

# AITCHISON COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS (ACMUN)

February 12<sup>th</sup> to February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021



*A Background Study Guide for*

Fédération Internationale de Football Association

**Topic A: European Super League - Viability and Implications of its Creation**

**Topic B: The VAR System - Help or Hindrance**

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# Aitchison College Model United Nations

## *A Letter from the Executive Council*

Respected Delegates,

***Shahmir Aziz***

(President)

The thought process we had while deciding our topics and committees was to educate, prioritize and highlight the various global issues and crises pertinent to today's status quo and era, in hopes of bringing together the best and brightest of the country and the globe to come together, share ideas and deliberate to find practical solutions to real world problems.

***Farhad Ahmed Amir***

(Secretary General)

While debating, drafting or lobbying during ACMUN, please always remember the reason you're here. That reason is that we are the generation and the leaders of tomorrow, and very soon, it's going to be in our hands how we solve these growing problems, tensions and conflicts.

***Shehryar Usman***

(Secretary General)

I speak for all of my Secretariat when I say that I expect diplomacy to be the cornerstone of your stance, strategy and game plan at ACMUN XI, and that respect, decorum and discipline come before all else. Your drafting, unmoderated caucuses and speeches all will be playing vital roles in any and every award distributed. For further reference, you can view our Judging Criteria which has been made public on our website. Act as a representative of the United Nations, as a diplomat of your honourable nation, and as an interested and motivated member of the human race looking to make a positive impact in the world at large.

***Syed Hassan Ali***

(Director General)

I hope that these Study Guides serve as a good aid in your research, but do keep in mind that these should just be the basic backbones of your content and knowledge on our topics, and that out of the box, creative points and sub-topic areas will be looked very well upon.

***Shehryar Hamesh***

***Khan***

(Chargé D' Affaires)

I have high hopes of all of you delegates. Debate with fervour. Deliberate with reason. Dream for a better world.

## Dias

Chair(s): Fazeel H. Naqvi, Omer Sajid  
Committee Director(s): Muhammad Zain

Assistant Committee Director(s):  
Nahayan Ali Sheikh, Haris Ali Wahla

## Topic A:

*European Super League: Viability and implications of its creation*

### **What is the European Super League?**

The European Super League aims to bring together the best clubs of the top five European leagues to play each other regularly, more than the UEFA Champions League allows.

The idea was for the top European football clubs to break away from UEFA and start their own competition in 2021. Not only will it bring the best across the continent face-to-face, but it will also generate revenue for each club in gargantuan amounts, making them financially stable for years to come.

This has especially become a hot topic since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, which has deeply damaged the economic situation of a lot of clubs around the continent.

### *Why establish a European Super League?*

Introducing a competition with the best clubs in Europe would eliminate the predictability of the Champions League group stage. Unfortunately, the biggest clubs in Europe do not see the forest for all the trees. They believe playing each other in the European Super League will increase revenue amongst themselves.

The problem with the biggest clubs playing multiple times a season is that fans will become jaded to the matches. Moreover, one of the reasons the top clubs in Italy, Spain and Germany support the idea of a Super League is because they cannot compete financially with the Premier League. English clubs already make more from the Premier League than from European football.

At the moment, a Champions League campaign can be 13 matches from Group Stage to final. For a true league format, even of just a dozen clubs, you would need to play a lot more matches. So either you need to persuade the domestic leagues to get smaller, or the bigger clubs leave them behind.

### **The Pros and Cons of the European Super League:**

Advantages:

- Protects the massive revenues of top clubs and UEFA.



- Decreases the number of games.
- Evens the playing field for top player awards. Players like Messi, Ronaldo and Neymar are undoubtedly benefitting from the lack of competition (especially defensively) provided by their opposition in their leagues. Forcing the best players to pay against each other week in and week out would also have the scope to remove any league bias for any individual awards.
- It will also provide fans with the chance to see their favorite players and the best of the best playing each other week in and week out while providing clubs with a platform to come face to face and play each other regularly.

#### **Disadvantages/Concerns:**

- ‘Financial restrictions.’ Due to the difference in owners, and their eagerness to invest along with the varying amount of revenue generated by their fans, there would not be financial parity between clubs. There would be financial differences between the big clubs with clubs like Manchester United and Barcelona under huge amounts of debt while the owners of clubs like Manchester City and Chelsea have been known to invest millions into their clubs. These factors could lead to the creation of super clubs that would rule this league

which goes against the very essence of this idea.

- Effectively finish domestic football. Leagues like those in England, Spain and Germany, which have been around for hundreds of years, would cease to exist, potentially causing unrest from historic clubs which are struggling at the moment and might not be invited to be a part of the league. The busy schedule would also mean that the top sides would not participate in the domestic competitions.

- Who do you classify as a top team? Do you use revenue, recent success, all time success, location? It would be quite complex figuring out who to include.

- Would be a closed competition and therefore reduce the potential to continuously improve.

#### **What would happen to the Champions League?**

The establishment of the European Super League most certainly means the annihilation of the Champions League. The European Super League could experience legal issues if it were to attempt to end the Champions League. However, with the biggest clubs in Europe moving to the proposed super league, it is likely the



Champions League would fall by the wayside.

The Champions League's only alternative would be to find a way to co-exist and potentially run alongside the new competition. There is no clear idea about what would happen to the domestic competitions such as the Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, Serie A, Ligue 1 and Eredivisie, and Primera Liga among others

### The causes of a European Super League.

During these testing times of the pandemic COVID-19 plays a major impact on the creation of a European Super League. COVID-19 most certainly acts as a catalyst for the creation of the European Super League.

It is because clubs, especially the non-English clubs, want to generate more revenue as much as the Premier League clubs.

In addition to this, due to the dominance of certain teams in the top 5 leagues of Europe such as; the Manchester clubs in the Premier League. Barcelona, Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid in La Liga, Juventus in Serie-A, Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga and PSG in Ligue-1, has decreased competition within the leagues.

Other than this, big clubs such as AC Milan and Inter Milan want to return back to where they belong, amongst the top.



### The Role of COVID-19

COVID-19 has hit hard and many clubs are starved for cash, mainly because of the way they're run: every penny that goes in usually goes back out, so everyone, to varying degrees, is facing cash flow issues now that broadcasters and sponsors are demanding rebates and stadiums aren't fully open to fans.

FC. Barcelona has reported a coronavirus-induced shortfall of more than €200m, leading to a pre-tax loss of €100m last season, which has accelerated the breakaway discussions, according to people briefed on the talks. "It's essentially using Covid and the existing chaos... to prove a point," says one club owner. "Small clubs in certain countries can't survive the crisis and [the super league] is the way to protect football."



UEFA, which organizes the Champions League and Europa League, hasn't been spared either. Nearly \$600 million has been lost due to the pandemic and payouts to clubs will be reduced over the next five seasons. Folks are left squabbling over what's left of the pie, with bigger clubs less willing to share.

Thus, COVID-19 and its affects are extremely impactful on the feasibility of a European Super League.

### **The Possibility that a European Super League would eliminate other Tournaments?**

The biggest proponents of a European Super League seem to be the continent's richest clubs who would benefit most financially from the competition. It would be a money machine for big clubs to simply take cash out of whenever desired.

For clubs outside of the European Super League, the competition would be a major slap in the face. It would create a gap between rich and poor like never before. Of course, it all depends on just what kind of European Super League would be created. This is something that is debated. Although the Der Spiegel report indicated the competition would take over for the Champions League, a European Super League that takes teams from their domestic

top flight competitions would be even more detrimental to the game.

A European Super League in which the same clubs continually contest the tournament would make all other football competitions pointless. It wouldn't be long until leagues and clubs folded due to the lack of money available. It is up to the big clubs to ensure the smaller ones remain in existence.

## Topic B

*The VAR System: Help or Hindrance?*

### **What Is VAR?**

The video assistant referee (VAR) is an assistant referee in association football which reviews decisions made by the head referee with the use of video footage and headset for communication specifically in order to minimize human errors causing substantial influence on match results.

Following extensive trials in a number of major competitions, VAR was first written into the Laws of the game by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) in 2018. Operating under the philosophy of "minimal interference, maximum benefit", the VAR system seeks to provide a way for "clear and obvious errors" and



"serious missed incidents" to be corrected.

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) was approved in March 2016 by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) and was used in the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018. It was introduced at the Quarter-finals stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019. It is now being used in all mainstream leagues across the world including La Liga, Premier League, Bundesliga, Serie A and Ligue 1 among others.

### **Rationale of VAR**

To rectify clear and obvious mistakes or serious missed incidents in certain key match-changing situations (as stated in the section – Reviewable decisions).

Minimum interference: Maximum benefit Enhance not detract from the game

National FAs and competitions are only permitted to take part in experiments (or use VARs) with the permission of IFAB. Permission is only granted where IFAB protocols will be used in full and IFAB's referee-VAR education and technical requirements have been fulfilled:

‘One protocol – used by all’

### **Reviewable Decisions**

Match officials make hundreds of decisions in every match, including decisions that an offence has not occurred. It would be impossible, without completely changing football, to review every decision. Therefore, the use of VAR is limited to four areas of match-changing decisions/incidents:

The role of the VARs is to assist the referee in determining whether there was an infringement that should have prevented the goal from being awarded. Potential infringements include, but are not limited to:

#### **1. Goal or No Goal**

- a) Offense by the attacking team in the build-up to or scoring of the goal (handball, foul, etc.);
- b) Offside: position and offence;
- c) Ball out of play prior to the goal;
- d) Goal/no goal decisions.

#### **2. Penalty Kick Decisions**

The role of the VARs is to ensure that no clearly wrong decisions are taken in conjunction with awarding or not awarding a penalty kick. This includes:

- a) Penalty kick incorrectly awarded;



- b) Penalty kick offence not penalized;
- c) Location of offence (inside or outside the penalty area);
- d) Offence by the attacking team in the build-up to the penalty incident; ball out of play prior to the incident;
- e) Offence by goalkeeper and/or kicker at the taking of a penalty kick;
- f) Encroachment by an attacker or defender who becomes directly involved in play if the penalty kick rebounds from the goalpost, crossbar or goalkeeper.

### 3. Direct Red Card Incidents

Reviews are limited to clear and obvious errors in crucial offences which resulting a red card to a player (not second yellow cards/cautions).

- a) Denying an Obvious Goal-scoring Opportunity (DOGSO), especially position of offence and positions of other players;
- b) Serious foul play (or reckless challenge);
- c) Violent conduct, biting or spitting at another person;
- d) Using offensive, insulting or abusive gestures

### 4. Mistaken Identity

If the referee penalizes an offence and then gives the wrong player from the offending (penalized) team a yellow or red card, the identity of the offender can be reviewed; the actual offence itself cannot be reviewed unless it relates to a goal, penalty incident or direct red card.

In all these situations, the VAR is only used after the referee has made a decision (including allowing play to continue), or if a serious incident is 'missed' ie: not seen by the match officials.

### Principals of VAR

1. Video technology will only be used to correct clear and obvious errors and serious missed incidents in predefined match- changing decisions (goal/no goal, penalty/no penalty, direct red card, and if the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player).

2. The final decision will always be taken by the referee, either based on information from the VAR or after the referee has undertaken an on-field review.

3. VARs are match officials and any information they provide to the referee will be treated by the referee in the same way as information received from an assistant referee, an



additional assistant referee or the fourth official.

4. The referee must always take a decision, regardless of the existence of VARs, i.e. the referee is not permitted to give “no decision” and refer the situation to the VARs. On rare occasions, when it is unclear whether a penalized offence is a caution or a sending-off or who should receive the sanction, the referee may consult the VARs.

5. The original decision taken by the referee will not be changed unless the video review clearly shows that the decision was a clear and obvious error.

6. Players, coaches or other team officials are not permitted to ask for reviews.

7. There is no time limit for the review process as accuracy is more important than speed.

8. The players and team officials must not surround the referee or attempt to influence whether a decision is reviewed, the review process itself or the final decision.

9. As the VAR will automatically check every situation/decision, there is no need for coaches or players to request a review.

10. The referee can make an on-field review. This review will take place in the referee review area (RRA). Only the referee is allowed to enter this area.

- Any player who enters the RRA will be shown a yellow card

- Any team official who enters the RRA will be dismissed from the technical area

11. The referee must remain “visible” during the review process in order to ensure transparency.

12. If play continues after an incident which is then reviewed, any disciplinary action taken/required during that period is not cancelled, even if the original decision is changed (except for a caution/sending-off for stopping a promising attack or DOGSO).

13. If play has stopped and been restarted, the referee may not undertake a review except for a case of mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s).

14. The period of play before and after an incident that can be reviewed is determined by the Laws of the Game and VAR protocol.



15. The VAR protocol shall be in line with the principles and philosophy of the Laws of the Game.

### **When a Review is initiated**

The VAR is operated from the Video Operations Room (VOR). The replay operator has access to all broadcast feeds to maintain the integrity of the process. A broadcaster cannot show footage which was not available to the VAR.

The VAR will check every decision. If a 'check' indicates that an incident should be reviewed, the referee will be informed immediately. In addition, if the referee suspects that a serious incident may have occurred, or something serious has been missed, a review can be requested.

Only the referee can initiate a review. Other match officials (especially the VAR) may recommend a review but only the referee will decide whether or not to have a review and the outcome of that review. The referee may decide that the match officials have clearly seen the incident and therefore no review is needed.

If the referee wants a review when play has not stopped, play should be stopped as soon as it is in a 'neutral' zone/situation ie: when neither team has a good attacking possibility.

### **How Does a Referee Call For a Review**

The referee will make the sign of the outline of a TV screen. A decision cannot be changed unless a review signal has taken place.

### **Where Does a Referee See the Review**

The referee can make a decision on the information from the VAR or more likely review the footage at a pitch side monitor. This is known as an On-Field Review (OFR) and the viewing area is known as the Referee Review Area (RRA). Once the referee has reviewed the footage and made a decision, that decision is final).

OFRs will usually be for decisions that require the referee's interpretation and not for factual decisions e.g. position of an offence or player (offside), point of contact (handball/foul).

Normally the RRA is by the fourth official's area and players and team officials must not enter this area during a review or seek to influence the referee.

The footage can be watched at normal or slow-motion speed if required and a decision should be made as efficiently and quickly as



possible remembering accuracy not speed is vital.

### **What Must the Referee Decide?**

If the decision to be made is within the four designated scenarios of match changing incidents – if not it cannot be reviewed.

The decision can only be changed if there is a clear and obvious error highlighted by the viewed footage.

### **What Happens If The Technology Malfunctions Or There Is A Mistake By VAR?**

The match continues as normal without VAR. A match is not invalidated because of:

- Malfunction(s) of the VAR technology;
- Wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a match official);
- Decision(s) not to review an incident;
- Review of a non-reviewable situation/decision.

### **Practicalities of VAR**

Use of VARs during a match involves the following practical arrangements:

1. The VAR watches the match in the video operation room (VOR) assisted

by an assistant VAR (AVAR) and replay operator (RO).

2. Depending on the number of camera angles (and other considerations) there may be more than one AVAR or RO.

3. Only authorized persons are allowed to enter the VOR or communicate with the VAR/AVAR/RO during the match.

4. The VAR has independent access to, and replay control of, TV broadcast footage.

5. The VAR is connected to the communication system being used by the match officials and can hear everything they say; the VAR can only speak to the referee by pushing a button (to avoid the referee being distracted by conversations in the VOR).

6. If the VAR is busy with a ‘check’ or a ‘review’, the AVAR may speak to the referee especially if the game needs to be stopped or to ensure play does not restart.

7. If the referee decides to view the replay footage, the VAR will select the best angle/replay speed; the referee can request other/additional angles/speeds.

