backing.

Example: Liverpool fans singing "You'll Never Walk Alone" is iconic in world football.

- **Cultural and Global Impact:** Clubs often reflect local culture and act as ambassadors.

Example: Flamengo (Brazil) symbolizes Rio's vibrant football culture, while Bayern Munich exemplifies German efficiency and dominance.

Why Do Football Clubs Matter?

- **Economic Impact:** Football clubs contribute billions to local and global economies. The European football market was worth €25.2 billion in 2022 (Deloitte Global, 2022).
- **Social Influence:** Clubs unite people across nations, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers (EFDN, 2023).
- **Sporting Legacy:** Clubs like Ajax and Manchester United have revolutionized tactics, youth development, and global football standards.

Basketball: A Global Phenomenon - An Overview of Basketball's Global Appeal

Basketball, born in 1891 through Dr. James Naismith's innovative vision, has blossomed into a global sport enjoyed by millions across over 200 countries. The sport's simplicity—requiring only a hoop and a ball—makes it accessible, whether on a city street, a rural court, or the grandest arena. Basketball's popularity stems from its exciting pace and

emphasis on teamwork, athleticism, and individual creativity. Today, it serves not just as a sport but as a cultural force that unites communities, fosters social interaction, and celebrates diversity (Williams, 2023).

The League System in Basketball: Understanding Basketball Leagues

Basketball leagues provide a structured platform for professional competition, showcasing talent across regional, national, and international stages. These systems vary widely:

- *Closed leagues*, like the NBA, maintain a fixed number of teams with no relegation or promotion.
- *Open leagues*, common in Europe, feature promotions and relegations, blending domestic and international competitions.

The NBA: The Pinnacle of Professional Basketball

The National Basketball Association (**NBA**), established in 1946, is recognized globally as the most prestigious professional basketball league. With its base in the United States, the league includes 30 teams divided into Eastern and Western Conferences. This division is characteristic of U.S. sports, helping to organize teams geographically and foster competitive rivalries. The conferences are further segmented into divisions to streamline scheduling and competition .

- **Season Structure:** Teams play 82 regular-season games, with top-performing teams advancing to playoffs.
- **Global Influence:** The NBA's commitment to globalization is evident in its diverse rosters, featuring international stars like Nikola Jokić (Serbia), Giannis Antetokounmpo (Greece), and Luka Dončić (Slovenia) (Sportsdab, 2023).
- **The Concept of Conferences:** Unique to the USA, conferences divide large leagues into manageable, geographically based competitions.

In the NBA: Teams within a conference play more games against one another than against teams from the opposite conference.

This format builds regional rivalries and ensures varied playoff pathways, culminating in the NBA Finals, where the Eastern and Western champions compete.

Basketball Beyond the USA

- ***Europe: Home of the EuroLeague***

The EuroLeague stands as Europe's premier basketball tournament, bringing together top clubs from domestic leagues like Spain's Liga ACB, Turkey's BSL, and Greece's HEBA A1. It contrasts sharply with the NBA:

Games are shorter (40 minutes vs. 48 in the NBA).

Strategies are more defense-oriented, and rosters often emphasize teamwork over star power.

EuroLeague clubs, such as Real Madrid, FC Barcelona, and Anadolu Efes, are global brands with dedicated fanbases. The competition culminates in the Final Four, a highly anticipated event drawing millions of viewers (Eurobasket, 2023).

- ***Asia and Latin America***

China: The Chinese Basketball Association (CBA), featuring stars like Yao Ming, has bolstered basketball's growth in Asia.

Philippines: The Philippine Basketball Association (PBA), the world's second-oldest professional and first Asian league, is a national obsession (Usana, 2021).

Argentina and Brazil: With rich basketball traditions, these countries have produced legends like Manu Ginóbili and Oscar Schmidt, who have excelled on global stages.

- ***The Balkans: A Hotbed of Basketball Passion***

The Balkans' Unique Legacy

Basketball runs deep in Balkan culture. Countries such as Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Montenegro boast extraordinary success in producing elite players, including:

Nikola Jokić: A two-time NBA MVP from Serbia.

Luka Dončić: A Slovenian prodigy dominating the NBA.

- **Fan Culture:**



Figure 10. Kk Partizan Basketball Club In Belgrade, Serbia

Source: Ultras Tifo, 2023

Fans in the Balkans are renowned for their passion. Clubs like Partizan Belgrade and Crvena Zvezda regularly draw packed arenas with vibrant chants and unwavering loyalty. The intensity of Balkan basketball rivalries rivals that of football, creating some of the most electrifying atmospheres in sports.

Figures 9 and 10 vividly capture the electrifying energy of the "Grobari" (Gravediggers), a fan base celebrated for their unmatched passion and dedication. Known for transforming arenas into thunderous cauldrons of excitement, their unwavering loyalty shines through, whether roaring in support during home games or traveling tirelessly to back their team on the road. Their presence isn't just supportive—it's a spectacle that defines the essence of Balkan basketball fervor.



Figure 11. KK Partizan Basketball Club in Belgrade, Serbia

Source: Sportal, 2024

What is a Basketball Club?

A basketball club is an organized entity that competes in basketball leagues and tournaments, representing a specific region, community, or institution. It operates at the intersection of sports, business, and community engagement, blending athletic excellence with a strong fan and cultural base (Sportsmatik, 2022).

Key Elements of a Basketball Club:

- **Teams and Players:** Basketball clubs often field teams across categories, including men's, women's, and youth squads, with rosters featuring local and international talent.

Notable example: The Los Angeles Lakers boast a roster of historic NBA legends like Kobe Bryant and Magic Johnson, alongside contemporary stars like LeBron James (RealGM, n.d.).

- **Facilities and Arenas:** Clubs invest in state-of-the-art arenas that serve as venues for matches and community events, often becoming iconic landmarks.

Example: Madison Square Garden, home to the New York Knicks, is a world-famous sports and entertainment venue. Also called "The World's Most Famous

Arena,” Madison Square Garden is synonymous with the New York Knicks and NBA history. It has hosted countless legendary basketball moments, including Willis Reed’s iconic entrance during Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals—a defining moment in the sport’s history (MSG Venue History, n.d.).

- **Ownership and Management:** Clubs can operate under different models, including private ownership, fan ownership, or corporate sponsorship.

Example: The Golden State Warriors, privately owned by Joe Lacob and Peter Guber since 2010, exemplify strategic sports management. Acquired for \$450 million, the franchise’s valuation has skyrocketed to an estimated \$7 billion, driven by innovative branding and the opening of the Chase Center. Their tenure includes multiple NBA championships, solidifying their position as a top-tier sports franchise (SIM, 2023).

- **Revenue Streams: Broadcast Rights:** Lucrative television deals fund league and club operations, such as the NBA’s \$76 billion media deal (ESPN, 2024).
- **Sponsorships:** Brands like Nike and Gatorade are prominent sponsors in basketball.

Example: Nike is a leading sponsor in basketball, holding 13 active sponsorship deals as of 2022. The company has a long-standing partnership with the NBA, valued at approximately \$1 billion, which includes being the official uniform and apparel provider for the league since the 2017-18 season. Nike’s involvement extends to high-profile athlete endorsements and partnerships with various teams (Sportcal, 2024).

- **Merchandising Revenue:** The NBA earns over \$1 billion annually from merchandise sales, with the Air Jordan brand contributing around \$5 billion annually, reflecting its cultural impact beyond basketball (Statista, 2024). Other brands like Coca-Cola and Kia are also active sponsors, enhancing the league’s financial landscape (Sportcal, 2022).
- **Ticket Sales and Matchday Revenue:** Arenas generate income from live audiences.
- **Fan Base** Clubs rely on passionate fan bases to build their legacy.

Example: Panathinaikos in Greece is renowned for its fervent fans, who create electrifying atmospheres during EuroLeague games, along with their rivals Partizan, Crvena Zvezda, and Fenerbahce.

- **Cultural and Global Impact:** Clubs promote basketball globally, inspiring communities and athletes alike.

Example: The Los Angeles Lakers exemplify basketball's cultural and global impact. With legendary players like Magic Johnson, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James, the team has popularized the sport worldwide. Beyond games, their partnership with UCLA Health supports youth fitness and healthcare education, benefiting over 100,000 children annually through clinics and wellness programs (UCLA Health, 2024).

The Lakers' international popularity has significantly expanded the NBA's global reach, creating a worldwide fanbase and influencing fashion, music, and entertainment. The team has shaped basketball culture and inspired generations, proving that sports can serve as a bridge for cultural integration and social change (Spicer, 2024).

Volleyball: A Global Phenomenon

Volleyball has become one of the most popular and widely played sports globally, characterized by its dynamic gameplay and inclusivity across various demographics. Its appeal spans multiple age groups, skill levels, and cultures, with participation ranging from recreational play at schools and beaches to professional leagues and international competitions. The sport's global popularity is demonstrated through increasing viewership numbers, higher attendance at events, and consistent market growth. According to the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), over 800 million people worldwide are engaged in the sport annually, either as players or fans. This extensive reach underscores its role not only as a competitive activity but also as a social and cultural phenomenon (CEV, 2021).

Accessibility and Diversity

One of volleyball's key strengths lies in its accessibility. The minimal equipment required—just a net, a ball, and a flat playing surface—makes it a sport that can be played almost anywhere. This ease of entry has contributed significantly to its widespread adoption, particularly in schools and community settings.



Figure 12. Japan vs Italy at the Olympic Games Paris 2024

Source: Recine, 2024

Moreover, volleyball thrives in diverse formats, including indoor, beach, and even snow volleyball, each offering unique appeals. Indoor volleyball emphasizes teamwork and strategy in a fast-paced environment, while beach volleyball combines athleticism with a relaxed, outdoor ambiance. Snow volleyball, a more recent addition, showcases the sport's adaptability to extreme conditions and has gained traction in colder regions (Britannica, 2024).



Figure 13. Australia vs Norway - the Olympic Beach Games Tokyo 2020
Source: Volleyball World, 2021

Volleyball's Professional Leagues and International Competitions

Volleyball has a well-established global professional landscape, featuring competitive national leagues, prestigious continental tournaments, and high-stakes international events. Each league and competition showcases the sport's unique blend of athleticism, strategy, and fan passion.

Major European Volleyball Leagues

- **CEV Champions League:** The CEV Champions League is Europe's most prestigious club competition, featuring top teams like Cucine Lube Civitanova and ZAKSA Kędzierzyn-Koźle.

Structure: Teams play group stages, leading to playoffs and the Final Four.

Reputation: Known for showcasing elite-level volleyball and vibrant fan atmospheres.

- **Italian SuperLega (Serie A1)**

Italy's SuperLega is renowned globally for its competitiveness and star power.

Features: Teams like Sir Safety Susa Perugia draw international talent and massive viewership.

Fan Culture: Known for its passionate, packed arenas and historic rivalries.

- **Polish PlusLiga**

Poland's PlusLiga combines world-class players and loyal supporters.

Impact: Regularly supplies players to both the Polish national team and European competitions.

Asian Volleyball Leagues

- **Japanese V.League**

A tactical and fast-paced league blending local and international talent.

Strengths: Renowned for precision and teamwork over physical dominance.

- **Chinese Volleyball Super League (CVL)**

Known for its significant investment, the CVL features both national and international stars.

Growth: Enhances China's prominence in global volleyball by supporting Olympic athletes.

American Volleyball Leagues

- **Brazilian Superliga**

A powerhouse in volleyball, Brazil's Superliga showcases top-tier talent and electrifying matches.

Fan Support: Brazilian fans' enthusiasm is unmatched, creating an exhilarating match atmosphere.

- **Pro Volleyball Federation (USA)**

Launched in 2024, this league is positioned to grow indoor volleyball in the U.S. alongside its thriving beach volleyball scene.

Prestigious International Competitions

- **FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL)**

An annual tournament that pits the best national teams against each other.

Significance: A test of tactical brilliance and athletic endurance, with global appeal.

- **FIVB Club World Championship**

A tournament where champion clubs from each continent compete for global supremacy.

Relevance: Highlights the strength of domestic leagues and international club talent.

- **Olympic Volleyball**

A pinnacle event that has showcased volleyball's global appeal since 1964.

Olympic volleyball has significantly increased the sport's popularity worldwide, leading to greater youth development programs and inspiring new generations of players (Wedekind, 2024).



Figure 14. Türkiye women's volleyball team vs Argentina–Paris 24 Olympic games

Source: Anadolu Agency, 2023

Beach Volleyball: Dynamic, Global, and Growing

Beach volleyball has gained prominence since its inclusion in the 1996 Olympics, showcasing a fast-paced, two-player format played on sand. Its smaller court size (16x8 meters) and outdoor settings introduce unique challenges like adapting to wind and sun. Matches are best-of-three sets, with rally scoring to 21 points (FIVB, n.d.).

Globally, the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour and World Championships attract top talent and massive audiences, particularly in host cities like Rio de Janeiro and Vienna.

The sport is beloved for its festive atmosphere and intimate fan experience, blending athleticism with entertainment (FIVB, n.d.).

Legendary players, such as Kerri Walsh Jennings and Misty May-Treanor (USA), and rivalries between nations like Brazil and the USA, have elevated its prestige. Accessibility, with minimal equipment needs, has further driven its expansion, ensuring a vibrant future as more nations invest in talent development (FIVB, n.d.).

What is a Volleyball Club?

A volleyball club is an organization that competes in regional, national, and international volleyball leagues. These clubs foster athletic development, community spirit, and sports entertainment through their structured operations and competitions.

Key Elements of a Volleyball Club

- **Teams and Players:** Clubs often feature squads in men's, women's, and youth divisions, prioritizing both grassroots development and elite performance.

Example: VakıfBank SK, one of the top women's volleyball clubs globally, the club's success is highlighted by a remarkable 73-game winning streak from 2012 to 2014, acknowledged as a world record by Guinness World Records. The team achieved an unprecedented feat by winning all five championship trophies during the 2012–13 season, making them the only club in volleyball history to accomplish this (Guinness World Records, 2024).

- **Facilities and Arenas:** Volleyball clubs invest in gyms and arenas tailored for the sport, enabling high-quality competitions and training.

Example: Saitama Super Arena (Saitama, Japan)

- **Capacity: 36,500:** Renowned for its versatility, Saitama Super Arena is one of the largest indoor arenas in the world. It hosted pivotal matches during the 2006 FIVB Men's World Championship, attracting global attention. This state-of-the-art facility is also utilized for various events, showcasing volleyball's appeal alongside entertainment and other sports. Its size and advanced infrastructure reflect Japan's commitment to hosting world-class tournaments (Arlind, 2024).

- **Ownership and Management:** Clubs may be sponsored by corporations, municipalities, or federations.

Example: Many Italian volleyball clubs, like Sir Safety Perugia, are funded by local businesses and operate as professional entities.

Clubs like Sir Safety Perugia benefit from sponsorships and partnerships with local businesses, which provide essential financial backing. This relationship fosters community engagement and loyalty among fans and local supporters (Cassioli, 2024).

Revenue Streams

- **Sponsorships:** Top brands like Mikasa and Mizuno have established significant investments in volleyball, enhancing both their visibility and the sport's global development. Mikasa, as the official game ball supplier for international volleyball, ensures its branding at prestigious events such as those organized by the FIVB, contributing millions annually to volleyball operations (FIVB, 2024). Furthermore, Mizuno has expanded its involvement with a strategic partnership with Volleyball World, strengthening its influence in the sport (Mizuno, 2023).

In Europe, sponsorship deals play a critical role in sustaining elite volleyball leagues. Italian and Polish leagues, for example, secure sponsorship revenues of €5–10 million per season, which are vital for supporting club operations and enhancing competitive standards (SportBusiness, 2023).

- **Broadcast Deals:** International leagues like the CEV Champions League attract media revenue.

International leagues like the CEV Champions League attract substantial media revenue through strategic broadcasting agreements. Recently, Sky Italia and DAZN secured deals with Infront, the rights-holder for the CEV, to share coverage of the Champions League for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 seasons. This partnership is valued at approximately \$117 million, running until the end of the 2031-32 season (Sportcal, 2024).

- **Ticket Sales and Events:**

Major tournaments hosted by volleyball clubs significantly enhance their finances through ticket sales and economic impact. For instance, the AAU Junior National Volleyball Championships, the world's largest volleyball tournament, is projected to generate approximately \$256.7 million for Central Florida, attracting around 200,000 attendees (OCCC, 2024).

- **Fan Base:** Clubs thrive on passionate followers who often attend games and support players across social media.

Example: Skra Bełchatów, a Polish club, enjoys a dedicated fan base that contributes to Poland's reputation as a volleyball powerhouse. Skra Bełchatów's dedicated fan base stems from several factors. The club's strong local ties foster community pride and consistent match support. Its successful history in domestic and international competitions enhances fan loyalty and engagement (Volleyworld, 2024). Skra also strengthens bonds with supporters through events, meet-and-greets, and interactive social media efforts (Notes from Poland, 2022). Additionally, the electrifying atmosphere at home games, driven by passionate fans, amplifies the excitement in the arena.

- **Cultural and Global Impact:** Volleyball clubs play a crucial role in popularizing the sport globally.

Example:

Volleyball clubs play a significant role in popularizing the sport globally. Japanese clubs, like Hisamitsu Springs, are pivotal in integrating volleyball into the country's cultural identity, inspiring younger athletes (Ali, 2023). Additionally, the anime Haikyuu!! has greatly amplified the sport's visibility worldwide, encouraging youth participation and raising interest in volleyball in regions where the sport was previously underrepresented (Ali, 2023). The global impact of volleyball is further emphasized by media representations and the continued efforts of clubs, which help make the sport a recognized and celebrated part of global culture (Peters, 2024).

Sports organizations, encompassing clubs, federations, and governing bodies, constitute the backbone of the global sports ecosystem. These entities are integral not only to the development of athletes and teams but also to the broader cultural, economic, and social dimensions of sports. Their operations span diverse areas, including talent cultivation, infrastructure development, securing financial sponsorships, and fostering global fan engagement. Such activities collectively contribute to the growth and globalization of sports, facilitating a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation.

The significance of these organizations extends into the domain of event management and public relations (PR). Sports organizations are instrumental in orchestrating large-scale events, coordinating logistical frameworks, and ensuring the seamless execution of tournaments and championships. Concurrently, PR strategies amplify the visibility and cultural impact of these events, shaping public perception and fostering a deeper connection between sports and society.

This analysis underscores the interconnectedness of organizational structures, event management, and PR practices, laying the groundwork for the subsequent exploration of event management in sports. The next chapter will delve into the collaborative and competitive dynamics among different sports entities, examining how their efforts coalesce to deliver impactful sporting events while navigating the challenges of global visibility, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning.

2.4. Key Strategies in Sports Event Management

Sports event management is one of the most complex types of management due to its dynamic nature and the broad spectrum of events it encompasses. From small-scale, local events to large-scale, global mega-events, the challenges faced by event organizers can vary greatly (Kokolakis, 2018). These challenges require careful planning and coordination, with key elements such as logistics, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and marketing playing vital roles in the success of an event (Shone and Parry, 2013).

Furthermore, the economic and social impact of sports events adds another layer of complexity. For instance, large events often involve significant investment and offer the

potential for substantial economic benefits, including tourism and local development, while also fostering community engagement and social cohesion (Pillay and Bass, 2008). As such, effective sports event management requires a tailored approach, considering the scale, objectives, and context of the event. Organizers must consider factors such as the type of event, its stakeholders, and the unique challenges posed by its location and audience (Masterman, 2009).

2.4.1. Key Frameworks in Event Management

At the heart of sports event management are three critical elements: **logistics planning, risk management, and stakeholder coordination.**

Logistics planning involves the detailed management of the physical and operational aspects of the event, such as venue selection, transportation, and scheduling (Shone and Parry, 2013). This ensures that all elements are in place for a seamless experience for participants and spectators alike. Risk management, on the other hand, involves identifying potential risks, from financial setbacks to security concerns, and developing strategies to mitigate them (Kokolakis, 2018). This is particularly important in mega-events, where the scale of operations increases the complexity and potential for challenges.

Stakeholder coordination plays a pivotal role in the success of sports event management. Effective collaboration among stakeholders—such as sponsors, local authorities, teams, and volunteers—is essential for achieving the event’s objectives. Clear communication and synchronized efforts are critical in overcoming logistical challenges and leveraging the full potential of the event (Parent and Chappelet, 2015).

Additionally, sports events present significant opportunities for economic growth, particularly within the host location. These events attract tourists, generate employment, and stimulate local business activity (Pillay and Bass, 2008). However, their economic impact can have both positive and negative outcomes, necessitating careful management by event organizers to maximize benefits while mitigating drawbacks. On a social level, sports events foster community engagement and social cohesion by providing a platform for diverse groups to come together (Pillay and Bass, 2008).

This chapter will further explore these concepts, examining key success factors in event management, analyzing the economic and social outcomes, and presenting case studies that demonstrate successful practices.

2.4.1.1. Logistics Planning

Logistics planning in sports events requires a comprehensive approach to ensure the smooth execution of all activities involved. From the selection of suitable venues to transportation, accommodations, and crowd management, every aspect must be carefully considered. Effective logistics ensure participants, spectators, and staff can move seamlessly between locations, reducing delays and enhancing the overall experience (Shone and Parry, 2013).

Venue Selection and Setup

Selecting a suitable venue is the foundation of event logistics. This process involves evaluating facilities based on their capacity, location, accessibility, and alignment with the event’s objectives. For instance, large-scale events like the Olympics or FIFA World Cup require infrastructure capable of accommodating thousands of attendees while offering state-of-the-art facilities for athletes, media, and staff (Chappelet and Parent, 2015).

Table 1. Infrastructure and Operational Zones in Sports Event Venues

| Category | Details |
|-------------------------|---|
| Athlete Areas | |
| Warm-Up Zones | Dedicated spaces for athletes to prepare before events. |
| Locker Rooms | Segregated facilities for changing, equipment storage, and resting. |
| Recovery Zones | Spaces with medical teams, massage tables, and hydration stations. |
| Spectator Areas | |
| Seating Arrangements | Standard seating (general admission, VIP sections, courtside for basketball, accessible seating). |
| Entrance and Exit Gates | Crowd flow control with separate gates for VIPs, athletes, media, and staff. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Food and Beverage Zones | Catering facilities, food courts, and concessions. |
| Media Zones | |
| Press Rooms | Dedicated spaces for interviews and press conferences. |
| Broadcasting Areas | Commentary booths, camera setups, and technical equipment zones. |
| Mixed Zones | Areas for media-athlete interaction post-competition. |
| Officials and Staff Areas | |
| Operations Rooms | Centralized command zones for logistics monitoring and real-time decisions. |
| Accreditation Checkpoints | Staff entry and identification areas. |
| Staff Rest Zones | Break areas for volunteers, security, and event staff. |
| Technology Integration | |
| Control Centers | Spaces for event management software, GPS monitoring, and live updates. |
| Security Monitoring Zones | CCTV control rooms for crowd safety and surveillance. |
| Transportation Hubs | |
| Shuttle Services | Drop-off and pick-up points for athletes, officials, and spectators. |
| Parking Zones | Reserved areas for vehicles, media trucks, and VIP guests. |
| Emergency and Safety Areas | |
| First Aid Stations | Strategically located medical zones for injuries and emergencies. |
| Evacuation Routes | Clearly marked exits for emergency situations. |
| Fire Safety Points | Accessible fire extinguishers and safety equipment. |
| Vendor and Sponsorship | |
| Merchandising Booths | Spaces for official event merchandise sales. |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Sponsor Activation Zones | Branded stalls, digital screens, and product promotion spaces. |
| Environmental Management | |
| Waste Disposal Points | Segregated bins for recycling and composting. |
| Post-Event Cleanup Areas | Zones where dismantling and waste management begin. |

Source: Original

Venue setup includes planning for seating arrangements, lighting, audio-visual systems, security checkpoints, and areas for sponsors and vendors. Accessibility for individuals with disabilities is another critical aspect (ramps, accessible restrooms, and designated seating), ensuring compliance with inclusivity standards (IOC, 2023).

Transportation and Accommodation

Transportation planning involves organizing efficient travel routes for athletes, officials, and spectators. This includes providing shuttle services, managing parking spaces, and coordinating with public transport systems. The 2012 London Olympics demonstrated best practices in transportation logistics, where organizers developed an integrated transport system that minimized congestion and reduced environmental impact (Gold and Gold, 2013).

Accommodation logistics are equally significant, particularly for international events where participants and spectators travel from various regions. Event planners collaborate with hotels and other lodging providers to secure sufficient capacity and ensure proximity to the event venue. The availability of alternative accommodation options, such as Airbnb, has further expanded the possibilities for event organizers (UNWTO, 2022).

Equipment and Resource Management

Efficient resource allocation and equipment management are pivotal to logistics planning. This includes securing necessary sports equipment, medical supplies, and broadcasting tools. Inventory control systems often track resource availability and ensure timely replenishment. For example, during the FIFA World Cup, logistics teams coordinate the

transportation and setup of cutting-edge technology, such as video assistant referee (VAR) systems, to maintain the integrity of matches (FIFA, 2022).

Health and Safety Measures

Health and safety are fundamental components of logistics planning for sports events, designed to ensure the well-being of athletes, spectators, and event staff. A comprehensive approach to health and safety begins with deploying adequately trained medical teams and equipping venues with essential medical resources. Ambulances and emergency medical personnel, including paramedics and specialized doctors, are stationed on-site during events to respond swiftly to any incidents. These services cater to athletes who may suffer injuries during competition and spectators experiencing medical emergencies (Piekarz, Jenkins and Mills, 2015).

Moreover, sports venues are equipped with first-aid stations and defibrillators, with staff trained in basic life support. These provisions are crucial in minimizing response times and improving survival rates in critical situations. Organizations collaborate with local hospitals for large-scale events to establish clear protocols for patient transfer and emergency care (FIFA, n.d.).

Precautionary Measures and Crowd Safety

Event planners prioritize crowd safety by implementing crowd management strategies such as designated entry and exit points, real-time crowd monitoring, and controlled seating arrangements. Fire safety protocols are also integral, including clearly marked evacuation routes, accessible fire extinguishers, and staff trained in emergency evacuation procedures (Kamarudin, Aziz and Ramely, 2022).

Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

Sustainability is a growing priority in logistics planning for sports events. Organizers focus on reducing environmental impact through eco-friendly practices such as promoting public transport, minimizing waste, and using renewable energy sources. For example, events increasingly implement waste management programs involving recycling, composting, and eliminating single-use plastics. Transportation logistics integrate electric

vehicles and encourage carpooling or cycling to minimize carbon emissions (Shukla et al., 2023).

Infrastructure planning also incorporates sustainability by designing venues with energy-efficient systems, solar panels, and water conservation measures. Additionally, post-event cleanup strategies ensure proper disposal or recycling of materials, leaving a minimal environmental footprint (Greenwell et al., 2014).

Technology Integration in Logistics Planning

Technological advancements have transformed logistics planning by improving efficiency and real-time communication. Digital platforms assist with ticketing, crowd monitoring, and transportation coordination. Mobile applications provide event schedules, maps, and updates, enhancing the spectator experience. GPS tracking systems ensure smooth transportation for athletes, staff, and officials by managing vehicle routes in real-time (Endava, 2023).

For broadcasting, advanced technologies like satellite systems and high-definition cameras enable seamless global coverage, while tools such as the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) maintain accuracy in gameplay. Communication tools like radio networks and mobile alerts keep event personnel connected, allowing quick responses to operational issues. Technology-driven solutions streamline logistics, ensuring the smooth execution of large-scale events (FasterCapital, 2024).

Post-Event Logistics and Legacy Planning

Post-event logistics ensure a seamless transition after the event concludes. Cleanup operations include dismantling temporary structures, managing waste, and restoring venues to their original condition. Planners prioritize recycling materials and repurposing resources to minimize waste. Equipment like seating, audio systems, and lighting is often reused or donated for future use, fostering sustainability.

Legacy planning focuses on maximizing the long-term benefits of hosting a sports event. Infrastructure improvements, such as transportation networks and upgraded venues, provide lasting value to host cities. For example, redeveloped stadiums and public spaces contribute to local communities, attracting future events and tourism. Events that align

with a legacy-focused strategy deliver economic, social, and cultural benefits that extend beyond their immediate timeframe.

2.4.1.2. Risk Management

Risk management in sports events involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential risks to ensure safety, compliance, and operational success. Key aspects include pre-event planning, proactive measures, and responsive protocols to minimize disruptions and safeguard participants, staff, and spectators.

Table 2. Comprehensive Risk Management Framework for Sports Events

| Key Area | Description | Examples |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Risk Identification | This involves recognizing potential hazards that could affect the event. These risks are typically classified into physical, logistical, and reputational hazards. | |
| Physical Risks | Potential injuries from high-speed impacts, physical exertion, or environmental factors such as extreme weather. | A rugby player may sustain a concussion due to high-impact tackles, or heat exhaustion may occur during an outdoor marathon. |
| Logistical Risks | Risks arising from the coordination of event logistics, such as technical failures or insufficient infrastructure. | Malfunctioning audio systems at a concert or issues with seating arrangements at a basketball game. |
| Reputational Risks | Negative feedback that can damage the event’s image or brand, affecting future engagement and attendance. | Disorganization, such as delays or poor participant experience, leading to bad reviews or public backlash. |
| Risk Assessment | After identifying risks, they are assessed by evaluating their likelihood and potential severity. They are categorized into levels such as low, | A high likelihood of injury in contact sports, a medium risk of delays due to weather conditions, or a low risk of |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| | medium, high, and extreme, helping prioritize management. | minor injuries during warm-ups. |
| Risk Mitigation Strategies | These strategies aim to reduce the severity or likelihood of risks through proactive measures. This may involve avoidance, reduction, transfer, or acceptance of certain risks. | |
| Avoidance | Risks that can be completely avoided through strategic planning or activity elimination. | Cancellations of outdoor events due to extreme weather conditions or removal of high-risk activities, such as dangerous stunts during live shows. |
| Reduction | Actions taken to minimize the impact or probability of risks, such as safety training and securing the right equipment. | Providing first-aid training for event staff or setting up barriers for crowd control in large gatherings. |
| Transfer | Shifting the responsibility or financial burden of certain risks, often via insurance or legal agreements such as waivers. | Event organizers using liability waivers to ensure that participants take responsibility for their own safety or taking insurance to cover event cancellations. |
| Acceptance | Acknowledging that certain low-level risks are inevitable and part of the nature of the sport. | Accepting minor injuries, such as sprains during a basketball game, as part of the sport. |
| Monitoring and Review | Constant surveillance during the event to track emerging risks, assess the effectiveness of current measures, and adjust plans as needed. Post-event evaluations are also vital for learning and refining strategies. | Regular updates on security status during a large event or conducting post-event reviews of the risk management approach. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Responsibilities of Event Organizers | Event organizers are responsible for creating and maintaining a risk management plan, engaging all stakeholders, and ensuring regulatory compliance. | Super Bowl planners must secure permits, plan safety measures, and involve health officials to manage risks like crowd control or medical emergencies. |
| Weather Risks | Environmental factors, such as rain, storms, or extreme heat, that can delay or cancel events, requiring contingency planning. | Postponing a cricket match due to rain or relocating a marathon to avoid heat waves. |
| Security Risks | Risks related to safety threats, including crowd control, terrorism, or violence. These require partnerships with local authorities and proper planning. | Deploying armed police for crowd control at large music festivals or instituting full security checks at event entrances. |
| Crowd Control and Safety | Ensuring that large crowds are properly managed to prevent injuries, panic, or disorder. This requires clear evacuation plans and adequate staff training. | Utilizing crowd barriers during a concert to prevent surges or conducting a fire drill at a sports stadium to prepare for emergencies. |
| Pandemic and Health Risks | The risk of disease transmission among large groups, which can be managed through health screening, vaccination, and social distancing measures. | Temperature checks for spectators or athletes during major sports tournaments to ensure public health safety. |
| Economic Risks | Financial instability due to revenue losses or unforeseen expenses, requiring careful budgeting and insurance coverage. | A sponsor pulling out due to economic downturns, or unexpected costs such as emergency security measures during the event. |
| Legal and Regulatory Risks | Ensuring compliance with local laws, permits, and industry regulations to prevent legal issues or penalties. | Obtaining the proper licenses for broadcasting rights, food safety standards for vendors, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | or safety permits for outdoor events. |
| Transportation and Logistics Risks | Potential delays or accidents related to transporting people or equipment to and from the event. Pre-event planning helps mitigate these issues. | Traffic congestion leading to delays for athletes, or transporting media equipment that is delayed due to logistics failures. |
| Technology and Equipment Risks | Risks related to the malfunction of technical equipment and systems. Backup systems and technical support are critical for smooth operations. | A failure of the live broadcast feed or technical breakdowns with timing systems during a race. |
| Insurance and Liability Risks | Lack of sufficient insurance coverage for accidents, injuries, or cancellation of events. Adequate liability coverage is essential for risk management. | Insurance coverage for event cancellation due to weather or participant injuries during the event. |
| Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion | Risks related to cultural misunderstandings or exclusion of certain groups. Promoting inclusivity and cultural sensitivity can help prevent conflicts. | Multilingual signage at international events like the Olympics or ensuring representation of diverse communities during global sporting events. |
| Health and Safety Risks | Complying with all health and safety regulations, including food safety, sanitation, and emergency medical services. | Monitoring food safety protocols at sports events or ensuring that medical teams are stationed for quick response to health emergencies. |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Emergency and Safety Measures | Planning for emergencies, including evacuation routes, medical aid stations, and disaster preparedness. Having clear procedures ensures safety during unforeseen situations. | Planning for natural disasters, such as earthquakes, and having emergency exits clearly marked for large stadiums or arenas. |
| Insurance Coverage | Ensuring that all necessary insurance policies are in place to cover possible risks, including cancellations, accidents, or severe weather events. | Obtaining comprehensive insurance policies that cover natural disasters, cancellations, or the injury of athletes. |
| Reputation Management | Protecting the event’s image through positive media relations and ensuring a positive experience for all participants. | Handling public relations crises, such as negative reviews on social media, through quick, clear communication strategies or offering refunds when needed. |

Source: original

Risk Management and Contingency Planning

Contingency planning involves developing structured, actionable strategies to manage risks such as natural disasters, technical failures, medical emergencies, or security threats. The goal is to maintain event continuity and protect all stakeholders while mitigating potential financial, legal, and reputational impacts (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell and Shonk, 2014).

Contingency planning is essential for minimizing risks and ensuring the seamless execution of sporting events. A critical component of this process is the adoption of structured frameworks such as PEARL and RAMP, which guide event organizers in identifying, assessing, and addressing risks comprehensively. By implementing these frameworks, conducting regular drills, and maintaining robust communication systems,

organizers can enhance resilience and deliver a safe, enjoyable experience for all stakeholders.

Table 3. Risk Assessment and Management Frameworks for Sports Events

| Framework | Definition | Key Components | Examples |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| PEARL | A framework focusing on assessing and categorizing risks in sporting events. | Proximity (risk closeness to stakeholders), Exposure (potential impact), Accountability (responsibility for management), Relevance (importance to event operations), Likelihood (probability of occurrence). | For an outdoor marathon: identifying the high likelihood of weather disruption, assigning accountability to event managers, and assessing relevance to participants' safety. |
| RAMP | A framework emphasizing risk identification, mitigation, and proactive responses. | Risk Identification (detailing all potential risks), Analysis (evaluating impact and severity), Mitigation (creating strategies to address risks), and Plan (formulating detailed contingency plans). | In a football match: identifying stampede risks, analyzing crowd behavior, mitigating barriers and controlled entry points, and planning evacuation routes. |

Source: Original

2.4.1.3. Stakeholder coordination

Stakeholder coordination is a cornerstone of successful sports event management, requiring seamless collaboration among all parties involved. These stakeholders typically include sponsors, athletes, spectators, media, local authorities, vendors, and event staff. Effective coordination ensures that all stakeholders' needs are addressed, creating a cohesive environment conducive to achieving event goals.

Table 4. Roles and Coordination Strategies for Event Stakeholders

| Stakeholder Category | Role/Responsibility | Examples of Activities | Key Strategies for Coordination |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Internal Stakeholders | Responsible for the planning and execution of the event. | Event staff, volunteers, and security teams. | Clear job descriptions, regular meetings, and use of project management tools to ensure accountability and progress tracking. |
| Sponsors | Provide financial or material support for the event in exchange for branding and advertising opportunities. | Negotiating contracts, and promoting sponsor logos on event materials. | Develop tailored sponsorship packages and maintain open communication to meet sponsor expectations. |
| Government Agencies | Ensure legal compliance, public safety, and regulatory adherence. | Securing permits, and coordinating with law enforcement, health departments, and emergency services. | Early engagement with agencies and clear communication channels for addressing event-specific needs. |
| Media | Help promote the event and provide coverage to increase visibility and engagement. | Press conferences, live broadcasting, and social media campaigns. | Provide timely and accurate information, offer media kits, and allocate designated press areas. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Athletes/Participants | Central figures who compete or perform, contribute to the event's success. | Registration, training schedules, and performance briefings. | Offer clear guidelines, ensure proper facilities, and maintain consistent communication about schedules and logistics. |
| Spectators/Audience | Key consumers of the event who contribute to its atmosphere and financial viability. | Ticketing, seating arrangements, crowd management. | Employ user-friendly ticketing systems, and crowd flow strategies, and ensure accessibility and security measures. |
| Local Community | May be impacted by the event positively or negatively, including local businesses and residents. | Traffic control, community engagement programs, collaborations with local businesses. | Conduct impact assessments, engage in dialogue with community representatives, and provide transparent updates about the event. |
| Vendors/Suppliers | Provide goods and services necessary for the event's operation. | Catering, equipment rental, merchandise sales. | Establish contracts with clear terms, coordinate delivery timelines, and ensure quality control. |
| Healthcare Providers | Ensure health and safety for all event attendees. | On-site medical teams, first aid stations, ambulances. | Partner with local hospitals, establish emergency protocols and perform regular safety drills. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Environmental Organizations | Advocate for sustainable practices and monitor the event’s ecological impact. | Recycling programs, waste management, and carbon offset initiatives. | Integrate sustainability goals, liaise with environmental experts, and educate stakeholders on eco-friendly practices. |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|

Source: Original

Economic and Social Outcomes

This chapter delves into sports events’ profound economic and social impacts, illustrating their ability to transform industries and lives. From the local vendor benefiting from increased foot traffic to the community volunteer finding purpose and pride, sports events weave themselves into the fabric of society. Their contributions to economic development and social cohesion underline the essential role of strategic planning, ensuring that these benefits ripple outward long after the final whistle. By exploring key outcomes and case studies, this chapter seeks to uncover how sports events leave enduring legacies for communities worldwide.

Table 5. Economic and Social Impacts of Sports Events: Key Aspects and Examples

| Aspect | Economic Contributions | Social Outcomes |
|---------------|---|--|
| Local Economy | Sports events bring a surge of visitors, increasing spending in hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. For instance, major events like the FIFA World Cup or Olympics inject millions into the host cities, boosting their financial health (Baltic Times, 2024). | These events create moments of pride and collective celebration, strengthening community bonds as people gather to cheer for their teams (Baltic Times, 2024). |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Employment | Events generate both temporary and permanent jobs, from construction projects to operational roles in tourism, catering, and event management. For example, the London 2012 Olympics created over 100,000 jobs, leaving a legacy of skilled labor (Lekic, 2024). | Volunteering opportunities also emerge, allowing people to contribute to events and gain valuable experiences, fostering a sense of inclusion (Lekic, 2024). |
| Infrastructure | Investments in infrastructure are a hallmark of sports events. Cities often upgrade roads, airports, and venues, which continue to benefit residents. For example, Tokyo’s preparations for the 2020 Olympics transformed its urban transit system (Baumann and Matheson, 2013). | These facilities often double as community hubs post-event, providing spaces for recreation, training, and local gatherings (Baumann and Matheson, 2013). |
| Health and Fitness | While economic data doesn’t always directly reflect health impacts, sports events promote healthier lifestyles indirectly by funding fitness campaigns and programs. | Events inspire participation in sports, particularly among young people. National campaigns like “Get Set” in the UK encouraged physical activity post-Olympics. |
| Cultural Exchange | Global sports events showcase the host country’s culture, attracting international visitors who contribute to the local economy through tourism and cultural activities. | They also foster understanding and diplomacy by bringing diverse groups together, exemplified by the Rugby World Cup, which bridges cultural divides. |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Case Study: FIFA 2010 | The FIFA World Cup in South Africa generated an estimated \$3.6 billion for the economy and supported 130,000 jobs (FIFA, 2011). | Beyond economics, it united a post-apartheid nation under a shared cause, inspiring hope and a sense of possibility. |
|--------------------------|--|--|

Source: Original

2.4.2. Case Study of a Successful Sports Event: Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022

The FIFA World Cup 2022 marked a groundbreaking achievement as Qatar became the first Arab and Muslim-majority country to host the event. This milestone reflected Qatar’s commitment to showcasing its unique cultural identity and reshaping global perceptions of the Middle East. By intertwining traditional values with modernity, the event emphasized cultural pride and hospitality while welcoming the world to experience its rich heritage. Through strategic planning and monumental investments, Qatar demonstrated its readiness to deliver a global sports spectacle rooted in its cultural and regional context.

2.4.2.1. Financial Commitments and Infrastructure Development

Qatar’s preparation for the World Cup was unparalleled, with an estimated expenditure of \$220 billion over 12 years. This figure dwarfs the \$14.2 billion spent by Russia for the 2018 World Cup, emphasizing Qatar’s commitment to delivering an extraordinary global event (Craig, 2022). These funds were allocated to massive infrastructure projects, including the construction of seven state-of-the-art stadiums, roads, airports, and hospitality facilities. One innovative project was Stadium 974, built using recycled shipping containers, which was entirely dismantled post-tournament to be repurposed into community spaces (Al-Hamrani et al., 2021).

2.4.2.2. Economic Impact

While the costs were staggering, the anticipated economic benefits were also significant. FIFA projected \$4.7 billion in revenue from the tournament, with major contributions from TV broadcast rights (\$2.64 billion) and marketing rights (\$1.35 billion) (Craig,

2022). Additionally, FIFA covered \$1.7 billion in operational costs, including \$440 million allocated to the total prize pool.

On the local front, Qatar expects a \$17 billion boost to its economy over the next three years due to increased tourism, global exposure, and long-term investments in infrastructure. Beyond direct revenues, these developments align with Qatar's broader economic diversification strategies as part of its Vision 2030.

2.4.2.3. Social and Cultural Significance

The World Cup served as a platform for Qatar to highlight its rich cultural heritage and traditions. Global fans witnessed an intersection of sports and cultural diplomacy, showcasing Qatari hospitality and Islamic traditions. The event also promoted sustainability, with eco-friendly designs like Stadium 974 demonstrating innovative approaches to event management (Roziqin, Setiawati, 2023).

2.4.2.4. Employment and Community Benefits

The tournament created extensive job opportunities, from construction to hospitality sectors, leaving a legacy of skilled labor. FIFA's \$209 million fund for soccer clubs worldwide, rewarding them for developing players participating in the tournament, added another layer of economic impact (Craig, 2022).

Conclusion

The Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup was more than a sporting spectacle—it was a transformative event with far-reaching economic, social, and cultural implications. While the costs were unprecedented, the long-term benefits, including enhanced global recognition, improved infrastructure, and cultural exchange, position Qatar as a prominent player on the international stage.

2.5. Public Relations in Mega Sports Events

Table 6. Key Elements of Public Relations in Sports

| Key Element | Description | Example |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Media Relations | Facilitates communication between sports entities and the media to shape public narratives. | The Tokyo 2020 Olympics used media relations to ensure consistent updates and global coverage amidst COVID-19 (International Olympic Committee, 2024). |
| Crisis Management | Addresses issues such as scandals or disruptions to protect and restore reputations. | Naomi Osaka's withdrawal from the French Open was managed to highlight mental health awareness (Stoldt et al., 2024). |
| Brand Promotion | Develops campaigns to elevate the image of organizations and events. | The NBA's "NBA Cares" program integrates community outreach with brand promotion (NBA Cares, n.d.). |
| Digital Engagement | Enhances fan interaction using social media, apps, and online content (Göksel, Serarslan, 2015). | Manchester City's AR app lets fans virtually tour the stadium, strengthening their connection to the club (Joyce, 2024). |
| Sponsorship Activation | Leverages partnerships to enhance visibility and value for both sponsors and sports entities. | Coca-Cola's sponsorship of FIFA includes ad campaigns and product placement to engage global audiences. |
| Community Outreach | Builds goodwill through initiatives that contribute to local or global communities. | Real Madrid Foundation conducts sports education programs to support underprivileged youth. |
| Event Publicity | Promotes sports events to maximize attendance and media coverage. | The Super Bowl leverages extensive PR campaigns to generate global anticipation and viewership. |
| Athlete Representation | Manages athlete public image, endorsements, and media interactions. | Serena Williams' PR team emphasizes her achievements on and off the court to maintain a positive image. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Content Creation | Produces stories, videos, and articles to engage fans and share narratives. | UEFA Champions League uses behind-the-scenes footage to enhance fan connection with teams and players. |
| Reputation Management | Protects and enhances the overall image of sports organizations and individuals. | Liverpool FC's handling of Hillsborough disaster anniversaries emphasizes respect and transparency. |
| Fan Relationship Management | Creates personalized experiences to deepen fan loyalty. | Barcelona FC's loyalty programs provide exclusive benefits to their global fan base. |
| Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) | Highlights the positive societal contributions of sports organizations. | FIFA's "Football for Hope" program promotes social development through football initiatives. |

Source: Original

2.5.1. Strategic Communication Frameworks in Mega Events

2.5.1.1. Brand Building

Analysis: Branding in sports transcends logos and slogans; it embodies identity, history, and values. Brazil's football federation and Real Madrid exemplify this by aligning their brand strategies with their legacy and cultural significance.

Brazil's "jogo bonito" culture and its iconic yellow jersey have become synonymous with excellence and flair in football, attracting a global fan base that extends beyond sports. This cultural branding sustains their marketability even in off-peak performance periods. (Nagpal, 2022)

Real Madrid capitalized on their "Galáctico" signings during the 2000s to project an image of glamour and invincibility, earning them the reputation of "the kings of Europe." Their dominance in the UEFA Champions League amplifies their brand globally (Statista, 2023).

Comparison: While Brazil's federation leverages cultural identity for branding, Real Madrid's strategy revolves around assembling star power and continuous success. Both approaches foster brand loyalty but cater to different stakeholder expectations.

Evaluation: Effective branding integrates history, culture, and performance. Federations like Brazil may struggle during performance dips, while clubs like Real Madrid benefit from diversification via merchandise and global fan programs.

2.5.1.2. Crisis Communication

Christian Eriksen's Collapse – Danish Football Federation

The world stood still on June 12, 2021, during Denmark's opening game against Finland in Euro 2020. As the match unfolded, Danish midfielder Christian Eriksen suddenly collapsed on the pitch, suffering a cardiac arrest. The atmosphere in Copenhagen's Parken Stadium shifted from celebration to deep concern, and the collective gasp of millions watching worldwide marked the gravity of the situation.

In those critical moments, the response by Eriksen's teammates and the Danish Football Association (DBU) exemplified extraordinary courage, humanity, and solidarity. Players immediately formed a protective circle around Eriksen, shielding him from the intrusive gaze of cameras and spectators. This simple yet powerful gesture underscored their respect for Eriksen's dignity and served as a poignant reminder of the human side of sports. Captain Simon Kjær not only consoled Eriksen's partner but also initiated life-saving measures until medical staff arrived.

The federation and team prioritized transparency, promptly communicating updates about Eriksen's condition. They demonstrated an empathetic and measured approach, reassuring fans, media, and the global community. The stadium echoed with chants of support from both Danish and Finnish fans, uniting the two nations in an emotional display of solidarity. Eriksen's recovery updates, shared carefully by the DBU, became a beacon of hope amidst the harrowing ordeal.

Christian Eriksen's collapse during Euro 2020 became a defining moment that underscored the power of human connection in sports. The Danish Football Association (DBU) demonstrated exceptional crisis management, characterized by empathy, swift action, and transparent communication. The federation's response, mirrored by the support of Eriksen's teammates, exemplified professionalism and compassion, transforming the incident into a poignant reminder of the unity and resilience that

transcend the boundaries of sport. This case continues to serve as a model for addressing unexpected and emotionally charged crises in the sports world.

Hillsborough Disaster – Liverpool FC

The Hillsborough disaster of 1989, where 97 fans tragically lost their lives, represents one of football’s darkest days. In the aftermath, Liverpool FC faced the monumental task of rebuilding trust and honoring those lost. Their approach extended far beyond operational reforms like enhancing stadium safety. The club demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the victims’ families and the broader fan community by addressing their pain directly and with enduring care.

A cornerstone of this effort was the establishment of memorial initiatives. A dedicated section on the club’s website shares the stories of those who lost their lives, ensuring they are remembered as individuals, not statistics. Each year, commemorative events and moments of silence at matches unite fans and players in shared grief and respect. By championing the victims’ families’ pursuit of justice, Liverpool FC not only rebuilt its reputation but also cemented its role as a compassionate and responsible institution.

A particularly moving tribute is the addition of the number 97 to the players’ jerseys, displayed prominently at the top of the back, symbolizing perpetual remembrance of the lives lost. This gesture is part of a broader commitment that includes a memorial page on the club’s website, individual stories of victims, and annual commemorative ceremonies during matches, uniting the global Liverpool fan base in a shared moment of respect.



Figure 15. Liverpool Hillsborough 97 Logo

Source: Footy Headlines, 2022

The emotional resonance of Liverpool’s response cannot be overstated. This tragedy became a rallying point for the community, strengthening bonds and creating a legacy of collective remembrance and accountability. The club’s actions highlight the enduring importance of empathy, transparency, and sustained support in crisis communication (Liverpool FC — Hillsborough, n.d.).

NBA and Kobe Bryant’s Tragic Passing (2020)

On January 26, 2020, the sudden passing of basketball legend Kobe Bryant in a tragic helicopter crash deeply impacted the global sports community. His death was not just the loss of a player but the loss of a figure whose influence extended far beyond basketball—into philanthropy, mentorship, and popular culture. The NBA’s response was a mix of grief and admiration for Bryant’s unmatched legacy, as the league, players, and fans came together to honor his contributions to the sport (ESPN, 2020).

In the days following his passing, the NBA and its teams paid tribute to Bryant in various ways. Players wore jerseys with his numbers—No. 24 and No. 8—and during games, teams observed a touching moment of remembrance. They held the ball for 24 seconds or eight seconds in the backcourt, symbolizing Bryant’s jerseys. These tributes were met with standing ovations, as the basketball community united to honor the life and career of one of its greatest athletes (ESPN, 2020).



Figure 16. NBA Lakers dedicate two seats for Kobe and his daughter to honor them

Source: The New York Times, 2020

The NBA also utilized social media platforms to express condolences, creating a space for fans to share their thoughts and memories. Additionally, a memorial service was held at the Staples Center, where Bryant's family, friends, and colleagues celebrated his legacy, further solidifying the emotional connection between Bryant and the broader community. The league's efforts reflected its commitment to honoring Bryant's human legacy while acknowledging the collective mourning of millions of fans around the world (ESPN, 2020).

This tragic event served as a reminder of the impact athletes can have beyond the sport, and it offered the NBA an opportunity to showcase solidarity, resilience, and respect for its icons.

Comparative Analysis

While the Danish FA's response was immediate and action-focused during an on-field medical emergency, Liverpool FC and the NBA dealt with crises that required long-term reputational management. The common thread across these cases is the prioritization of human dignity, empathy, and transparent communication. However, the cultural and contextual nuances of each crisis—whether it involved fans, players, or societal implications—demanded tailored approaches.

Eriksen's case emphasized swift action and real-time transparency, making it a live crisis management model. Liverpool's handling of Hillsborough highlighted the importance of accountability and justice over decades, while the NBA's response to Bryant's death underscored the role of PR in honoring legacies and managing grief in the public eye.

2.5.1.3. Fan Engagement: Beyond the Stadium Walls

Analysis: Fan engagement strategies now transcend live events, tapping into cultural, emotional, and social dynamics. Morocco's 2022 World Cup run is a standout example, driven by passionate fans and cultural pride. Their "Red Wave" embodied unity, transforming their journey into a global cultural phenomenon. The federation's initiative to provide free tickets further exemplified inclusivity (Pavitt, 2022).

Such efforts align with João Duarte’s (2008) perspective on PR as a catalyst for social change. Engaging fans authentically fosters loyalty while addressing broader societal issues, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between sports and communities.

Comparison: Morocco’s engagement focused on cultural pride and accessibility, while Western clubs like Barcelona FC use technology and loyalty programs to deepen connections. Both approaches reflect differing resource pools and target demographics.

Evaluation: Authenticity and inclusivity are key to impactful fan engagement. Morocco’s grassroots approach and Barcelona’s tech-driven programs demonstrate that emotional and experiential connections are equally vital.

Digital Engagement with Fans: Bayern Munich’s Innovative Strategies

Bayern Munich’s approach to fan engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic was a prime example of creativity and responsibility in sports public relations. The club employed a variety of digital initiatives to connect with fans while addressing broader societal challenges.

A standout initiative was the #WeKickCorona campaign, spearheaded by players Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka, which raised substantial funds to support pandemic relief efforts. Bayern contributed significantly by selling branded face masks, demonstrating its commitment to both its fans and the wider community (De Koninck, 2024).



Figure 17. #WeKickCorona campaign led by Bayern Munich FC.

Source: De Koninck, J., 2024

To keep fans entertained and engaged, Bayern introduced interactive content like the #KidsQuestions series, where young fans could ask players personal and career-related

questions. Esports also played a pivotal role, with the club organizing tournaments such as the FC Bayern Esports Cup, offering fans an engaging alternative to live football matches. These events were broadcast on digital platforms, expanding the club's reach and reinforcing its presence in the esports space (De Koninck, 2024).

Additionally, Bayern extended its support to amateur football clubs, redistributing ticket revenue to assist smaller teams struggling financially due to the pandemic. The club also provided fans with reliable updates through a dedicated information column, emphasizing transparency and trustworthiness during a time of uncertainty.

Beyond football, Bayern connected with fans through diverse content, such as fitness classes led by former players and casual lifestyle recommendations shared by team members. This multifaceted approach showcased the club's adaptability and commitment to maintaining fan relationships despite the limitations of the pandemic.

Bayern Munich's strategies highlight how digital engagement, combined with community-focused actions, can reinforce a sports club's reputation and strengthen its connection with fans even during challenging times. This serves as a model for effective public relations in the sports industry (De Koninck, 2024).

2.5.1.4. Building Relationships with Stakeholders in Sports PR

The essence of successful public relations in sports is rooted in fostering meaningful relationships with stakeholders, including fans, sponsors, and media partners. These relationships are instrumental in ensuring a team or organization's visibility, credibility, and long-term viability. Below is a detailed analysis of how these connections are cultivated and their strategic importance:

Types of Sponsorship Deals: Sponsorship arrangements in sports can be categorized into several key types, each offering distinct benefits and opportunities:

- **Title Sponsorship:** The sponsor's name is integrated into the event, league, or stadium title.

Example: Barclays Premier League (now Premier League) and Allianz Arena, the home of Bayern Munich, named after the global insurance giant Allianz.

- **Kit/Equipment Sponsorship:** Sponsors provide branded apparel and equipment, gaining visibility during games.

Example: Adidas' deal with Manchester United, valued at £750 million over ten years, is among the most lucrative in sports apparel history (BBC Sport, 2023).
- **Event Sponsorship:** Sponsors fund specific sports events for global exposure.

Example: Coca-Cola's long-standing partnership with the FIFA World Cup, showcasing its brand during one of the most-watched events worldwide (Lusk, 2022).
- **Broadcast Sponsorship:** Companies sponsor television or online broadcasts of matches or tournaments.

Example: Sky Sports' partnership with Formula 1 includes presenting live races under the broadcaster's banner (F1, 2022).
- **Digital Sponsorship:** Sponsors leverage digital platforms, including websites and social media.

Example: TikTok's sponsorship of UEFA EURO 2020 focused on engaging younger audiences through content creation and fan challenges (UEFA, 2021).
- **Esports Sponsorship:** Sponsors support professional esports teams or leagues.

Example: BMW's sponsorship of multiple esports teams under the "United in Rivalry" campaign targets the tech-savvy demographic (Koenig, 2020).
- **Grassroots Sponsorship:** Companies fund local or amateur sports programs, promoting community engagement.

Example: Bayern Munich's support for amateur clubs during the pandemic, allocating €35,000 to each of 35 clubs to help sustain their operations (FBM, 2020).



Figure 18. Solidarity by FC Bayern Hilfe Ev

Source: FC Bayern, 2020

- **In-Kind Sponsorship:** In-kind sponsorship involves providing goods or services instead of monetary contributions.
- **Example:** A prominent case is Gatorade, which supplies hydration products to NFL teams as part of its sponsorship agreements (Dasdas, 2024).

Gatorade's Relationship with the NFL

Gatorade's affiliation with the NFL is a quintessential example of a tenacious sports partnership that enhances brand presence and fosters significant audience engagement.

Historical Overview

Gatorade's journey with the NFL began in 1983, when it secured a formal sponsorship deal, though its presence on league sidelines dates back to 1968. This long-standing alliance was born from the drink's proven ability to help athletes enhance their performance through hydration and nutrition. The iconic Gatorade dunk, started by a New York Giants player in 1985, has since become a celebrated tradition at NFL games.

Figure 19. Historical Overview of Gatorade's Relationship with the NFL

Source: Prime vs Gatorade, 2024

Economic Contributions and Market Dynamics

According to Expert Market Research (2024), the global sports sponsorship market size, it attained a value of USD 76.33 billion in 2023. The market is further expected to grow at a CAGR of 8.70% between 2024 and 2032, reaching a value of USD 161.12 billion by 2032. The rise of technology has further propelled this growth. Key revenue drivers include:

- Football/Soccer:** Clubs such as Real Madrid, Manchester City, and Bayern Munich generate substantial sponsorship income, leveraging their massive global fan bases to attract international brands. Such clubs generate substantial sponsorship income by leveraging their massive global fan bases to attract international brands. For instance, the Premier League has seen a significant increase in sponsorship deals, with the combined value across its clubs surpassing \$1.5 billion for the 2024-25 season, reflecting a 12% increase from the previous year (Sportcal, 2024).

Example:

Manchester City, in particular, has secured lucrative deals, including a sleeve sponsorship with OKX valued at £55 million, which is more than double its fair market value (The Sponsor, 2024). Similarly, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich benefit from their large followings and historical success, which allows them to negotiate high-value sponsorship agreements with major brands.

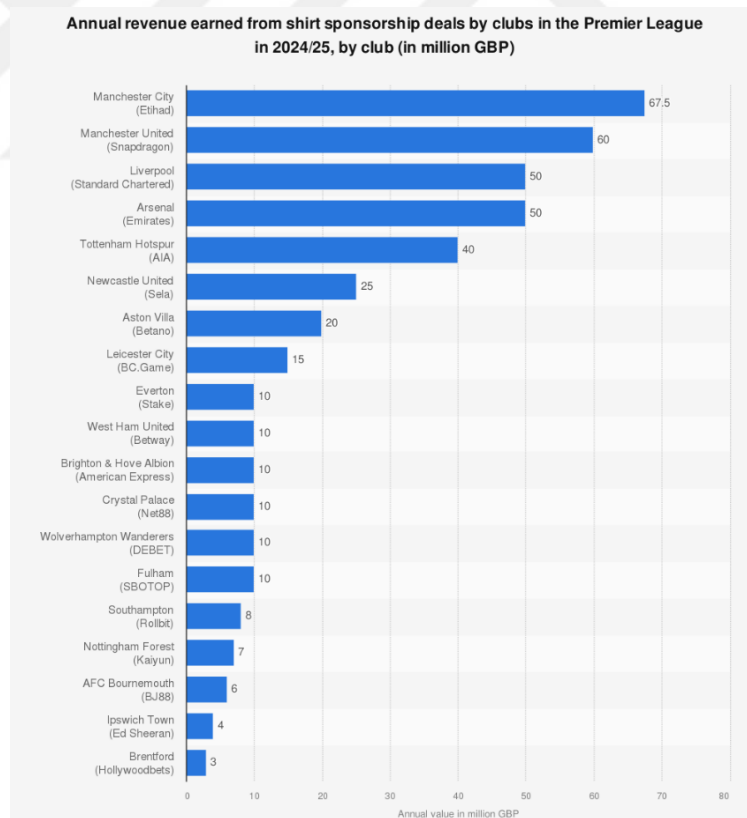


Figure 20. Annual revenue earned from shirt sponsorship deals by clubs in the Premier League in 2024/25, by club

Source: Statista, 2024

- **Mega-Events:** The Olympics and World Cups are standout examples, with sponsorship revenues running into billions. Programs like the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) "TOP Program" secured billions of dollars from high-profile sponsors for events like the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The TOP Program yielded \$835.6 million in sponsorship revenue during the delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics (SportBusiness, 2022). This program allows the IOC to partner with global brands, providing them with extensive visibility and marketing opportunities during the Olympic Games. The success of the TOP Program not only supports the financial viability of the Olympic Games but also enables the IOC to distribute funds to various National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and international federations, thereby promoting sports development worldwide (Olympics.com, 2023).

Detailed Analysis of Sponsorship Strategies: Title and Naming Rights

- **Financial Impact:** Naming rights agreements can provide consistent, high-value revenue. A prime example is Emirates' £150 million investment in naming the Emirates Stadium.

This investment not only secures the naming rights but also reinforces Emirates' branding presence in one of the most recognized football venues globally. The partnership has been beneficial for both parties, as it allows Arsenal to maintain a strong commercial revenue stream while providing Emirates with extensive visibility among football fans worldwide (Emirates, 2019).

- **Brand Integration:** Venue naming ensures enduring visibility and frequent mentions across media channels.

The thesis titled "Stadium Naming Rights" discusses how purchasing stadium naming rights allows companies to create ongoing brand visibility and awareness through various media channels. It notes that exclusive rights to display products and services within a sponsored venue enable brands to engage with a captive audience, thereby enhancing brand recognition and loyalty (Broberg and Rosén, 2017).

Digital Innovations in Sponsorship: The integration of digital platforms is reshaping sponsorship strategies:

Social Media Engagement: Platforms such as TikTok bring innovative approaches to sponsorship.

Example: The integration of digital platforms is reshaping sponsorship strategies, particularly through enhanced social media engagement. Platforms like TikTok have become pivotal in how brands connect with audiences, offering innovative approaches to sponsorship. For example, Wrexham AFC's partnership with TikTok exemplifies this trend. The collaboration has allowed Wrexham to leverage TikTok's vast user base, resulting in over 1.5 million followers and 17.4 million likes on the platform, significantly boosting the club's visibility and fan engagement (RedTorch, 2023).

Another notable example is the partnership between Chelsea FC and Trivago. This collaboration enabled Trivago to advertise on Chelsea's training gear, which, while not as visible during matches, gained substantial exposure through social media posts featuring training sessions. This strategy allowed Trivago to reach nearly 92 million followers through Chelsea's channels and an additional 190 million via the players' accounts (SPORTFIVE, 2024).

CSR and Community Engagement

Sponsors increasingly focus on socially responsible campaigns to enhance their brand reputation and build trust.

Example: Nike's "Equality" campaign emphasized inclusivity by funding diverse sports initiatives and aligning brand values with social progress.

Nike's "Equality" campaign, launched in 2017, aimed to inspire individuals to extend the fairness and respect seen in sports into everyday life, featuring prominent athletes like LeBron James, Serena Williams, and Megan Rapinoe, alongside actor Michael B. Jordan as the narrator (FasterCapital, 2024). The campaign utilized a powerful black-and-white film that highlighted the message that "equality should have no boundaries," emphasizing that worth should transcend race and beliefs (Wieden and Kennedy, 2017). Nike also committed \$5 million to organizations promoting equality, such as MENTOR and

PeacePlayers International, reinforcing its dedication to social progress (Campaign Live, 2017). The campaign was not merely a marketing strategy but a response to current societal issues, encouraging audiences to engage with the principles of justice and inclusivity both on and off the field (Maerowitz, 2017). Through this initiative, Nike positioned itself as a leader in advocating for social change within the sports community while creating a strong emotional connection with consumers.

Esports Sponsorship: Esports has become a significant opportunity for sponsorship, attracting a global audience exceeding 500 million. Brands like Red Bull leverage this trend by sponsoring tournaments and players, thereby associating their image with the dynamic gaming culture.

The esports sponsorship market is projected to generate over \$641 million in revenue, contributing to an overall market value of approximately \$1.64 billion in 2023 (Webb, 2021; Newzoo, 2024). Major companies such as Mercedes-Benz and Kia are also entering the space, sponsoring events like the League of Legends World Championship and collaborating with game developers (Digiday, 2024) (McKinsey and Company, 2020). As the industry grows, projections indicate that esports sponsorship could exceed \$1 billion by 2025 (Sweeney and Soutar, 2021).

Challenges in Sponsorship Deals: Economic Risks

Despite their many benefits, sports sponsorships face significant challenges, particularly economic risks. The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted the sports sponsorship ecosystem, leading to an estimated \$20 billion revenue loss due to canceled events and diminished fan engagement (Yellowbrick, 2020). Many sponsors reduced their investments or withdrew altogether as uncertainty surrounded sporting events, forcing organizations to renegotiate contracts and seek new partnerships (Pokrywczynski, 2020). Recovery strategies have increasingly focused on integrating digital engagement tools and diversifying sponsorship portfolios to mitigate these financial impacts (Skinner and Smith, 2021).

Brand Reputation Management

Controversies involving sponsored athletes or teams can significantly harm brands. For example, Nike has faced backlash during scandals related to some of its sponsored athletes, which raised questions about the company's commitment to integrity and athlete welfare (Williams, 2024). Despite these challenges, Nike has effectively leveraged strategic public relations campaigns to reaffirm its dedication to sportsmanship and ethical practices (Beugré, 2023). Such incidents highlight the importance of conducting thorough due diligence in sponsorship agreements to mitigate potential reputational risks (Ohio University, 2023). Brands must ensure alignment with their partners' values to avoid negative publicity that can damage both their image and financial performance (Euromonitor, 2024).

2.5.2. Case Studies in Sports PR: Paris Basketball Club - Fan Engagement

Paris Basketball Club has positioned itself as a dynamic sports organization through innovative fan engagement strategies. By leveraging digital platforms and interactive campaigns, the club has successfully expanded its reach, strengthened its community, and fostered deeper connections with its supporters.

Paris Basketball has established itself as a benchmark for modern sports public relations by leveraging innovative strategies that combine fan engagement, sponsorship activation, and social media optimization. Their relentless commitment to capturing the energy of each game—from sharing photos and videos of fans, athletes, VIPs, and celebrities to creating themed campaigns—underscores their ability to connect deeply with audiences.

A notable strength of their PR approach lies in their consistent invitation of celebrities to games, which serves as an indirect but highly effective campaign to reach new demographics. This tactic not only enhances the prestige of their events but also broadens their fan base by associating the club with well-known personalities.

Through timely and creative content on social media, Paris Basketball keeps their followers engaged and informed, ensuring their brand remains vibrant and relevant. Whether it's festive themes like the "Xmas Game," fan-driven moments like proposals, or honoring athletes, their storytelling creates an emotional connection with audiences.

Their integration of sponsorships with engaging events showcases a strategic understanding of creating mutual value, making them a standout case study in sports PR excellence.

2.5.2.1. Detailed Analysis of Paris Basketball's PR Campaigns: Xmas Game Campaign

The Xmas Game campaign exemplified seasonal marketing with a design-centric approach. The poster visually reflected the holiday atmosphere, featuring snow on the basketball net and a basketball moon glowing in yellow, signifying the holiday spirit in an unconventional yet clever way. The font, Burton's Nightmare, was a unique choice that gave the design an edgy look, aligning with the club's modern identity while also adding a playful, festive tone. The combination of the snow, moon, and font created a cohesive holiday narrative. Additionally, the use of visuals such as the snow-covered net directly connected the festive season with basketball, creating a seamless transition from the holiday atmosphere to the game itself (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Impact: Emotional Engagement: The design and aesthetic choices resonated deeply with fans, particularly those who associated Christmas with family-friendly activities. This made the event accessible to a broader audience, including families and children.

Branding and Visibility: The incorporation of snow and holiday elements helped Paris Basketball stand out in a crowded market during the holiday season, gaining attention across social media platforms.

Challenges: The holiday theme, while widely appealing, might have limited long-term association with the club's brand post-event, requiring future campaigns to maintain consistency in messaging.

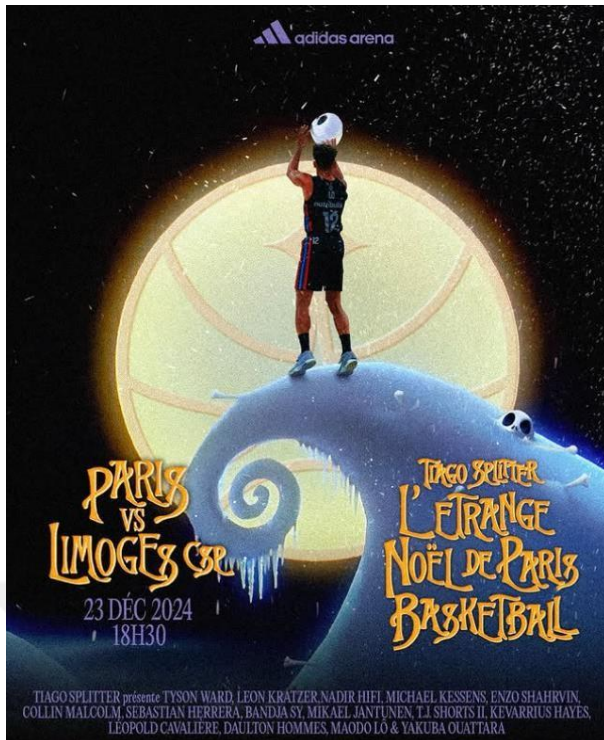


Figure 21 – 22. Paris Basketball Club Xmas Game 23 December 2024

Source: Instagram Page of Paris Basketball Club, 2024

Paris Basketball Official Store Launch

Paris Basketball’s official store launch was a strategic commercial move designed to establish a more tangible connection with fans. The store was more than just a retail space; it served as a branding extension where fans could purchase exclusive merchandise that symbolized their connection to the club. This campaign included in-store events, player meet-and-greets, and exclusive product launches that created buzz. The social media teasers and countdown posts effectively built anticipation, while behind-the-scenes content made the launch feel special and exclusive (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Impact: Community Engagement: The store became a physical touchpoint for fans, fostering a sense of belonging and community. Fans were not just passive consumers; they were part of the Paris Basketball culture.

Revenue Generation: With exclusive merchandise, fans were encouraged to buy products they couldn’t get elsewhere, generating significant sales.

Brand Loyalty: The store's existence strengthened brand loyalty as it served as a permanent representation of the club in the local community.

Challenges: Overcoming retail obstacles: Opening a physical store involved considerable risks and upfront costs. The store needed to ensure high foot traffic to remain profitable.

Hosting a Party at the Eiffel Tower to Announce the New Logo (Exclusive Event)

To announce their new logo, Paris Basketball organized an exclusive event at the Eiffel Tower, leveraging the global icon of Paris to maximize visibility and prestige. This event was tailored for athletes, staff, and select guests, including high-profile celebrities and business partners. By holding the event at the Eiffel Tower, the club linked itself to Parisian elegance and international recognition. The logo reveal was not just a visual rebranding but also a statement of the club's evolving identity, marking a significant shift in its ambition and direction (Dautun, 2024).

The event was meticulously designed to exclusively engage key influencers within the sports industry and beyond. Celebrities and high-profile guests at the event amplified the message, ensuring that the new logo would be seen as an indicator of the club's future potential. The venue itself, a symbol of Paris, provided a stunning backdrop that elevated the event's significance and aligned perfectly with the club's aspirations (Dautun, 2024).

Impact: Enhanced Brand Prestige: By hosting the event at one of the world's most recognizable landmarks, Paris Basketball reinforced its global aspirations and solidified its brand identity as a modern, prestigious organization. The exclusivity of the event also helped elevate the club's status, making it a more attractive partner for future collaborations.



Figure 23. Paris Basketball Club's New Logo

Source: Paris Basketball, 2024

Strengthened Stakeholder Relationships: The event allowed Paris Basketball to strengthen relationships with business partners, sponsors, and media influencers. These individuals played a critical role in promoting the rebranding efforts and could be key to future business opportunities and sponsorship deals.

Increased Media Attention: The event garnered international media coverage, with news outlets highlighting the event as part of the club's rebranding journey. This type of press exposure significantly raised the profile of the club, especially among high-net-worth individuals, potential sponsors, and international markets.

Exclusive Network Growth: The invitation-only nature of the event created an opportunity for Paris Basketball to network with influential figures in sports, fashion, and entertainment, increasing its visibility and creating new business opportunities.

Challenges: Limited Fan Involvement: Due to the event's exclusive nature, fans had no direct involvement. While this ensured a more intimate experience for the invited guests, it may have caused some disconnect with the broader fan base, especially those who were excluded from such a high-profile occasion.

Overemphasis on Exclusivity: While the event successfully engaged high-profile stakeholders, it risks being perceived as too elitist or detached from the everyday fan

experience. Going forward, the club may want to find a balance by creating similar high-profile events that also engage fans in more inclusive ways, either through live streams, virtual access, or other fan-centered initiatives.

Student Zone

The Student Fan Zone, described as "the most festive evening of the season," was organized to attract and engage the younger demographic of Paris Basketball's fan base. Designed as a high-energy event with various entertainment activities, the campaign was held during the match between Paris Basketball and Bologna (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Key Features of the Event: Engaging Activities

Happy Hour at the refreshment stands encouraged students to arrive early and socialize. Interactive games, including beer pong, cornhole, and arcade games, created an immersive fan experience beyond basketball. A DJ Set provided a high-energy atmosphere, reinforcing the event's festive nature (Paris Basketball, 2024).

- **Player Involvement:** Players attended the event for photo opportunities, adding a personalized touch and increasing excitement among attendees (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Event Timing:** Scheduled for Thursday, 28th November, before the match, the event made use of downtime to engage students and maximize attendance (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Social Media Amplification:** Promotional posts, hashtags, and live updates ensured high visibility on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, appealing directly to the student audience (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Impact Analysis

- **Fan Engagement:** The campaign successfully targeted university students by aligning the event with their preferences for socializing, fun activities, and unique experiences. By incorporating popular activities like DJ sets and interactive games, the campaign strengthened the emotional connection between students and the club.

- **Community Building:** The informal and vibrant setting of the Student Fan Zone created a sense of community among attendees, fostering loyalty to Paris Basketball.
- **Sponsorship Visibility:** Sponsors likely benefited from the event's popularity, as their branding could be incorporated into interactive zones, DJ booths, and refreshment stands.
- **Social Media Buzz:** The event's exciting nature generated organic content from fans, further promoting the club through shared photos and posts.

Challenges

- **Retention:** Engaging younger fans in the long term requires a series of consistent, innovative events to maintain interest beyond one campaign.
- **Operational Costs:** Organizing such an immersive fan experience can strain the club's resources, particularly if sponsorship support is insufficient.
- **Scalability:** Replicating this success for larger audiences or in different venues may pose logistical challenges.

Medals Tribute to Olympic Champions: Celebrating National Heroes JO 24

The Medals Tribute to Olympic Champions was a special event by Paris Basketball, designed to honor French Olympic medalists for their exceptional achievements. This campaign was as much a celebration of the athletes as it was an opportunity for Paris Basketball to align its brand with national pride and success in sports (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Key Features of the Event

- **Presentation of Jerseys:** Each honored athlete received a personalized Paris Basketball jersey with their name on it, symbolizing the club's respect and admiration for their accomplishments (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Strategic Timing:** Tying the tribute to an Olympic theme capitalized on the heightened visibility and emotional connection associated with the Games (Paris Basketball, 2024).

- **Amplification Through Social Media:** Posts and videos featuring the athletes receiving their jerseys and interacting with the team resonated strongly with followers, generating significant engagement (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Impact Analysis

- **National Recognition:** By celebrating Olympic athletes, Paris Basketball elevated its status as a key player in French sports, demonstrating its cultural and patriotic relevance.
- **Local Fan Engagement:** Fans were able to celebrate these national heroes through the club's lens, fostering a sense of shared pride and strengthening community ties.
- **Brand Positioning:** This campaign helped position Paris Basketball as a supporter of broader sports achievements, showcasing its values of excellence and unity.
- **Sponsorship Alignment:** Sponsors associated with Paris Basketball benefited from the event's positive coverage and alignment with national pride, enhancing their own visibility and reputation.

Challenges

- **Balancing Branding:** While the campaign effectively highlighted the Olympic athletes, it was essential for Paris Basketball to ensure its own brand did not take a backseat.
- **Cost of Execution:** Events featuring high-profile athletes require significant resources, including planning, logistics, and hospitality.
- **Sustainability:** To maintain momentum, similar initiatives may be needed in the future, which could present challenges in creativity and execution.

Partnership 3x3 Tournament: Strengthening Corporate Relationships

Paris Basketball organized an exclusive 3x3 basketball tournament at Halle Carpentier, designed to foster deeper connections with its corporate partners. This unique event merged sportsmanship, networking, and team spirit, creating a memorable experience for all involved (Paris Basketball, 2024).

- **12 Teams, 12 Partners:** The event featured 12 teams, representing 12 corporate partners, competing in a round-robin group stage followed by knockout rounds. This direct involvement emphasized the importance of collaboration and shared values between the club and its sponsors (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Catering and Networking Opportunities:** Participants enjoyed high-quality catering, provided by hospitality partner Le Réfectoire, allowing informal interactions between games. This added a social dimension, enabling partners to strengthen their connections with the club and with each other (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Celebrating Success:** The tournament concluded with a ceremony recognizing The-E-Team as the winner, showcasing Paris Basketball's commitment to celebrating achievements (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Engaging Visual Content:** The club capitalized on the event by sharing photos and videos across its social media platforms, increasing brand visibility and reinforcing its dynamic corporate culture.

Strategic Impact

- **Fan Exclusion Balanced by Sponsor Focus:** While fans were not part of this event, the exclusive nature of the tournament highlighted the importance of corporate relationships. This focus helped solidify partnerships, showcasing the club's ability to create meaningful and engaging experiences for its sponsors.
- **Sponsor Engagement and Visibility:** The active participation of 12 corporate partners provided unparalleled opportunities for visibility. The personalized experience, combined with direct interaction with Paris Basketball representatives, strengthened the emotional and professional connection between the club and its sponsors.

Challenges

- **Challenge:** The event was exclusive, limiting potential fan outreach and engagement.

Coffee Networking Event: Strengthening Business Ties Through Hospitality

Paris Basketball hosted an exclusive coffee networking event in collaboration with their partner Coutume Coffee, designed to foster meaningful connections among business partners and stakeholders. This initiative highlighted the club's commitment to nurturing its corporate relationships while emphasizing its community-focused approach.

The event welcomed around 30 partners, creating an intimate setting for valuable discussions and networking (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Strategic Analysis

- **Sponsor Engagement:** The event successfully highlighted the value of being part of Paris Basketball's partner network. By combining casual interactions with professional discussions, the event strengthened the bond between the club and its sponsors, fostering deeper relationships.
- **Brand Alignment:** The collaboration with Coutume Coffee was strategic, reinforcing Paris Basketball's modern, sophisticated brand image. This partnership also showcased the club's ability to integrate unique elements into its campaigns, enhancing the overall experience.
- **Value Addition:** By facilitating meaningful interactions, the event demonstrated the club's commitment to building partnerships that go beyond financial transactions. It emphasized shared values and mutual growth, establishing Paris Basketball as a trusted partner in the sports and business communities.

Paris Basketball Foundation: Supporting Social and Community Causes

The Paris Basketball Foundation was launched as a platform to address social responsibility and give back to the local community. Its initiatives focus on empowering underprivileged youth, supporting education, and promoting inclusivity through basketball. By aligning its brand with meaningful causes, the foundation serves as an essential part of Paris Basketball's long-term strategy to strengthen community ties and showcase its commitment to social change (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Key Initiatives

- **Basketball Clinics for Underprivileged Youth:** The foundation organizes free basketball clinics aimed at nurturing young talent, encouraging physical activity, and fostering teamwork.
These clinics provide mentorship from professional players and coaches, creating lasting impressions on the participants (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Educational Programs:** Programs emphasizing education, such as after-school tutoring and scholarships, were introduced to address systemic inequalities and inspire academic success alongside athletic growth.
- Collaborations with local schools amplify the foundation's reach, ensuring that its initiatives benefit the most deserving students (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Inclusion Campaigns:** Focused on breaking down barriers, the foundation supports campaigns for gender equality, disability inclusion, and opportunities for migrant communities to engage with basketball (Paris Basketball, 2024).
- **Redistribution of Resources:** A key highlight was the redistribution of 180kg of food (from a canceled game against Fenerbahçe) to a solidarity collective for migrants, ensuring that the club not only minimizes waste but also addresses pressing social issues (Paris Basketball, 2024).

Impact on Fan Engagement and Sponsorship

- **Community Building:** The foundation serves as a bridge between the club and its community, fostering a sense of belonging among fans by emphasizing shared values.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Through its initiatives, the foundation enhances the club's appeal to socially conscious sponsors who prioritize aligning their brands with organizations demonstrating active social responsibility.
- **Positive Public Relations:** The foundation boosts Paris Basketball's image, portraying the club as a socially aware organization committed to making a difference beyond the court.

- **Long-Term Fan Loyalty:** By addressing community needs, the foundation strengthens loyalty among existing fans and attracts new supporters who align with its values.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** The foundation opens doors to CSR-focused sponsors seeking partnerships with organizations that share a commitment to social impact.

Challenges

- **Balancing Community and Commercial Interests:** While the foundation enhances the club's social profile, there's always a risk of being perceived as leveraging CSR for publicity if not handled authentically.
- **Sustainability:** Maintaining consistent funding and support for the foundation's programs requires long-term investment, which could challenge the club's budget if not offset by sponsorships.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Measuring the direct impact of the foundation on fan loyalty and sponsorship acquisition may require sophisticated tracking and feedback mechanisms.

Fan Proposal Video: Creating Emotional Engagement through Social Media

Paris Basketball's Fan Proposal Video campaign involved a heartfelt and emotional moment that took place during a live game, where a fan proposed to their partner on the court. The club captured this special moment and shared it on Instagram, showcasing the emotional side of the fan experience. This campaign not only fostered a sense of personal connection with the audience but also generated viral potential by utilizing social media to amplify the moment.

Key Highlights

- **Emotional Engagement:** The proposal during a live game created a raw, emotional moment that resonated with fans, further strengthening the club's connection with its audience.

- **Social Media Buzz:** The video was posted on Paris Basketball's Instagram, reaching a wider audience and encouraging fans to engage with the moment, share their reactions, and generate additional content.
- **Viral Potential:** This type of emotional content often leads to viral attention, with users sharing the video, creating a snowball effect of engagement.

Impact

- **Increased Engagement:** The emotional appeal of the video not only captured attention on social media but also deepened fan loyalty, as people appreciate being part of such special moments.
- **Brand Perception:** By sharing moments that are personally meaningful, Paris Basketball positions itself as a club that values fan experiences beyond just the sport itself.

Vip Guests

- **Social Media Buzz:** Paris Basketball enhances its brand visibility through the VIP guest experience strategy, inviting influential individuals from various industries to attend its games. These high-profile guests—ranging from celebrities to well-known influencers—offer Paris Basketball a unique opportunity to create buzz and elevate its prestige. By offering exclusive access and a platform for social media amplification, the club leverages these VIP appearances to create meaningful interactions and expand its fanbase (Paris Basketball, 2023).
- **Social Media Amplification:** One of the key components of these VIP experiences is the use of social media to amplify the impact. Celebrities and influencers are encouraged to share their experiences, whether through posts, stories, or videos. This type of content reaches far beyond the in-venue audience, extending the club's visibility to a much larger and diverse group of people. The organic, behind-the-scenes content adds authenticity and relatability, making it highly effective (Von Felbert, 2022).
- **Fan Interaction and Engagement:** VIP events also give fans the chance to interact with celebrities, creating an unforgettable experience. These personal moments are often captured and shared across various platforms, further

enhancing the connection between the club and its fans. The excitement of seeing celebrities at games adds an element of glamour and prestige, leading to greater emotional investment from fans (Mastromartino et al., 2019).

Strategic Analysis

- **Brand Visibility and Prestige:** Inviting celebrities and influencers provides Paris Basketball with significant exposure. These VIP guests act as brand ambassadors, helping to elevate the club's image by associating it with notable figures. Their presence at games positions Paris Basketball as an elite, forward-thinking organization in the sports world, attracting attention from diverse audiences (Azmi et al., 2022) (Khan et al., 2022).
- **Broadening Audience Reach:** The involvement of celebrities allows Paris Basketball to reach audiences beyond its traditional fanbase. Each guest brings their followers, who may not have been previously engaged with the club. This helps the organization expand its appeal to different demographic groups, from entertainment fans to fashion enthusiasts, giving the club a chance to diversify and grow its support base (Azmi et al., 2022) (Khan et al., 2022).
- **Effective Social Media Marketing:** Social media plays a vital role in enhancing VIP guest experiences at events like those hosted by Paris Basketball. When celebrities post about attending games, it generates organic buzz and engages their followers, significantly raising awareness of the team (Rolling Stone, 2024). This engagement fosters a deeper emotional connection with fans, making them feel part of an exclusive experience. Additionally, social media serves as a valuable platform to showcase the uniqueness of these events and extend excitement beyond game day through behind-the-scenes content and real-time updates (Topend Sports, 2024). By leveraging social media effectively, teams can amplify the impact of VIP experiences and create lasting impressions on both attendees and their broader fan base (Sprout Social, 2024).

Impact Analysis

- **Enhanced Public Exposure:** The participation of high-profile figures gives Paris Basketball increased visibility in both traditional and social media. These

appearances help the club tap into new fanbases, potentially turning casual observers into loyal supporters. This form of publicity is far-reaching and reinforces the club's position as an influential and innovative organization (Baltezarević, 2023).

- **Engaging New Fans:** Celebrity involvement brings in new audiences who may not have previously considered attending a basketball game. This shift toward broadening the appeal is key to Paris Basketball's growth, as it moves beyond the core sports fan demographic and introduces itself to a wider cultural audience. With the ability to engage followers of these celebrities, the club can foster long-term relationships with a more diverse fanbase (International Journal of Arts, Recreation and Sports, 2023).
- **Increased Emotional Connection with Fans:** The presence of celebrities at Paris Basketball games significantly enhances the fan experience, transforming the event into a vibrant celebration of pop culture, fashion, and sports. This not only adds excitement but also strengthens emotional connections with fans, which is crucial for fostering long-term loyalty and encouraging ongoing support from both new and existing followers (Williams, 2024). Celebrities generate buzz that extends the appeal of these events beyond the game itself, making them highly anticipated occasions (Baltezarević, 2023). As basketball continues to intersect with popular culture, this connection plays a vital role in engaging fans and increasing the sport's overall attractiveness (Johnson, 2023).

Table 7. SWOT Analysis

| Campaign | Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Xmas Game | Strong festive engagement, emotional connection, thematic content | May only resonate with a holiday-specific audience | Expand holiday-themed events to multiple seasons | Limited to holiday period; overemphasis on seasonal themes |
| Official Store Launch | Increased brand loyalty, physical | Dependence on location and foot traffic | Expand merchandise | High competition with other |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| | connection with fans | | collection and collaborations | sports clubs' stores |
| Eiffel Tower Event | Global visibility, high-profile PR, brand prestige | Expensive, limited immediate engagement | Increased international recognition | High costs, limited direct fan engagement |
| Student Fan Zone | Direct engagement with youth, long-term loyalty potential | May not attract other demographics | Expand beyond the student base, tailor to diverse audiences | Over-reliance on younger audience segments |
| Medals Tribute | National pride, prestige association | May only resonate with fans of the athletes | Further tributes to national heroes, expand to other sports | Short-lived impact, limited to Olympics-related content |
| Partnership Tournament | Strong sponsor engagement, unique experience | Limited to sponsor interaction, may not attract a broader audience | Leverage partnerships for more engaging events | Risk of not appealing to fans outside sponsor networks |
| Breakfast Networking | Strengthened business relationships, elite PR | Limited fan engagement, niche audience | Host more networking events with diverse stakeholders | Small-scale, less impactful for the wider fanbase |
| Real Madrid Euroleague Game | Spectacular fan experience, strong sponsor visibility | High production costs, temporary appeal | Collaborate on more high-profile games, enhance fan experiences | Overemphasis on spectacle over gameplay |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Food Donation Initiative | Positive PR, community support | Low immediate fan engagement | Promote a long-term social responsibility campaign | Limited visibility outside of niche audience |
| Fan Proposal Video | Emotional engagement, viral potential | Limited to one-off moments | Develop more fan-focused content, continue emotional engagement | Risk of losing novelty, less impactful long-term |
| VIP Guest Experiences | Increased brand visibility, new audience reach, social media buzz | May alienate non-VIP fans, and can be perceived as elitist | Strengthen influencer partnerships, expand audience outreach | Risk of over-reliance on celebrities and social media trends |
| Foundation | Community engagement, social responsibility, positive PR | Limited direct fan engagement, niche focus | Expand community initiatives, strengthen long-term partnerships | Risk of insufficient awareness outside the local community |
| Eiffel Tower Announcement | High-profile announcement, strong global visibility, high engagement | Limited to short-term events, expensive | Leverage announcements for future global partnerships, enhance media reach | High costs, potential oversaturation of event-driven PR |

Source: Original

Paris Basketball's strategy focuses heavily on fan engagement, sponsorship activation, and social media presence, using a combination of emotional connection, high-profile events, and collaborations with partners. Their innovative approach, including the use of themed events, celebrities, and community-driven initiatives, has made them a standout example of modern PR tactics in sports. By diversifying their campaigns, Paris Basketball maximizes its reach across multiple demographics, ensuring a strong and lasting connection with fans, sponsors, and the community.

2.6. Significance of Volunteering in Sports Events

Volunteering in sports events is the backbone of operations, ensuring the smooth execution of both large and small events by managing critical details that staff might not have the capacity to address. This chapter emphasizes the indispensable role of volunteers, highlighting how their contributions provide structure, efficiency, and an unparalleled support system for the successful implementation of sports events (Carolyn, 2023).

2.6.1. Supporting Operations and Event Execution

Volunteers play a pivotal role in the seamless execution of sports events, handling logistical tasks such as ticketing, registration, ushering, and assisting with athletes' needs. They manage details that might otherwise be overlooked, ensuring that the event runs efficiently and professionally. Without volunteers, these gaps would compromise the experience for participants and spectators, potentially leading to organizational failures (Pattullo, 2023).

2.6.2. Enhancing the Quality of Events

Volunteers contribute not only manpower but also passion and dedication that enhance the overall quality of an event. Their enthusiasm translates into positive experiences for attendees, creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. From providing directions to engaging with fans, their presence is instrumental in elevating the event's reputation and success (Cavalcante et al., 2022).

2.6.3. Addressing Resource Constraints in Sports Organizations

Many sports organizations operate with limited budgets, which makes it difficult to hire additional paid staff. Volunteers help fill this gap by providing essential support without adding financial pressure on the organizers. This is especially important for community and amateur sports events, where volunteer labor is vital to the event's success (Doherty, 2009).

While volunteers don't receive monetary compensation, they do gain a range of non-financial benefits that enhance their overall experience and recognize their valuable contributions:

- **Volunteer Apparel:** Volunteers are often given branded clothing, such as T-shirts, hats, and jackets. These not only serve as practical uniforms during the event but also as souvenirs, helping foster a sense of pride and belonging (Cavalcante et al., 2022).
- **Meals and Snacks:** Volunteers are typically provided with free meals, snacks, and beverages throughout the day to keep their energy up and ensure they stay focused while on duty (Doherty, 2009).
- **Rest Areas:** Event organizers often set up dedicated areas where volunteers can relax during breaks. These lounges are equipped with comfortable seating, drinks, and entertainment, offering a space for volunteers to recover and unwind (Doherty, 2009).
- **Access to Key Events:** Volunteers often receive exclusive access to major sporting events, such as final games, allowing them to experience the excitement of high-profile competitions.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Volunteering allows individuals to meet and interact with a wide variety of people, including event organizers, athletes, sponsors, and other volunteers. These connections can result in valuable career opportunities and professional growth (Doherty, 2009).
- **Certificates and Recognition:** Many sports organizations provide certificates, letters of recognition, or badges as tokens of appreciation for the volunteers'

efforts. These can enhance resumes and support future applications for jobs or further studies (Doherty, 2009).

- **Skill Development:** Volunteers develop various skills, such as event management, communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution, which are transferable to many other industries and roles (Doherty, 2009).
- **Opportunities for Future Engagement:** Many sports organizations value reliable volunteers and may invite them back for future events. In some cases, exceptional volunteers may be offered paid positions, transitioning from unpaid roles to staff members (Doherty, 2009).

2.6.4. Impact on Volunteers, Communities, and Sports Organizations

Volunteering in sports events offers personal growth for individuals while providing significant benefits to the local community and the sports organizations involved. Volunteers develop valuable skills, form meaningful connections, and contribute to a stronger sense of community, all while helping deliver successful events. In turn, local economies thrive from the increased activity surrounding major events (European Commission, 2023).

Volunteers are crucial to the functioning of sports organizations. They handle many behind-the-scenes tasks that ensure smooth operations during events. Without their support, even the most carefully planned events might encounter disruptions. Their efforts allow federations and clubs to focus on strategic and logistical aspects, knowing that the essential operational tasks are in good hands (European Commission, 2023).

Short-Term Impact

- **Reducing Event Costs:** By volunteering, individuals help keep operational costs down, as the need for additional paid positions is minimized. This enables the event organizers to allocate their budget more efficiently, focusing resources on other essential aspects of the event (Baldassare et al., 2021).
- **Smooth Event Management:** Volunteers play a pivotal role in handling various tasks such as check-in, managing crowds, and assisting with event operations. Their enthusiasm and commitment ensure that the event runs seamlessly,

contributing to a positive experience for both participants and spectators (European Commission, 2023).

- **Strengthening Community Engagement:** Involving local volunteers fosters a deeper connection between the event and the community. Volunteers from the local area take pride in contributing to an event that highlights their region, creating a sense of ownership and strengthening the community's ties to the event (Baldassare et al., 2021).

Long-Term Impact

- **Fostering Loyalty:** Many volunteers develop lasting attachments to the organizations they support, becoming long-term advocates. Their ongoing support can benefit federations and clubs for years to come (Klein et al., 2020).
- **Pathways to Employment:** Volunteers often transition into paid roles within the organization, bringing with them valuable experience and a deep understanding of the organization's culture (Cavalcante et al., 2022).
- **Sustained Event Success:** Building a dependable volunteer base ensures that future events can be staffed efficiently. Long-term relationships with volunteers help organizations maintain continuity in their operations (European Commission, 2023).

2.6.4.1. Personalized Recruitment

Sports organizations recognize the value of building strong, long-term relationships with their dedicated volunteers. Instead of relying solely on general recruitment processes, many federations and clubs focus on personally engaging standout volunteers, inviting them to participate in future events. This tailored approach not only fosters loyalty but also strengthens the overall team dynamic (Baldassare et al., 2021).

Over time, some of these volunteers transition into permanent positions, thanks to their extensive knowledge and experience with the organization. Their deep commitment and firsthand understanding of event operations make them ideal candidates for roles within the organization, allowing them to turn their passion for sports into a sustainable career (Baldassare et al., 2021).

Key Roles Volunteers Play

- **Event Coordination:** Volunteers assist in planning and managing logistics, schedules, and onsite operations to ensure that the event runs according to plan.
- **Guest Services:** Volunteers ensure that participants, VIPs, and guests receive the necessary support and feel welcome throughout the event.
- **Technical Assistance:** Volunteers help with technical tasks, such as equipment management, troubleshooting, and assisting with scorekeeping.
- **Engaging the Public:** Volunteers also support fan engagement, ensuring spectators have an enjoyable and memorable experience during the event (European Commission, 2023).

2.6.4.2. Economic and Organizational Impact

Volunteers significantly contribute to the financial success of sports events. Their contributions reduce the need for additional paid staff, thus keeping costs low while increasing the overall value of the event. Beyond economic benefits, volunteers embody the values of teamwork, dedication, and community spirit, essential elements of any successful sports event (Wicker and Downward, 2024).

Notable Examples

- **London 2012 Olympics:** The “Games Makers” were integral to the event’s success, providing high-quality volunteer engagement that set a new standard for future events (Olympics.com, 2010).
- **FIFA World Cup:** Volunteers play a key role in managing event logistics, assisting with cultural programs, and supporting both the international and local community during the event (Engage for Success, 2022).

Volunteers are essential to the success of sports events, leaving a lasting impact on federations and clubs. Their contributions not only ensure smooth operations but also help build a loyal network, creating a legacy that strengthens the organization’s future and long-term growth (Engage for Success, 2022).

Conclusion

This literature review explored the interconnected roles of sports event management and public relations (PR) in driving the success and visibility of modern sports organizations. Through theoretical insights, industry analysis, and case studies, it demonstrated how these disciplines shape audience engagement, brand identity, and organizational growth.

The first chapter highlighted the importance of effective event management in delivering memorable experiences and sustaining long-term success. The second chapter examined PR's role in crafting narratives that amplify events, build loyalty, and enhance global recognition. Together, these chapters emphasized the synergy between the two, with PR leveraging event success for broader visibility and event management relying on PR to generate excitement.

The analysis of Paris Basketball's campaigns offered practical insights into how strategic initiatives foster cultural relevance, strengthen partnerships, and achieve measurable results. By integrating traditional methods with digital innovation and community engagement, these campaigns demonstrated the potential of PR and event management to drive both commercial and social outcomes.

In conclusion, this review established the foundation for examining the measurable impact of these strategies on sports clubs and federations in the subsequent chapters. It underscores the need for innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity in an ever-evolving sports landscape.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The chapter begins with an overview of the conceptual framework and progresses into a detailed explanation of the semi-structured interviews and the case study methodology. Ethical considerations, reliability measures, and the significance of the chosen methods are also discussed.

3.1. Research Purpose

The methodology chapter outlines the research framework and methods used to explore the interplay between **sports event management** and **public relations (PR)** in enhancing the success and international visibility of sports clubs and federations. This study adopts a **qualitative research approach**, integrating **semi-structured interviews** with a **case study of the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul 2023**.

This chapter is structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of the methodological approach, including the conceptualization of the research, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures. The dual approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of theoretical insights and their practical application within a real-world context.

3.2. The Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach, which is particularly effective in investigating complex and context-specific phenomena. The qualitative method is suited for exploring the intricate dynamics of PR and event management within the sports industry, focusing on how these strategies shape organizational success and international visibility.

The research combines two primary methods:

Semi-Structured Interviews: Designed to capture detailed, nuanced insights from professionals involved in PR and event management within sports organizations.

Case Study: Focusing on the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul 2023 to provide a practical context for examining the application of PR and event management strategies.

These methods complement each other, with interviews providing personalized perspectives and the case study grounding the findings in real-world events. The rationale for this dual-method approach is supported by Creswell and Poth (2018), who argue that integrating qualitative methods allows for a deeper understanding of phenomena by triangulating data sources.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Rationale for Using Semi-Structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary qualitative data collection method due to their adaptability and effectiveness in exploring complex phenomena. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured formats allow flexibility in probing participants for deeper insights, ensuring that responses are contextually rich and reflective of real-world practices (Kallio et al., 2016; Bryman, 2012).

This approach is widely acknowledged as a robust method for exploring intricate organizational dynamics. Research emphasizes its utility in capturing detailed perspectives while allowing flexibility in inquiry (Kallio et al., 2016). This approach is especially relevant for studies aiming to understand contextual nuances within industries such as sports management and organizational learning. For example, Argote (2013) highlights the importance of collecting in-depth, qualitative data when studying organizational practices, emphasizing that insights often emerge from personalized, context-sensitive engagements.

The strategy of tailoring interview questions to the roles and experiences of respondents is supported by best practices in qualitative research, as it enhances the relevance and depth of responses. Bryman (2012) notes that this personalization encourages participants to provide richer, more reflective answers, which can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This study adopts these principles, ensuring that the methodology is aligned with established frameworks while offering new insights into the integration of public relations and event management strategies within the sports industry.

3.3.1.1. Key Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

- **Rich, Contextualized Data:** Participants provide detailed accounts and real-world examples, critical for understanding the integration of PR and event management practices.
- **Flexibility for Probing:** Follow-up questions enable the exploration of emerging themes, ensuring that responses capture the complexity of the issues under study.
- **Participant-Centric Design:** Personalized questions tailored to participants' roles, experiences, and expertise enhance the relevance and depth of responses.
- **Interview Development Process:** The development of the semi-structured interview guide followed established frameworks (Kallio et al., 2016) and included the following steps:
 - **Defining Objectives:** The interviews sought to uncover the practical impacts of PR and event management strategies on sports organizations, focusing on stakeholder engagement, brand building, and logistical success.
 - **Tailoring Questions:** Questions were customized for each participant to reflect their professional expertise, ensuring relevance and depth (Bryman, 2012).
 - **Expert Review:** The interview guide was reviewed by PMP-certified professionals to ensure alignment with industry standards and clarity.
 - **Pilot Testing:** Initial interviews were conducted with two participants to test the comprehensibility and relevance of the questions. Feedback led to refinements, including rephrasing and eliminating redundant questions.

3.3.2. Case Study – UEFA Champions League Final, Istanbul 2023

The UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul in 2023 serves as an important case study for my research, particularly due to my personal experience as an attendee. Being present at the event provided me with valuable insights into the fan engagement strategies and public relations (PR) campaigns that were utilized to enhance both the event's success and its global visibility.

A key highlight was the effective integration of digital platforms with live fan experiences, which fostered an immersive atmosphere that engaged audiences before, during, and after the match. For example, UEFA's marketing initiatives included the

introduction of a distinctive brand identity for the final, which highlighted Istanbul's cultural heritage and aimed to resonate with both local and international fans (UEFA, 2023a).

Additionally, initiatives such as encouraging user-generated content through platforms like TikTok contributed to building anticipation and extending the event's reach to a diverse audience base. Such tactics highlighted the potential of digital campaigns to amplify engagement and reinforce brand identity across varying demographics (SponsorUnited, 2023).

My firsthand experience provides a unique perspective for analyzing how PR and event management practices influence fan behavior, brand perception, and overall organizational outcomes. Observing these strategies in action allows me to combine theoretical knowledge with practical insights, enhancing my understanding of the factors that contribute to successful sports events in today's industry.

Data Sources and Collection

This case study draws on multiple data sources to provide a holistic understanding of the event:

- **Direct Observations:** Personal experiences at the event, including interactions with fan engagement activities and event organization.
- **Official UEFA Publications:** Reports, press releases, and promotional content related to the Istanbul 2023 Final.
- **Media Coverage:** International and local reporting on the event, providing insights into public perception and media framing.
- **Secondary Research:** Academic and industry literature on sports event management and PR strategies.

These sources were systematically analyzed to evaluate the event's organizational and communication strategies, ensuring a thorough understanding of its execution and outcomes.

Event Highlights and Analysis

The UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul was more than a football match; it was a comprehensive cultural and commercial spectacle. Key aspects of the event included:

Fan Engagement and Interactive Strategies

Physical Experiences: Dedicated fan zones were set up across the city, offering interactive games, live performances, and opportunities to connect with the event's branding.

Digital Campaigns: Social media platforms were leveraged to create excitement leading up to the match. This included interactive polls, exclusive pre-match content, and live updates, fostering a global sense of involvement.

Cultural Emphasis

Istanbul's rich heritage played a central role in the event's branding. From the architecture-inspired visual designs to performances featuring traditional music and dance, the city's cultural identity was interwoven with the event's global appeal.

Brand Collaborations and Sponsorship

Strategic partnerships with global and local brands ensured widespread promotion. The sponsors' presence was visible in event-related materials, advertisements, and on-site activations, enhancing their association with the prestige of the UEFA Champions League.

Operational and Logistical Execution

A well-coordinated infrastructure ensured smooth operations for both participants and spectators. Transportation systems were enhanced to accommodate increased demand, and meticulous planning ensured minimal disruptions in a bustling metropolitan area.

3.4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Q1: How do public relations (PR) strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations?

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): There is a significant and positive relationship between the implementation of PR strategies and the success and international visibility of sports federations.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between PR strategies and the success or visibility of sports federations.

Public relations is a cornerstone of modern organizational communication and branding. In the context of sports federations, PR strategies, such as media outreach, social media campaigns, and stakeholder engagement, play a pivotal role in shaping public perception and international recognition. Scholars such as Grunig and Hunt (1984) have emphasized the importance of PR in creating a favorable organizational image, while studies in sports management highlight its role in boosting visibility and fostering fan loyalty (Stoldt et al., 2021).

The hypothesis explores whether PR initiatives directly influence metrics of success, such as audience engagement, global recognition, and sponsorship acquisition. This aligns with findings that suggest organizations with robust PR frameworks are more likely to achieve international acclaim and competitive success.

Q2: What are the fundamental event management strategies employed by successful sports clubs?

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Implementing fundamental event management strategies has a significant and positive impact on the success of sports clubs.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between event management strategies and the success of sports clubs.

Event management strategies encompass planning, coordination, and execution, all of which are critical for ensuring the success of sports clubs, whether it involves a single game day, a home game series, or an international tournament. Research by Parent and

Smith-Swan (2013) underscores the importance of event management in enhancing fan experiences, improving logistical efficiency, and driving revenue growth. For instance, a home game may focus on creating a sense of community through localized marketing and pre-game activities, while an international tournament requires intricate logistical planning and global media outreach. Successful sports clubs often rely on a combination of innovative engagement strategies, such as immersive fan experiences, digital marketing, and stakeholder collaboration, to distinguish themselves in the competitive sports market.

This hypothesis investigates the tangible outcomes of event management practices, including increased attendance, financial performance, and brand loyalty. It builds on the notion that strategic event planning, tailored to the scale and type of event, is integral to achieving organizational goals and sustaining a strong market presence.

Q3: What is the impact of integrated sports event management and PR on the overall performance of sports clubs and federations?

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Integrated sports event management and PR strategies significantly enhance sports clubs and federations' performance and brand value.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant impact of event management and PR integration on the performance of sports clubs and federations.

The integration of event management and public relations (PR) is essential for achieving holistic success in sports organizations, as these two domains are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Event management focuses on operational excellence, including logistics, scheduling, and fan experience, while PR ensures effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and brand promotion. By combining these efforts, sports clubs and federations can optimize both organizational performance and brand value. Shilbury and Ferkins (2011) emphasize that integrated approaches foster stronger relationships with stakeholders, enhance brand perception, and improve event outcomes.

Large-scale events such as the UEFA Champions League and the Olympics demonstrate the effectiveness of coordinated PR campaigns in enhancing the success of well-managed events by boosting global visibility and extending media reach. Research emphasizes that

aligning operational strategies with promotional efforts contributes to streamlined event execution while fostering greater financial gains, improved fan experiences, and stronger sponsor relationships (Pedersen, 2020). This integrated approach is widely regarded as a best practice for organizations aiming for sustainable success and international recognition.

3.5. Sampling Procedure

This section outlines how participants were selected for the semi-structured interviews, ensuring that they offer valuable insights into the intersection of event management and public relations in the sports industry.

3.5.1. Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling technique was employed to deliberately select participants who possess in-depth knowledge and experience within the sports industry. Purposive sampling was chosen because it ensures that interviewees can provide relevant and specific insights related to the research questions.

Rationale for Selection

Purposive sampling was particularly advantageous in this study because it allowed for the selection of individuals who have direct involvement with key aspects of sports event management and PR, ensuring the data collected would be rich and applicable to the research objectives. This method also enabled the identification of subject-matter experts whose professional backgrounds align with the focus on sports federations, clubs, and major events like the FIBA U17 World Cup.

Number and Roles of Participants

A total of 5 participants were selected for the interviews, with an emphasis on quality over quantity. While the number of participants is relatively small, the depth and detail of the data obtained from each interview compensate for this. Each interview was structured with 20 in-depth questions, allowing the participants ample opportunity to provide thoughtful and comprehensive responses.

The length of each interview, ranging from 45 to 60 minutes, contributed to the depth of the data collected. This allowed for a thorough exploration of critical topics, such as public relations strategies, event management, and their influence on the success of sporting events. By focusing on fewer participants with significant expertise, I was able to gather detailed and rich data that aligns closely with the research objectives.

The interviewees were selected from a variety of roles within sports organizations, such as:

- **PR Directors and Managers, Sports Social Media and Community Managers:** Responsible for overseeing the public image and communication strategies of their organizations.
- **Event Coordinators and Managers:** In charge of planning, executing, and managing logistics for large-scale sporting events.
- **Marketing and Sponsorship Managers:** Engaged in aligning sports events with commercial sponsors and maximizing engagement.

This diversity in roles ensures that the sample captures a comprehensive range of perspectives regarding the dual impact of PR and event management.

Table 8. Profile of Interview Participants

| Name | Role/Position | Organization |
|--|---|--|
| Nicolas Seigne Participant B | Head of Events / Technical Delegate / Event Coordinator | Paris Basketball Club / Basketball Champions League / FIBA |
| Bertan Kaya Participant A | Senior Operations Manager / Accreditation Coordinator | TBF / EuroLeague Basketball |
| Amine Azzouzi Participant D | Associate Customer Success Specialist MENA | Catapult |
| Amine Yahiaoui Participant E | Administrative Staff (U20 Football Teams) | FRMF |
| Hasan Mahdi Participant C | Volunteer | UEFA Champions League |

Source: Original

Diversity and Representativeness:

Efforts were made to ensure diversity in terms of geographic location, type of sport, and organizational size. This diversity will ensure that the findings reflect the breadth of practices across different settings within the sports industry. By including both large, internationally recognized organizations (such as UEFA) and smaller, regional bodies, the sample offers insights applicable to a variety of contexts.

3.5.2. Interview Process

The interviews for this research were conducted using a hybrid approach, tailored to the geographic and logistical constraints of the participants. While some interviews were held in person, others took place online through video conferencing platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom. This method allowed for flexibility and ensured participation from professionals based in various countries and cities, maximizing the diversity and relevance of the sample.

Prior to each interview, participants received a document outlining all the questions to be discussed. This allowed them to familiarize themselves with the topics and decide how to address them. Participants were given full autonomy to respond to all questions, omit those they felt were less pertinent, or consolidate their answers when multiple questions overlapped. This personalized approach helped maintain the relevance and depth of the interviews, ensuring a focus on the most critical areas of the study.

In some cases, interviews were conducted in French due to the linguistic preferences of both myself and certain participants. For one participant, whose primary language was French, the entire interview was conducted in that language. These interviews were transcribed in French initially and subsequently translated into English for consistent analysis. This ensured that no nuances or details were lost in translation while accommodating the multilingual nature of the research.

The semi-structured format enabled open-ended discussions, encouraging participants to elaborate on their perspectives and share practical examples relevant to their roles in the sports industry.

To ensure accuracy and consistency, all interviews were recorded with explicit consent from the participants. The recordings were carefully transcribed, and all significant points were extracted and categorized for analysis. This meticulous process ensured that the data remained comprehensive and aligned with the research objectives.

This iterative process allowed for deeper exploration of key topics and ensured the integrity and richness of the collected data.

3.6. Data Analysis

This section details the process used to analyze data collected from both the interviews and the case study. It highlights the systematic approach taken to ensure that insights align with the research objectives and provide meaningful contributions to understanding the role of event management and public relations in sports organizations.

3.6.1. Analytical Framework

A thematic analysis approach was adopted to systematically examine and interpret the data. This method was chosen for its flexibility and suitability in exploring patterns, relationships, and themes that emerge across qualitative datasets, including interviews and case study.

3.6.2. Combining Data from Multiple Sources

The analysis integrates findings from two key sources:

3.6.2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Data from interviews was analyzed to capture the perspectives of industry professionals with expertise in sports event management and public relations.

Patterns, recurring ideas, and unique viewpoints were identified through a detailed thematic analysis process.

3.6.2.2. Findings from the UEFA Champions League Final Case Study

The case study was used as a practical example to illustrate key strategies and practices within a real-world context.

Relevant observations and data from the event were closely examined to align with and expand upon the themes emerging from the interviews.

3.6.2.3. Analytical Process

The analysis followed a structured approach to ensure coherence and reliability:

- **Preliminary Review of Data:**
The interview transcripts and case study materials were thoroughly reviewed to identify significant observations and recurring elements.
- **Identification of Themes:**
Recurring patterns within the data were organized into key themes that align with the research focus, such as crisis communication, audience engagement, and sponsorship effectiveness.
- **Cross-Analysis:**
Data from interviews were compared with findings from the case study to highlight consistencies, differences, and areas of overlap in practices and strategies.
- **Synthesis of Findings:**
Themes were refined and synthesized into cohesive narratives, ensuring that the analysis addressed the research questions effectively and provided actionable insights.

This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how public relations and event management strategies influence the success of sports organizations and events.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to rigorous ethical standards to ensure the integrity of the study and the protection of participant rights. Key ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and mitigating researcher bias throughout the data collection and analysis process.

3.7.1. Informed Consent

All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, procedures, and their role in the research before the interviews commenced. They were given an informed consent document outlining the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any point without repercussions, and the measures in place to protect their data. This aligns with the ethical guidelines stipulated in the Belmont Report, which emphasize respect for persons and informed decision-making (Belmont Report, 1979).

3.7.2. Confidentiality and Data Security

Confidentiality was prioritized throughout the research process. To protect participants' identities, all identifying information was anonymized during transcription and analysis. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant, and any specific organizational details were generalized to prevent recognition. Interview recordings, transcripts, and translations were securely stored on password-protected devices, adhering to data protection principles as outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

3.7.3. Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity

Given that some interviews were conducted in French to accommodate participants' native language, additional ethical measures were taken to ensure accuracy and cultural sensitivity. French interviews were transcribed in their original language and then carefully translated into English for analysis. This process ensured that the meaning and context of participants' responses were preserved, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation.

Having outlined the methodology employed to collect and analyze data for this study, the following chapter will present the key findings derived from the semi-structured interviews and the case study of the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul 2023. These findings will be organized around major themes identified during the analysis, addressing the research questions and providing insights into the impact of public relations and event management on the success of sports events. The subsequent sections

will offer a detailed examination of the data, followed by a thorough analysis of how it contributes to the overall understanding of the research objectives.



CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter delves into the outcomes of the research, focusing on insights derived from two key sources: a case study of the UEFA Champions League Final held in Istanbul and detailed interviews with professionals working in sports management and public relations. The analysis examines how these two domains intersect to influence the planning, execution, and impact of large-scale sports events. Specifically, it explores themes such as the strategic role of public relations in strengthening an organization's brand, the processes and decisions underpinning effective event management, and the measures implemented to address challenges during high-pressure scenarios.

The findings are not presented in isolation but are critically compared with the perspectives and frameworks established in the literature review. This comparative approach emphasizes where current practices align with or differ from established academic theories, providing a deeper understanding of how theoretical principles translate into real-world application. Additionally, this comparison identifies areas where further research or innovation may be necessary.

This exploration demonstrates the mutual influence of public relations and event management in shaping outcomes for sports organizations. By presenting these findings, the chapter provides valuable insights that are both theoretically significant and practically applicable, offering a foundation for future advancements in the industry.

4.1. Case Study - UEFA UCL Final Istanbul 2023

Overview of the Event

In 2023, Istanbul played host to one of the most prestigious football tournaments in the world: the UEFA Champions League Final. This event brought together not only two of Europe's top-performing teams but also a vast, international audience eager to witness the culmination of months of competition. The final was not just a sporting highlight; it symbolized the intricate collaboration required to execute a large-scale global event.

Organizing an event of this magnitude required collaboration on a global scale. UEFA partnered with local authorities, transportation agencies, sponsors, media networks, and security teams to ensure every aspect of the event ran smoothly. The logistical complexity

ranged from managing the influx of thousands of international fans to coordinating live broadcasts for millions of viewers worldwide. Each stakeholder played a pivotal role in maintaining the efficiency, safety, and entertainment value of the final.

This event showcased Istanbul's capability to host international sporting occasions at the highest level, blending tradition and innovation. Moreover, The event extended far beyond the stadium, transforming Istanbul into a footballing capital for an entire week. A free-to-all fan festival at Yenikapı Park and strategic PR campaigns across the city—such as showcasing the UEFA Trophy in iconic locations like Taksim Square and the Bosphorus—further elevated its profile (UEFA, 2023).

The following analysis explores the planning, management, and public relations strategies employed, shedding light on how this remarkable event was executed and its broader implications for sports event management.

4.1.1. Venue Preparation and Logistics

The Atatürk Olympic Stadium served as the cornerstone of the event. Renovations focused on improving infrastructure, including advanced seating arrangements for 75,000 fans, VIP lounges, hospitality boxes, and modernized media facilities (Inews, 2023). Accessibility was a key consideration, with ramps, elevators, and dedicated areas for individuals with disabilities ensuring inclusivity (Accessiball, 2023). The €140 million renovation investment highlighted UEFA's commitment to delivering a world-class experience for all stakeholders.

The upgrades extended beyond the stadium itself to include its surrounding infrastructure. Additional entrances were constructed to reduce bottlenecks, while the parking facilities were expanded to accommodate the influx of vehicles on match day. Security enhancements, including controlled entry points with metal detectors and ticket scans, ensured a safe environment for fans and officials (Daily Sabah, 2023).

Transportation logistics were meticulously planned to support the movement of thousands of fans. A Free Transport Programme was introduced, encompassing dedicated shuttle buses running between Istanbul's airports, the city center, and the stadium Fan Zones. Public transport, including all metro and tram services, was made free for ticket holders,

who could access these services by presenting their UCL Fan Pass on the UEFA Champions League app (UEFA, 2023).

To effectively manage the large crowds and minimize congestion on match day, access to the metro services leading to the stadium was specifically limited to individuals with valid match tickets, as well as event staff and volunteers. Security checkpoints were strategically positioned at key metro stations and shuttle bus stops to verify credentials and conduct safety checks. This ensured that the area surrounding the stadium remained secure and accessible only to authorized attendees, supporting a smooth and organized transportation system (UEFA Champions League Official Event Guide, 2023).

Shuttle buses operated continuously between key transport hubs and the stadium, providing a reliable option for fans traveling from hotels or airports. For those driving to the venue, designated parking areas were clearly marked, with traffic management systems in place to prevent bottlenecks (Daily Sabah, 2023).

Organizers also issued warnings about the potential for heavy traffic across Istanbul on match day, urging fans to use public transport and avoid taxi travel where possible. These efforts reflected a holistic approach to logistics, balancing accessibility, safety, and convenience for attendees (UEFA Champions League Official Event Guide, 2023).

The logistical arrangements not only showcased Istanbul's ability to host a high-profile international event but also set a benchmark for effective transportation and venue management in global sports.

Transportation and Access

Given the stadium's location and the expected influx of attendees, transportation planning was central to the event's logistics. A multi-modal approach was implemented to provide fans with a range of options, minimizing traffic congestion and ensuring timely arrival.

A detailed guide for fans and tourists, published by HeyTripster's blog, outlined transportation options and safety tips for the final (Simge Sor, 2023). This guide emphasized the importance of planning journeys in advance and highlighted key transportation routes:

Bus Routes

- From Eminönü: Lines 92, 79T, MK11 provided access to the stadium, with a journey duration of approximately 94 minutes.
- From Kadıköy: Lines 15BK, 34AS (Metrobus), and 79K covered the route in about 160 minutes.
- From Beşiktaş Square: Lines 28T, 142E, and 79K were available, with a travel time of 96 minutes.
- From Başakşehir: Fans could take the MK14 bus from Güvercintepe Park, arriving at the stadium in just 12 minutes.

Metro Services

- The M3 line, terminating at Olympic station, was a key access route. After alighting, fans faced a 20-minute walk to the stadium, transformed into a vibrant experience with other supporters.
- From Eminönü: Using the M2, M1B, and M3 lines, the total journey took around 76 minutes.
- From Beşiktaş Square: Similar routes as Eminönü, with a travel duration of 96 minutes. Beşiktaş itself lacked direct metro access, requiring fans to walk 33 minutes to Taksim or take a short minibus ride.

Traffic Management and Early Planning

To mitigate congestion, organizers emphasized the use of public transport. Heavy traffic on match day was anticipated, and fans were advised to plan their journeys in advance. The Free Transport Programme, which included shuttle buses and metro access for ticket holders, eased logistical challenges and reduced private vehicle use.

Fans were also reminded by the guide to keep essential documents—tickets, passports, and IDs—securely on them for efficient entrance processing. For those traveling with tour companies, additional guidance on safety and navigation was provided by tour advisors (Simgé Sor, 2023).

4.1.2. Fan Engagement and the Yenikapı Fan Festival

The UEFA Champions League Final 2023 was not only a match but a week-long celebration that showcased the unity and excitement of football. Central to this experience

was the **Yenikapı Fan Festival**, a free-to-attend event designed to entertain and engage fans of all ages. Located at Yenikapı Etkinlik Alanı, the festival reflected Istanbul's unique cultural vibrancy while fostering a global footballing community.

Festival Layout and Attractions : The festival offered a diverse array of activities and attractions, ensuring something for everyone. Some of the highlights included:

- **Football Games and Activities:** Attendees could participate in football-related games throughout the day, adding an interactive element to the festivities. Special matches featuring players with trisomy highlighted inclusivity and celebrated the unifying power of sports.
- **Food Courts and Sponsor Giveaways:** Food courts provided a variety of culinary options, while sponsors like Pepsi and Ruffles offered free snacks and drinks all day. This generosity from event partners added to the sense of hospitality and excitement.
- **Concerts and Entertainment:** Free DJ performances entertained crowds throughout the day, culminating in artist concerts at night. Among these, Lost Frequencies's performance stood out as the most popular and well-attended, energizing the festival with a dynamic atmosphere.



Figure 24. UEFA UCL's Fan Festival Concerts' poster.
Source: Elektronik Dans Müziği, 2023

- **Photo Booths:** Fans could create personalized souvenirs at the free photo booth, which featured instant printed pictures with cut-out boards of Manchester City and Inter Milan players. This activity became a fan favorite, as it allowed supporters to capture their excitement and take home a memory of the event.
- **Hall of Fame Display:** One of the festival’s most captivating features was the Hall of Fame, a hallway showcasing jerseys from all the teams that participated in the Champions League. The jerseys were arranged according to the group stage eliminations, starting with the first eliminated teams and progressing to the final two—Manchester City and Inter Milan—displayed alongside the Champions League Trophy. Each jersey represented the best or most famous player from each team, offering fans a journey through the competition’s narrative.
- **Free Watch Party:** On match day, the festival transformed into a massive viewing area, with all the screens in the park broadcasting the final live. This watch party allowed fans without tickets to join in the excitement, fostering a communal atmosphere as thousands gathered to watch the climactic game together.

Inclusivity and Community Engagement

The Yenikapı Fan Festival exemplified inclusivity, with its free admission and wide variety of attractions ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or ticket status, could participate. The festival’s integration of special matches featuring trisomy players and the provision of family-friendly zones underscored UEFA’s commitment to making football accessible to all.

Cultural and Entertainment Showcases

Beyond football, the festival highlighted Istanbul’s cultural richness. Local artists and musicians performed on the Main Stage, offering a blend of international and Turkish entertainment. Food courts showcased traditional Turkish cuisine alongside international options, further emphasizing the city’s role as a bridge between cultures.

Digital Amplification and Global Reach

The festival was designed to maximize digital engagement, encouraging fans to share their experiences online. Attendees actively posted photos and videos of activities, such as their moments at the photo booth, the Hall of Fame, and the concerts, creating a vibrant online presence. Hashtags such as #UCLFinalIstanbul helped unify these posts, showcasing the festival's atmosphere to a global audience. The festival's interactive attractions and the energy of the watch party sparked wide participation across platforms, drawing international attention to Istanbul's role as a premier host city.

Impact on the Overall Event Experience

The Yenikapı Fan Festival played a pivotal role in elevating the Champions League Final beyond a single match. By offering a mix of interactive, cultural, and entertainment-focused activities, it fostered a sense of community and celebration that extended to both local residents and international visitors. The festival exemplified how fan engagement can transform a sporting event into an unforgettable cultural experience.

4.1.3. Media and Broadcasting Infrastructure

The Final 2023 in Istanbul was more than just a football match; it was a global spectacle that showcased how media and broadcasting technology can unite millions of people across continents. With an estimated 350 million viewers tuning in worldwide, the event underscored the importance of robust media infrastructure, cutting-edge technology, and strategic content delivery in creating a seamless viewing experience for global audiences.

4.1.3.1. Sophisticated Media Facilities

The Atatürk Olympic Stadium housed a state-of-the-art media center designed to support the demands of a high-profile international event. This facility accommodated over 1,500 journalists and broadcasters, providing them with advanced tools and workspaces to cover the event effectively. Equipped with high-speed internet, private interview rooms, and live data feeds, the media center became the hub for content creation and dissemination. Dedicated editing bays allowed for real-time video and image processing, enabling journalists to relay updates instantaneously to their respective audiences.

Live press conferences with team managers, players, and UEFA officials were streamed directly from the media center, further connecting global audiences to the heart of the action. These press events were structured to include simultaneous translations, ensuring accessibility for an international audience.

4.1.3.2. Broadcasting Reach and Technology

The Champions League Final was broadcast live to over 200 territories worldwide, cementing its status as one of the most-viewed annual sporting events (450 million broadcast viewers worldwide). UEFA's broadcasting strategy incorporated a network of over 100 high-definition cameras strategically positioned throughout the stadium. These cameras captured every angle of the match, from dynamic on-field action to the reactions of the crowd, ensuring a comprehensive viewing experience (Arab News, 2023).

Drone technology was employed to provide aerial views of the stadium and its surroundings, capturing Istanbul's iconic skyline and reinforcing the city's cultural significance as the host. Augmented reality (AR) features, such as team formations and player statistics, were integrated into the broadcast, enhancing the analytical depth for viewers. These innovations offered fans an immersive experience that rivaled live attendance.

For fans unable to watch the match through traditional broadcasting, UEFA provided digital live-streaming options via its official app and website. These platforms allowed users to access real-time match coverage, highlights, and behind-the-scenes content, ensuring inclusivity for fans without access to television networks.

4.1.3.3. Public Viewing and Inclusivity

The Yenikapı Fan Festival provided a unique opportunity for fans to enjoy the Champions League Final in a shared and energetic setting. Large LED screens were installed throughout the park, transforming the festival into a vibrant watch party. Fans from diverse backgrounds came together to experience the match, creating a sense of unity and celebration that extended beyond the stadium itself.

Special viewing zones within the festival grounds catered specifically to supporters of Manchester City and Inter Milan. These areas allowed fans to express their team loyalties

while maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment. The careful planning and execution of the watch party ensured that even those without tickets could immerse themselves in the excitement of the final, demonstrating how thoughtful event design can amplify the communal spirit of sports.

4.1.3.4. Social Media and Digital Engagement

Social media platforms served as critical tools for engaging fans worldwide. UEFA's official accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok actively posted updates, behind-the-scenes footage, and interactive polls during the event. Hashtags like #UCLFinalIstanbul trended globally, with millions of posts shared by fans, teams, and influencers. This real-time engagement amplified the event's visibility and created an online community where fans could connect and share their excitement.

Fan-generated content from the Yenikapı Fan Festival also played a significant role in digital amplification. Photos and videos of fans participating in festival activities, such as the Hall of Fame or the photo booth, were widely shared across social media. This content not only promoted the Champions League brand but also showcased Istanbul's vibrant atmosphere as the host city.

4.1.4. Economic and Legacy Impacts

The global reach of the event had significant economic implications. Broadcasting rights for the Champions League are among UEFA's most lucrative revenue streams, with the 2023 final contributing substantially to the organization's earnings. According to industry estimates, UEFA generated over €3.5 billion from broadcasting rights during the 2022–2023 Champions League season, demonstrating the financial impact of high-quality media production (Statista, 2023).

The success of the broadcasting strategy also enhanced Istanbul's global profile. By showcasing the city's cultural landmarks and state-of-the-art stadium, the event reinforced Istanbul's position as a top-tier destination for international sports and tourism. The use of innovative technology in the broadcast further established UEFA's reputation as a leader in sports media.

4.1.5. Security and Emergency Management

The UEFA Champions League Final 2023 demonstrated that hosting a high-profile international event requires robust security and emergency management strategies to ensure the safety of attendees, players, and staff. With over 75,000 fans present at the Atatürk Olympic Stadium and thousands more participating in the Yenikapı Fan Festival, meticulous planning and execution were essential.

4.1.5.1. Multi-Layered Security Framework

A comprehensive security plan was developed in collaboration with local law enforcement, private security firms, and UEFA officials. Over 5,000 security personnel were deployed across the stadium, Fan Zones, and key transport hubs. This included police officers, plainclothes operatives, and specialized units trained in crowd management and emergency response.

Controlled entry points equipped with metal detectors and bag scanners ensured that only authorized individuals could access the stadium and other official venues. Ticket checks were reinforced with digital verification systems to prevent counterfeiting and unauthorized entry. Security checkpoints were also established at metro stations and shuttle bus stops leading to the stadium, minimizing risks during fan transit (UEFA, 2023).

4.1.5.2. Crowd Control and Traffic Management

Managing the movement of tens of thousands of fans required a detailed crowd control strategy. Barriers and designated walkways were used to guide fan flows and prevent overcrowding. Within the stadium, seating arrangements and staggered entry times helped distribute the arrival of fans evenly, reducing bottlenecks.

Traffic management systems were implemented to handle the influx of vehicles around the stadium. Dedicated parking zones and shuttle buses were part of this strategy, while non-ticket holders were discouraged from approaching the stadium to avoid unnecessary congestion. The Free Transport Programme further supported smooth transit for ticket holders by limiting private vehicle use and encouraging public transport.

4.1.5.3. Emergency Preparedness and Medical Services

Emergency preparedness was a cornerstone of the event's safety plan. Medical teams and first responders were stationed strategically throughout the stadium and at the Yenikapı Fan Festival. Mobile medical units and ambulances were on standby to address any health-related incidents quickly.

Evacuation protocols were rehearsed prior to the event, with clear signage and trained staff ready to guide fans to safety in case of an emergency. Fire safety measures, including extinguishers and sprinkler systems were in place to address potential hazards within the stadium and surrounding areas.

4.1.5.4. Managing Risks in High-Profile Events

High-profile events such as the Champions League Final are often targets for security threats, requiring proactive risk management. Security teams conducted risk assessments before the event, identifying vulnerabilities and implementing mitigation strategies. These included measures to prevent unauthorized drone activity, cyberattacks, and crowd-related incidents.

In addition, UEFA's crisis communication team developed a plan to ensure timely and accurate information dissemination in case of disruptions. This included coordination with local authorities and media outlets to manage public perception and maintain confidence in the event's safety.

Key Outcomes of Security and Emergency Planning

The meticulous security and emergency management strategies implemented during the UEFA Champions League Final 2023 resulted in a smooth and incident-free event. Fans were able to enjoy the match and festival activities in a safe environment, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative planning between UEFA, TFF, local authorities, and private partners.

The success of these measures also reinforced Istanbul's reputation as a capable host for global events, setting a benchmark for future security protocols in international sports.

4.1.6. Volunteer Management

Volunteers were instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of the UEFA Champions League Final 2023. With over 2,000 individuals recruited from diverse backgrounds, the volunteer program exemplified how local and international collaboration could contribute to the success of a global event. These volunteers, operating across various roles, provided essential support and enhanced the overall experience for attendees.

4.1.6.1. Volunteer Recruitment and Training

The recruitment process for volunteers began months before the event, focusing on individuals with a passion for football and a commitment to delivering exceptional service. Applicants were screened based on their skills, language proficiency, and ability to work in high-pressure environments. Special efforts were made to include volunteers from Istanbul, ensuring local engagement and representation.

Comprehensive training sessions were conducted to prepare volunteers for their roles. These sessions covered event logistics, customer service, cultural sensitivity, and emergency response protocols. Volunteers were also briefed on the stadium layout, fan zones, teams, and VIP hotels, and the Yenikapı Fan Festival, enabling them to assist attendees effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers were assigned to various key areas based on their expertise and interests. Their responsibilities included:

- **Hospitality Services:** Assisting VIPs, media personnel, and sponsors in designated hospitality areas.
- **Fan Engagement:** Guiding visitors at the fan zones and festival grounds, helping them navigate activities, and answering queries.
- **Transportation Assistance:** Managing shuttle services and metro access points, ensuring fans reached the stadium and festival safely.
- **Crowd Management:** Supporting security personnel in managing crowd flows and providing directions during entry and exit.

- **Media and Communications Support:** Assisting journalists and broadcasters at the media center, ensuring they had the resources to deliver timely coverage.

4.1.6.2. Cultural and Emotional Impact

Beyond logistical support, volunteers served as ambassadors of Istanbul, showcasing the city's hospitality and warmth to international visitors. Their enthusiasm and commitment added a personal touch to the event, creating a welcoming environment for attendees. Many fans noted the friendliness and helpfulness of the volunteers as a highlight of their experience, reflecting positively on Istanbul's hosting capabilities.

The involvement of local volunteers also fostered a sense of pride and ownership within the community. By participating in such a prestigious event, they contributed to Istanbul's reputation as a world-class destination for international sports.

4.1.6.3. Volunteer Coordination, Support, and Rewards

A dedicated team of coordinators managed the volunteers, ensuring that shifts were organized efficiently and that support was available whenever needed. Break areas and refreshment zones were provided to keep volunteers energized throughout the event. Regular check-ins with coordinators allowed for real-time adjustments and ensured that volunteers felt supported in their roles.

In return for their service, volunteers received exclusive items such as branded bags, hats, and kits, along with meals to sustain them during their shifts. A select number of volunteers, depending on their roles and assigned locations, were also granted free access to the game. This reward served as a significant motivation for many, allowing them to witness the historic final while contributing to its success.

4.1.7. Public Relations and Branding

The long-awaited finale of the Champions League was not just a match; it was a meticulously orchestrated showcase of public relations (PR) and branding excellence. Organizers developed a comprehensive strategy to amplify global visibility, foster local engagement, and highlight Istanbul's unique position as a cultural and historical hub. By

weaving football into the city's identity, the event created a lasting impression on audiences worldwide.

4.1.7.1. Brand Identity: Development and Design

The brand identity for the 2023 Champions League Final was meticulously crafted to reflect Istanbul's unique cultural and historical elements. Unveiled during the group stage draw on August 25, 2022, it was designed by Istanbul-based artist Tolga Tarhan. It featured a dynamic visual theme blending the global nature of the Champions League with the city's distinctive charm (UEFA, 2023).

Visual Elements:

- **Iconic Landmarks:** The branding prominently incorporated Istanbul's landmarks, such as the Galata Tower, Bosphorus Bridge, and Hagia Sophia, merging historical richness with the modern energy of football.
- **Color Palette:** Inspired by Istanbul's sunsets and bustling nightlife, the palette included deep blues, vibrant oranges, and golden yellows, creating a striking visual identity.
- **Typography and Graphics:** Typography combined traditional and contemporary elements, while fluid graphics symbolized the dynamic nature of football.



Figure 25. Istanbul's UCL Final 23 - Brand Identity, By Tolga Tarhan.

Source: HeyTripster. 2023

Implementation:

The visual identity was applied consistently across promotional campaigns, merchandise, signage, and digital platforms, ensuring a cohesive brand presence.

Collaboration between UEFA, the TFF, and local artists ensured authenticity, aligning Istanbul's identity with the Champions League's global appeal (UEFA, 2023).

4.1.7.2. Pre-Event Campaigns and Media Outreach

Months before the long-awaited finale, UEFA and local organizers launched a dynamic PR campaign to build excitement. A key highlight of this campaign was the **Trophy Tour**, which showcased the iconic UEFA Trophy across Istanbul. Over two weeks leading up to the event, the trophy was prominently displayed at various locations, including bridges, metro stations, metro hallways, and other highly visible areas around the city.



Figure 26. PR Campaign - UCL Cup - Bosphorus, Istanbul

Source: Daily Sabah, 2021

One particularly creative activation was at **Gayrettepe metro station**, where the hallway floor was transformed to resemble a football stadium pitch. This design immersed commuters in the spirit of the Champions League, turning a routine journey into a memorable engagement with the event.



Figure 27. Gayrettepe Metro Station, Istanbul, 27 May 2023
Source: Original

This widespread display ensured that residents and visitors alike could engage with the Champions League's prestige in their everyday spaces. Landmarks such as Taksim Square and the Bosphorus served as backdrops for the trophy, creating visually striking and shareable moments. The activations connected Istanbul's heritage to the global football narrative, blending local culture with the competition's international appeal.



Figure 28. PR Campaign - UCL Cup - Taksim Square, Istanbul 2023
Source: A News, 2023

4.1.7.3. Digital Strategies and Fan Engagement

Digital platforms played a central role in connecting with fans. UEFA's official social media accounts actively engaged followers with interactive polls, live updates, and exclusive content in the weeks leading up to the final. Hashtags like #UCLFinalIstanbul became viral, uniting fans globally under a shared narrative of excitement. Influencers and former players also contributed to the buzz by sharing personal stories and experiences tied to the competition.

On match day, social media became a real-time extension of the event. Fans shared their perspectives from the stadium, Fan Zones, and watch parties, creating a rich tapestry of user-generated content. This approach not only amplified the event's reach but also showcased the energy and unity among supporters worldwide.

4.1.7.4. Reputation Management and Crisis Preparedness

Large-scale events come with inherent risks, and the Champions League finale was no exception. To mitigate potential issues, organizers implemented a detailed crisis communication plan. This included real-time coordination between UEFA and local authorities to address potential disruptions such as logistical delays, safety concerns, or media scrutiny. By prioritizing transparency and swift responses, organizers successfully maintained the positive momentum of the event.

4.1.7.5. Building a Lasting Legacy

The PR and branding efforts surrounding the long-awaited finale had a profound impact. Istanbul's reputation as a world-class destination for international events was bolstered, attracting future opportunities for tourism and cultural exchanges. For UEFA, the event reinforced the Champions League's status as the pinnacle of club football, further cementing its connection with fans worldwide.

4.1.8. Key Takeaways from the Case Study

The grand culmination of Europe's premier football competition in Istanbul provides a detailed case study of the complex dynamics involved in hosting an international mega-event. By analyzing its economic, cultural, and operational dimensions, this section

highlights the far-reaching impacts such events have on host nations, cities, and sports federations.

4.1.8.1. Impact on the Host Country: Turkey

Hosting the Champions League Final significantly bolstered Turkey's international standing and economy.

- **Economic Contribution:** International visitors were estimated to spend an average of €855 per person. This breakdown included accommodation (€300), dining (€150), shopping (€100), transportation (€50), and miscellaneous expenses (€255) (Daily Sabah, 2023).

The total economic impact was approximately €75 million, encompassing direct tourist spending and indirect benefits such as job creation and increased demand for local services.

- **Infrastructure Development:** The €140 million renovation of the Atatürk Olympic Stadium reflected a long-term investment in Turkey's ability to host high-profile international events (UEFA Event Guide, 2023).

4.1.8.2. Impact on the Host City: Istanbul

Istanbul benefited significantly from the event through tourism, local business growth, and global exposure.

- **Tourism and Local Economy:** Hotels reported occupancy rates exceeding 95%, with room rates increasing by an average of 50% during the event week. Restaurants and cafes in areas such as Sultanahmet and Taksim doubled their daily turnover, while retail businesses experienced a surge in sales, particularly for sports merchandise and local crafts (Hurriyet Daily News, 2023).
- **Transportation Enhancements:** Improvements to the city's metro and shuttle systems were key to managing the influx of fans. The Free Transport Programme streamlined movement while reducing traffic congestion on match day (UEFA Event Guide, 2023).
- **Cultural Integration:** Initiatives like the Trophy Tour, featuring Istanbul landmarks such as Taksim Square and the Bosphorus, reinforced the city's

identity as part of the Champions League branding. Activations like the football-pitch-themed hallway at Gayrettepe metro station provided a unique local touch.

4.1.8.3. Impact on the Turkish Football Federation (TFF)

The TFF played a crucial role in delivering a seamless event, enhancing its global reputation and local influence.

- **Operational Leadership:** The TFF coordinated critical elements such as stadium upgrades, volunteer programs, and transportation logistics in collaboration with UEFA and local authorities.
- **Leadership Perspective:** The Vice-President of the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) and UEFA Executive Committee member, Servet Yardımcı, highlighted the significance of hosting the Champions League Final in Istanbul. He expressed pride in the TFF's ability to organize the event for the second time, emphasizing the diligent efforts made to create a memorable and inclusive experience. Yardımcı remarked that Turkey's deep passion for football and Istanbul's vibrant cultural diversity positioned the city as an ideal host. He noted that the renovated Atatürk Olympic Stadium would provide a fitting stage for Europe's top teams to compete, ensuring fans from across the globe would feel welcomed and at home in a city known for its rich blend of cultures.
- **Community Engagement:** Charity initiatives, including a match featuring football legends, raised over €500,000 for youth sports and earthquake relief efforts (Daily Sabah, 2023).
- **Increased Visibility:** The successful execution of the event enhanced the TFF's position within UEFA, strengthening partnerships and paving the way for future opportunities.

4.1.8.4. Experiential Value: VIP and Hospitality Packages

Hospitality offerings contributed to the event's financial and experiential appeal.

VIP Offerings: Packages included match tickets, a drinks reception, match programs, and hospitality starting three hours before kick-off.

Exclusive options, such as private tables in the Prestige Restaurant (€44,000) or access to the Official Hospitality Club (€3,900 per person), attracted sponsors, executives, and high-profile attendees (LLM Reporters, 2022).

Branding and Public Relations Success

The public relations strategies employed for the finale set a new benchmark in the field, combining creativity, inclusivity, and global reach. By integrating Istanbul's iconic landmarks and cultural richness into the event's narrative, the campaign bridged local authenticity with international appeal. The innovative use of the Trophy Tour, interactive fan engagement activities, and social media campaigns, which garnered over 154 million impressions globally, exemplified cutting-edge PR practices (UEFA.com, 2023).

This approach not only promoted the event but elevated its status as a cultural and sporting spectacle. The seamless integration of physical branding with digital engagement highlighted a sophisticated understanding of modern PR dynamics, raising the standard for future mega-events. Through these efforts, Istanbul was positioned as a top-tier destination for global sports, showcasing the transformative potential of well-executed public relations.



Figure 29-30. Promotional Murals in Famous Districts (Kadikoy and Karakoy) - Istanbul, 2023

Source: UEFA, 2023

4.1.9. Conclusion of the Case Study

The Istanbul finale represents a benchmark in sports event management, not because of the individual elements of its execution, but through the seamless integration of diverse strategies that collectively delivered an extraordinary outcome. The event highlighted how logistical innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and cultural resonance can turn a global sports event into a transformative experience for participants and hosts alike.

A key lesson from the case study is the critical role of adaptability. Facing challenges such as crowd management, extensive security measures, and high global visibility, the

organizers demonstrated that precise coordination and proactive planning are indispensable. Moreover, the event's strategic use of branding and community-focused engagement underlined that a mega-event's success lies as much in its legacy as in the spectacle itself.

This case study shows that future hosts must look beyond the immediate objectives of hosting such events. Instead, they should prioritize creating meaningful and measurable impacts that align with the aspirations of local communities and international stakeholders. The Istanbul finale exemplifies how sports events, when effectively managed, can drive innovation, unify diverse audiences, and build lasting global recognition for hosts.

4.2. Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

This section presents a comprehensive thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from interviews conducted with key stakeholders in the sports event management and public relations domain. The thematic analysis aims to identify recurring patterns, insights, and perspectives that align with the research objectives. Each theme has been carefully extracted and coded to reflect critical areas of focus within the study, providing an in-depth understanding of the impact of sports event management and public relations on clubs and federations.

The analysis is structured around several key themes, including **sports event operations, public relations campaigns, sponsorship strategies, fan engagement initiatives, volunteer contributions, crisis management, and the impact on host cities and federations**. Each theme is further divided into subcategories that capture the nuances of the stakeholders' experiences and strategies implemented within the industry.

To provide a clearer overview of the thematic structure, the following figure illustrates the key themes and their respective subcategories in a mind map format, offering a visual representation of the analytical framework used in this study.

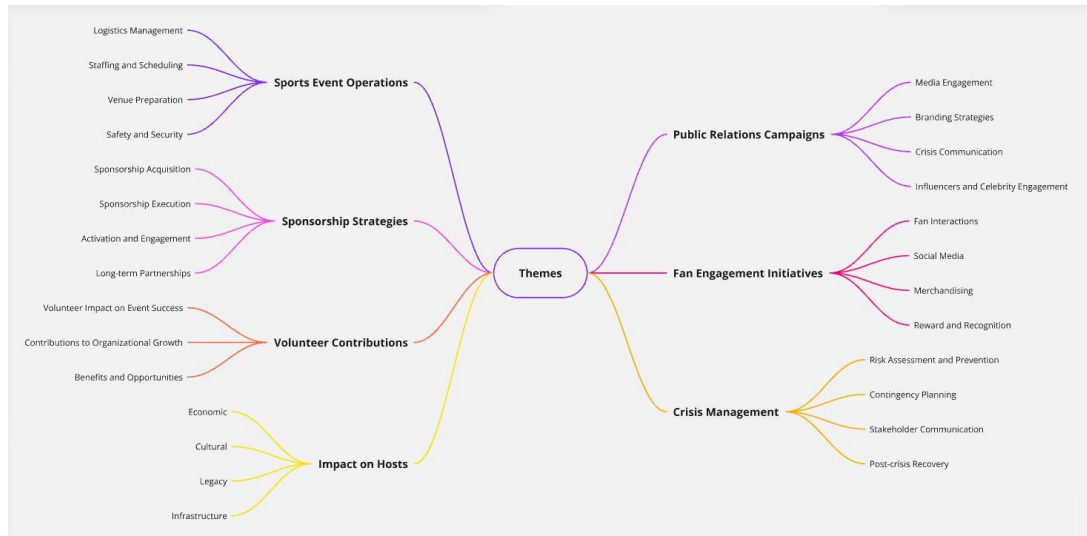


Figure 31. Mind Map of Themes and Codes for Thematic Analysis

Source: Original

The following analysis not only offers a qualitative exploration of these themes but also contextualizes them within the broader sports management framework, providing valuable insights that contribute to both academic research and practical industry applications.

4.2.1. Sports Event Operations

4.2.1.1. Logistics Management

Logistics management emerged as a foundational pillar of successful sports events.

Amine Azzouzi described the importance of preparation:

“Preparation was essential and began over a year prior to the event. Successfully organizing an event of this scale begins years in advance. The first step involves establishing a competent organizing committee and appointing a leader who assembles a team to oversee all aspects of the event.”

This emphasis on early preparation aligns with **Bertan Kaya’s** experience of logistical challenges in Turkey:

“Especially here in Turkey, we encounter a lot of issues with customs because we’re not part of the EU, which means we have a hard border. Anything coming from outside gets stuck at customs. It’s vital to clearly explain this to your counterparts, especially if they’re unfamiliar with such challenges.”

Nicolas Seignez extended this understanding by reflecting on balancing diverse stakeholder needs:

“The athletes need to perform under the best possible conditions, and I find it most interesting to ensure that everyone is aligned and working towards producing the best event possible. By ‘diverse teams,’ I mean ticketing, sponsors, and television, each with their specific goals.”

Additionally, **Amine Yahiaoui**, drawing from his experience at the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting, emphasized the critical need for accessibility:

“My role involved managing logistics, coordinating the reception of international athletes, and ensuring that the event adhered to high accessibility standards.”

Finally, **Hasan Mahdi’s** example of strict stadium access demonstrates how logistics directly affect security measures:

“Two days before the match, I could still access the metro and get to the stadium. However, when I exited at the stadium stop, there was a strong police presence. They wouldn’t let you exit towards the stadium without showing your ID card and explaining why you were going there.”

4.2.1.2. Staffing and Scheduling

Staffing and scheduling were emphasized as key elements for operational efficiency. **Amine Azzouzi** highlighted structured timelines:

“Preventing bottlenecks requires a comprehensive timeline identifying peak workload periods. For example, the accreditation department typically experiences its highest demand approximately three weeks prior to an event.”

This approach is mirrored in **Bertan Kaya’s** statement on early preparation:

“For this World Cup, we started planning a year ago. It’s crucial to implement everything early on with your counterparts. This is a World Cup, and it requires significant preparation.”

Nicolas Seignez connected the importance of structured staffing to effective team management:

“At Paris Basketball, I manage a team of four employees who handle fan experience and logistics. Together, we ensure that everyone is synchronized and working effectively. In event management, more than in other fields, it is crucial to work well in a team, communicate effectively, and understand others’ needs to harmonize efforts. It is important to convey instructions clearly, and be firm yet maintain a positive atmosphere, especially during recurring events throughout a season. Good sense is also vital, meaning understanding how things work and remaining calm under pressure, which is not always easy. Unlike ticketing, marketing, or public relations where specific techniques are crucial, such as sales techniques or optimizing space for partners, the primary quality is human qualities.”

Additionally, **Hasan Mahdi’s** example of flexible volunteer scheduling reinforces the role of clear instructions in achieving operational success:

“When I was finalizing my application, they asked if I wanted to volunteer for 10 days, 3 days, or just on match day. I chose the three days. Clear instructions and onboarding sessions facilitated seamless operations.”

Amine Yahiaoui, reflecting on his role at the 2022 FIFA Club World Cup, added:

“Coordinating the transportation and logistics for international teams while managing equipment and ensuring effective communication across multiple time zones was no small task.”

4.2.1.3. Venue Preparation

Venue preparation was identified as critical for both immediate event success and long-term legacy. **Amine Azzouzi** emphasized sustainability:

“For events like the Olympics, the aim is not just to host the games but to ensure the infrastructure developed remains functional and beneficial long after the event concludes.”

Bertan Kaya’s example of logistical failure complements this perspective, highlighting the importance of readiness:

“We couldn’t find the right person to raise the flags on the catwalk—a narrow walkway in the arena’s roof. Only licensed individuals can perform this task, and unfortunately, no one was available.”

Adding to this, **Nicolas Seigne** discussed financial considerations tied to venue preparation:

“At the Adidas Arena, even a basic match costs us €40,000. Post-event debriefs are crucial to improve efficiency and reduce costs.”

Lastly, **Hasan Mahdi**’s pre-event stadium tour underscores the operational intricacies involved:

“Two days before the match, they gave us a tour of the stadium, showing us how everything worked. The pitch was elevated, not at ground level, and they guided us around the field, the seating areas, and all the key spots.”

4.2.1.4. Safety and Security

Safety and security considerations were addressed directly or implicitly by all participants. **Amine Azzouzi** noted the importance of proactive communication:

“Regular and structured meetings—daily, weekly, and monthly—across departments ensured alignment and synergy among teams.”

Bertan Kaya’s perspective complements this by focusing on creating a safe environment for fans:

“Our fans are very passionate, and the key is to ensure they feel safe. If they know they’re safe, they can fully enjoy the tournament.”

Nicolas Seigne’s detailed account of planning for a high-risk match highlights the complexities of ensuring safety:

“We held meetings with the police, private security, and Hapoel Tel Aviv’s security advisor. Thankfully, there were no issues, but our extensive preparations ensured readiness for any eventuality.”

Similarly, **Hasan Mahdi's** example of prohibited item enforcement emphasizes the importance of stringent measures:

“No power banks, no cigarettes, no lighters, no smoking devices of any kind. These measures occasionally caused tensions with attendees but were necessary for safety.”

Amine Yahiaoui added insights from the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting:

“One of the biggest challenges was meeting the specific needs of the participants, which required close collaboration with teams and stakeholders to provide adequate facilities and support.”

4.2.2. Public Relations Campaigns

4.2.2.1. Media Engagement

Effective media engagement strategies were emphasized by participants. **Amine Azzouzi** highlighted tailored promotional approaches:

“During the Fifth Games of Solidarity in Konya, the promotional materials were in English to reach a broader audience. Using Turkish exclusively would have limited accessibility.”

This aligns with **Bertan Kaya's** focus on cross-department collaboration:

“Marketing, media, and event operations are the three main pillars that drive an event's success. While my focus is on delivering a great show, the marketing team ensures profitability and visibility.”

Nicolas Seigne reinforced PR's critical role, tying visibility to success:

“PR is crucial; it's the foundation of your success. Even the most beautiful event requires strong PR to ensure visibility and engagement.”

Hasan Mahdi's reference to pre-match ceremonies exemplifies media-driven engagement:

“The pre-match ceremony started at around 8 p.m. with performances by artists like Anita from Brazil and Burna Boy from the UK, followed by fireworks.”

Amine Yahiaoui, reflecting on the Women’s Africa Cup of Nations, noted:

“Press conferences, interviews with athletes and officials, and an active social media presence helped capture the attention of both fans and media.”

4.2.2.2. Branding Strategies

Branding was identified as a vital component of event identity. **Amine Azzouzi** discussed strategic partnerships:

“The partnership strategy for Paris 2024 categorizes collaborators into tiers, such as premium and golden partners. Choosing reliable partners like LVMH ensures alignment with the event’s vision.”

Bertan Kaya’s emphasis on storytelling complements this:

“If you can weave a story around the game, it enhances the experience and visibility of the event.”

Nicolas Seignez described FIBA’s branding innovations:

“The Basketball Champions League Final Four featured a new generation of LED courts, showcasing cutting-edge technology. However, this technological innovation was not the sole focus. Nicolas also emphasized integrating cultural branding at Paris Basketball: “We emphasize urban culture in Paris, including musical elements with our DJ. We also feature dance troupes showcasing hip-hop and breakdance, and halftime performances with artists. This approach differentiates us from other French clubs and has made us stand out significantly.”

Amine Yahiaoui added a unique perspective from the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting:

“By focusing on the inspiring stories of athletes with disabilities, we were able to attract meaningful media coverage and public interest.”

4.2.2.3. Crisis Communication

Participants shared in-depth accounts of how crises were managed, focusing on proactive strategies and resourcefulness.

Amine Azzouzi shared an example of managing a critical language barrier during the Islamic Solidarity Games:

"During one event involving over 56 countries, we encountered a significant shortage of multilingual staff, particularly for French-to-Turkish translation. This posed a considerable challenge, as communication barriers could have disrupted operations. To address this, we identified volunteers from departments with lighter workloads and temporarily reassigned them to translation tasks. This reallocation of resources was instrumental in resolving the issue and ensuring smooth communication. It highlighted the importance of having a flexible and adaptive approach to crisis management."

Bertan Kaya emphasized the need to prevent logistical errors that can escalate into PR challenges:

"Small mistakes, like a driver forgetting to pick up a team, can become PR nightmares. For instance, during one event, the Slovenian national team tweeted about being left waiting at the airport. This caused significant backlash and required immediate intervention. Since then, we've tightened our logistical protocols to ensure that communication is clear and that every task is completed on schedule. Learning from these errors has helped us avoid repeat situations."

Nicolas Seigne recounted managing social media backlash during the inaugural match at the Adidas Arena:

"We initially banned drums for the opening match because we wanted to ensure the ceremonial speeches and fireworks weren't drowned out. However, when we announced the ban, even our own supporters criticized us heavily on social media, creating a significant 'bad buzz.' A few days before the event, we reversed the decision, explaining that it was originally a venue-imposed rule but that we had successfully overturned it. By communicating this change transparently, we

restored goodwill, and the controversy was forgotten by the time the event occurred."

Hasan Mahdi described UEFA's proactive response to ticketing issues at the Champions League Final:

"When electronic ticket systems failed, UEFA security managers stepped in, issuing paper tickets on the spot to prevent delays. This quick thinking ensured that attendees could enter without frustration, maintaining a positive atmosphere and avoiding potential disruptions at the gates."

Amine Yahiaoui highlighted the importance of proactive crisis planning:

"Overcoming challenges requires detailed planning, constant monitoring, and proactive communication. During the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting, we worked closely with teams and stakeholders to ensure all facilities and support were in place, minimizing the risk of last-minute issues."

4.2.2.4. Influencers and Celebrity Engagement

Participants highlighted how leveraging celebrities and influencers can significantly enhance the visibility and appeal of events.

Amine Azzouzi shared a creative strategy for globalizing event reach:

"Imagine organizing a basketball tournament in Morocco and inviting an NBA star. You could create visually captivating content featuring the player at iconic Moroccan locations like the Hassan Tower or the Hassan II Mosque, engaging with local culture. High-quality videography showing the player enjoying traditional Moroccan tea or visiting a souk could go viral, attracting international attention and generating excitement for the event."

Bertan Kaya emphasized the organic promotion generated by positive player experiences:

"When players have a positive experience, they talk about it with their friends, on social media, or with their fans. Even simple gestures, like ensuring smooth

logistics or warm welcomes, leave a lasting impression. These stories naturally spread and boost the reputation of the event."

Nicolas Seigne detailed a teaser campaign to drive ticket sales:

"For our inaugural match at the Adidas Arena, we wanted to boost ticket sales, so we arranged for an artist to perform during halftime. However, we couldn't announce the artist's name due to contractual limitations. Instead, we launched a week-long teaser campaign, telling fans that the artist was among the top five French artists but not the fifth. This generated significant curiosity on social media, and the buzz translated into strong ticket sales. The audience was thrilled when the artist performed, and the campaign proved very effective."

Another successful strategy Nicolas mentioned :

We also have an influencer manager at Paris Basketball. Her role is to invite influencers, stars, and celebrities and place them in prime, courtside seats. This creates the perception that the match is highly significant because a notable figure like Aya Nakamura is present, and it significantly enhances the event's profile. Additionally, we feature these celebrities on the video cube, which draws attention to their presence and reinforces the event's importance. This practice is unique to Paris Basketball and is not commonly done in other venues.

Hasan Mahdi reflected on the use of global performers during the UEFA Champions League Final:

"The pre-match ceremony featured artists like Burna Boy and Anita. Their performances elevated the event's prestige and added a unique international appeal that resonated with both attendees and viewers worldwide."

Amine Yahiaoui emphasized storytelling's power in engaging audiences:

"At the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting, we focused on the inspiring journeys of athletes with disabilities. These narratives resonated deeply with local and international audiences, drawing attention to the event and fostering a strong emotional connection."

4.2.3. Sponsorship Strategies

4.2.3.1. Sponsorship Acquisition

Participants emphasized the importance of early and strategic partner selection in sponsorship acquisition.

Amine Azzouzi underscored the value of aligning with reliable collaborators:

"Selecting reliable partners is essential. For instance, Paris 2024 partnered with brands like Decathlon for uniforms and Airbnb for accommodations. These partnerships not only provided financial stability but also ensured smooth operations and alignment with the event's vision."

Bertan Kaya highlighted professionalism as a key to attracting sponsors:

"Sponsors look for events that reflect quality, reliability, and professionalism. If you fail to meet these standards, you risk losing their trust and long-term support. Attention to detail and delivering value are critical."

Nicolas Seignez shared the impact of naming rights partnerships:

"Adidas naming the arena after their brand significantly elevated our profile. These high-profile partnerships provide both financial backing and increased visibility, which are crucial for sustained growth."

Hasan Mahdi pointed out Turkish Airlines' integral role as a sponsor:

"Sponsors like Turkish Airlines supported the Champions League Final by providing food and transportation for volunteers. This not only showcased their commitment to the event but also ensured smooth operations."

Amine Yahiaoui highlighted the broader collaboration required for successful sponsorships:

"Collaboration with federations, sponsors, and local authorities ensures seamless integration of contributions. This synergy is essential for the success of major events."

4.2.3.2. Sponsorship Evaluation

Participants stressed the importance of executing sponsorships effectively to maximize their impact.

Amine Azzouzi illustrated how sponsorships enhance branding:

"Collaborations with prominent brands like LVMH not only provide financial support but also elevate the event's prestige, associating it with luxury and excellence."

Bertan Kaya discussed the operational aspects of sponsorship activations:

"Sponsors often engage fans during breaks by organizing contests, such as shooting competitions, to win prizes. Ensuring these activities are seamlessly integrated into the event schedule is critical for maintaining their impact and visibility."

Nicolas Seignez highlighted meaningful activations:

"For our national 3x3 competition, we collaborated with sponsors to blend street culture with basketball. This included elements like hip-hop performances, graffiti art, and dance shows, creating a unique identity for the event."

Hasan Mahdi reflected on the role of sponsors in engaging audiences:

"Hundreds of thousands of visitors participated in sponsor-driven activities at the festival park. This not only enhanced UEFA's visibility but also strengthened the connection between the sponsors and the community."

Amine Yahiaoui emphasized storytelling in sponsorship execution:

"By focusing on compelling narratives aligned with sponsors' branding, we were able to create a deeper connection with the audience, ensuring sustained interest and engagement."

4.2.3.3. Activation and Engagement

Participants shared specific strategies on how sponsors actively engaged audiences to enhance event experiences and build stronger brand connections. Their insights revealed

a progression of engagement techniques, from strategic branding to fostering emotional connections.

Amine Azzouzi highlighted the integration of sponsors into marketing campaigns, laying the foundation for effective activation:

"For instance, Paris 2024 carefully cultivated its brand identity, ensuring it is protected and projected effectively. This included integrating sponsorships into their branding to amplify the event's prestige." By aligning sponsorships with the event's overarching image, Amine emphasized the importance of maintaining coherence between the event's values and its sponsors.

Building on this, **Bertan Kaya** elaborated on how such integration transitions into direct fan engagement:

"It's not just about giving away gifts; it's about creating a sense of belonging and community. If fans feel like they're part of a larger family, they'll keep coming back. Sponsors play a huge role in this by supporting fan zones, organizing activities, or even providing branded merchandise."

Bertan highlighted that sponsors play a pivotal role in making fans feel personally connected to the event, which fosters loyalty.

He further explained the long-term benefits of these efforts, emphasizing the cyclical relationship between successful activations and future collaborations:

"If sponsors feel that their engagement is truly connecting with the audience, they're more likely to renew their partnerships and increase their investment in future events. This is why we prioritize creating memorable experiences, such as fan zones and side events, which add value for both the sponsors and the fans."

Adding depth to these insights, Bertan noted the broader community impact of sponsor-driven activations:

"When sponsors activate campaigns that are interactive and engaging, they leave a lasting impression. Fans remember not only the event but also the positive

experiences facilitated by the sponsors. This creates loyalty not just to the event but to the sponsor's brand as well."

Nicolas Seigne built on these ideas with examples of off-game activities that expanded the scope of sponsor engagement:

"We collaborated with the NBA for their junior program in Paris in January. We also organized a Euroleague junior tournament in Paris. These are considered off-game activities, which fall under my responsibility. This includes organizing events such as "Meet the Team," where our sponsors meet the team during an evening event."

Such initiatives provided sponsors with unique opportunities to connect with diverse audiences, enriching the overall event experience and reinforcing their commitment to community development.

Together, these insights showcase a cohesive strategy where sponsorship activation moves beyond visibility to create lasting emotional and experiential connections with audiences, aligning the interests of sponsors, organizers, and fans.

4.2.3.4. Long-term Partnerships

Amine Azzouzi connected sponsorship strategies to sustainable event planning, stating,

"A well-executed event can be repeated in future years, creating anticipation and enduring impact." He added that *"PR strategies must consider not only the immediate outcomes but also the long-term visibility and reputation of the event,"*

emphasizing the importance of a forward-looking approach to sponsorship.

Bertan Kaya echoed this by focusing on trust and reliability in sponsorships:

"Building long-term partnerships is about trust and consistency. Sponsors want to know that you'll deliver on your promises and provide them with the visibility and engagement they're looking for."

He stressed the importance of transparency and communication, explaining,

“It’s important to keep sponsors informed throughout the planning and execution stages. If they feel included and see their input being valued, they’re more likely to see the partnership as mutually beneficial and commit to a longer relationship.”

He concluded by highlighting the mutual benefits of effective sponsorship management, noting,

“Good sponsorship management isn’t just about securing funding—it’s about creating a partnership where both the event and the sponsor grow together.”

Nicolas expanded on these ideas, emphasizing operational alignment with sponsors, stating,

“It is important to inform the marketing team about the new regulations for the upcoming season, review available spots, and discuss feasible options.” He also discussed sponsor activations, such as *“activities on the court during halftime or advertisements on the video cube or outside, in front of the venue,”*

which require clear communication and adaptability. Additionally, Nicolas highlighted external collaborations, saying,

“We have partnerships with the city of Paris for posters, newspapers for ads, and sometimes purchase online advertising space.”

Together, these perspectives underline the role of trust, strategic planning, and mutual collaboration in fostering long-term sponsorship partnerships.

4.2.4. Fan Engagement Initiatives

4.2.4.1. Fan Interactions

Amine Azzouzi emphasized the prioritization of fan engagement over winning titles, stating,

“I had a discussion with the head of research and the director of data at Real Madrid. They emphasized that while winning prestigious titles like the Champions League is significant, it is not the primary focus. Instead, their priority lies in cultivating customer loyalty and delivering exceptional experiences to their fans.”

This reflects the strategic importance of creating long-term connections with fans through meaningful engagement.

Bertan described interactive activities during Turkish national team events, sharing,

“Sponsors organize contests during game breaks where fans can participate in shooting competitions to win prizes. It keeps the audience engaged.” He also noted how these interactions enhance the fan experience: *“You can have a great game and even win a championship, but what really brings fans back is the fun they had.”*

Nicolas discussed Paris Basketball’s strategy of integrating urban culture, stating,

“We emphasize urban culture in Paris, including musical elements with our DJ, performances by hip-hop and breakdance troupes, and halftime performances with artists. This approach differentiates us from other French clubs and has made us stand out significantly.”

This demonstrates how incorporating local culture can make events unique and memorable.

Amine Yahiaoui highlighted a community-focused initiative, the **Socio-Sports Caravan**, which engaged underserved populations, stating,

“Children and adolescents who had limited access to organized sports were introduced to activities like 3x3 basketball and football tournaments. These activities not only brought joy but also fostered social inclusion by breaking down cultural and geographical barriers.”

This initiative underscores the role of fan engagement in promoting inclusivity and social cohesion.

Hasan provided an example of large-scale fan engagement through the festival park organized before the UEFA Champions League final, explaining,

“The festival park, which was organized two weeks before the match, showcased the trophy, offered engaging activities, and featured concerts by artists like Lost Frequencies. It was all free, making it accessible to everyone.”

This highlights how pre-event activities can attract diverse audiences and build excitement.

Collectively, these examples demonstrate how fan interactions, from interactive contests and cultural performances to community programs and large-scale events, create inclusive, memorable experiences that foster loyalty and strengthen connections with fans.

4.2.4.2. Social Media

Bertan directly emphasized the instant connectivity provided by social media, stating,

“Thanks to social media, we’re all connected instantly. Whether through the marketing department or the event itself, you need to create moments that resonate with everyone—moments they can be a part of.” He also gave an example of the impact of viral moments: *“Everyone remembers the time when a fan made a half-court shot, and LeBron James hugged them. If you can create such viral moments, the event becomes much bigger than itself. These moments stay with fans forever.”*

Nicolas shared a creative example of leveraging social media to generate excitement and drive ticket sales, stating,

“We did a big teaser for a week about who the artist would be. We mentioned that the artist was among the top 5 French artists but didn’t reveal the name. This worked very well. We gained a lot of attention on social media. People were curious and bought tickets.”

This demonstrates how strategic teasers can successfully build anticipation and attract audiences.

4.2.4.3. Merchandising

Bertan highlighted the emotional value of merchandising, explaining,

“Merchandising is not just about selling items—it’s about creating something fans can take home and remember the event by. Whether it’s a jersey, a keychain, or a limited-edition product, these items become symbols of their connection to the event.”

He emphasized that offering exclusive merchandise or giveaways enhances the overall fan experience and builds a sense of belonging.

Hasan provided a vivid example of fans' enthusiasm for purchasing merchandise, even when prices were high, sharing,

“Some shirts were priced as high as \$500. But people bought them because these items represent the players and the organization.”

This demonstrates how fans view merchandise as a meaningful connection to their favorite teams and events, regardless of cost.

4.2.4.4. Rewarding Loyal Fans

Bertan elaborated on how sponsors enhance fan appreciation through giveaways and activities, stating,

“Sponsors engaging fans by giving out gifts or organizing activities during breaks really enhances the experience. It's not just about the gifts; it's about creating an environment where fans feel appreciated and recognized for their support.”

He further emphasized the value of loyalty programs, explaining,

“It's about creating a sense of belonging and community. If fans feel like they're part of something, they'll keep coming back, not just for the game but for the whole experience.”

Nicolas described how Paris Basketball utilizes its spaces to enhance the fan experience and engage loyal supporters:

“We have a plaza, similar to Sinan Erdem, a large open area in front of the arena where outdoor activities can be held in good weather. There are also concourses within the arena for additional activations, and court activities during timeouts and halftime.”

These efforts highlight how creating designated areas for activities can provide fans with added value and memorable experiences during events.

4.2.5. Volunteer Contributions

4.2.5.1. Volunteer Impact on Event Success

Amine Azzouzi praised the adaptability of volunteers during a critical staffing issue, stating,

“When a shortage of multilingual staff posed challenges, volunteers from less busy departments were reassigned to fill the gap. Their flexibility and willingness to step in where needed were instrumental in overcoming this challenge.”

This highlights how volunteers play a crucial role in addressing logistical issues and ensuring the event runs smoothly.

Bertan underscored the indispensable role of volunteers in event success, stating,

“Without volunteers, we couldn’t run these events. Volunteering is crucial, and I personally want every volunteer to leave the event feeling proud of what they accomplished.”

He added a heartfelt perspective, explaining;

“Even when volunteers face challenges, they often come in with high expectations—wanting to meet star players, be part of big stages, and see the best in the world. But when things don’t go as planned, it’s important to remember that this is a job, and as the leader, you’re responsible for managing those expectations. It’s crucial to ensure that every volunteer leaves the event happy and with a smile. Once that’s achieved, everything else falls into place.”

This sentiment emphasizes the importance of leadership in creating positive experiences for volunteers, even under challenging circumstances.

Hasan described the sheer scale of volunteer involvement, noting:

“Volunteers made up a significant portion of the workforce—around 25-30%. Without them, the event wouldn’t have run as smoothly.”

This insight underscores the heavy reliance on volunteers for event operations.

4.2.5.2. Contributions to Organizational Growth

Volunteering serves as both a cornerstone for developing professional talent and a critical component in the seamless execution of sports events. Bertan highlighted how volunteering within federations, such as the Turkish Basketball Federation (TBF), enables organizations to cultivate skilled and passionate individuals who eventually take on significant roles. He explained:

"Volunteering is a unique experience because you're contributing without expecting anything in return, and that's crucial for us. That's why many members of our LOC team, including myself, Yağız, Arthur, and Emin Balje (who is currently the head of events), all started as volunteers. Four out of five core team members were volunteers, and one is highly experienced in their field."

This underscores the long-term value federations derive from volunteering programs, as they act as incubators for future talent. Bertan emphasized that the passion-driven nature of volunteering is essential for navigating the challenges and chaos often inherent in event management:

"If you don't have a passion for events, it's challenging to handle the chaos that comes with them. But when you do, it's like a passion-driven pursuit. My mom and sister both became volunteers because of this passion."

Hasan, similarly, highlighted the indispensable role of volunteers in large-scale events, such as the UEFA Champions League Final, noting how their efforts ensured the event's success. He shared:

"UEFA highly valued the volunteers. They were respectful, organized, and the top management was just as accessible as the local staff. I'd say the official management was even more approachable than the local staff."

This demonstrates how volunteers were seamlessly integrated into the event's operations, working in collaboration with both local and official staff. Hasan also described the overwhelming global interest in volunteering, which underscores its appeal as a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth:

"There were about 200,000 applicants for the volunteer experience, with around 50,000 selected from all over the world, including countries like France, Spain, and Italy."

Volunteers' contributions extended beyond logistical support, as they managed critical tasks that complemented the work of official staff. Hasan elaborated:

"While UEFA's official employees handled the larger management tasks, the details and minor tasks, which are just as important, were managed by volunteers. It's like a puzzle—if one piece is missing, you don't get the full picture."

He further explained the collaborative role of volunteers, noting their interactions with high-ranking officials and their ability to resolve issues or escalate them when necessary:

"Volunteers communicated with high-ranking officials, including those from the police, and if they couldn't resolve an issue, they would escalate it to the official staff. Without volunteers, the event wouldn't have been as effective, and you'd still need people to do those tasks, which would have required hiring additional staff."

Bertan's personal experiences reinforced the transformative potential of volunteering, both for individuals and the organizations they serve. He shared how his passion for sports led him to volunteer for European Athletics despite lacking experience in TV graphics:

"Whenever I have time, I try to help out. For example, a friend at European Athletics asked if I could assist with TV graphics. Even though I had no experience with TV graphics, I volunteered because I know the sport. On the first day, the Turkish director was yelling at me, saying, 'You're an amateur!' And I replied, 'Yes, I'm an amateur; that's why I'm here.' In the end, they even offered me a job, but I declined because of my commitment to the Turkish Basketball Federation. Volunteering truly keeps the passion alive."

Together, these perspectives showcase how volunteering not only addresses immediate operational needs but also helps federations like the TBF and organizations like UEFA build a sustainable talent pipeline. The passion, professionalism, and dedication demonstrated by volunteers contribute significantly to the growth and success of sports

organizations, while providing individuals with transformative opportunities that can lead to influential roles within the industry.

4.2.5.3. Benefits and Opportunities

Volunteering in sports not only provides immediate contributions to event success but also serves as a springboard for personal and professional growth. Bertan's journey exemplifies the transformative opportunities that volunteering offers, showcasing how it can shape careers and create lifelong passion for the industry.

Bertan shared the story of the former External Relations Manager of the Basketball Federation, who rose through the ranks after starting as a volunteer:

"The former External Relations Manager of the Basketball Federation was my volunteer during EuroBasket 2022. Interestingly, she volunteered during the group phase under my supervision, but by the final phase in Berlin, she was leading as a FIBA official. It was a strange situation—knowing that after me, she would take over the job."

This example highlights how volunteering opens doors to significant roles in the sports industry, demonstrating its ability to identify and develop future leaders who contribute meaningfully to the growth of federations and international organizations.

Bertan also recounted his own humble beginnings as a volunteer, starting with a chance encounter at a shopping mall:

"When I was 18 years old, I happened to see an advertisement in a shopping mall near Bakirköy Capacity that called for volunteers. Intrigued, I signed up and began as a volunteer during the 2010 World Cup, working as a tribunal assistant. My responsibilities were basic—handling tickets, guiding spectators to their seats, and ensuring everything ran smoothly."

This first experience introduced him to the operational side of sports events, sparking a passion that would shape his career. He elaborated on how continued volunteering allowed him to build his reputation and skills, eventually leading to paid roles and greater responsibilities:

"Following that experience, I was called back in 2011 for the Istanbul Cup, where I handled accreditation as a volunteer. My involvement continued with the 2012 EuroLeague Women's Final Eight and the Turkish Airlines EuroLeague Final Four. I volunteered again, and because I had become known within the community, I gradually became an integral part of the organizing team."

The progression of his career illustrates how volunteering not only provides hands-on experience but also facilitates networking within the sports community, creating a pipeline of opportunities:

"By 2014, I was working with the Federation during the summer for the Women's World Championship, and by 2015, I was part-time, progressing to full-time in 2016. My role evolved significantly, and in 2017, after we managed EuroBasket, I was appointed as the event manager and accreditation manager. My journey then led me to FIBA, where in 2018, they reached out to me regarding applications."

Bertan's story underscores how volunteering nurtures passion and dedication. Although he never played basketball competitively, the dynamic and energetic environment of sports events captivated him:

"What sparked my passion for sports was my inherent love for the field. Although I never played basketball competitively, I was drawn to the dynamic environment of sports events. The chaos, the energy, and the step-by-step growth within the industry solidified my career choice."

He credited volunteering as the foundation of his career:

"Volunteering was the catalyst that set me on this path, and I have no regrets about the decisions I've made."

4.2.6. Crisis Management

4.2.6.1. Risk Assessment and Prevention.

Risk assessment and prevention are essential components of crisis management in sports events, requiring meticulous planning and proactive problem-solving. Nicolas emphasized the importance of thorough preparation to anticipate potential challenges:

"We held meetings with the police, our private security firm, and Hapoel Tel Aviv's security advisor, conducting thorough planning and risk assessments. We anticipated various scenarios, prepared detailed plans, and conducted numerous briefings. Thankfully, there were no issues, but our extensive preparations ensured we were ready for any eventuality."

He stressed the need to plan for all possible outcomes to ensure readiness:

"If you encounter Situation A, what actions do you take? In Situation B, what steps do you follow? And in Situation C, and so on? It is crucial to thoroughly prepare for all possible scenarios to avoid being caught off guard."

Amine Azzouzi echoed this sentiment, highlighting the importance of structured timelines to prevent bottlenecks:

"Preventing such issues would require a comprehensive and detailed timeline that identifies the peak workload periods for each department. Ensuring sufficient resources during this period would prevent bottlenecks. Conversely, once their peak workload subsides, these resources can be reallocated to support other departments."

4.2.6.2. Contingency Planning

Contingency planning ensures smooth operations during unforeseen challenges. Nicolas provided an example from Paris Basketball, where a torn net disrupted a game:

"At Paris Basketball, there was an incident where a player tore the net during a game. We weren't prepared for a quick replacement, so we initiated video and music animations to engage the crowd, successfully masking the delay."

He also described a match that ran over time, necessitating immediate adjustments:

"Yesterday, we had a match that lasted much longer than expected, necessitating a decision to delay the following game. Teams require 30 minutes for warm-up, so I immediately informed the television crew to display a delay notice and notified both teams, TBF and FIBA personnel, including statisticians."

Bertan shared an incident during the 2023 FIBA World Cup in Indonesia where lenient security caused issues:

"The Indonesian security staff, who were extremely friendly, were a bit too lenient with foreigners, allowing people access to areas they shouldn't have been in. Our job was to ensure that everyone followed the rules and that the field of play was fair for all teams."

This required on-the-spot collaboration and education to enforce rules effectively:

"We had to work with the security team to enforce the rules strictly, which involved educating them on the importance of their role."

4.2.6.3. Stakeholder Communication

Effective communication among stakeholders is vital during crises. Nicolas highlighted the challenges of coordinating information:

"The most challenging part is finding the right person in each federation who will be the point of contact to disseminate the correct information and then organize regular updates."

He emphasized the importance of clear and concise communication:

"There is a lot of information to provide, but it's important not to overwhelm people with too much information; knowing how to communicate it effectively is crucial in such large-scale events."

Bertan pointed out the need for respect and composure when interacting with all stakeholders, from top officials to entry-level staff:

"Understanding what people are saying and proactively addressing issues is crucial. Respect for all participants—from the lowest level to the highest—is also essential."

4.2.6.4. Post-Crisis Recovery

Post-crisis recovery focuses on addressing residual effects and ensuring long-term improvements. Amine Yahiaoui discussed how flexibility and attention to detail contribute to recovery efforts:

"Flexibility and adaptability are crucial as well, especially when unexpected issues arise. Events of this scale demand a detail-oriented approach, where even the smallest aspects—such as transportation schedules or seating arrangements—are carefully managed."

He also highlighted the ultimate goal of post-crisis recovery:

"The ultimate measure of success lies in the experience of participants, athletes, and spectators. Ensuring that they leave with positive memories is what truly defines a successful event."

Amine Azzouzi added an example of overcoming challenges related to inclusivity and deadlines, emphasizing collaboration and sportsmanship:

"Challenges were frequent and varied. For example, Algeria's Olympic Committee submitted incorrect athlete data, which caused significant delays upon their arrival. The deadline had passed, but we collaborated with them to resolve the issue, ensuring their delegation could compete. While we could have adhered strictly to deadlines, promoting sportsmanship and inclusivity took precedence."

Nicolas reiterated the importance of maintaining composure and following the plan:

"Maintaining composure regardless of the circumstances is essential. Always remember the plan, even when in a rush. Maintaining composure is vital."

4.2.7. Impact on Host Countries and Federations

4.2.7.1. Economic

Major sports events generate substantial economic benefits for host cities, ranging from increased tourism to boosted local businesses. **Hasan** highlighted Istanbul's economic gains from hosting the UEFA Champions League Final:

"These visitors didn't just watch the match and leave; they stayed for a few days, explored Istanbul, and spent money on food, accommodation, and transportation. This contributed to the local economy and boosted Istanbul's image as a capable host city for major international events."

He emphasized how such events enhance the city's global reputation and attract long-term interest:

"Even if a small percentage of the visitors considered returning to Istanbul for a longer stay or moving here, it would positively impact the Turkish economy. Events like this one provide immense benefits and enhance the reputation of both Turkey and Istanbul as premier destinations for international events."

Nicolas also underlined the financial opportunities presented by international events:

"When you organize an international event, you attract people who will use hotels, and restaurants, buy tickets, and so on. You will also create revenue for branding companies for the venue. This generates significant income for the city itself."

4.2.7.2. Cultural

Sports events foster cultural pride and inclusivity, showcasing the host country's identity on an international stage. Bertan reflected on Turkey's volleyball success, highlighting the emotional connection it fosters:

"Turkey is now known as a volleyball country because of the emotional connection people have with the players. When they play and win, it lifts the nation's morale and creates a positive atmosphere. Spectators attach these feelings to our country and events, so it's essential to manage these emotions effectively."

Amine Yahiaoui added that successful events inspire national pride and promote inclusivity:

"These events have a profound impact on multiple levels. Beyond this, the broader sports community is inspired by such events, which often lead to increased participation and a stronger sense of national pride."

4.2.7.3. Legacy

The legacy of sports events lies in their ability to create lasting infrastructure, inspire future participation, and develop sports at both grassroots and professional levels. **Nicolas** emphasized the importance of infrastructure projects that remain useful after the event concludes:

"For the Paris Olympics, five years ago, the government set a goal to build 1000 3x3 basketball courts by Paris 2024. This means that even after the Olympics, these courts will remain for children to play. This is the most important part, the social impact of an event. It contributes to the development of sports, plain and simple."

Amine Azzouzi reinforced the need for sustainable planning:

"For events like the Olympics, the aim is not just to host the games but to ensure the infrastructure developed remains functional and beneficial long after the event concludes. Abandoning such facilities after their immediate use would be counterproductive."

Bertan linked legacy to Turkey's reputation in hosting high-profile events:

"For the federation, hosting multiple European Cups each year solidifies our reputation with FIBA Europe. They know that if they send an event to Turkey, it will be handled well—there's no question about that."

4.2.7.4. Infrastructure

Infrastructure development is often a central focus of hosting large-scale sports events, with long-term benefits for the host city and country. **Amine Azzouzi** shared examples of transformative projects:

"In Paris, preparations for the 2024 Olympics have resulted in significant infrastructure improvements. New metro lines have been built, roads have been upgraded, and various enhancements have been undertaken to ensure readiness and long-term impact."

He also highlighted Turkey's investments:

"The Turkish Olympic Preparation Center in Ankara is a prime example. This facility is equipped with some of the most advanced technologies globally, specializing in performance analysis and rehabilitation. It has become a hub for nurturing elite athletes and enhancing their performance."

Nicolas stressed that infrastructure improvements should be matched with knowledge sharing and expertise development to ensure sustainability:

"Beyond infrastructure, it's about understanding how to help them organize, build expertise, and deliver an event that meets international standards."

Sports events are transformative opportunities that impact host cities and nations across economic, cultural, legacy, and infrastructural dimensions. This chapter has explored these interconnected impacts, emphasizing the importance of meticulous planning, adaptability, and long-term vision in hosting successful events.

Economically, events like the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul demonstrate how international competitions generate significant local revenue through increased tourism and hospitality. Hasan highlighted how these events attract visitors who spend on accommodations, transportation, and food, boosting the local economy and enhancing the city's global reputation. Nicolas emphasized the importance of financial planning, where host cities leverage these benefits to secure support and subsidies from public authorities.

Culturally, sports events foster unity, inclusivity, and national pride. Bertan shared how Turkey's volleyball success has reshaped its national identity, creating an emotional connection that strengthens the public's support for sports. Amine Yahiaoui's account of the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting demonstrated how inclusive planning celebrates diversity and provides access for underserved communities, fostering positive cultural change.

The legacy of sports events extends far beyond the competition itself. Nicolas provided a powerful example with the Paris Olympics, where 1,000 basketball courts were built to encourage youth participation in sports, ensuring a lasting impact on local communities. Amine Azzouzi reinforced the importance of sustainability in planning, emphasizing that infrastructure must remain functional and beneficial after events to avoid wasted investments. Bertan illustrated how hosting events consistently enhances Turkey's reputation with international federations, opening doors for future opportunities.

Infrastructure is a critical element of legacy building. Investments like Turkey's Olympic Preparation Center not only support elite athletes but also establish a foundation for long-term sports development. Amine Azzouzi noted how such facilities, equipped with cutting-edge technologies, serve as hubs for performance enhancement while inspiring future generations.

This chapter also highlighted the importance of effective crisis management and the critical role of volunteers in delivering successful events. Nicolas and Bertan demonstrated how addressing challenges in real time and fostering collaboration among stakeholders ensure smooth operations, while volunteers provide essential support that shapes the future of event management.

In conclusion, sports events are not just competitions but transformative experiences that leave lasting economic, social, and cultural imprints. By prioritizing inclusivity, sustainability, and long-term impact, host cities and nations can ensure these events bring enduring benefits to their communities, inspiring future participation and development in sports. The true success of an event lies not only in its execution but in the positive legacy it leaves behind.

CONCLUSION

This thesis explored the interplay between public relations (PR) strategies and event management in driving the success, visibility, and legacy of sports organizations. By combining insights from a detailed literature review, an in-depth case study of the UEFA Champions League Final 2023, and interviews with industry professionals, it provides a comprehensive understanding of how these domains influence the performance and development of clubs, federations, and host cities. The integration of these elements reveals the multifaceted nature of sports management, highlighting how innovation, inclusivity, and strategic collaboration create a sustainable framework for success.

The research was guided by three core objectives: to assess how PR strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations, to identify the fundamental event management strategies employed by successful sports clubs, and to analyze the impact of integrating PR and event management on organizational performance. The findings affirmed the hypotheses, demonstrating the indispensable role of both PR and event management and their synergy in enhancing outcomes. This synergy is essential for creating memorable events, building brand equity, and leaving a lasting cultural and economic legacy.

The literature review identified PR strategies, such as branding, media relations, and crisis communication, as critical tools for fostering audience engagement and building organizational trust. Branding efforts, such as those of Real Madrid and Brazil's football federation, showcased the importance of aligning cultural identity with strategic goals to build global recognition and loyalty. Media relations, demonstrated by events like the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, emphasized transparency and consistency in communication to foster public trust. Crisis communication also emerged as a vital component, with examples like Liverpool FC's response to the Hillsborough disaster and the NBA's handling of Kobe Bryant's passing illustrating the power of empathy and transparency in maintaining reputational integrity.

Similarly, event management was shown to rely heavily on precise logistics, stakeholder coordination, and adaptability to ensure smooth operations and create memorable experiences. The London Olympics highlighted meticulous risk management as a key

factor in achieving operational efficiency, while the UEFA Champions League Final 2023 underscored the importance of crowd control, volunteer coordination, and innovative use of infrastructure. These strategies not only enhance the immediate success of events but also contribute to long-term benefits for host cities and communities.

The case study of the UEFA Champions League Final 2023 exemplified the transformative power of integrating PR and event management. This event, which achieved a €75 million economic impact, demonstrated how cultural branding, meticulous planning, and interactive fan engagement can elevate an event's success. Sponsorship activations, such as Coca-Cola's campaigns and the strategic involvement of local communities, highlighted the importance of aligning goals with the unique attributes of the host city. Strategic volunteer deployment played a critical role in ensuring seamless operations and fostering community goodwill, further illustrating how inclusive planning strengthens ties between stakeholders and the local population.

Interviews with industry professionals provided additional depth and practical insights. Bertan Kaya emphasized the pivotal role of volunteers in event success, highlighting their contributions to operational efficiency and community engagement. Amine Yahiaoui shared experiences from the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting, where inclusivity and accessibility were prioritized to enhance the event's reputation and broaden its impact. Hasan Mahdi discussed sponsorship strategies, focusing on aligning sponsor values with event goals to maximize mutual benefits, while Amine Azzouzi elaborated on the long-term impact of infrastructure investments, showing how they support both the event and the broader development of the host city. Nicolas Seignez illustrated how localized campaigns celebrating Paris's multicultural identity helped Paris Basketball Club strengthen local engagement and boost international visibility.

PR strategies are essential for enhancing visibility, fostering audience trust, and building brand loyalty. From the literature review, examples such as the NBA's global expansion demonstrate how digital campaigns engage younger demographics and expand international reach. The case study of UEFA's Trophy Tour highlighted how PR tools can build excitement and global engagement, while interviews emphasized the importance of integrating local identity into broader campaigns, as seen with Paris Basketball Club's multicultural initiatives.

Effective event management strategies, such as logistics, stakeholder coordination, and adaptability, were also shown to be critical to success. Volunteer coordination, risk management, and crowd control, as exemplified in events like the UEFA Champions League Final and the London Olympics, ensure operational efficiency while fostering goodwill. These examples demonstrate how precise planning and collaboration among stakeholders lead to the seamless execution of large-scale events.

The integration of PR and event management creates a powerful synergy that enhances organizational performance, revenue, and legacy. Paris Basketball's campaigns exemplify how event marketing combined with PR strategies creates a feedback loop of growth and fan loyalty. The FIFA World Cup and the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting further demonstrated how combining state-of-the-art logistics with community-focused branding delivers significant cultural, economic, and infrastructural benefits. This integration not only maximizes immediate outcomes but also leaves a lasting legacy for host cities and communities.

The findings also have practical implications for the sports industry. Organizations should strengthen sponsor-event alignment to maximize mutual benefits, as highlighted by Amine Azzouzi. Volunteer programs should be expanded to enhance logistical execution and community engagement, as emphasized by Bertan Kaya. Continuous innovation in PR and event management strategies is critical, with digital platforms, such as those used by the NBA and UEFA, offering opportunities to engage global audiences. Inclusivity and accessibility must also be prioritized, as noted by Amine Yahiaoui, to ensure events resonate with broader audiences and stakeholders.

This study faced limitations, primarily the relatively small number of interviews conducted due to the competitive nature of the sports business industry and scheduling challenges. Future research could explore sports events as catalysts for cross-cultural exchange, examining how such events foster understanding and collaboration between diverse communities. Additionally, further studies could investigate post-crisis recovery and rebranding strategies for host cities, analyzing how cities rebuild their reputation and economic stability following disruptions.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores that success in the sports industry relies on innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration. The integration of PR strategies and event management not only strengthens organizational performance but also enhances fan engagement, sponsor relationships, and the broader societal impact of events. By creating meaningful connections and delivering lasting legacies, the sports industry can continue to grow and evolve, providing valuable insights for future research and practical applications.



REFERENCES

- AccessibAll. (2023, April 26). *UEFA Champions League Final 2023 accessibility tickets on sale now*. <https://www.accessiball.com/news/uefa-champions-league-final-2023-accessibility-tickets-on-sale-now>
- AISTS. (2021). *Economic impacts of sports events: Methodology as the world standard*. <https://aists.org/oecd-references-aists-sports-events-economic-impact-study-methodology-as-the-world-standard/>
- Agha, N. and Taks, M. (2018). An investigation of the economic impact of small-scale sports events. *Journal of Sports Management and Commercialization*, 10(1), 1-15. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365392146_An_investigation_of_the_economic_impact_of_small-scale_sports_events_The_case_of_a_medium-sized_city_in_the_Western_United_States/download
- Al-Hamrani, A., Kim, D., Kucukvar, M. and Onat, N. C. (2021). *Circular economy application for a Green Stadium construction towards sustainable FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022TM*. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 87, 106543. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2020.106543>
- Allison, L. and Monnington, T. (2002). Sport, prestige, and international relations. *Government and Opposition*, 37(1), 106–134. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44482975>
- Amw. (2023, September 18). *What is event management? A comprehensive guide*. AMW. <https://www.amworldgroup.com/blog/what-is-event-management-a-comprehensive-guide/>
- Amponsah, O. Pop, R. and Mondello, M. (2018). A comprehensive study of major sporting events and their impact on host cities. *Journal of Research in Economics and Development*, 1(1), 1-15.
- Antolihao, L. (2015). Basketball without borders: Globalization and national sports in postcolonial context. In *Playing with the Big Boys: Basketball, American Imperialism, and Subaltern Discourse in the Philippines* (pp. 149–176). *University of Nebraska Press*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1d9nj8x.13>
- Austin, S. (2024, May 13). *Public relations: A comprehensive definition and guide- Marketing Scoop*. *Marketing Scoop*. <https://www.marketingscoop.com/marketing/public-relations-a-comprehensive-definition-and-guide/>
- Arab News. (2023). *Champions League final set to reach 450 million broadcast viewers*. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2319151/amp>

- Argote, L. (2013). *Organizational Learning: Creating, Retaining and Transferring Knowledge (2nd ed.)*. Springer. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4614-5251-5>
- Azmi, N., Khan, M. and Pagnoni, A. (2022). Unveiling the psychological mechanisms behind sports celebrity endorsements. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 39(4), 456-467. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2024.2376771>
- Baldassare, M., Terenzini, P. and Hsu, Y. (2021). Motivations and future intentions in sport event volunteering: A systematic review. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 12454. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212454>
- Baltezarević, R. V. (2023). *Sports celebrities and their impact on consumer attitudes*. Retrieved from <https://scindeks-clanci.ceon.rs/data/ipdf/0353-9008/2023/0353-90082360237B.pdf>
- Baltic Times. (2023). *The Economic Impact of Sporting Events: A Business Perspective*. https://www.baltictimes.com/the_economic_impact_of_sporting_events_____a_business_perspective/
- Basketball, P. (2024c, December 12). Paris Basketball on LinkedIn: *Quand café rime avec business et opportunités* https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paris-basketball_quand-caf%C3%A9-rime-avec-business-et-opportunit%C3%A9s-activity7273011260273655808081N?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios
- Basketball, P. (2024a, November 26). Paris Basketball on LinkedIn : *Juste un événement chill pour les étudiants* https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paris-basketball_juste-un-%C3%A9v%C3%A9nement-chill-pour-les-%C3%A9tudiantsactivity7267217037020614658yO8S?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- Basketball, P. (2024a, December 2). Paris Basketball on LinkedIn: *Quand nos Jouentaires jouent le jeu et la balle!* https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paris-basketball_quandnospartenairesjouentlejeuetlaactivity7269274188174004224yUlh?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- Basketball, P. (2024, December 19). Paris Basketball on LinkedIn: *Paris, on brille ensemble* https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paris-basketball_paris-on-brille-ensembledepuisleactivity7275559296405286913HcgZ?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- Baumann, R. and Matheson, V. A. (2013). *Infrastructure investments and mega-sports events*. Holy Cross Economics Department. Retrieved from https://hcapps.holycross.edu/hcs/RePEc/hcx/HC1305-Baumann-Matheson_MegaEventsDeveloping.pdf

- Bergström, T. and Bäckman, L. (2013). *Marketing and PR in social media: How the utilization of Instagram builds and maintains customer relationships (Dissertation)*. Retrieved from <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-90410>
- Beugré, A. (2023). *Sponsorship Dilemma in Sporting Events: How to Maximize Profit*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/sponsorship-dilemma-sporting-events-how-maximize-profit-alex-beugre-fqhqe/>
- Blackstar. (2024, August 26). *10 Major sports events in the world | Famous and biggest international sports event*. Black Star News. <https://blackstarnews.com/sports-events-in-the-world/>
- Bourg, J. and Gouguet, J. (2023). *Legacy: What is the long-term impact of mega-sporting events in Socio-economics of sport – A critical analysis | Jean-François Bourg et Jean-Jacques Gouguet (pp. 160–163)*. <https://doi.org/10.25965/ebooks.514>
- Broberg, M. and Rosén, J. (2017). *Stadium naming rights*. DiVA Portal. Retrieved from DiVA Portal <https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1032721/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods (4th ed.)*. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.de/books/about/Social_Research_Methods.html?id=_1XjLwEACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Bull, C. and Lovell, G. (2007). *Evaluating economic impacts of major sports events – A meta-analysis of the key trends*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271938852_Evaluating_economic_impacts_of_major_sports_events_-_A_meta_analysis_of_the_key_trends
- Carolyn, V. (2023, September 12). *Behind the Scenes Heroes: unraveling the impact of volunteers in major sporting events*. <https://www.serveohio.org/behind-the-scenes-heroes-unravelling-the-impact-of-volunteers-in-major-sporting-events/>
- Cavalcante, M. C., Silva, A. L. and Santos, R. (2022). Volunteer motivation in sports events in Brazil. *Journal of Physical Education*, 33(3). Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/jpe/a/kPv9ZfQQW6XSMsWzVrcBTrs/>
- Chelladurai, P. and Zintz, T. (2015). Functions of national sport governing bodies: A network perspective. *Public Policy and Administration*, 14(4), 529–544. <https://doi.org/10.13165/VPA-15-14-4-03>
- Craig, M. (2022b, November 20). *The money behind the most expensive World Cup in history: Qatar 2022 by the numbers*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattcraig/2022/11/19/the-money-behind-the-most-expensive-world-cup-in-history-qatar-2022-by-the-numbers/>

- Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among Five Approaches*. 4th Edition, SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks. DOI:1506330193, 9781506330198
- Dautun, L. (2024, December 17). *Paris Basketball dévoile son nouveau logo* - ParisBasketball. Paris Basketball. <https://parisbasketball.com/2024/09/paris-basketball-devoile-son-nouveau-logo/>
- D'Asaro, F. (2018, May 17). *The 15 most iconic sponsors in football history*. Nss Sports. <https://www.nss-sports.com/en/lifestyle/14905/iconic-sponsor>
- Dasdas. (2024, May 27). *Is Gatorade Head Sponsor of the NFL? 55 million USD for a single sponsor*. Gatorade News. PrimevsGatorade.com. <https://primevsgatorade.com/news/is-gatorade-head-sponsor-of-the-nfl/#:~:text=Gatorade's%20journey%20with%20the%20NFL,performance%20throug%20hydration%20and%20nutrition.>
- De Koninck, J. (2024, February 29). *How Bayern München bridged the content gap with clever digital engagement*. StriveCloud. <https://strivecloud.io/blog/fan-engagement/clever-digital-engagement/>
- CocaCola. (2022, December 13). *Delivering magic to customers during the FIFA World Cup*. Coca-Cola Europacific Partners. <https://www.cocacolaep.com/news-and-stories/delivering-magic-to-customers-during-the-fifa-world-cup/>
- SPORTFIVE. (n.d.). *Digital-First brands and sports sponsorship: a perfect match*. Sportsmarketing Agency. <https://sportfive.com/beyond-the-match/insights/why-digital-first-brands-are-discovering-sportsponsoring-for-themselves>
- Doherty, A. (2009). The volunteer legacy of a major sport event. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events*, 1(3), 185–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407960903204356>
- Duarte, J. (2008). Public relations in sporting and leisure events as promoters of social change: A view from Portugal. *Tripodos*, (24), 73-84. <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Tripodos/article/download/129437/178820/0>
- Efl. (n.d.). Innovation - *The English Football League*. <https://www.efl.com/about-the-efl/history/innovation/>
- Emirates. (2019, September 16). *Emirates and Arsenal renew sponsorship deal*. <https://www.emirates.com/media-centre/emirates-and-arsenal-renew-sponsorship-deal/>

- Endava. (2023). *Using tech to maximize the impact of major sporting events*. Retrieved from <https://www.endava.com/insights/articles/using-technology-to-maximise-the-impact-of-major-sporting-events>
- Euromonitor. (2024). *Ethical Goalposts in Sports Sponsorship: Impact of Consumer Trends*. <https://www.euromonitor.com/article/how-consumer-trends-are-establishing-ethical-goalposts-in-sports-sponsorship>
- European Commission. (2023). *Sports Volunteer Training Programme*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-resultcontent/a4130b4b35dc49de856dfd3cd135cfbf/SPORTS_VOLUNTEER_TRAINING_PROGRAMME_-_EN.pdf
- Evens, T., Iosifidis, P. and Smith, P. (2013). *The Sports-Media-Business Complex*. In *The Sports-Media-Business Complex* (pp. 1-20). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137360342_2
- Expert Market Research. (2024). *Global Sports Sponsorship Market Report and Forecast 2025-2034*. <https://www.expertmarketresearch.com/reports/sports-sponsorship-market>
- FasterCapital. (2024, June 14). *Cause marketing examples: The top 10 examples every cause marketer should learn from*. <https://fastercapital.com/content/Cause-Marketing-Examples--The-Top-10-Examples-Every-Cause-Marketer-Should-Learn-from.html#Nikes-Equality-Campaign.html>
- FasterCapital. (2024). *Sport event management: The role of technology in modern sport event management*. <https://fastercapital.com/content/Sport-event-management--The-Role-of-Technology-in-Modern-Sport-Event-Management.html>
- FasterCapital. (2024). *Sports Risk Management: Innovative Approaches to Sports Risk Management for Entrepreneurs*. <https://fastercapital.com/content/Sports-Risk-Management--Innovative-Approaches-to-Sports-Risk-Management-for-Entrepreneurs.html>
- F. B. M. (2020, May 28). *Further declaration of solidarity by FC Bayern Hilfe eV. FC Bayern*. <https://fcbayern.com/en/news/2020/05/fc-bayern-and-fans-donate-toward-amateur-football-during-coronavirus-crisis>
- FootballHistory (n.d.). *Football League - facts, stats and history*. <https://www.footballhistory.org/league/football-league.html>
- F1. (2022, September 16). *Formula 1 and Sky announce partnership extension across all Sky markets with greater exclusivity* – Formula One World Championship Limited <https://corp.formula1.com/formula-1-and-sky-announce-partnership-extension-across-all-sky-markets-with-greater-exclusivity/>

- FIFA. (n.d.). *5.4 Safety and security* | FIFA publications. FIFA Publications. <https://publications.fifa.com/de/football-stadiums-guidelines/technical-guideline/stadium-guidelines/safety-and-security/>
- Blingos. (2023, April 27). | QR-Patrol | *FIFA World Cup 2022 case study*. Real-Time and Online Guard Tour Patrol System. <https://www.qrpatrol.com/casestudies/FIFA-World-Cup-2022>
- Fourie, J. (n.d.). *Hosting the FIFA World Cup brings benefits but not as many as politicians claim*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/hosting-the-fifa-world-cup-brings-benefits-but-not-as-many-as-politicians-claim-190923>
- Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S. and Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for data management and analysis in qualitative research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13(1), 117. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-117>
- Giannoulakis, C., Papadimitriou, D., Alexandris, K. and Brgoch, S. (2017). Impact of austerity measures on national sport federations: Evidence from Greece. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 17(1), 75-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2016.1178795>
- Göksel, Ali and Serarslan, Mustafa. (2015). Public Relations in Sports Clubs: New media as a Strategic Corporate Communication Instrument. *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health*. 2. 275-283. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298807810_Public_Relations_in_Sports_Clubs_New_media_as_a_Strategic_Corporate_Communication_Instrument
- Greenwell, T.C., Danzey-Bussell, L.A. and Shonk, D.J. (2014). *Managing sport events*. Champaign, IL, Humen Kinetics.
- Greenwell, T.C., Danzey-Bussell, L.A. and Shonk, D.J. (2024). *Managing sport events. Third Edition*. Champaign IL, Humen Kinetics.
- Greenfly. (2023, August 28). *Social media in sports: driving fan engagement*. Greenfly. <https://www.greenfly.com/blog/social-media-in-sports/>
- Grunig, J. E. and Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. https://books.google.de/books/about/Managing_Public_Relations.html?id=qCtpQgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Heritage, C. (2024, August 27). *National sport organizations*. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/sport-organizations/national.html>

- Herold, D. M., Breitbarth, T., Schulenkorf, N. and Kummer, S. (2019). Sport logistics research: reviewing and line marking of a new field. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, 31(2), 357–379. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijlm-02-2019-0066>
- International Journal of Arts, Recreation and Sports. (2023). *The impact of artistic expression on sports fan engagement*. Retrieved from <https://carijournals.org/journals/index.php/IJARS/article/view/1517>
- International Olympic Committee. (2024). *IOC Marketing Media Guide Paris 2024*. <https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/International-Olympic-Committee/IOC-Marketing-And-Broadcasting/IOC-Marketing-Media-Guide-Paris-2024.pdf>
- IOC. (2018, February 23). *Coca-Cola and the Olympic Games celebrate 90 years of partnership*. Olympics.com. <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/coca-cola-and-the-olympic-games-celebrate-90-years-of-partnership>
- ITF. (n.d.). *ITF 2024 Strategy | Tennis Around the World | ITF* <https://www.itftennis.com/en/growing-the-game/itf-2024-strategy/>
- Jain, S. (2020) *Autonomy of national sports federations to control and regulate sports in India*. <https://lexindis.com/wpcontent/uploads/2020/11/AUTONOMY-OFF-NATIONAL-SPORTS-FEDERATIONS.pdf>
- Johnson, R. (2023). *The cultural impact of celebrity endorsements in sports*. Sports Marketing Quarterly. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373282284_Sports_celebrity_endorsement_impact_on_purchase_intention
- Joyce, E. (2024, July 30). *Manchester City Football Club launches AR treasure hunts for fans*. SBJ. <https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2024/07/30/manchester-city-ar-treasure-hunts>
- Kamarudin, L. M., Aziz, N. A. R. A. and Ramely, A. (2022). Understanding crowd management in sports events: A preliminary study. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts*, 14(1), 393-410. Retrieved from <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/68267/1/68267.pdf>
- Keshkar, S. and Karegar, G. A. (2022) *Effect of the COVID -19 pandemic on the sports industry*. In Elsevier eBooks (pp .123–157). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b97-0-323-91307-2.00004-3>

- Kirenci, A.I. (2023, June 14). *Türkiye offers a lively and safe hub for international sports events. Istanbul as a Lively and Safe Hub for International Sports Events*. TRT World. <https://www.trtworld.com/turkiye/turkiye-offers-a-lively-and-safe-hub-for-international-sports-events-13614712>
- Kirsch, C. (2024, March 12). *Revisiting the NBA's historic shutdown four years later*. GiveMeSport. <https://www.givemesport.com/revisiting-nba-covid-pandemic-shutdown-four-years-later/>
- Klein, J., Smith, R. and Jones, T. (2020). *How sports event volunteer management affects volunteers' satisfaction and engagement: The mediating role of social capital*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361397720_How_Sports_Event_Volunteer_Management_Affects_Volunteers'_Satisfaction_and_Engagement_The_Mediating_Role_of_Social_Capital
- Koenig, C. (2020, April 16). *Partnership with five of the world's leading teams under the mottoes "United in Rivalry" and "United at Home"*. BMW Group PressClub.
- Kucukvar, M., Kutty, A. A., Onat, N. C., Jurf, N. A., Al-Abdulmalek, N., Naser, A. and Ermolaeva, Y. (2021). How Can Collaborative Circular Economy Practices in Modular Construction Help Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup Qatar 2022 to Achieve Its Quest for Sustainable Development and Ecological Systems? *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsus.2021.758174>
- Larkins, M. (2024, March 7). *What is public relations, and why is it important?* RELEVANCE. <https://www.relevance.com/what-is-public-relations-and-why-is-it-important/>
- Leeds, M. A., von Allmen, P. and Matheson, V. A. (2023). *The economics of sports* (7th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003317708>
- Lekic, M. (2024, September 9). OECD references AISTS' sports events' economic impact study methodology as the world standard. AISTS. <https://aists.org/oecd-references-aists-sports-events-economic-impact-study-methodology-as-the-world-standard/>
- Ludvigsen, J.A.L., Rookwood, J. and Parnell, D. (2022). The sport mega-events of the 2020s: governance, impacts and controversies. *Sport in Society*, 25(4),705–711. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2022.2026086>
- Luo, S. (2024). *A Brief Analysis of The Economic Impact of Major Sporting Events on The Host City*. Dean Francis Press. <https://doi.org/10.61173/wss5wz97>

- Luxury Lifestyle Magazine. (2022). *Heading to the 2023 UEFA Champions League Final? Here's How to Enjoy a Lavish Istanbul City Break While You're There*. <https://www.luxurylifestylemag.co.uk/travel/heading-to-the-2023-uefa-champions-league-final-heres-how-to-enjoy-a-lavish-istanbul-city-break-while-youre-there/>
- Maerowitz, S. (2017). *Nike's 'Equality' campaign: Before, during and after the Grammys*. PR News Online. <https://www.pnewsonline.com/nike-grammys-equality>
- Masterman, G. (2014). *Strategic Sports Event Management*. In Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203114674>
- Mastromartino, B., Moital, M. and Jang, S. (2019). *Affective outcomes of membership in a sport fan community*. PMC. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7225319/>
- McMenamin, D. (2021, January 26). *The longest flight in Los Angeles Lakers history – When the team learned of Kobe Bryant's death* - ESPN. ESPN.com. https://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/28752359/the-longest-flight-los-angeles-lakers-history-team-learned-kobe-bryant-death
- McKinsey and Company. (2020). *Esports as a Sponsorship Asset?* https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Marketing%20and%20Sales/Our%20Insights/E%20sports%20and%20the%20next%20frontier%20of%20brand%20sponsorships/esports_whitepaper_03_06_2020_vfinal.pdf
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. doi:10.1007/s40592-022-00165-5
- NBA. (n.d.). *NBA Cares*. <https://cares.nba.com/about-us/>
- Newzoo. (2024). *Global Esports and Live Streaming Market Report*. <https://newzoo.com/resources/trend-reports/newzoos-global-games-market-report-2024-free-version>
- Noll, Roger and Patel, Dharmesh. (2003). *The Organization of Sports Leagues*. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* .19 .530–551. DOI:10.1093/oxrep/19.4.530
- O'Donnell, K. (2024, August 12). *Key learnings from successful sports sponsorships on social media*. Redtorch. <https://redtorch.sport/insights/key-learnings-from-successful-sports-sponsorships-on-social-media/>

- Ohio University. (2023). *Ethical Issues in Sports*.
<https://www.ohio.edu/business/academics/graduate/professional-master-sports-administration/resources/ethical-issues-sports>
- Olley, J. (2023, November 22). *One year after the 2022 FIFA World Cup what has changed in Qatar?* - ESPN.Com. https://www.espn.co.uk/football/story/_/id/38919896/one-year-2022-fifa-world-cup-changed-qatar
- Olympics.com. (2023). *Funding*. Olympics.com <https://olympics.com/ioc/funding>
- Ovechkin, V. (2024). *The economic impact of major sporting events* (Bachelor's thesis, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences). Retrieved from https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/853198/Ovechkin_Vladimir.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y
- Paris Basketball Club. (2024, September 19). *Paris Basketball*.
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DAGHY_xM1Fj/?igsh=MTJnc3cyNms5Z3owNA==
- Paris Basketball Club (2024, December 20). Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DDzIOTdM6iD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==
- Pattullo, T. (2023, July 26). *Benefits of volunteering in sports: How giving back transforms lives, including yours*. Australian Sporting Alliance for People With a Disability. <https://asapd.org/benefits-of-volunteering-in-sports-how-giving-back-transforms-lives-including-yours/>
- Patrick. (2022, April 15). *Updated Liverpool Hillsborough 97 logo revealed*. Footy Headlines. <https://www.footyheadlines.com/2022/04/updated-hillsborough-memorial-symbol.html>
- Pavitt, M. (2022, December 13). *Moroccan Football Federation “to give 13,000 free tickets” for World Cup semi-final*. with France. Mail Online. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article11533109/Moroccan-Football-Federation-13-000-free-tickets-Wold-Cup-semi-final-France.html>
- Peacemaker, B., Robinson, S. and Hurst, E. J. (2016). Connecting best practices in public relations to social media strategies for academic libraries. *Colleges and Undergraduate Libraries*, 23(1), 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10691316.2016.1134244>
- Pedersen, P. M. (Ed.). (2020). *Handbook of Sport Communication* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003430278>

- Perry, J. (2022, May 20). *IOC posts revenues of \$7.6bn for elongated Olympic cycle*. SportBusiness. <https://www.sportbusiness.com/news/ioc-posts-revenues-of-7-6bn-for-elongated-olympic-cycle/>
- Pokrywczynski, J. (2020). *The Pandemic Reset: Implications for Sport*. Athens Journal of Sports. <https://www.athensjournals.gr/reviews/2024-6203-AJSPO.pdf>
- Pott, Christoph and Breuer, Christoph and Hompel, Michael. (2023). Sport logistics: considerations on the nexus of logistics and sport management and its unique features. *Logistics*. 7(3). DOI:10.3390/logistics7030057
- Rahi, S. (2016). Impact of customer value public relations perception and brand image on customer loyalty in services sector of Pakistan. *Arabian J Bus Manag Review S*, 2(2). DOI:10.4172 /2223-5833.S2-004
- Reidy, P. (2023, June 13). *TV ratings: how many people watched the 2023 Champions League Final?* AS USA. <https://en.as.com/soccer/tv-ratings-how-many-people-watched-the-2023-champions-league-final-n/>
- Rolling Stone. (2024). *How social media in Sports Marketing is Changing the Game*. Retrieved from <https://council.rollingstone.com/blog/how-social-media-in-sports-marketing-is-changing-the-game>
- Ruihley, B. and Li, B. (2021). *An Introduction to Sport Organizations*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357285780_An_Introduction_to_Sport_Organizations
- Sabah, D. (2023, May 26). *Champions League final in Istanbul to add \$80M to Turkish economy*. Daily Sabah. <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/champions-league-final-in-istanbul-to-add-80m-to-turkish-economy>
- Shilbury, D. and Ferkins, L. (2011). Professionalisation, sport governance and strategic capability. *Managing Leisure*, 16(2), 108–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13606719.2011.559090>
- Shone, A. and Parry, B. (2013). *Successful Event Management: A Guide to Planning Events*. Routledge. https://books.google.com.tr/books/about/Successful_Event_Management.html?id=ZVeamAEACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Shukla, P., Tripathy, P., et.al. (2023). *Sport tourism, events and sustainable development goals: An emerging foundation*. Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9781003384786

- Skinner, J. and Smith, A. C. T. (2021). Introduction: sport and COVID-19: impacts and challenges for the future (Volume 1). *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 21(3), 323–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2021.1925725>
- Slattery, P. (2019). *Major sport event television broadcast and sport development legacy: A case study of the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup 2015* (Master's thesis, Bond University). Retrieved from https://pure.bond.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/84491662/Peter_Slattery_Thesis.pdf
- Smith, A.C.T. and Stewart, B. (2015). *Introduction to Sport Marketing: Second edition*. Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9781315776767
- Sor, S. (2023, August 17). *Istanbul UEFA Champions League Final 2023: tickets, prices*. HeyTripster. <https://heytripster.com/activities/istanbul-champions-league-final-2023/>
- SponsorUnited. (2023). *Sponsors Go All Out in Istanbul for the UEFA Champions League Final*. <https://www.sponsorunited.com/insights/champions-league-istanbul>
- Sport, B. (2023, July 31). *Manchester United agree 10-year extension with Adidas worth at least £900m*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/66358793#:~:text=United's%20new%20deal%20with%20the,15%20year%20period%20from%202017.>
- Sportcal. (2024). *Premier League sponsorship deals up 12% to over \$1.5bn in 2024-25*. Retrieved from <https://www.sportcal.com/sponsorship/premier-league-sponsorship-deals-up-12-to-over-1-5bn-in-2024-25/>
- Sports ETA. (2024). *Sports ETA releases its 2023 State of the Industry Report for the \$128 billion sport tourism industry*. GlobeNewswire. <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2024/04/24/2869100/0/en/Sports-ETA-releases-its-2023-State-of-the-Industry-Report-for-the-128-Billion-Sport-Tourism-Industry.html>
- Sprout Social. (2024). *How social media changed the sports marketing game*. Retrieved from <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-sports-marketing/>
- SGA. (n.d.). *Stakeholder engagement*. <https://www.sportsgovernanceacademy.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base/stakeholder-engagement/>
- Stan, S. V. (2019). The evolution of sports branding. *Ovidius University Annals Economic Sciences Series*, 19(1), 533-540. Retrieved from <https://stec.univ-ovidius.ro/html/anale/RO/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/28-1.pdf>

- Statista. (2024, October 16). *Yearly value of shirt sponsor deals in the Premier League 2024-2025, by club*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/254513/value-of-jersey-kit-sponsorships-in-the-barclays-premier-league-by-club/>
- Statista (n.d.). *Sports-Worldwide*. Statista market forecast. <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/sports/worldwide>
- Statista (n.d.). *Team sponsorship revenue of major sports leagues in North America in 2023*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1459438/team-sponsorship-revenue-major-sports-league/>
- Sweeney, J. and Soutar, G. N. (2021). *Sponsoring Esports to Improve Brand Image*. DOI:10.47743/saeb-2020-0030
- ESPN. (2020, January 27). *Teams take 24-second shot clock violations in Kobe Bryant's honor* - ESPN.com. https://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/28571776/teams-take-24-second-shot-clock-violations-kobe-bryant-honor
- The Sponsor. (2024). *Revealed: Premier League Fair Market Sponsorship Valuations 2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.thesponsor.com/revealed-premier-league-fair-market-sponsorship-valuations-2024/>
- Tooby, D. (2023, November 20). *ALL SOCCER LEAGUES EXPLAINED Easy to understand*. Progressive Soccer. <https://www.progressivesoccertraining.com/all-soccer-leagues-explained/>
- Torossian, R. (2022). *The Importance of Sports PR*. *Public Relations Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.publicrelationstoday.com/sports/>
- Topend Sports. (2024). *The role of social media in promoting sports events*. Retrieved from <https://www.topendsports.com/marketing/social-media.htm>
- Truswell, B. D. (2022). *Why major sporting events matter* | Sport England. Sport England. <https://www.sportengland.org/blogs/why-major-sporting-events-matter>
- UEFA. (2023, May 5). *UEFA announces measures to enhance safeguards for supporters at UEFA finals*. UEFA.com. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0281-17f0c1cdd39d-1ba3e64490b5-1000--uefa-announces-measures-to-enhance-safeguards-for-supporters/>
- UEFA. (2023, June 8). *A warm welcome back to Istanbul!* UEFA.com. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0282-1834d76912c9-56138cad8649-1000--a-warm-welcome-back-to-istanbul/>

- UEFA. (2023, June 8). *Champions League final: Atatürk's "special soul."* UEFA.com. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0282-18351233e1d1-0ccb75c30b4b-1000--champions-league-final-ataturk-s-special-soul/>
- UEFA. (2023, June 8). *Key matchday information for fans attending the UEFA Champions League final.* UEFA.com. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0282-1834e87d4dae-0470f1c1eba4-1000--key-matchday-information-for-fans-attending-the-uefa-champio/>
- UEFA. (2021, February 12). *TikTok becomes official UEFA EURO 2020 sponsor.* UEFA.com. <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0266-118d1c6ac1b5-4ffce41d08de-1000--tiktok-becomes-official-uefa-euro-2020-sponsor/>
- Vlajkovic, M. (2023). The role of public relations in the organization of sports events. *Sports Media and Business*, 9(2), 159–168. DOI:10.58984/smb2302159v
- Von Felbert, A. (2022). The influence of sports celebrity endorsers on consumers' purchase intentions (Doctoral dissertation). *German Sport University Cologne*. https://fisdb.dshskoeln.de/ws/portalfiles/portal/14207169/The_Influence_of_Sports_Celebrity_Endorsers_on_Consumers_Purchase_Intentions_Manteltext_vUPD_ATE.pdf
- Webb, M. D. (2021). History and Effectiveness of Sponsorships in Esports. *Illinois Wesleyan University*. <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1541&context=parkplace>
- Wicker, P. and Downward, P. (2024). *Valuing the contribution of sport volunteering to subjective wellbeing.* PMC. Retrieved from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10869625/>
- Wieden and Kennedy. (2017). *Nike: Equality.* Retrieved from <https://www.wk.com/work/nike-equality>
- Wikipedia contributors. (2024, August 24). *Football League First Division.* Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_League_First_Division
- Williams, J. (2024). Sports Sponsorships and partnerships: *Are hidden ethical risks lurking?* InsightX. <https://insightxintel.com/ethical-risk-sport-sponsorships/>
- Yellowbrick. (2024, March 21). *Evolution of sports history: From ancient games to modern sporting events.* Yellowbrick. <https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/sports/evolution-of-sports-history-from-ancient-games-to-modern-sporting-events>

- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/case-study-research-and-applications/book250150>
- Zimbalist, A. (2016). *What's Wrong with the Olympics and the World Cup?* In *Circus Maximus: The Economic Gamble Behind Hosting the Olympics and the World Cup* (pp. 1–8). Brookings Institution Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1c2cr4w>.
- Zinn Jr., A. D. (2015). Social media and Professional Sports: An analysis of the National Basketball Association and National Football League teams' strategies. *Southern Illinois University Carbondale*. Retrieved from OpenSIUC https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1822&context=gs_rp



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

Interview 1: Participant A: Bertan Kaya

IMANE: First of all, thank you very much for this opportunity. I really appreciate it. Let's dive into the questions. As you know, my thesis is focused on the impact of sports events management and PR on clubs and federations. Given your extensive experience, particularly in sports events management, I'd love to start by hearing about your journey into this field. What initially sparked your interest in this industry?

BERTAN: Absolutely, I can walk you through the whole story. When I was 18 years old, I happened to see an advertisement in a shopping mall near Bakirköy Capacity that called for volunteers. Intrigued, I signed up and began as a volunteer during the 2010 World Cup, working as a tribunal assistant. My responsibilities were basic—handling tickets, guiding spectators to their seats, and ensuring everything ran smoothly.

Following that experience, I was called back in 2011 for the Istanbul Cup, where I handled accreditation as a volunteer. My involvement continued with the 2012 EuroLeague Women's Final Eight and the Turkish Airlines EuroLeague Final Four. I volunteered again, and because I had become known within the community, I gradually became an integral part of the organizing team.

By 2014, I was working with the Federation during the summer for the Women's World Championship, and by 2015, I was part-time, progressing to full-time in 2016. My role evolved significantly, and in 2017, after we managed EuroBasket, I was appointed as the event manager and accreditation manager. My journey then led me to FIBA, where in 2018, they reached out to me regarding applications.

What sparked my passion for sports was my inherent love for the field. Although I never played basketball competitively, I was drawn to the dynamic environment of sports events. The chaos, the energy, and the step-by-step growth within the industry solidified my career choice. Volunteering was the catalyst that set me on this path, and I have no regrets about the decisions I've made.

IMANE: Perfect, thank you very much for that insight. Moving on to the next question: What do you find most rewarding about working in the sports industry, particularly in events management roles?

BERTAN: The most rewarding aspect is seeing the tangible results of your work. When you can look back and say, "I was a part of that," it brings a sense of accomplishment. For instance, I've worked on pre-Olympic qualifiers, and seeing the event come together successfully is incredibly fulfilling.

When you're behind the scenes, there's often a sense of anonymity—people may not know who you are, but they respect the work you do. It's especially gratifying when those in the know recognize and appreciate your contributions. In the end, whether it's a World Championship or a European Championship, you're part of the best in the world. I find it extremely rewarding to see the growth of individuals within the industry, such as basketball players or even CEOs whom I met early in their careers. For example, seeing Giannis Antetokounmpo play again, having known him since he was young, is very rewarding.

IMANE: Thank you very much. So, what specific skills or qualities do you believe are essential for success in sports events management based on your own experience?

BERTAN: First and foremost, you need to be a problem solver. Understanding what people are saying and proactively addressing issues is crucial. Respect for all participants—from the lowest level to the highest—is also essential. If you can't handle stress, this job might not be for you because, ultimately, it's a competition. You're managing an arena where, essentially, modern-day gladiators are battling it out, and you need to think of everything.

This role isn't for those seeking a typical nine-to-five job. Even with careful planning, things can go very wrong, and you need to be quick-thinking and adaptable. Crisis management is a constant requirement, and being flexible is key to overcoming challenges.

IMANE: Let's move on to the next question. Can you elaborate on your role as the Operations Manager at the Turkish Basketball Federation? What were your primary responsibilities and key achievements in this position?

BERTAN: In my role, I managed all events overseen by the Turkish Basketball Federation. This included everything from top to bottom—from volunteers to ambulances, from police coordination to ensuring the court and lighting were set up correctly. We worked closely with counterparts in other departments, such as marketing, and all coordination passed through us when it was our event.

Additionally, I managed accreditation operations for the leagues, as well as transportation and accommodation logistics for referees and other participants associated with the Federation. My primary focus for the current season is the Under-17 World Cup, where we are handling everything from top to bottom to ensure the event's success.

Working with top organizations like the Turkish Basketball Federation, EuroLeague, and FIBA didn't come easy. My journey started from the ground up, and people who have known me for years, including those who first met me as a volunteer, now trust me in leadership roles. For example, my first EuroLeague manager has known me for over a decade and still places trust in me because of our shared history.

IMANE: That's really inspiring and gives me a lot of hope. As I mentioned earlier, one of my main goals is to become an organizer for the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which will be held in Morocco, Spain, and Portugal. I aspire to be in charge of the games and stadiums in Morocco during that period, so your journey is particularly inspiring. I would love to learn from you. Thank you very much. Now, onto the next question: How did you approach the planning, organization, and execution of international events such as tournaments, championships, and friendly matches?

BERTAN: Our approach is rooted in structured planning, informed by our extensive experience in past events. Our team is composed of individuals who have been everywhere and seen everything in the industry, which gives us a comprehensive understanding of potential challenges. We rely heavily on detailed checklists, which we refine after each event, to ensure we cover all bases.

The planning process begins with assessing what we have and what we lack, followed by reaching out to our counterparts to delegate responsibilities. If a problem arises, we work collectively to solve it in advance. Of course, problems will always occur, but that's precisely why we have jobs—to find solutions. In our world of sports events, it's straightforward: as long as you have the basic elements—a ball, players, and the necessary equipment—the game can go on.

Ultimately, we strive to provide an exceptional experience for everyone involved, ensuring that every participant enjoys their time at the event.

IMANE: Thank you. Could you share a specific example of a challenging situation you encountered during event management and how you resolved it?

BERTAN: Let me think of a specific tournament... There isn't really a single most challenging situation, as problems arise constantly, and our job is to fix them. But here's a small example from today: we couldn't find the right person to raise the flags on the catwalk—a narrow walkway in the arena's roof. Only licensed individuals can perform this task, and unfortunately, no one was available. As a result, the flags weren't in place, which was a failure on our part. However, we accepted the situation and ensured it would be fixed for tomorrow's games.

For a more complex example, during the 2023 FIBA World Cup in Indonesia, we encountered issues with security. The Indonesian security staff, who were extremely friendly, were a bit too lenient with foreigners, allowing people access to areas they shouldn't have been in. Our job was to ensure that everyone followed the rules and that the field of play was fair for all teams.

We had to work with the security team to enforce the rules strictly, which involved educating them on the importance of their role. Despite some initial resistance, we managed to level the playing field, and although it made some teams unhappy, they understood the necessity of fairness.

IMANE: How did you collaborate with event partners and venues to optimize cost efficiency while maintaining high-quality standards?

BERTAN: Essentially, you can provide those who work with you an invaluable, lifetime experience. This helps them become high-quality professionals, which in turn ensures that the work they produce is of high quality as well, even when you're aiming to save on costs. It's crucial not to cut corners by opting for cheaper services that might not understand your needs. For instance, with court branding, which involves applying stickers, it's vital to find the right person who understands the importance of the task. If done properly, it doesn't have to be the most expensive option, but it needs to be executed correctly. When you have professionals who know their job well, it automatically becomes more cost-efficient. That's the main point for me.

IMANE: What strategies do you typically implement to ensure seamless event logistics, including customs, accommodation, transportation, and catering?

BERTAN: The key is to provide every counterpart with accurate and comprehensive information. If they miss something, just give them a heads-up. Especially here in Turkey, we encounter a lot of issues with customs because we're not part of the EU, which means we have a hard border. Anything coming from outside gets stuck at customs. It's vital to clearly explain this to your counterparts, especially if they're unfamiliar with such challenges, which they might not face in other countries or events. For example, if something is shipped from China to the EU, they usually know the process, but shipping from China to Turkey is very different.

We do our best to manage this efficiently by providing the necessary information and planning ahead. For example, if you need a car to transport equipment during a tournament, it's not feasible to rent a vehicle locally just for moving people; you also need to transport cups, balls, printers, and other event materials. Proper planning is essential. Once you've figured this out, your event will run much more smoothly and be more enjoyable for everyone involved.

IMANE: I apologize for interrupting, but how much time do you think is ideal to start planning for an event?

BERTAN: It really depends on the size of the event.

IMANE: Let's say, for example, this World Cup is starting at the end of June. When did you start planning?

BERTAN: We started planning a year ago. It's crucial to implement everything early on with your counterparts. This is a World Cup, and it requires significant preparation. You could try to do it in a month or two weeks if you have a very experienced team, but that doesn't guarantee it will be a good event. If you want to organize a top-notch event, you need to communicate with every member of your organizing committee and ensure they are fully prepared. When everyone is on the same page and prepared, they will deliver their best work.

As I mentioned before, having people who know what they're doing enhances cost efficiency because you don't have to micromanage them. There's no risk, only reward. But of course, sometimes you need to adapt. For this World Cup, we started planning a year in advance, but at a senior level, it should be two to three years of preparation, especially for facilities. You need to find the right time to make necessary adjustments.

For example, even though this facility is experienced in hosting basketball events, we still had to prepare two months in advance to ensure everything was perfect for this tournament.

IMANE: I hope I'm not going off script, but what about post-event activities? How long do they take, and what are the main responsibilities? What do you think is the most important aspect of post-event activities?

BERTAN: Post-event activities start with gathering reports on what we succeeded at and where we failed. This analysis helps us understand how we can improve. The initial reporting takes about a month, but closing the book on the event can take six to seven months due to outstanding payments and other follow-up tasks. During this time, we work on fixing any issues and implementing changes in a way that can be adjusted for future events.

So, to sum it up, for a large-scale event, the entire process can take about two years from start to finish. For smaller events, like a friendly game with Germany, it can take

anywhere from two weeks to a month, depending on the level of communication and coordination required.

IMANE: In what ways do you analyze event feedback and data to identify areas of improvement and enhance future events?

BERTAN: This is one of the most critical aspects of our work. We collect data from every event to understand what worked well and what didn't. Each event has a different focus—sometimes the main objective is team preparation, other times it's putting on a great show, or it might be about executing the event efficiently. You can't do everything perfectly all at once, so we use the data to pinpoint where we fell short and where we excelled.

After gathering feedback, we reassess our approach. For example, if the main focus of an event was cost efficiency but it ended up being more of a spectacle, we analyze how that happened and what adjustments are needed for future events. We also look at audience engagement to see if we need to relocate or rebrand the event to attract more sponsors.

Although we don't work with direct numbers like social media or marketing teams, we focus on putting on the best show possible and gathering opinions from all participants. The post-event report helps us see where we succeeded and where we need to improve, even though it might not provide exact percentages.

IMANE: How do you collaborate with marketing and communication teams to promote events and drive engagement and ticket sales?

BERTAN: Marketing, media, and event operations are the three main pillars that drive an event's success. While my focus is on delivering a great show, the marketing team works on making the event promotable and profitable, and the media team ensures it looks good in the public eye. Collaboration between these teams is essential.

For instance, if the marketing team brings in dancers at the last minute, it's my responsibility to ensure they have the necessary facilities, like locker rooms, to perform well. If that's not handled, it can reflect poorly on the entire event, even if the game itself was a success. So, we work closely with the entire organizing community to make sure everything runs smoothly.

IMANE: Reflecting on your role as a volunteer manager for various sports events, including the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Final and EuroLeague Final Four, how do you perceive the role of volunteer engagement in shaping the overall perception of an event and fostering positive public relations within the community?

BERTAN: Let's break that down into two parts. First, from a PR perspective, volunteer engagement is invaluable. Volunteers, whether they're basketball fans or not, are given behind-the-scenes access, and if they enjoy the experience, they'll talk about it positively. This word-of-mouth can be one of the best forms of PR.

IMANE: I can attest to that. Before participating in events as a volunteer, I knew nothing about basketball. But after the event, I was so inspired that I went out and bought a basketball.

BERTAN: Exactly! It's beneficial for sports, for the event managers, and for public relations. Volunteering is a unique experience because you're contributing without expecting anything in return, and that's crucial for us. That's why many members of our LOC team, including myself, Yağız, Arthur, and Emin Balje (who is currently the head of events), all started as volunteers. Four out of five core team members were volunteers, and one is highly experienced in their field.

If you don't have a passion for events, it's challenging to handle the chaos that comes with them. But when you do, it's like a passion-driven pursuit. My mom and sister both became volunteers because of this passion.

IMANE: Really? That's amazing!

BERTAN: Yes, during EuroBasket 2017, my mom was volunteering in the same office, handling food management—taking care of lunch and dinner arrangements. My sister, who has a professional career in digital marketing, got involved through her volunteer work in the marketing department. Although she's a landscape architect by profession, her volunteer experience shifted her career focus.

Without volunteers, we couldn't run these events. Volunteering is crucial, and I personally want every volunteer to leave the event feeling proud of what they accomplished. I even forgot to mention—my wife also volunteered!

IMANE: Amazing, really?

BERTAN: Absolutely. That's why we love this sport and are so passionate about it. Even when volunteers face challenges, they often come in with high expectations—wanting to meet star players, be part of big stages, and see the best in the world. But when things don't go as planned, it's important to remember that this is a job, and as the leader, you're responsible for managing those expectations. It's crucial to ensure that every volunteer leaves the event happy and with a smile. Once that's achieved, everything else falls into place.

IMANE: I can confidently say that the Turkish Basketball Federation is doing an exceptional job with volunteer management. I really mean it, especially since I've volunteered with other organizations before, but this one stands out.

BERTAN: I'm still volunteering myself.

IMANE: Really? That's incredible! The fact that you still find the time and energy to volunteer is truly inspiring.

BERTAN: The former External Relations Manager of the Basketball Federation was my volunteer during EuroBasket 2022. Interestingly, she volunteered during the group phase under my supervision, but by the final phase in Berlin, she was leading as a FIBA official. It was a strange situation—knowing that after me, she would take over the job. She once told me, “Bertan, our job is so unique that we can't stop.” That's when I really understood the mentality that keeps us going.

Whenever I have time, I try to help out. For example, a friend at European Athletics asked if I could assist with TV graphics. Even though I had no experience with TV graphics, I volunteered because I know the sport. On the first day, the Turkish director was yelling at me, saying, “You're an amateur!” And I replied, “Yes, I'm an amateur; that's why I'm here.” In the end, they even offered me a job, but I declined because of my commitment to the Turkish Basketball Federation. Volunteering truly keeps the passion alive.

IMANE: I love that. Thank you so much. Moving on to the next question: Do you have any specific thoughts on how PR strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations, especially on an international level?

BERTAN: In today's world, thanks to social media, we're all connected instantly. This makes visibility crucial, and for an event, we often rely on viral content. Whether through the marketing department or the event itself, you need to create moments that resonate with everyone—moments they can be a part of. It could be something simple, like giving the spectators a chance to shoot a basket or creating a fan zone where memorable moments happen. Everyone remembers the time when a fan made a half-court shot, and LeBron James hugged them. If you can create such viral moments, the event becomes much bigger than itself, which is beneficial because it means increased visibility for the entire tournament. I can't even count how many times I've rewatched clips of buzzer-beaters or other iconic moments. If you can weave a story around the game, it enhances the experience and the visibility of the event.

IMANE: Thank you so much. Let's move on to the next question. In your experience, how do effective sports event management and public relations contribute to the success of a sports club or federation, as well as host cities and countries?

BERTAN: Effective PR and event management create a powerful platform for visibility. For example, when players have a positive experience, they talk about it, whether to their friends, their country, or on social media. If they arrive at the court with smiles, enjoying viral events, it reflects well on the event and the organization. Conversely, small mistakes, like a driver forgetting to pick up a team, can become PR nightmares, as happened with the Slovenian team when they tweeted about being forgotten.

Events have a huge impact on the perception of sports. For instance, Turkey is now known as a volleyball country because of the emotional connection people have with the players. When they play and win, it lifts the nation's morale and creates a positive atmosphere. Spectators attach these feelings to our country and events, so it's essential to manage these emotions effectively.

IMANE: What do you think is the impact on the federation and the country?

BERTAN: For the federation, hosting multiple European Cups each year solidifies our reputation with FIBA Europe. They know that if they send an event to Turkey, it will be handled well—there's no question about that. As for the country, despite any preconceptions people might have about Turkey, when they arrive here and see the events,

the facilities, and the social infrastructure, they leave with a positive impression. Even minor things, like players taking pictures of different aspects of the facilities, can shape their perception. I've seen many people get emotional when leaving after a tournament because they've had such a joyful experience.

Events like the UEFA Champions League final also boost Turkey's image, especially in tourist-friendly cities like Antalya, where teams feel welcomed and enjoy their stay. The performance of the players can be influenced by many factors, but when they enjoy the atmosphere and smile during interviews, it shows that they've had a good experience. Unfortunately, in places where the sports culture isn't as strong, like in some American events, players might not have as positive an experience. But here, we strive to create an environment that players and fans alike will remember fondly.

IMANE: Thank you so much. Let's move on to the next one. How do you approach striking a balance between creating a memorable fan experience and ensuring the operational efficiency of a large-scale sports event? Here, we're tackling fan engagement, particularly in Turkey, where fans are incredibly passionate. The atmosphere is amazing, and the first time I experienced it, I felt sorry for the opposing team because the energy was so intense. If I were in their shoes, I might have cried.

BERTAN: Our fans are indeed very passionate, and the key is to ensure they feel safe. If they know they're safe, they can fully enjoy the tournament and cheer with all their might. From a fan experience standpoint, it's all about creating a secure and enjoyable environment. Sometimes security checks can be a bit tedious, but they are necessary. When fans feel respected and secure, they will have a great time, whether there are side events or not.

IMANE: One thing that stands out in events like Anadolu Efes games or Turkish national team events is how sponsors engage fans during breaks by giving out gifts or organizing activities. Those kinds of initiatives really encourage fan engagement.

BERTAN: Absolutely. Fan experience is crucial. You can have a great game and even win a championship, but what really brings fans back is the fun they had. It's not just about giving away gifts; it's about creating a sense of belonging and community. If fans feel like they're part of a larger family and have opportunities to engage through activities

like side events or loyalty programs, they'll keep coming back. Ensuring fans feel safe is the first step but creating a fun and inclusive atmosphere is what keeps them loyal.

IMANE: From your perspective, what are the key differences or similarities in event management approaches between sports like basketball, football, and volleyball? What differs in management?

BERTAN: Honestly, the differences are minimal because, at the end of the day, it's all about putting on a show for the audience. The basic structure of event management remains the same across sports. The main differences lie in the rules. For example, volleyball games don't stop as frequently, so you have less time for fan engagement compared to basketball, where there are more breaks due to timeouts and quarters. Football is similar, but in the end, it's still a competitive event where two teams face off. The core principles of managing these events are the same, whether it's a sports event, a concert, or a public gathering. The differences are in the details, but the overall objective is to provide entertainment.

IMANE: Last question.

BERTAN: No worries, but if you need more details, I'm happy to elaborate.

IMANE: Thank you so much, I appreciate it. So, the last question is: Based on your extensive background in sports event management and PR, what recommendations would you offer to sports organizations or event managers aiming to maximize the impact and success of their events?

BERTAN: Be involved in every aspect. Consider things from every participant's perspective.

IMANE: So, you mean seeing things from each perspective?

BERTAN: Exactly. You need to think from the perspective of the fans, participants, volunteers, players, officials—everyone involved. If you don't consider all these perspectives, problems will arise. For example, when choosing accommodation, it's not enough to just pick a nice hotel; you have to consider how the players will feel after staying there for two weeks, especially if they've been losing games. You need to

anticipate their needs and challenges to ensure a smooth event. It's not about spending a lot of money but about thoughtful planning for everyone involved.

Creating equality in game experiences is also crucial. For example, if one team has an early game and another has a later one, you need to ensure both have equal access to practice time on the court. These kinds of considerations are essential for a fair and successful event.

IMANE: So, basically, it's about being aware of every detail.

BERTAN: Not every single detail, but the key ones that affect participants' experiences. You might miss a few minor things, but if you focus on the main aspects, you'll avoid significant problems. For instance, if a referee forgets their accreditation and your security is doing a good job, they might prevent the referee from entering, causing a mess. That's why it's essential to think about how every participant will interact with the event.

IMANE: It could mess up the entire game.

BERTAN: Exactly. It's like a butterfly effect. One small issue can escalate and affect the whole event.

IMANE: Exactly. Well, that was all. Thank you very much for all the details, your time, and everything.

BERTAN: Make sure to include this part too—the thank you part.

IMANE: Of course, I will! Both on and off the record. So that's all. Thank you very much.

BERTAN: You're welcome.

Interview 2: Participant B: Nicolas Seigne

IMANE: Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your time and generosity. Your support is greatly appreciated. It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak with you. To begin, please share your journey into sports events management with me. I am interested in understanding what initially drew you to this industry, as well as the significant experiences or influences that have shaped your decision to pursue a career in this field.

NICOLAS: Well, I have always wanted to work in sports because sports have been my entire life, especially basketball. Initially, I wanted to find any job in sports, regardless of the specific role. So, I explored becoming a sports teacher, but that path did not quite fit my interests. I then became very interested in pursuing a career as a sports journalist.

However, after discussing it with individuals who had followed that path, I learned that there isn't a dedicated track for becoming a sports journalist. It's generally a matter of acquiring broad knowledge, so one might start with studies in fields like history or economics before transitioning into journalism. There isn't a clearly defined career path. Furthermore, these positions are highly competitive due to their limited number. Journalists often remain in the same position for 30-40 years, which limits career opportunities. Thus, I decided to shift towards sports economics and management.

After obtaining an economics degree following high school, I completed a generalist economics diploma over two years. I then went to Paris to pursue a program that was called, though it no longer exists, a Master's in Science and Techniques, Economics, and Sports Management.

It lasted two years. At the time I began this program, there were very few programs focused on sports management. We were at the early stages of what we see now, where many schools offer such programs. Back then, there were only a few. In France, there were perhaps three or four business schools.

And maybe two or three universities across France offering programs specifically in sports management. Nowadays, there are many more due to increased opportunities. So, I completed this training at the University of Dauphine in Paris. As part of this program, I had to undertake an internship, which I did at a basketball magazine.

Moreover, it was the magazine I used to buy when I was very young. I was thrilled to discover how the magazine I bought every Wednesday morning was produced. The internship went exceptionally well; I found it fantastic to be involved with a basketball magazine. It was also during the 2004 Olympic Games, so we followed the Olympics at the same time.

Subsequently, I decided to continue and enrolled at a business school in Marseille called Kedge Business School, pursuing a Master's in event management. This wasn't specifically focused on sports but also included culture, corporate events, product launches, conventions, and so on. It was a general master's in event organization. At the end of this master's program, I also had to complete an internship. It so happened that one of the journalists from the magazine where I had previously interned moved to the French Basketball Federation to manage the federation's magazine.

In France, the basketball federation has its own monthly magazine, I am not sure if this is the case with Turkiye as well. Since I had kept in touch with him, he informed me that the French Basketball Federation was seeking an intern in marketing.

I applied and was accepted for the internship, which was six months long. I started in the marketing and communication department at the French Basketball Federation, which was unrelated to events. The internship went very well, and in the end, I was offered a permanent position. For me, it was a dream come true because basketball is my life. Working at the French Basketball Federation for three years was truly exceptional. I spent 17 years at the Federation, particularly in the marketing department, managing 3x3 basketball.

3x3 is an exciting discipline inspired by street culture, blending hip-hop, dance, and more. It has a unique identity that is quite compelling. I was responsible for handling all partnerships and sponsorships for our national 3x3 competition, the 3x3 Superleague, and the French 3x3 teams.

I worked in that role for 17 years. Simultaneously, I became a FIBA Technical Delegate starting in 2016. In this role, I was involved not only with basketball regulations but also with marketing, event management, and television, including setting up cameras.

This role required me to oversee various aspects, which allowed me to travel, work in English, and engage in many activities that I didn't handle at the French Basketball Federation. It also helped me expand my network and enhance my skills because, after so many years in marketing, I began transitioning more into event management. Additionally, regarding 3x3 basketball at the federation, we were a very small team. At the time, it was in early development, and now it has grown significantly since it became an Olympic sport. Initially, we were a small team and had to handle everything ourselves. This meant our responsibilities extended beyond marketing and partnerships to include event management.

About a year ago, **Paris Basketball** launched a major recruitment campaign, opening 10 positions across media, legal, ticketing, and commercial departments. They also created a role in event production to prepare for their new arena, the **Adidas Arena**, which was set to open in February. This new venue, akin to a **mini NBA arena**, was set to elevate the club to a new level. I decided to apply having lived in Paris for 20 years, I wanted to see a major club succeed in the city, as there hadn't been one.

With the exciting prospect of this new arena, I felt it was the right time to leave the Federation because I genuinely believed in this project. After numerous steps and interviews, I was hired. I left the French Basketball Federation last September to join Paris Basketball, focusing on event management, specifically organizing home games at the Adidas Arena as well as at the Accor Arena.

At the club, we frequently relocate games. The Accor Arena, the largest basketball venue in France with 16,000 seats, is where the NBA plays when they visit. I am also responsible for all non-game activities. This includes organizing events such as "Meet the Team," where our sponsors meet the team during an evening event. We have also conducted activations with the NBA for their junior program in Paris in January.

We have done a lot with the NBA for their junior program and organized a Euroleague junior tournament in Paris. These are considered off-game activities, which fall under my responsibility. To summarize, I manage a team of four employees who handle fan experience and logistics. They report to me, and together we are responsible for organizing all home games.

That's a brief overview of my career.

IMANE: What an interesting journey, moving on to the next question; what do you find most rewarding about working in the sports industry, particularly in event management roles?

NICOLAS: When you refer to the most rewarding aspect, you mean the most satisfying, correct? Alright. For me, the greatest fulfillment in working in the sports industry comes from successfully balancing the athletes' need to perform and be in the best conditions to deliver an excellent match, while also coordinating diverse teams to create a spectacular event. By "diverse teams," I mean ticketing, which aims to sell as many seats as possible; sponsors, who want to activate their presence in the stadium or arena; and television, which seeks the best camera placements and commentary positions, among other aspects, such as managing the branding providers and ensuring that everyone can work together, despite potential conflicts over competing interests or preferred locations. The goal is to coordinate all parties with a central focus on the athletes.

The athletes need to perform under the best possible conditions, and I find it most interesting to ensure that everyone is aligned and working towards producing the best event possible. This is challenging because, for instance, television needs to be set up, which takes time.

Teams have their training sessions, and coaches, as well as other personnel, set up while training is ongoing. Therefore, organizing efficiently to ensure a high-quality broadcast while also ensuring smooth training sessions is crucial. This is just one example among many that arise daily in sports events. It is essential to ensure that everyone is synchronized and working effectively together, which is my role at Paris Basketball.

IMANE: It is truly rewarding when the event concludes successfully, and everyone—athletes, organizers, and spectators—is satisfied. The realization that your work contributed to this success is a unique and gratifying feeling.

NICOLAS: When people leave the venue having had a great evening, and behind the scenes, where spectators do not see, everything has gone smoothly because everyone worked well together, that is truly wonderful. Although athletes might not always express

how things went because they are focused on the game, when the match ends and the atmosphere is great, regardless of the outcome, and there have been no problems, and everyone has worked under good conditions, that is fantastic.

IMANE: Thank you very much. Moving on to the third question. Based on your experience, what specific skills or qualities do you believe are essential for success in sports event management?

NICOLAS: For me, this question is quite straightforward. It primarily involves human qualities.

In event management, more than in other fields, it is crucial to work well in a team, communicate effectively, and understand others' needs to harmonize efforts. It is important to convey instructions clearly, and be firm yet maintain a positive atmosphere, especially during recurring events throughout a season. Good sense is also vital, meaning understanding how things work and remaining calm under pressure, which is not always easy.

In event management, unlike ticketing, marketing, or public relations where specific techniques are crucial, such as sales techniques or optimizing space for partners, the primary quality is human qualities.

IMANE: And how about adapting?

NICOLAS: Exactly, adapting is key. Regarding technical aspects, for example, after 17 years in marketing, transitioning into event management involved learning many new things, such as lighting shows and sound quality requirements for speakers or DJs. These technical aspects are things you can learn over time by discussing with providers. However, without the fundamental human qualities of seeking knowledge and asking others, it wouldn't be possible to succeed. So, to answer this question, the essential skills or qualities are indeed human qualities.

IMANE: Thank you very much. Moving on to the fourth question. Could you elaborate on your role as a Technical Delegate and Event Manager with FIBA, as well as your position as Head of Events at Paris Basketball? What are your main responsibilities in these roles, and what key achievements have you accomplished?

NICOLAS: Regarding the role of Technical Delegates, when FIBA launched a new competition system in 2017 with qualification windows similar to those in football, it meant that there were 24 matches happening simultaneously in Europe. In Africa, there were 12, and there were many more in South America, North America, and Asia. FIBA, being based in Switzerland with around fifty employees, found it impossible to be everywhere. Thus, they created the Technical Delegate position, which is akin to a commissioner but with a broader role.

The Technical Delegate's responsibility is to oversee all the requirements set out for federations to ensure they are properly implemented. This includes everything from camera placements to ensuring the press conference room and backdrops are set up correctly.

The Technical Delegate verifies logos, court markings, basketball equipment standards, and compliance with various regulations. This requires a comprehensive understanding of TV, marketing, media relations, photography, basketball rules, and equipment standards. We underwent numerous workshops and online tests to prepare. Each delegate receives assignments two months in advance and travels to the respective countries to ensure everything is in order. Essentially, we serve as FIBA's eyes and ears on-site, addressing issues as they arise and providing feedback between local federations and FIBA.

At major competitions like the World Cup, our roles can expand. Here in Istanbul, for example, some Technical Delegates focus solely on match oversight due to the volume of games, while Operations Managers handle broader logistical responsibilities. Adam and I divided responsibilities, with him managing the Sinan Erdem venue and me overseeing Ahmet Comert. I was responsible for the setup and ongoing match coordination.

As for my role as Head of Events at Paris Basketball, I mentioned earlier about my career path.

IMNAE: Understood, thank you. Let's move to the next question, In your experience with FIBA and Paris Basketball Club, how do you approach the planning, organization,

and execution of international events, such as the U17 Basketball World Cup and other tournaments?

NICOLAS: Initially, I focused on gathering information. When FIBA contacted me, I requested the host agreement, which outlines the responsibilities between the Turkish Federation (TBF) and FIBA. This document is crucial as it details the contributions and expectations from both sides.

Understanding this agreement and the organizational structure of both the TBF and FIBA was vital. Once we were well-informed, we implemented weekly meetings every Thursday morning with Yagiz and Bertan to prepare for the World Cup. For two months, we held these meetings to ensure we were thoroughly prepared.

Arriving on-site a week before the competition begins allows us to oversee the final preparations. I arrived on Sunday, with the competition starting on Saturday, enabling us to supervise the setup effectively.

IMANE: So, could you please share a specific example of a challenging situation you encountered during event management and how you successfully resolved it? Because in this field, adaptability is key. We must adapt to everything and be prepared for anything. You never know what you might encounter at an event, given the involvement of many external parties such as spectators, sponsors, and everyone else we work with during an event. Things can go wrong, or something might be missing at the last minute, so we must always be ready to adapt. Have you ever been in a situation where something went wrong, or something was missing, and you had to resolve it quickly?

NICOLAS: Challenges are common in this field, as you mentioned. For instance, yesterday we had a match that lasted much longer than expected, necessitating a decision to delay the following game. Teams require 30 minutes for warm-up, so I immediately informed the television crew to display a delay notice and notified both teams, TBF and FIBA personnel, including statisticians.

Maintaining composure and promptly informing everyone involved is crucial. At Paris Basketball, there was an incident where a player tore the net during a game. We weren't

prepared for a quick replacement, so we initiated video and music animations to engage the crowd, successfully masking the delay.

In another instance, related to security, we faced a match against Hapoel Tel Aviv three days after the outbreak of war. Initially, we anticipated cancellation or playing in an empty arena, but EuroLeague insisted on proceeding with the match with an audience. We held meetings with the police, our private security firm, and Hapoel Tel Aviv's security advisor, conducting thorough planning and risk assessments.

We anticipated various scenarios, prepared detailed plans, and conducted numerous briefings. Thankfully, there were no issues, but our extensive preparations ensured we were ready for any eventuality. Risk management involves anticipating and preparing for all possible scenarios.

If you encounter Situation A, what actions do you take? In Situation B, what steps do you follow? And in Situation C, and so on? It is crucial to thoroughly prepare for all possible scenarios to avoid being caught off guard. Furthermore, maintaining composure regardless of the circumstances is essential. Always remember the plan, even when in a rush. Maintaining composure is vital. I believe I addressed questions 6 and 11.

IMANE: Yes, thank you very much. You have also addressed question 7, so let us proceed to another question: How do you collaborate with event partners and vineyards to optimize the efficiency of economic and event management, particularly from a financial perspective?

NICOLAS: This is a very important question when working with Paris Basketball. We do not have an unlimited budget. When we first changed venues, we moved from a city-owned facility with very favorable conditions—essentially a gymnasium at minimal cost—to a professional performance venue managed by a private operator who aims to maximize profitability. The costs are significantly higher. At the Adidas Arena, even a basic match costs us 40,000 euros. This amount includes expenses for security, cleaning, venue rental, etc.

The minimum cost is 40,000 euros. Therefore, it is extremely important, as indicated in your question, to optimize all costs and carefully consider our approach. We are required

to adhere to sports regulations, which specify the presence of certain teams in the venue for referees, investors, and so on.

Thus, we need to strategize on how to comply with all regulatory requirements while keeping costs as low as possible, and still deliver a high-quality event. Many adjustments are made during the initial matches. We have implemented practices that were not repeated thereafter. To achieve optimization, especially when entering a new venue like the Adidas Arena, some initial errors are inevitable. However, it is crucial to debrief, discuss with colleagues, and consult with institutions...

For instance, the basketball league, to gain insights on their perspective and adjust for subsequent matches, continuously refining to reach an ideal situation where all requirements are met at minimal cost while generating revenue. Managing costs effectively is crucial for a sports club.

IMANE: Sponsors indeed provide significant assistance, do they not?

NICOLAS: Yes, they do assist. This addresses question 9, which follows right after.

Indeed. The main distinction between a professional club and a federation is that federations have objectives related to the development of the sport and the performance of national teams. These are the primary goals of a federation: to develop basketball and achieve the best results for the national teams, such as the French Federation. To support this, there are state subsidies, and when playing in a club, a portion of the license fee is allocated to the Federation.

Federations also have sponsors and generate revenue through ticket sales, but this is a relatively small portion compared to subsidies and license fees. Thus, federations generally have a larger budget to manage and organize events effectively, with less emphasis on cost control compared to a club setting.

In a club, revenue sources include ticket sales from organized matches, potential TV rights, sponsorship revenue, and city subsidies, such as from Paris. With these sources, the club must organize matches, compensate players, and pay administrative staff, all while ensuring profitability. This highlights the key difference between a federation and a club. During my 17 years with the French Basketball Federation, my focus was on

promoting basketball, whereas at Paris Basketball, the focus is on filling the arena to generate revenue through ticket sales. Providing an exceptional experience to encourage repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion is essential.

IMANE: Understood, that's insightful. We've already covered question 9 as well. Moving on to the 10th question: How did you collaborate with marketing and communication teams to promote events and drive engagement and ticket sales? This is closely related to the previous questions. It is particularly relevant as you have experience in both event management and marketing. How do you view the synergy between these two departments from both perspectives?

NICOLAS: In marketing, it is crucial to communicate regulatory details to ensure they do not sell spots in prohibited areas. For example, during the World Cup, (U17 World Cup Istanbul 2024) sponsors were positioned in specific locations; logos could not be placed everywhere.

It is important to inform the marketing team about the new regulations for the upcoming season, review available spots, and discuss feasible options. Additionally, coordinating with them on partner activations is essential. Sometimes sponsors seek activities on the court during halftime or wish to display advertisements on the video cube or outside, in front of the venue. Understanding their needs and proposing viable, permissible alternatives is key. It involves constant communication with the marketing department to align with their goals, as we all aim to attract more sponsors.

Regarding the communication department, on the event side, there is less interaction because their role is to highlight what we organize. We are responsible for informing them about the planned activities, such as face painting, fan interactions at the entrance, and halftime showcases. Providing them with a detailed program allows them to send photographers and videographers to appropriate locations to showcase our work. However, there is less exchange between event management and communication.

IMANE: What about the promotional aspect? Is the event team involved in this, or is it solely the responsibility of marketing?

NICOLAS: Marketing handles promotion, but it is important they have accurate information, including match dates, times, and programs. We provide updates on match organization, and marketing manages the promotion through advertising campaigns. We have partnerships with the city of Paris for posters, newspapers for ads, and sometimes purchase online advertising space.

IMANE: Or in the metro, which provides greater visibility.

NICOLAS: Exactly. We also invest heavily in social media promotions. Paid promotions can reach individuals who do not follow us. However, managing pre-event promotion is not part of our responsibilities in event production.

IMANE: But for fan engagement, both departments are involved, correct?

NICOLAS: When fans arrive at the match, that's indeed our responsibility. We have a fan experience manager who plans various activities in the arena. Upon arrival...

We have a plaza, similar to Sinan Erdem, a large open area in front of the arena where outdoor activities can be held in good weather. There are also concourses within the arena for additional activations, and court activities during timeouts and halftime. Our president, who is American and has 30 years of NBA experience, incorporates best practices from the NBA into our fan experience, while adding a Parisian touch. We emphasize urban culture in Paris, including musical elements with our DJ.

We also feature dance troupes showcasing hip-hop and breakdance, and halftime performances with artists. This approach differentiates us from other French clubs and has made us stand out significantly.

IMANE: This is very interesting. For example, as an average fan, I would choose to attend your match because it offers a two-in-one experience—a mini-concert and a match. It's engaging and entertaining, with a vibrant atmosphere.

NICOLAS: I will send you a documentary that was aired on French television about the inauguration of the Adidas Arena. We also have an influencer manager at Paris Basketball. Her role is to invite influencers, stars, and celebrities and place them in prime, courtside seats. This creates the perception that the match is highly significant because a notable figure like Aya Nakamura is present.

And it significantly enhances the event's profile. Additionally, we feature these celebrities on the video cube, which draws attention to their presence and reinforces the event's importance. This practice is unique to Paris Basketball and is not commonly done in other venues.

IMANE: Indeed. For example, if Aya Nakamura or any artist shares their attendance with their fans, there is a strong likelihood that fans will attend the match just for a chance to see that person. Even if they were initially uninterested in the club or basketball, they might find the experience intriguing and potentially become fans of the club.

NICOLAS: Precisely. This also applies to social media followers, as seeing a celebrity like Aya Nakamura at the match may pique their interest and encourage them to learn more about the event.

IMANE: So, regarding the next question, we can say that we've already addressed question 12 as well, but we can focus solely on the international aspect if you prefer. Because, once again, thank you very much. You've covered so many topics and details, and I truly appreciate it. By doing so, you've more or less answered several other questions, including question number 12. But if you'd like, we can just focus on the domestic and international aspects.

Based on your experience, could you share some insights on how strategic events management and effective public relations have enhanced the success and visibility of basketball events, both domestically and internationally? We've just discussed the local aspect, such as with influencers, etc. But on an international level, for instance, what strategies do you implement in that case?

NICOLAS: The difference is that at FIBA, we strive to ensure that the quality of organization is the same everywhere in the world. And this is sometimes not simple because every country is different, every federation is different, and cultures vary.

IMANE: Especially in terms of infrastructure.

NICOLAS: The structure and methods of working are not the same. What is also very interesting, and why I love working with FIBA, is that everyone has to work towards the same goal to deliver an event that is genuinely FIBA—of international quality. For

example, I organized a competition in Cairo, Egypt, where they had no experience with events of this level. However, they were so motivated and thrilled to have it. They had incredible energy but sometimes struggled to channel it because they wanted to do very well. So, it was necessary to manage people while maintaining that level of energy, which is not easy.

I also organized other matches, notably one in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, there were only two people responsible for organizing everything. For example, they were the ones who placed the water bottles in the locker rooms and managed the sponsors. They did everything because basketball is very small there, and thus, the federation is very small.

So, it's about getting the best out of these two people to deliver the same quality of organization as we would have done in Cairo with 100 people. This is where it becomes super interesting in terms of strategy because it requires a lot of study, listening, and understanding to know how others are organized and to activate the right levers to deliver the best event possible.

IMANE: Alright, that's really interesting. There's no script.

NICOLAS: No, not at all.

IMANE: It's really fascinating. So, every time, there's something new. It's truly remarkable. That's why I want to work in this field. You will never get bored!

I apologize, I know it's a bit long, but I would like to add a small question. For example, regarding the Paris Basketball Club's participation in the EuroLeague, how do you enhance your international visibility?

NICOLAS: For the club, we have real international ambitions. Paris is already a big club in the EuroLeague because France is a huge market, and Paris is a very large city. Thus, the EuroLeague has strongly supported the club's presence from this year. So, this is the first cornerstone of our international ambition. The second was the new Adidas Arena, and now, we have the chance to have a great partner, the sportswear brand Adidas, which supports us a lot. They even named the arena after it, the Adidas Arena. We are also in the process of changing our logo. We will announce our new logo on September 15th,

which will prominently feature the city of Paris and basketball. Because Paris Basketball, our president, has combined two globally recognized brands—Paris and Basketball—resulting in Paris Basketball, the name of the club. Our ambition is that one day, people in foreign countries will buy a Paris Basketball jersey without necessarily knowing the club but simply because they find it cool to have a Paris Basketball jersey from Adidas if it is well designed. Paris Saint-Germain, for example, has done this very well.

In the United States, you now see many people wearing a PSG jersey even though they may not even know what it is, simply because the jersey is beautiful, it's Jordan, and the design is stunning. We have real ambitions in this area regarding international merchandising; that is our strategy.

IMANE: For example, could you provide insights into the complexities of organizing an Olympic-level event that involves international teams and athletes from around the world, especially having multiple teams in the same place?

NICOLAS: Yes, we saw this during the World Cup. As I mentioned earlier, no federation is organized the same way; there are really different cultures. So, it's about effectively disseminating the right information, assisting teams with their plane tickets, explaining how the hotel works, and helping with visas. We rely heavily on the local federation for visas, explaining the competition's sports regulations, training schedules, and so on. The most challenging part is finding the right person in each federation who will be the point of contact to disseminate the correct information and then organize regular updates.

There is a lot of information to provide, but it's important not to overwhelm people with too much information; knowing how to communicate it effectively is crucial in such large-scale events. The same applies to the Olympics: it's about ensuring that people have all the information they need to organize their attendance.

IMANE: Thank you very much. So, we can say that we've also covered question 14, thus let's move to another question; do you have any specific thoughts on how PR strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations?

NICOLAS: Yes, exactly. PR is crucial; it's the foundation of your success. You can organize the most beautiful event, perfectly executed, with all the teams and matches being spectacular, but if no one is in the venue, that's what people will remember.

IMANE: Exactly!!

NICOLAS: That's what people will remember.

IMANE: That's exactly what I say whenever someone asks me why I chose the title "The Impact of Sports Events Management and PR on Clubs and Federations" for my thesis. It's the exact answer I give all the time. For example, if there's an event that is perfectly organized, with teams and everything in place, but no one knows about it, then all the organization is for nothing.

No one is aware of it, so despite the excellent organization, the event is empty. There's no coverage, meaning no ticket sales and no attendees. Consequently, the substantial investment yields no revenue. So, it's like taking an exam or giving a presentation. You've done it perfectly, but you didn't give it to the professor. So, it's useless.

NICOLAS: Exactly.

NICOLAS: This year, FIBA organized the Final Four of the Basketball Champions League in Belgrade. I think they had their reasons, but they chose a city where no club participated in this competition. They organized an incredible event with an LED court. I don't know if you've seen the images, but it's the new generation of floors where you play on an LED screen.

example:



<https://images.app.goo.gl/DsYuGSuDP2MRN2hB8>

IMANE: Oh, I see! Impressive!

NICOLAS: You can design the court lines in LED. The event was stunning, but there were no spectators in the stands.

IMANE: That's unfortunate.

NICOLAS: That's what people remembered. **It's very important for international competitions to identify locations where there is a basketball culture, and where there is an interest in the event.** Similarly, if you set up an excellent PR system but hold the event in a city where people have no interest in basketball, it won't work.

IMANE: It won't work, yes. And at the same time, that's why PR in sports is very important. For example, you have an event, the PR is perfect, you made a lot of campaigns, and everyone knows you're organizing this event, but the organization is poor, there's no synchronization, and in the end, it doesn't work. Here, what we remember is that they complement each other.

Sports PR and sports event management complement each other to achieve the perfect match, the most successful event. If you don't have one, it's not good. The synergy between both, either breaks it or makes it.

I really enjoyed your response because it's exactly what I always say.

Okay, now the 16th question is extremely important to me; From your perspective, what are the impacts of mega-events on host cities, clubs, and federations?

NICOLAS: There are many different impacts. The first one is financial. When you organize an international event, you attract people who will use hotels, and restaurants, buy tickets, and so on. You will also create revenue for branding companies for the venue. This generates significant income for the city itself. That's why it can be an opportunity to negotiate substantial subsidies from public authorities, city or state, by explaining that thanks to my event, the local economy will thrive, so you should support me. That's the first impact. The second impact is more about what we call the legacy of an event. It's about ensuring that the event kickstarts a sports development program so that it's not just a one-time thing.

In fact, we are truly launching something. For example, for the Paris Olympics, five years ago, the government set a goal to build 1000 3x3 basketball courts by Paris 2024. So, over the past five years, many basketball courts have been built everywhere.

The government allocated significant funds for building these courts. This means that even after the Olympics, these courts will remain for children to play. **This is the most important part, the social impact of an event.** It contributes to the development of sports, plain and simple. So, there's the economic aspect and especially the social aspect.

IMANE: Moving on, we will merge two questions together; Can you share examples of particularly successful PR campaigns for sports events that you have managed, and what made them successful? And Q19: How do you handle PR crises or negative publicity during a sports event, and what are your key strategies for crisis communication?

So the two options here are either **bad PR or good PR.**

NICOLAS: Yes, a good example is... I'm talking about the same match. It's our inaugural match at the Adidas Arena, Paris Basketball. We wanted to boost ticket sales, so we had an artist for a showcase, but we weren't allowed to announce it. So, we did a lot of teasing for a week, saying we had a halftime showcase.

We mentioned that the artist was among the top 5 French artists at the moment, but we said he wasn't the fifth. We did a big teaser for a week about who the artist would be. This worked very well. We gained a lot of attention on social media. People were curious and bought tickets. On the same match, we wanted to make a grand opening for the arena, so we had a fireworks display inside the venue.

IMANE: Alright, that's very captivating!!

NICOLAS: So, that was super cool to organize. Okay, it was quite stressful but really cool. We wanted to hear all the ceremonial speeches. So, initially, we banned drums because we were worried that the opposing supporters would use them to chant and drown out the opening ceremony, which was a unique moment since it only happens once in the arena. When we announced this, even from our own supporters, we received numerous negative comments on social media because we had communicated this. So, it became a terrible bad buzz. And we managed a few days before the event to turn it around by saying

that it was the venue's rule that imposed this. We managed to change the rule and explained that we were the ones who had changed it, and drums were once again allowed. And then everything went back to normal, and people forgot about the incident very quickly. But I mean, during that week, we wondered if we had made a big mistake. Should we go back to our decision? So, yes, it was an example of a bad buzz. We managed to turn it around, and in the end, no one remembers.

IMANE: May I ask, who was the artist?

NICOLAS: It was Zola, a rapper.

IMANE: Rapper, yes, exactly. Alright, that's brilliant.

NICOLAS: I'll send you the documentary. I have it on my computer.

IMANE: Thank you very much, I really appreciate it.

NICOLAS: The documentary follows the arena manager, me, and everything related to food and beverage in the arena, explaining how all the menus were created and everything. It's super interesting; you have the three profiles, and you can see the organization of the match well.

IMANE: Excellent. Can I also use it in my thesis as a case study?

NICOLAS: Oh yes, of course.

IMANE: Thank you very much. Your kindness and generosity with your time are greatly appreciated. The insights you've shared have been incredibly valuable and enlightening. I understand how precious your time is, and I am genuinely grateful for the hour you've dedicated to this conversation. Thank you once again.

Interview 3: Participant C: Hasan Mahdi

IMANE: Dear Hasan, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview and share your valuable insights and experience.

HASAN: It's my pleasure.

IMANE: Hasan, as a volunteer for the UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul, you had firsthand experience with the event's logistics and operations. One aspect I came across is the restricted access to the metro line leading to Atatürk Stadium, which required a valid match ticket for entry. As a volunteer, did you have to present your official badge to gain access, or were there alternative arrangements for staff and volunteers?

HASAN: No, there wasn't anything like that. What happened was, leading up to the match day—one or two days before—it was all pretty normal. The first time I went to the stadium was about 10 days ago, actually two weeks ago, for an onboarding meeting. They welcomed us and gave an introduction.

IMANE: So, you had to prepare for it for about two weeks?

HASAN: Not really. They mainly briefed us on precautionary measures, what to do, what not to do, and so on. Back then, the metro was operating normally, and anyone could access it. I believe it was the M9 line, which starts from Mahmut Bey and goes to Atatürk Stadium.

When I was finalizing my application, they asked if I wanted to volunteer for 10 days, 3 days, or just on match day. I chose the three days. Two days before the match, I could still access the metro and get to the stadium. However, when I exited at the stadium stop, there was a strong police presence. They wouldn't let you exit towards the stadium without showing your ID card and explaining why you were going there. We had received our cards a week or two earlier, so we showed them and exited.

We also wore our volunteer kits to avoid any confusion. On match day, after registration and receiving our cards, they scanned our cards, and we went to the volunteer center to get our kits. Two days before the match, they gave us a tour of the stadium, showing us how everything worked. The pitch was elevated, not at ground level, and they guided us around the field, the seating areas, and all the key spots.

The day before the match, they explained how the gates and ticketing would work. Scanning machines were installed at each gate, and most people had their tickets on the UEFA app. Each person could only have one ticket, and if they had multiple tickets, they had to transfer them to another person's phone. Once a ticket was transferred, it could no longer be accessed by the original owner. It was well-organized. If you scanned your ticket and didn't pass through the turnstile in time, you couldn't scan it again. This happened a few times at my gate, where people accidentally triggered the turnstile and got stuck.

At the gates, there were two volunteers at the outer gate and two at the inner gate. I was stationed at the inner gate, where we guided people after their tickets were scanned. There was also a staff member who conducted a security check, and another volunteer who directed people to their seats. Volunteers outside the gates helped guide spectators to the correct gate, such as Gate A, B, or C on the left side, and Gates J, K, L on the right side. The VIP lounge was near Gate B or D, if I'm not mistaken.

It was quite efficient. From the moment people arrived, they were directed to the correct gate. The first gate was where they underwent a security check, and after passing through, they encountered a line of police officers who conducted another security check. This was where they enforced strict rules: no power banks, no cigarettes, no lighters, no e-cigarettes, no smoking devices of any kind. Even devices like iQOS, which don't produce tobacco residue, weren't allowed. These items are expensive, ranging from 70 to 100 euros (about 2,200 to 3,200 lira), so people were understandably upset.

At my gate, there was an incident involving a Mexican couple and the woman's brother, who was a high-ranking Mexican police officer. He showed his badge and ID card, but the Turkish police officer was very strict and didn't care. It was a bit harsh, especially since there was a language barrier. Fortunately, someone else arrived who could explain the situation in their language, making it clear that the issue was about UEFA policy, not Turkish law.

IMANE: So, there was some miscommunication...

HASAN: Yes, definitely, due to the language barrier. The guests tried their best to make the officers understand that their items were valuable, but communication was difficult.

Once you passed through the outer gate, there was an inner gate with no additional security check. You just scanned your ticket and entered. Sometimes, as I mentioned earlier, people had issues with the turnstiles, but the UEFA security managers—who were all French—handled these situations. They would issue paper tickets on the spot to resolve the problem.

After getting through security, you were guided to your seat. People started arriving at the stadium as early as 12 or 1 p.m.

IMANE: And the game started at 10 p.m., right?

HASAN: The game started around 9:30 p.m., if I remember correctly. We arrived during the first half, and it was about 10:15 when halftime began. The security was well-organized, with a strong presence of police and clear guidance for everyone. The ticketing system was efficient, and the stadium, which I believe holds around 70,000 people, was well-managed. The pre-match ceremony started at around 8 p.m. with performances by artists like Anita from Brazil and Burna Boy from the UK, followed by fireworks.

The atmosphere in the stadium was electric. Inter Milan's fans were much more vocal and energetic than Manchester City's, even after their team lost. Manchester City fans began leaving the stadium as soon as it became clear they were winning, which was quite surprising. In contrast, Inter Milan's fans stayed to cheer for their team long after the match ended.

Once the match finished, the VIP protocol was well-executed. The exits were managed efficiently, with only about 30% of the gates being used to control the flow of people. The VIP exits were reserved for officials, but the general public was guided smoothly out of the stadium without any issues. The entire process, especially the exit, was handled even more efficiently than the entry.

IMANE: As a volunteer, how do you view your role and the role of other volunteers? Do you think it played a significant part? If volunteers weren't there, would the event have been the same? Could you also share how many volunteers were involved, and in which departments? How do you think UEFA treated the volunteers?

HASAN: That's a great question. From my experience, UEFA highly valued the volunteers. They were respectful, organized, and the top management was just as

accessible as the local staff. I'd say the official management was even more approachable than the local staff.

If volunteers hadn't been involved, I don't think the event would have been as efficient or even possible. Volunteers made up a significant portion of the workforce—around 25-30%. Without them, the event wouldn't have run as smoothly. There were about 200,000 applicants for the volunteer experience, with around 50,000 selected from all over the world, including countries like France, Spain, and Italy.

Volunteers handled many small but essential tasks. While UEFA's official employees handled the larger management tasks, the details and minor tasks, which are just as important, were managed by volunteers. It's like a puzzle—if one piece is missing, you don't get the full picture. Volunteers communicated with high-ranking officials, including those from the police, and if they couldn't resolve an issue, they would escalate it to the official staff. Without volunteers, the event wouldn't have been as effective, and you'd still need people to do those tasks, which would have required hiring additional staff. Volunteers played a crucial role, just as important as the officials.

IMANE: Thank you so much. I enjoyed hearing about your experience. Now, let's move on to another question. Based on your experience and insights, let's talk about fan engagement, particularly in the festival park and fan zone. You experienced it from two perspectives—as a fan at the festival park and as a volunteer. I saw you at the Lost Frequencies concert, for example.

HASAN: Ah, the festival park at Yenikapı. I remember the fan zone as well.

IMANE: Yes, the fan zone.

HASAN: I wasn't allowed to go into the fan zone, but I know it had official UEFA merchandise, musical performances, and places for fans to relax before the match. The fan zone was active for three days leading up to the match, providing a place for international visitors to socialize, enjoy music, and learn more about UEFA and the upcoming match.

IMANE: How important do you think these fan engagement initiatives, like interactive activities, fan zones, and merchandise offerings, were in shaping the overall experience of attending the UEFA Champions League final?

HASAN: Fan interaction is just as important as the event itself. It's the foundation of marketing. You can have a big event, but if you don't engage with the community, it won't be as successful. The event is organized to generate revenue for UEFA through ticket sales, merchandise, and more. Merchandise, for example, was very expensive—some shirts were priced as high as \$500. But people bought them because these items represent the players and the organization.

Marketing is crucial, especially in 2024, where a brand can succeed purely through online presence without a physical store. The festival park, which was organized two weeks before the match, showcased the trophy, offered engaging activities, and featured concerts by artists like Lost Frequencies. It was all free, making it accessible to everyone. Hundreds of thousands of people visited, many of whom might not have known about UEFA or the match beforehand. I'd estimate that at least 20% of the visitors looked into UEFA and the match after attending the festival park, and even if just 1% of them bought tickets, it would have generated significant revenue.

The volunteer experience was also given a lot of importance. Volunteers received the same standard of treatment as the guests, with food and transportation provided by Turkish Airlines. The experience was designed to be memorable for both volunteers and guests.

IMANE: That's amazing. Thank you so much for sharing these insights. I know it's already been 34 minutes, so I'll just ask one more question. From your perspective, how did the UEFA Champions League Final event contribute to the reputation and brand image of Istanbul as a host city, both nationally and internationally, and Turkey as a whole?

HASAN: In my opinion, Istanbul and Turkey have always had strong tourism and healthcare sectors, with tourism being one of the biggest revenue generators. Hosting the UEFA Champions League Final added to Istanbul's already impressive tourism appeal. This wasn't just a regular match; it was the UEFA final, which attracted tourists, ticket buyers, and football fans from around the world.

These visitors didn't just watch the match and leave; they stayed for a few days, explored Istanbul, and spent money on food, accommodation, and transportation. This contributed

to the local economy and boosted Istanbul's image as a capable host city for major international events. The event showed that Turkey could successfully host such a large-scale event, enhancing its reputation globally.

Even if a small percentage of the visitors considered returning to Istanbul for a longer stay or moving here, it would positively impact the Turkish economy. Events like this one provide immense benefits and enhance the reputation of both Turkey and Istanbul as premier destinations for international events.

IMANE: Thank you very much for your answer and for your time. I appreciate your participation and your cooperation. I'm sure everything you've shared will be valuable for this thesis.

HASAN: Thank you.



Interview 4: Participant D: Amine Azzouzi

IMANE: Welcome, Amine. Thank you for your time and for agreeing to participate in my research on the impact of sports event management and public relations on clubs and federations. I truly appreciate your cooperation and interest. Knowing your experiences and recent activities, I am deeply impressed and would like to learn more about your background, both academic and professional.

AMINE: Thank you for having me. It is my pleasure to contribute to your research. My name is Amine. I graduated from the Royal Institute of Sports Executives of the Ministry of Sports in Morocco in 2020. Following that, I pursued a master's degree at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey, specializing in Physical Education and Sports within the Faculty of Education. Presently, I am completing another master's degree in Sports Management in France.

In terms of professional experience, I have been involved in numerous roles. My initial professional engagement was with AIESEC, a non-governmental organization, where I spent two and a half years in various capacities. Subsequently, I worked with Tibi Africa, an international association, serving as a basketball coach and as part of their technical staff during summer camps. In Turkey, I contributed to different basketball teams and participated in organizing the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games. Additionally, I undertook missions for the Ministry of Sports in Turkey. Currently, I work in France at a sports technology company that develops software and artificial intelligence solutions for sports performance analysis.

Regarding my sports background, I have been a basketball player since the age of four. I have competed for various teams and was part of the Moroccan national under-16 and under-18 basketball teams.

IMANE: Thank you for sharing such a detailed background. It is fascinating that you bring both perspectives: that of an athlete and a professional. This dual insight surely contributes to your expertise. Let us begin with a few general questions related to sports management and events before moving on to specifics. Is that acceptable?

AMINE: Absolutely.

IMANE: From your experience, what are some key event management strategies that contribute significantly to the success of major sporting events?

AMINE: From my experience, particularly with the Solidarity Games, three key strategies stand out: preparation, communication, and leadership. Preparation was essential and began over a year prior to the event. This proactive approach ensured adequate time for addressing critical details. Communication played a pivotal role, characterized by regular and structured meetings—daily, weekly, and monthly—across departments. These meetings ensured alignment and synergy among teams. Lastly, leadership was instrumental. Managers fostered a positive and collaborative environment, motivating teams and facilitating smooth operations.

IMANE: Can you share an example of a time when unforeseen challenges arose during an event, and explain how your event management strategies helped you adapt and overcome those challenges?

AMINE: Certainly. During one event, which involved over 56 countries, we encountered a significant shortage of multilingual staff, particularly for French-to-Turkish translation. This posed a considerable challenge, as communication barriers could have disrupted operations. To address this, we identified volunteers from departments with lower workloads and temporarily reassigned them to support translation needs. This reallocation of resources effectively resolved the issue, exemplifying the importance of problem-solving skills and adaptive management strategies.

IMANE: If you were tasked with preventing such challenges, what proactive measures would you implement?

AMINE: Preventing such issues would require a comprehensive and detailed timeline that identifies the peak workload periods for each department. For example, the accreditation department typically experiences its highest demand approximately three weeks prior to an event, as it prepares credentials for all participants, officials, and vehicles. Ensuring sufficient resources during this period would prevent bottlenecks. Conversely, once their peak workload subsides, these resources can be reallocated to support other departments. A structured timeline with clear deliverables and deadlines would facilitate efficient resource allocation and ensure preparedness across all functions.

IMANE: Organizing events on an Olympic scale is an immense undertaking. How do you manage such complexity, ensure seamless coordination among various stakeholders, and address the diverse needs of government officials, federations, sponsors, and venue managers?

AMINE: Successfully organizing an event of this scale begins years in advance. The first step involves establishing a competent organizing committee and appointing a leader who assembles a team to oversee all aspects of the event. Infrastructure development is a priority, ensuring that venues are not only ready for the event but also usable post-event. Engaging stakeholders is equally critical. Selecting reliable partners and sponsors is fundamental. For instance, in Paris 2024, partnerships with companies like Decathlon for uniforms and Airbnb for accommodations demonstrate the strategic importance of aligning with capable collaborators. Additionally, effective public relations strategies and brand identity protection play a vital role in shaping the event's success. These elements, combined with clear timelines and structured communication, ensure a cohesive and well-executed operation.

AMINE: At the same time, there are numerous meetings conducted with key stakeholders, including state officials, the Ministry of Sports, and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). To provide an example, consider the FIFA World Cup scheduled to take place in Morocco in 2030. This event, in terms of scale and complexity, is comparable to the Olympics.

The preparations for the World Cup are already evident. Investments are being made in infrastructure, such as constructing new roads and stadiums, in each host city. For events like the Olympics, the aim is not just to host the games but to ensure the infrastructure developed remains functional and beneficial long after the event concludes. Abandoning such facilities after their immediate use would be counterproductive. These events are designed to breathe new life into the host country and city, leaving a lasting legacy.

For example, in Paris, preparations for the 2024 Olympics have resulted in significant infrastructure improvements. New metro lines have been built, roads have been upgraded, and various enhancements have been undertaken to ensure readiness and long-term impact.

In addition to infrastructure, public relations (PR) plays a vital role. Managing stakeholders and forming strategic partnerships are fundamental to the success of such events. The Paris Olympics provide an excellent case study. Their partnership strategy categorizes collaborators into tiers, such as premium and golden partners. Choosing the right partners early in the planning process is crucial. They must be reliable, credible, and aligned with the event's vision. Effective PR also involves targeting specific publicity strategies to enhance the event's image and identity. For example, Paris 2024 has carefully cultivated its brand identity, ensuring it is protected and projected effectively.

Sponsorship opportunities are another critical aspect. Collaborations with prominent brands not only provide financial support but also elevate the event's stature. For instance, Paris 2024 has partnered with LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy), associating the luxury brand's image with the elegance and prestige of the event. Such strategies contribute significantly to creating a successful and memorable event.

Finally, these strategies are not only about executing a successful event in the present but also about establishing a legacy. A well-executed event can be repeated in future years, creating anticipation and enduring impact. PR strategies must consider not only the immediate outcomes but also the long-term visibility and reputation of the event.

IMANE: Thank you, Amine. These insights are incredibly valuable, and I appreciate the level of detail you've provided. Let us move to the next topic. I have combined some questions to streamline our discussion, as many of the elements overlap with what we have already covered. Shall we continue?

AMINE: Of course. Feel free to proceed with the questions that align with your research priorities.

IMANE: For this question, we will delve into the role of public relations (PR) within events management, clubs, and federations. PR in sports, as we know, is incredibly significant. It is essential to address this topic thoroughly, as there is a notable gap in research related to events management that fails to adequately highlight the importance of PR.

From your perspective, how do PR strategies contribute to the success and international visibility of sports federations? Additionally, what fundamental event management strategies are employed by successful sports clubs?

AMINE: PR strategies cannot be generalized, as they must be tailored to the specific characteristics of each sport. Every sport has its own culture, audience, and context, which means a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. For example, urban sports like skateboarding or BMX have distinct PR strategies that cater to their unique culture and partnerships. Red Bull, for instance, is known for organizing and promoting events in these spaces. However, this approach cannot be directly applied to football or basketball, as their audience and culture differ significantly.

When it comes to enhancing the international visibility and success of sports federations, the strategies vary by region. The United States, Europe, and Asia each adopt different approaches to PR and event management, shaped by cultural, economic, and social factors. This highlights the critical role of understanding the host country's context. For instance, in Morocco, PR strategies must align with the local sports culture and identify companies that resonate with the targeted sport to achieve maximum visibility.

At its core, PR serves several purposes. It fosters strong sponsorship relationships, enhances the event's image, and establishes a lasting legacy. A well-executed PR strategy ensures that an event becomes an annual or recurring fixture that audiences look forward to year after year. This longevity is a testament to effective brand management and audience engagement.

Another crucial aspect of PR is the fan experience. Ensuring that participants and attendees have a memorable experience is pivotal in building loyalty. Recently, I had a discussion with the head of research and the director of data at Real Madrid about this very topic. They emphasized that while winning prestigious titles like the Champions League is significant, it is not the primary focus. Instead, their priority lies in cultivating customer loyalty and delivering exceptional experiences to their fans. This shift in focus underscores the growing importance of fan engagement over mere competitive success.

Ultimately, PR strategies must balance performance with the emotional connection fostered between the organization and its audience. This perspective is vital for achieving sustainable success, particularly in the context of your research.

IMANE: That's incredibly insightful, Amine. I appreciate your detailed response. It's fascinating to hear about your meeting with Real Madrid's leadership and how their approach to PR aligns with your observations. Let's continue exploring related aspects of events management and PR.

IMANE: For this segment, we'll delve into how public relations and events management intersect. PR plays a crucial role in enhancing the visibility of sports federations and events. Could you share strategies that improve international visibility for sports federations? Additionally, what approaches combine effective PR with quality event management?

AMINE: To start, effective PR must consider the audience and communicate in a language they understand. For instance, during the Fifth Games of Solidarity in Konya, the promotional materials were in English to reach a broader audience. Using Turkish exclusively would have limited accessibility for international participants and viewers.

Second, leveraging the influence of globally recognized public figures is a powerful tool. Imagine organizing a basketball tournament in Morocco and inviting an NBA star. You could create a visually captivating campaign, showcasing the player at iconic locations like Hassan Tower or Hassan II Mosque. This type of content, produced with high-quality videography, could easily go viral, drawing international attention to the event.

However, as impactful as these promotional efforts might be, the quality of the event itself must match the expectations set by the PR campaign. Participants and attendees need excellent accommodation, seamless transportation, and well-equipped training facilities. Word-of-mouth endorsements from satisfied attendees are one of the most effective marketing tools, as people trust the experiences of others.

IMANE: That's a fascinating approach, combining creativity and practicality. It truly emphasizes the synergy between good PR and quality event management.

AMINE: Precisely. Without quality event execution, even the best PR efforts are meaningless. And without effective PR, excellent event management may fail to reach its audience. Both must work hand in hand.

IMANE: Moving on to the Solidarity Games, could you describe your role and daily responsibilities in the International Relations and Accreditation departments?

AMINE: When I joined the Solidarity Games, I worked in the International Relations department. Our primary role was to maintain communication and provide support to 56 participating countries from Africa, Asia, and Europe. These countries primarily used four languages: Turkish, English, Arabic, and French. For less common languages, like Albanian, we coordinated translations as needed.

We facilitated visa processes, liaising with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies, and National Olympic Committees (NOCs). This involved collecting participant data, ensuring the correct invitations were sent, and resolving issues when complications arose. For instance, countries like Morocco, which didn't require visas, had a straightforward process, while others, such as Algeria, required extensive coordination.

Later, I joined the Accreditation department, specifically managing NOC accreditation. My multilingual abilities allowed me to work efficiently without needing translation assistance. Tasks included verifying participant lists, processing substitutions, and printing accreditation cards. We also managed access permissions for competition venues, ensuring all logistical details were in place.

IMANE: What challenges did you encounter in these roles, and how did you overcome them?

AMINE: Challenges were frequent and varied. For example, Algeria's Olympic Committee submitted incorrect athlete data, which caused significant delays upon their arrival. The deadline had passed, but we collaborated with them to resolve the issue, ensuring their delegation could compete. While we could have adhered strictly to deadlines, promoting sportsmanship and inclusivity took precedence.

IMANE: How did your experiences managing international relations and accreditation influence your perspective on event management?

AMINE: These roles taught me the importance of adaptability, communication, and collaboration across multiple organizations. Handling visa processes, coordinating with embassies, and ensuring smooth accreditation gave me a holistic view of how interconnected every aspect of event management is.

IMANE: Shifting focus, what are your observations on hosting international events in Morocco, Turkey, and France? How do their strategies differ, and what cultural factors play a role?

AMINE: Each country has unique strengths and challenges. Turkey exemplifies comprehensive sports development, with the Ministry of Sports actively supporting federations nationwide. Morocco operates differently, with federations working more independently. France offers a mix of these models, with federations enjoying substantial budgets and autonomy.

Culturally, each nation's passion for sports influences its focus. Turkey excels in boxing and wrestling, while Morocco emphasizes football. Understanding and aligning with these cultural nuances is crucial for effective event management.

IMANE: Lastly, what positive legacies have major events left in these countries, particularly regarding infrastructure and community engagement?

AMINE: Events like the World Cup in Morocco and the Olympics in France have catalyzed significant infrastructure development, such as stadiums, roads, and public facilities. However, maintaining these facilities post-event is vital. Neglect, as seen with some stadiums in past African host countries, undermines the long-term benefits.

Community engagement projects, particularly during the Paris Olympics and Morocco's preparations, are fostering sports participation and cultural pride. Proper planning and sustained investment can ensure these legacies endure, benefiting future generations.

IMANE: Thank you, Amine. Your insights are incredibly valuable and greatly enhance my understanding of these topics. I appreciate your time and detailed responses, however, I have another question that was not in the script, if you accept to answer it, of course; can you elaborate on the strategies implemented by Turkey to develop its sports sector, particularly in terms of inclusivity, coaching, and infrastructure?

AMINE: Certainly. Turkey has introduced some remarkable programs that reflect a comprehensive approach to sports development. One standout initiative is a program called *No One Left Behind Without Knowing How to Swim* (translated). Through this program, the Turkish Ministry of Sports offers free swimming lessons to everyone. This initiative ensures inclusivity and helps build a large base of individuals proficient in swimming. From this foundation, the country can identify and nurture future swimming champions. It's an excellent grassroots strategy that combines accessibility with talent identification.

Another significant effort focuses on expanding the number of qualified coaches. The ministry opens applications to the public, allowing anyone interested in coaching to apply. They then provide training and education in the sport of their choice. By equipping more individuals with coaching expertise, Turkey is able to extend its reach and engage more people in sports at all levels. This is a smart way to ensure the sustainability of sports development across the country.

In terms of infrastructure, Turkey's investments are also noteworthy. The Turkish Olympic Preparation Center in Ankara is a prime example. This facility is equipped with some of the most advanced technologies globally, specializing in performance analysis and rehabilitation. It has become a hub for nurturing elite athletes and enhancing their performance. The success of Turkish athletes in the Olympics and the impressive performances of teams like the Turkish women's volleyball team and their basketball leagues demonstrate the tangible benefits of these initiatives.

IMANE: These strategies are truly impressive, particularly their focus on inclusivity and long-term sustainability. The blend of grassroots development and cutting-edge infrastructure is a strong model for other countries to consider.

AMINE: Absolutely. The results Turkey is achieving—both in individual sports and team performances—are not accidental. They are the product of deliberate planning and strategic implementation. It's a testament to how effective governance and investment in sports can drive success.

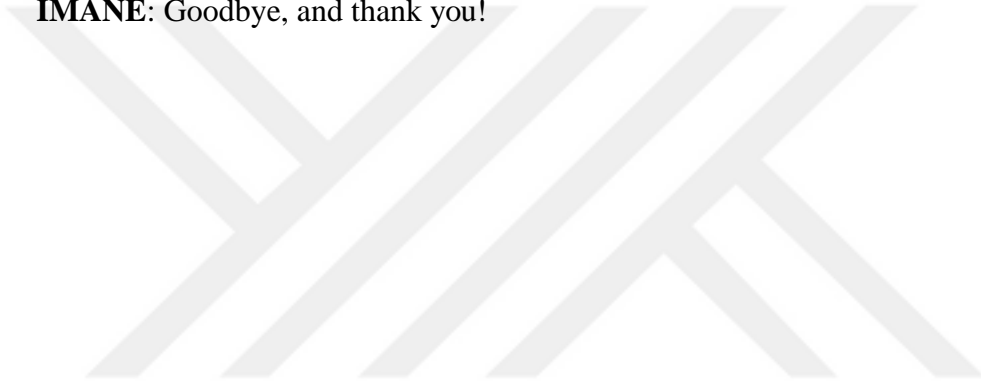
IMANE: Thank you for providing such a detailed overview. These examples will be incredibly useful for my research. Your insights have been invaluable throughout this conversation.

AMINE: I'm happy to have contributed. I hope my experiences and observations help enrich your thesis. Best of luck with your work!

IMANE: Thank you so much, Amine. I truly appreciate your time and generosity in sharing your knowledge. It's been an honor speaking with you.

AMINE: The pleasure is mine. Take care, and I wish you all the best with your research. Goodbye.

IMANE: Goodbye, and thank you!



Interview 5: Participant E: Amine Yahiaoui

IMANE: Could you share your journey into the field of sports management and what initially sparked your interest in this industry?

AMINE: My journey into sports management started at ENS Casablanca, where I pursued a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and Sports. That period marked my introduction to sports' powerful role in shaping personal and social development. Organizing university tournaments provided my first glimpse into the challenges and opportunities of managing sports events. As I advanced my education with a Master's degree in Sports Management and Governance at the Royal Institute for Training Cadres, my interest expanded to more complex projects. I became deeply involved in managing sports infrastructures and organizing international events, which sharpened my understanding of the industry.

However, seeing how sports can drive social transformation cemented my passion for sports management. During my internship at the Royal Moroccan Federation of Sports for People with Disabilities, I saw firsthand how inclusive sports initiatives can create life-changing opportunities for marginalized communities. My role as Vice President of Assa Maroc Association further reinforced this belief, as I worked on programs that used sports as a vehicle for empowerment and inclusion.

IMANE: Reflecting on your career, what have been the most rewarding and challenging aspects of working in sports and football management?

AMINE: The most rewarding aspect of my career has been witnessing the tangible impact of my work on individuals and communities. Being part of the U20 national team's journey to qualify for the 2025 Africa Cup is a moment I hold close to my heart. Equally fulfilling has been seeing young people in rural areas thrive through initiatives like the socio-sports caravan. Watching these young individuals discover their potential and grow through sports has given me a profound sense of purpose.

On the other hand, challenges are an inherent part of this profession. Managing high-pressure situations during major events like the 2022 FIFA Club World Cup or the Women's Africa Cup of Nations has tested my ability to remain calm and adaptable. The

logistical hurdles, from coordinating international teams to ensuring seamless communication among stakeholders, can be daunting. Yet, these challenges have taught me invaluable resilience, teamwork, and problem-solving lessons.

IMANE: What specific skills or qualities are essential for success in this field, based on your own experiences?

AMINE: Success in sports management demands a unique blend of skills and qualities honed through experience and passion. Organizational skills and time management are at the core of what we do, as planning an event requires careful coordination of resources and schedules. However, adaptability is equally important, because unexpected challenges often arise, and the ability to think on your feet can determine the outcome of an event.

Strong communication and collaboration skills are essential when working with diverse groups, from teams and federations to sponsors and local authorities. Remaining composed under pressure is another critical quality, as the high stakes and tight deadlines of this industry can easily become overwhelming. Above all, I believe that passion and commitment to sports are the driving forces that keep you motivated and focused, even during the most challenging times.

IMANE: Could you discuss your experiences organizing large-scale events like the Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting or the 2022 FIFA Club World Cup? What were the key challenges, and how did you address them?

AMINE: Organizing events of such magnitude has been both a rewarding and demanding experience. The Marrakech International Para-Athletics Meeting was particularly special because it emphasized inclusivity and accessibility. My role involved managing logistics, coordinating the reception of international athletes, and ensuring that the event adhered to high accessibility standards. One of the biggest challenges was meeting the specific needs of the participants, which required close collaboration with teams and stakeholders to provide adequate facilities and support.

The 2022 FIFA Club World Cup presented an entirely different level of complexity due to its global scale. Coordinating the transportation and logistics for international teams while managing equipment and ensuring effective communication across multiple time

zones was no small task. Overcoming these challenges required detailed planning, constant monitoring, and proactive communication to ensure that no aspect of the event was overlooked.

IMANE: In your opinion, what are the critical factors for ensuring the success of international sports events?

AMINE: The success of international sports events hinges on a combination of meticulous planning, effective collaboration, and adaptability. Planning is the backbone of any event, as it allows organizers to anticipate challenges and develop strategies to address them. Collaboration with stakeholders, including federations, sponsors, and local authorities, is equally important because these events rely on the seamless integration of various contributions.

Flexibility and adaptability are crucial as well, especially when unexpected issues arise. Events of this scale demand a detail-oriented approach, where even the smallest aspects—such as transportation schedules or seating arrangements—are carefully managed. Finally, the ultimate measure of success lies in the experience of participants, athletes, and spectators. Ensuring that they leave with positive memories is what truly defines a successful event.

IMANE: How do you evaluate the impact of these events on federations, athletes, and the broader sports community?

AMINE: These events have a profound impact on multiple levels. For federations, they serve as opportunities to enhance their international visibility and showcase their organizational capabilities. Athletes benefit by competing on prestigious platforms, gaining recognition, and building their careers. Beyond this, the broader sports community is inspired by such events, which often lead to increased participation and a stronger sense of national pride. The ripple effects of a successful event can last for years, influencing the development of sports at both grassroots and professional levels.

IMANE: Could you share an example of a memorable project where sports were used as a tool for social change?

AMINE: One project that stands out is the socio-sports caravan I helped organize with Assa Maroc. This initiative aimed to bring sports activities, education, and awareness

programs to youth in rural and underserved areas. The impact was immediate and transformative. Children and adolescents who had limited access to organized sports were introduced to activities like 3x3 basketball and football tournaments. These activities not only brought joy but also fostered social inclusion by breaking down cultural and geographical barriers.

In addition to the sports activities, the project included educational workshops on topics like gender equality, the importance of education, and personal hygiene. These workshops empowered young participants with knowledge and skills that extended far beyond the playing field. For me, this project was a powerful reminder of how sports can serve as a bridge to create lasting social and cultural change.

IMANE: How do you see the role of public relations in sports event management, and what strategies have you found most effective?

AMINE: Public relations play a pivotal role in shaping the image and success of sports events. PR is essentially the bridge between the event and its various audiences—spectators, sponsors, media, and even the athletes themselves. A strong PR strategy ensures that the event’s key messages are communicated effectively, while also fostering engagement and building trust.

In my experience, maintaining positive relationships with the media is crucial. By anticipating their questions and proactively providing information, you can ensure consistent and favorable coverage. Organizing press events or arranging interviews with athletes and officials also goes a long way in enhancing visibility. Social media, of course, is a game-changer in today’s world. Engaging fans with creative, relevant content not only boosts excitement but also cultivates a deeper connection to the event. These strategies have proven highly effective in my work, particularly when combined with a clear understanding of the event’s audience and objectives.

IMANE: Can you provide insights into how PR contributes to the visibility and reputation of sports federations and events?

AMINE: PR is a cornerstone of visibility and reputation management for both federations and events. Through carefully curated campaigns, PR helps generate widespread awareness and enthusiasm. Media coverage, for example, is instrumental in reaching

broader audiences and attracting sponsors, while social media amplifies engagement by directly connecting with fans.

More than just visibility, PR shapes perception. By highlighting the achievements of athletes, the values of sportsmanship, and the unique aspects of the event, it helps craft a positive image. This is particularly important when managing crises. Effective PR allows organizers to control narratives and address issues promptly, ensuring minimal damage to reputation. For sports federations, these efforts translate into sustained growth, stronger partnerships, and greater opportunities to host high-profile events in the future.

IMANE: Have you experienced any specific instances where effective PR transformed the outcomes of a sports event or project?

AMINE: Absolutely. One example that comes to mind is the Women's Africa Cup of Nations. During the tournament, the PR team worked tirelessly to enhance visibility and create excitement around the event. Press conferences, interviews with athletes and officials, and an active social media presence helped capture the attention of both fans and media. This effort not only increased attendance but also significantly boosted the perception of women's football in Africa.

Another instance was the International Para-Athletics Meeting. By focusing on the inspiring stories of athletes with disabilities, we were able to attract meaningful media coverage and public interest. These stories resonated with audiences and showcased the importance of inclusion in sports. Both examples highlight how well-executed PR can elevate an event, ensuring its success and leaving a lasting impact on its audience.

IMANE: Based on your experience, what do you believe are the key trends and challenges shaping the future of sports management?

AMINE: The future of sports management is being shaped by several emerging trends and challenges. Technology and digitalization are at the forefront, transforming everything from event organization to fan engagement. Social media, live-streaming platforms, and mobile applications have become indispensable for reaching global audiences and enhancing the spectator experience.

Sustainability is another major focus. As sports organizations face growing pressure to minimize their environmental impact, adopting responsible practices and reducing carbon

footprints will become critical. Inclusion and diversity are also gaining prominence, with increasing efforts to ensure accessibility and representation across gender, age, cultural, and ability lines.

Monetization is perhaps one of the biggest challenges. As expectations from sponsors and stakeholders grow, sports managers need to find innovative ways to create engaging commercial experiences while maintaining the integrity of the event. Navigating these trends requires a balance of adaptability, creativity, and a forward-thinking approach.

IMANE: How can technology and data analytics enhance event management and team performance in sports?

AMINE: Technology and data analytics have revolutionized both event management and team performance in sports. For event organizers, digital tools streamline coordination among stakeholders and improve decision-making. Real-time data on transportation, scheduling, and resource allocation allows for greater efficiency and quicker responses to unexpected challenges.

In terms of team performance, analytics provide invaluable insights into athletes' physical and strategic performance. Tools like performance sensors and video analysis help coaches identify areas for improvement and refine their strategies. These technologies not only enhance individual and team performance but also contribute to injury prevention by monitoring workload and recovery.

On the fan engagement side, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are creating immersive experiences that bring fans closer to the action. Additionally, analyzing fan behavior allows for personalized experiences, which strengthens loyalty and builds deeper connections with the audience.

IMANE: What advice would you offer to aspiring sports managers looking to specialize in event or team management?

AMINE: For aspiring sports managers, my first piece of advice is to develop a versatile skill set. Managing events and teams is a multifaceted role that requires organizational expertise, logistical coordination, and the ability to work effectively with diverse stakeholders. Understanding the role of technology and data analytics is also crucial, as these tools are rapidly becoming integral to the field.

Another key element is communication. Building strong relationships with sponsors, media, and institutional partners is vital for ensuring the success of events. Adaptability is equally important, as the sports industry evolves quickly, and staying ahead of trends will set you apart.

Finally, passion and commitment are non-negotiable. A genuine love for sports and a dedication to creating positive experiences for athletes and fans are what drive success in this field. If you approach your work with enthusiasm and resilience, you'll be well-prepared to navigate the challenges and make a lasting impact.

IMANE: Thank you so much for sharing your insights and experiences, Amine. Your passion for sports management and your dedication to using sports as a tool for positive change are truly inspiring. I'm sure your journey and advice will resonate with many aspiring professionals in the field.

AMINE: Thank you, Imane. It was a pleasure to reflect on my experiences and share them with you. I hope this discussion provides valuable perspectives for those looking to make an impact in the world of sports management.

IMANE: Absolutely. Thank you again for your time and thoughtful responses. Wishing you continued success in your career and future endeavors!

AMINE: Thank you very much. I wish you the best as well.