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APRIL 29th, 2023

https://www.euroleaguebasketball.net/euroleague/news/disciplinary-judge-issues-decisions-after-game-2-between-real-madrid-and-partizan/?pageTitle=Homepage&historyUrl=/euroleague/

Disciplinary judge issues decisions after Game 2 between Real Madrid and Partizan

The Euroleague Basketball Independent Disciplinary Judge, having reviewed the incidents from Game 2 of the playoff series between Real Madrid and Partizan Mozzart Bet Belgrade, has issued the following decisions.

- Real Madrid and Partizan Mozzart Bet Belgrade have received a fine of €50,000 each for the unsportsmanlike conduct by both teams preventing the normal conclusion of the game in accordance with Article 29.1.a) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code
- Guershon Yabusele has been sanctioned with a 5-game suspension in accordance with Article 27.1.a) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code
- Kevin Punter has been sanctioned with a 2-game suspension in accordance with Article 27.1.a) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code
- Gabriel Deck has been sanctioned with a 1-game suspension in accordance with Article 27.1.a) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code
- Matthias Lessort has been sanctioned with a 1-game suspension in accordance with Article 27.1.a) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code

The above decisions are not subject to appeal, due to the nature of the exceptional proceeding for occurring in a non-round robin phase

https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/1495534/euroleague-suspends-yabusele-for-5-games-punther-for-2-deck-and-lessort-for-1/

Euroleague suspends Yabusele for 5 games, Punther for 2, Deck and Lessort for 1

The Euroleague Basketball Independent Disciplinary Judge has made their decision after the brawl in Madrid

By Eurohoops team/ info@eurohoops.net

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https://www.mozzartsport.com/kosarka/vesti/ostoja-mijailovic-da-gospodski-docekamo-real/449961
(Google translate)

Ostoja Mijailović: Let's give a gentlemanly welcome to Real

The first man of Partizan Mozzart Beta spoke on social networks after the triumph in the second game of the quarter-final series of the Euroleague and the incident that broke out in the end.

Partizan Mozzart Beta basketball players will have match ball on Tuesday from 8:30 p.m. to qualify for the Final Four of the Euroleague. After the victory in the first game of the quarter-final series with Real Madrid, with a three-pointer by Kevin Panter in the last second (89:87), the black and white team triumphed 95:80 in the second leg in front of the Madrid audience, and the end of the match was marked by a major incident, and 100 seconds later before the end, the match was stopped and the team of Željko Obradović won .

The decision of the Euroleague on the issue of sanctions for the participants of the general brawl that broke out on the floor of the Wizink Center is still awaited, and reactions to the unprecedented events from the capital of Spain are echoing throughout Europe. The president of Partizan Ostoja Mijailović also announced himself through social networks and called on the fans to welcome their rivals next week in Belgrade.

"Magnificent two victories in Madrid, I congratulate the players and the coaching staff on the chosen results. The incident that happened at the very end of the game did not affect the final result, that is extremely important for us. Fairly and sportingly, we won two big victories in Madrid. We are writing new pages of the club's rich history, we will not allow one moment to diminish our great success. We broke all the records, pushed the boundaries of basketball, and we will continue to push them further. Real is historically our friendly club, one of the biggest clubs in the world, regardless of the unpleasant situation, we will welcome them extremely friendly. We have experienced good moments this season so far, after many years, everything is in our hands, success awaits us. Our strongest weapon, besides this great generation of guys, are our fans, the best basketball fans in the world! Let's all welcome the Real team, I wish everyone a

warm welcome to Belgrade, the center of European basketball. Long live Partizan", wrote Ostoja Mijailović.

https://basketnews.com/news-188834-giannakopoulos-attacks-the-euroleague-european-basketball-was-ridiculed.html

Giannakopoulos attacks the EuroLeague: 'European basketball was ridiculed'

Giannakopoulos shared that he thinks the fines and bans were too small for the players involved in the Real-Partizan fight and presented his personal example.

Earlier on Friday, the EuroLeague imposed penalties on four players that participated in the fight between Real Madrid and Partizan Mozzart Bet Belgrade fight on Thursday. Panathinaikos Athens owner Dimitris Giannakopoulos didn't like the decision at all. Guerschon Yabusele was given a 5-game ban, Kevin Punter was suspended for 2 games, while Gabriel Deck and Mathias Lessort received 1-game bans.

Giannakopoulos thinks this is sending the wrong message and the bans should be much higher and stricter. The businessman posted an Instagram story where he attacked the EuroLeague:

Being a person that has paid €300,000 for one post on Instagram when Turkish fans were swearing at my family and I answered them... From a person who has paid €120,000 because I didn't listen to the EuroLeague and the Disciplinary Judge sanctions, not allowing me to go to the stadiums...

From a person who has paid €1,700,000 in personal penalties, not the club's penalties, personal penalties, because of my Instagram and my so-called insults toward the EuroLeague... How should I feel today when the entire European basketball was ridiculed around the world yesterday because of what happened in the Real-Partizan game?

What should I do now? How should I feel? Does anybody in the EuroLeague or the Disciplinary Judge think about this? What message do you give to me? The next time, I should not swear, I should not ridicule, [maybe] I should start hitting people. Is this the message that you want to give out with the sanctions for yesterday?

Back then, 250,000 people watched my Instagram. From what I know, the EuroLeague is watched by millions of people, tens of millions of people, 20, 50, 100 million around the world. You penalize the players with 5 games and 3 games, and I paid 1.7 million? I think there's something going wrong here.

More media coverage about the brawl:

https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/1495422/punter-responds-to-llull-lets-keep-it-basketball/

https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/1495374/yabusele-apologized-to-exum-after-brawl-in-madrid/

https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/1495399/partizan-president-states-real-madrid-will-be-welcomed-extremely-friendly/

https://basketnews.com/news-188852-euroleague-stars-react-to-real-partizan-punishments-baldwin-calls-out-llull.html

https://basketnews.com/news-188821-guerschon-yabusele-handed-a-5-game-suspension-3-others-penalized.html

https://basketnews.com/news-188820-mathias-lessort-releases-a-statement-sends-a-message-to-partizan-fans.html

https://basketnews.com/news-188815-dante-exum-avoids-serious-injury.html

https://www.gazzetta.gr/basketball/euroleague/2217542/giampoysele-ehei-paradehtei-oti-aneptyxe-talento-toy-hari-sto-mpox

https://www.gazzetta.gr/basketball/euroleague/2217475/o-dolofonos-giampoysele-kai-ftaine-panta-oi-ispanoi

https://www.lequipe.fr/Basket/Actualites/Guerschon-yabusele-suspendu-cinq-matches-apres-la-bagarre-generale-entre-le-real-madrid-et-le-partizan/1393825

https://www.15min.lt/24sek/naujiena/eurolyga/eurolyga-isdalino-bausmes-tustinamos-klubu-pinigines-ir-susnis-suspendavimu-1362-2045754
https://www.mozzartsport.com/kosarka/vesti/covek-koji-je-sve-zakuvao-se-javio-sa-dve-recenice-stvarno-mi-je-zao/449994

https://www.mozzartsport.com/fudbal/vesti/egzuma-cekaju-nove-analize-ali-su-prve-prognoze-optimisticne/449990

https://www.mozzartsport.com/kosarka/vesti/dzudo-zahvat-ne-moze-da-pokvari-cetiri-najbolja-dana-partizana-jos-od-cudesnog-istanbula-1992/449985

https://www.eurohoops.net/en/euroleague/1495513/panathinaikos-cutting-dwayne-bacon-confirmed/

Panathinaikos cutting Dwayne Bacon confirmed

The 28-year-old American small forward was acquired last October

By Eurohoops team/ info@eurohoops.net

Coach Christos Serelis has decided to cut Dwayne Bacon due to a violent incident against one of his teammates on Tuesday. This was the last of many behavioral problems during the season.

After less than six months, Bacon is parting ways with the Greek club, which has taken its final decision on the matter, Eurohoops reported on Thursday.

The 28-year-old American small forward was acquired last October amid much fanfare on a contract until 2024, but the deal also included special clauses concerning his professional conduct.

After this unexpected turn of events, Panathinaikos will finish the Greek league season with five non-Greek players, since the team had already excluded from the Greek playoffs roster Nate Walters and Matt Thomas, due to the limitation of six foreign players.

Paris Lee, Derrick Williams, Mateus Ponitka, Arturas Gudaitis, and Marius Grigonis will be available from now on. Dwayne Bacon was the team's leading scorer with 13.2 points per game in 17 contests.

https://basketnews.com/news-188828-wade-baldwin-iv-fined-by-the-euroleague-for-his-conduct-vs-monaco.html

Wade Baldwin IV fined by the EuroLeague for his conduct vs Monaco

Wade Baldwin IV was fined €1,500 for showing 'a lack of respect towards the officiating crew'.

Maccabi Playtika Tel Aviv's guard Wade Baldwin IV got ejected from Game 2 of the EuroLeague playoff series against AS Monaco. The EuroLeague issued a fine on top of it.

The league has announced that the player will receive a €1,500 fine:

Mr Wade Baldwin IV, the player of Maccabi Playtika Tel-Aviv, has been sanctioned with a fine of €1,500 for committing acts that show a lack of respect towards the officiating crew, on the occasion of its away game against AS MONACO under Article 27.2.b) of the Euroleague Basketball Disciplinary Code.

"That's the play that we have. "Flash." But it's okay, it's misinterpreted, I understand. The miscommunication, I guess," Baldwin told BasketNews about how the referees might have misinterpreted his gestures, thinking he was showing that they were getting bribed.

Darrun Hilliard and Baldwin were ejected during an intense game that saw Maccabi representatives receiving six technical fouls. That's the most in the EuroLeague history since 2007.

https://www.2playbook.com/patrocinio/baskonia-se-alia-con-mcdonald-dinamizar-buesa-arena-lograr-otro-sold-out_11824_102.html
(Google translate)

Baskonia joins forces with McDonald's to revitalize the Buesa Arena and achieve another 'sold out'

The ACB club has carried out an activation together with the hamburger chain to deliver a free menu to its fans. The objective is to achieve the third full house in their pavilion this season against FC Barcelona.

Baskonia wants his third *sold out* at the Fernando Buesa Arena this season. **The club has partnered with McDonald's to offer its fans a free menu** if they attend the match against FC Barcelona on the last day, on May 14. Achieving it would mean congregating 15,504 people at the Fernando Buesa Arena.

If they succeed, it would be the third full house so far this year after achieving it against Real Madrid and Unicaja. Baskonia has already taken advantage of these matches to organize concerts and other activations during the matches and complement the show experience, as he has reported in a statement.

https://www.palco23.com/competiciones/la-fiba-sigue-los-pasos-del-futbol-y-entrega-el-mundial-2027-a-qatar
(Google translate)

FIBA follows in the footsteps of football and delivers the 2027 World Cup to

Qatar

After celebrating the Soccer World Cup in 2022 amid accusations of *sportswashing*, abuse and exploitation of migrant employees and lack of freedoms, Qatar maintains its commitment to the organization of sporting events.

Basketball also falls into the hands of Qatar. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has announced this Friday that **Qatar will organize the 2027 Men's World Cup** and all the matches will be held in the capital of the emirate, Doha.

The institution has indicated that the choice of Qatar is due to the fact that it is "one of the best-connected destinations in the world, with direct flights from most of the possible participating countries."

In addition, FIBA ensures that the fact that the venues to host the matches are already built causes the event to be "carbon neutral", while stressing that all the matches will be played in the same location.

The organization has also reported that **Germany will host the tournament in a women's format a year earlier**. The Women's Basketball World Cup will take place in September 2026 in Berlin and will be played in two venues, the Arena Berlin and the Max-Schmeling Halle.

Germany will host the women's tournament in 2026

This is not the first major sporting event that Qatar has hosted. Last November, the emirate held the World Cup, which was not without controversy. **Since the designation of Qatar as the headquarters in 2010, numerous news reports have come to light about labor protests**, deaths of workers for endless days, without rest or security measures, repeated abuses and discrimination after having hired hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to lift the event infrastructure.

In fact, Amnesty International led a campaign against the event, assuring that **it was 'the World Cup of shame' for the abuses and exploitation of migrant employees and their concern for respect for human rights** and the Lgbtiq+ community, since the country punish homosexuality with severe prison terms.

In addition to the World Cup, Qatar hosts a Formula 1 test, hosts a Motorcycle Grand Prix at the Losail circuit and controls Paris Saint Germain of Ligue-1 through an investment fund. Doha also hosted the Asian Games in 2006 and will host them again in 2030.

The Arab emirate is also looking to host the 2036 Olympic Games in Doha. Qatar proposes that the Games be held in autumn, due to the climatic conditions of the country, as happened in Seoul 1988 and Sydney 2000. After the World Cup, the country has a powerful sports infrastructure, especially in transportation, accommodation and stadiums. However, the main stumbling block is the **restriction of freedoms in the country, its treatment of migrant workers and its reduced territory**

https://www.palco23.com/clubes/sad-o-no-sad-el-barca-pregunta-a-sus-socios-sobre-el-cambio-de-estructura
(Google translate)

SAD or not SAD?: Barça asks its partners about the change of structure

The objective of becoming a Sports Public Limited Company is to go public and open up new private investors. It is estimated that the value of the Blaugrana team on the stock market could range between 7,000 and 20,000 million euros.

FC Barcelona proposes changes. The entity chaired by Joan Laporta is **studying the possibility of transforming its structure and becoming a Sports Public Limited Company (SAD)**, for which reason it is conducting a telephone and internet survey among its members to press their opinion, according to *La Información*.

The goal of the club with the change in structure is **to go public and raise funds through the entry of new private investors**. There are other clubs that have opted for this type of legal form, such as Atlético de Madrid CF, owned by the Gil Marín family and Enrique Cerezo, which has had Wang Jianlin as co-owners in recent years, Idan Ofer and since 2021 has the Ares Management fund as main partner.

The option of listing on the stock market has already been chosen by other clubs, such as Manchester United FC, Juventus de Turin or Ajax FC. There are several variables to calculate the value of a club in the market, such as the ability to generate income from the purchase and sale of players, divestment of assets, sales of merchandising *or* television rights, in addition to the income derived from the stadium. FC Barcelona anticipates extra income after the remodeling of the Spotify Camp Nou of 347 million euros per season.

Manchester United FC, Juventus Turin or Ajax FC are already listed on the stock market

Taking these factors into account, and that the club anticipates income of 1,255 million euros at the end of this course, **the value of FC Barcelona in the market could be between 7,000 million euros and 20,000 million euros**.

Yesterday, the club, through a press conference, informed about how it will pay the debt of Espai Barça, **through a securitization fund**. Likewise, the club, which will have a two-year grace period to start repaying the loan, has set three repayment terms. In five years, starting in 2026, it will have to disburse 583 million

euros, between seven and nine years after that, 477 million euros more, and the remaining 390 million euros may be returned until 2050.

The objective of using a securitization fund to pay the debt is to continue with one of the guidelines approved at the meeting held in October 2021 to approve the financing of Espai Barça, which states that "the club cannot be mortgaged".

The financing of the Espai Barça and the possibility of a change in structure come in the midst of a storm due to the Negreira case. Last month, Uefa opened an investigation against the club for payments to the vice president of the technical committee, as agreed by the entity's Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, with the aim of knowing in detail what happened. The worst scenario could lead to the exclusion of the club from the Champions League.

FC Barcelona closed the 2021-2022 season with revenue of 1,077 million euros, after having sold 10% of the television rights. Had these operations not been closed, revenue would have been 750 million euros, an amount similar to the 765 million budgeted before the start of the course.

https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2023/04/28/Media/phoenix-suns-mercury-gray-television-kiswe.aspx

Court to ultimately decide who owns Suns, Mercury rights following RSN split

The question of who owns the Suns and Mercury rights ultimately will be decided by a court. Diamond Sports says that the Suns breached its contract and violated bankruptcy law when it announced a new local media rights deal with Gray Television and Kiswe. "Diamond Sports Group will pursue all remedies against any parties that attempt to exercise control over our property interests while we reorganize. This is an improper effort by the Suns to change their broadcasting partner without permitting Diamond to exercise our contractual rights." At issue are back-end rights that give Diamond an opportunity to buy the team's rights if its new deal is worth less than Diamond's last bid. It is virtually certain that local broadcasters like Gray will pay less for rights than an RSN. The question is how much value does the added distribution add to the deal. Suns and Mercury CEO Josh Bartelstein responded to Diamond with a statement of is own: "Diamond's position is totally inaccurate. We are moving forward with this deal and could not be more excited about what it means for our fans and our future." Endeavor and WME Sports' Karen Brodkin and Hillary Mandel advised the Suns on this deal. LHB Sports' Lee Berke represented Gray Television and Kiswe.

CNBC's Lillian Rizzo noted the Suns and Mercury's decision is a "pivotal moment." Part of what made this deal possible is that the Suns and Mercury "have their own in-house production, as well as a commercial sales group," which will "help simplify the transition from its RSN." Suns regular season games were "previously available" on Diamond Sports' Bally Sports Arizona channel. Diamond filed for bankruptcy protection in March. Financial terms of the Suns and Mercury's deal with Gray and Kiswe "weren't disclosed." Overall, Gray and Kiswe will carry the Suns games "for five years," while the deal with the Mercury "runs for two years." With this new deal, Suns and Mercury games will be "available to nearly 2.8 million households in Arizona." The teams will be "able to reach every home in Arizona once Gray launches in Yuma this summer" (*CNBC.com, 4/28*).

MONEY TREE: ESPN.com's Brian Windhorst notes the shift could cost the Suns "tens of millions in guaranteed money per year in the short term," but it will "boost the number of households the games are available in." Suns owner Mat Ishbia said the team is "not focusing on money." Ishbia: "We're going to have more fans than ever before. We're going to have more people who will have eyeballs on Devin Booker and Deandre [Ayton] and Kevin Durant, Chris [Paul] and cheer the team on. And more people buying merchandise because they're bigger fans." Ishbia said that he "believes appealing to more fans will increase value in other areas, including sponsorship deals." He "consulted" with the NBA league

office and “some other owners before making a decision to go this path.” Ishbia said, “The media world is changing.” He added, “We think in Phoenix we're going to be the leaders starting off with a new way of thinking about it, a new way of doing it” (*ESPN.com, 4/28*). Ishbia said that he was “not concerned about any potential revenue shortfalls in running the team.” He said, “I paid $4 billion to be the steward of the team. Money always follows more fans. The monetization is not the number one focus. The first focus is reach” (*WASHINGTON POST, 4/28*).

FOLLOWING EFFECTS: In Phoenix, Duane Rankin reports there is “no immediate impact” on Bally Sports Arizona’s coverage of the D-Backs, but MLB “continues to monitor the situation.” Diamond has “missed payments to some clubs, including the Diamondbacks” (*ARIZONA REPUBLIC, 4/28*).

https://www.sportspromedia.com/analysis/nfl-sunday-ticket-youtube-jon-cruz-interview-streaming-live-sports/

Inside YouTube's NFL Sunday Ticket deal and its future in sports broadcasting

Jon Cruz, YouTube's global head of sports partnerships, explains why the Google-owned platform bought the NFL's out-of-market broadcast package and outlines how it plans to deliver on its biggest live sports commitment to date.

For YouTube, Christmas came a few days early at the end of last year, as it landed one of the biggest rights packages in North American sport.

After much speculation, the National Football League (NFL) finally confirmed in December that it had agreed a deal with Google for Sunday Ticket. It means YouTube TV and YouTube Primetime Channels will replace DirecTV as the exclusive home of the NFL's out-of-market Sunday regular season games from the start of this season, with CNBC reporting that the contract is worth US$2 billion annually over seven years.

The findings of a study published last October suggest that this was the most popular outcome for fans, with 35 per cent of those surveyed by The Streamable picking YouTube as their preferred destination for the package. Still, the deal marks YouTube's biggest sports rights acquisition to date and, having reportedly fended off competition from the likes of Amazon and Apple, it now needs to deliver on expectations.

While the challenge of broadcasting live games will be new for the platform, the NFL and YouTube have long partnered on providing fans with other content around the game. Jon Cruz, YouTube's global head of sports partnerships, believes that longstanding relationship should make the expanded collaboration work smoothly.

"There's this assumption that we now have Sunday Ticket, we're going to build a broader NFL partnership on top of that," says Cruz, speaking at last month's SportsPro OTT Summit USA in New York. "I actually think it's the reverse. It's all of the years we've invested to get to this place that has allowed us to kind of prop up Sunday Ticket as opposed to the other way around.

"We talk to our partners about initiatives broad and narrow all the time. The key is figuring out just from a first principal standpoint, are we aligned on our vision of the future in a certain area? Are we aligned on what we're looking to collectively accomplish?

"Sometimes it comes together faster, sometimes it doesn't, and then once you're aligned on the broader principle, then it just becomes a trade-off and

compromise exercise to figure out whether it's a new original show we want to do with the NFL or something as broad as Sunday Ticket."

As for the discussions with the NFL itself, getting a mutual understanding of how the games were going to be accessible and appear to fans was crucial.

"With Sunday Ticket in particular, the exercise was largely rooted in a couple of things," Cruz continues. "One, obviously, the incumbent has had that property on its platform since its existence, so I think both fans, the league, media, everybody had a very specific understanding of what Sunday Ticket looked like.

"At YouTube, we're actually going to have Sunday Ticket available on YouTube TV and also on YouTube Primetime channels. But when we kicked off the Sunday Ticket discussions, Primetime Channels hadn't even launched. We just launched that product in Q4 in the US, and there will be a fast follow internationally.

"So a lot of the conversation was largely making sure we had the right shared understanding of what the optimal fan experience would be, how Sunday Ticket retains a premium price point position and also how it's additive to the national games and the broadcast partnerships that the NFL has in place."

Bidding for the 'most comprehensive NFL offering'

For Cruz and his team, creating additional value for the user was the first priority when deliberating a potential bid for Sunday Ticket.

"The first thing we have to look at is whether this does or doesn't make sense for the user," he begins. "Our users across both the YouTube main app and YouTube TV love sports, we have hundreds of millions of users who come to YouTube everyday to watch sports content, so we knew that behaviour was there.

"Similarly, we know there's strong viewership and interest in NFL content across YouTube TV. So we really started with the user and asked: 'Does this make sense for the users on our platform?' We thought that answer was a resounding yes.

"And given the popularity and success that the NFL specifically has had on our platform, we were really excited about bringing together what we felt was the most comprehensive NFL offering available, both from a live game standpoint and a video-on-demand (VOD) standpoint.

"When you look at that user value proposition, I think that piece really excited us."

The other main driver behind YouTube's bid was how Sunday Ticket could support the company's ambitions for both its ad-supported and subscription services.

"Our connected TV business remains a top priority," Cruz continues. "Today we have roughly 700 million hours of content. And this is not on YouTube TV, this is just standard YouTube VOD content that is viewed on connected TVs. YouTube TV as a subscription service in the US has five million plus subscribers, so we've made good headway there, but there's still a lot for us to do.

"So much of consumption in the living room and on connected TV happens off of YouTube. So we understand that we need to accelerate efforts there. With having both the YouTube TV business and bringing Primetime Channels onto the main app, we felt that Sunday Ticket could be a really helpful anchor tenant.

"In and of itself it doesn't solve all consumption issues, but we felt it was something that we could build around and that we can make successful and broaden the tent for."

Another benefit of distributing Sunday Ticket is also the potential to open up new revenue streams for YouTube, allowing it to move away from relying on subscriptions and ads.

"We've spent a very long time building a very strong ad-supported business on the YouTube main app," Cruz says. "We recently launched Shorts monetisation to allow for the monetisation of vertical video.

"One of the things that Sunday Ticket provides that I think really excites us is the opportunity to monetise in a number of ways. Most live sports offerings are supported via a mix of subscription and ads. It can be a challenge to make any premium property work on a single revenue stream.

"So when you look at a Sunday Ticket, you look at YouTube's broader aspirations and priorities, and you look at the revenue diversity that comes from subscription and ads. I think we have even broader aspirations as we think about commerce and other ways to monetise, so it felt like there were enough pieces there for us to really wrap our arms around."

Giving users a choice

While Cruz hopes YouTube TV's subscriber base grows thanks to the addition of Sunday Ticket, he also stresses the need to provide fans with choice from a subscription standpoint.

Earlier this month, it was revealed that YouTube TV base plan subscribers can expect to pay US$349 a year for Sunday Ticket or US$389 with the RedZone whiparound show included, while the cost on Primetime Channels will rise to US$449 annually and US$489 with RedZone.

“Obviously YouTube TV has a strong subscriber base already,” he says. “But I think one of the expectations is that fans will come over.

“As a Dallas Cowboys fan living in San Francisco, Sunday Ticket is a non-negotiable for me. So I need it in order to watch Cowboys games. We expect those folks to come over, but we did want to ensure that they had choice.

“Our hope and expectation is that many fans will want both the YouTube TV base package, so they can watch Monday Night Football on ESPN, Sunday afternoon games on Fox and CBS etc., they’ll want that plus Sunday Ticket. I think we’ll see a decent cohort that exhibits that behaviour.

“But if you have a fan who isn’t ready to make the full jump over to YouTube, or maybe they like the double play they’re currently getting from their current provider, we’re fine with that. We’ve created a Primetime Channel offering that will allow those types of fans who get their base package from another party to be able to subscribe via Primetime Channels.

“So as we think about this strategically, there is incremental value from those subscribers coming over into the YouTube TV ecosystem. And obviously as we look to really accelerate and help Primetime Channels grow, we couldn’t think of a more attractive property to partner with on that.”

Balancing interactivity with expectations

The deal with the NFL will also see will also see chosen YouTube creators gain access to weekly games and tentpole events, working with the league to create additional Shorts content for its official channel. In addition, a new NFL International show will launch on the NFL’s YouTube channel and the league will form a global creator content programme, all of which should help boost the NFL’s YouTube following, which currently stands at more than 11 million.

Even if getting creators involved doesn’t lead to a wave of paid subscriptions, Cruz insists that their role in widening the appeal of YouTube’s sports content will be invaluable for the platform.

“We are looking at this holistically,” he says. “So we expect creators, really the lifeblood of YouTube, to really come in and not only support Sunday Ticket but really help us message and introduce the property to new fans.

“Not every fan is going to be able to take out a credit card and pay for the premium subscription price. But we want to make sure that young fans, fans in different economic positions, all have touchpoints that allow them to engage with the NFL and quite frankly the broader ecosystem of sports content on YouTube.”

While there will also be opportunities to increase interactivity for fans watching the NFL on YouTube, Cruz also cautions against going too far, understanding that diehard fans will simply use the platform as a means to watch their favourite team.

“We want to be really thoughtful about the experience we’re delivering,” he notes. “We know that sports fans in general and NFL fans specifically have certain expectations about the way a game is presented and how it’s offered.

“We want to make sure that we’re meeting the user desire to have interactivity on YouTube, we’re meeting our own aspirations in ensuring that our streams feel like YouTube, but we don’t want things to necessarily feel disruptive.

“So creators will be woven into the experience in a number of ways. But we also want to balance that with the expectation of a core NFL fan who just may want to watch a game.”

Can YouTube’s infrastructure handle other sports?

When asked if the framework for Sunday Ticket would be transferable, Cruz is confident YouTube has the building blocks in place to broadcast other live sports and in other countries.

“YouTube TV is a domestic US product, I expect it to stay that way, at least for the foreseeable future, so let’s put that to the side,” he says.

“But as we think about live sports and monetisation opportunities more broadly, all of that should scale. Our Primetime Channels platform, which Sunday Ticket will kind of sit on top of, is going to be made available in five or six additional international markets this year, and a fast follow with a broader push beginning in 2024.

“So that ecosystem should be more than scalable. Our live dynamic ad insertion product, the ability to put ad pods within a YouTube live stream, that’s beginning to scale and roll out to a number of geographies and a number of folks will be able to tap into that.“

Cruz also revealed that YouTube was already trialling other subscription and monetisation options, as it looks to bolster the proposition it can offer viewers and rights holders going forward.

“We have a pay-per-view (PPV) product that’s in an early beta [phase] right now,” he says. “I think for us the goal has been to build that daily behaviour and relationship with fans so they come back to YouTube for highlights, for their favourite sports content.

“Then for rights holders, we want to provide options. So if you want to monetise through a mix of ads and subscription, you can. If you prefer more reach and you want to just have a purely ad-supported experience, you can. If you have a massive tentpole, but not a full slate of programming, you can tap into pay-per-view.

“I think where YouTube is providing the most value is by building the tooling and the platform. And then our partners are going to be much smarter about the right way to monetise and the right way to engage with their fanbases.”

https://www.sportcal.com/analysis/uefa-is-considering-taking-the-champions-league-final-to-markets-outside-of-europe-but-is-it-a-wise-idea/

UEFA is considering taking the Champions League Final to markets outside of Europe, but is it a wise idea?

The governing body could risk alienating its core audience in taking its showpiece around the world.

t's possible. We started to discuss about that, but then one year it was the World Cup, [20]24 is Euro, this year [the final] is [in] Istanbul, '24 is London, and '25 is Munich, and after that, let's see.

"Football is extremely popular in [the] United States these days. Americans are willing to pay for the best and nothing for the less. So, they will follow European football as basketball lovers in Europe follow NBA.

"It's a very important promising market for the future. The thing is that we are selling rights very well. Sponsorship is so-so for now from the US, but here [in the US] commercialization is completely different than in Europe. They [Americans] are much more talented for that than us [Europeans]."

These words from UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin got a very mixed reaction from European soccer fans following an interview in the US, especially given his blanket denial of reports last September that talks had taken place about hosting the blue-chip event outside of Europe for the first time. While the popularity of the UEFA Champions League is certainly growing, aided in part by a strong social media presence and the coverage provided in the US by CBS/Paramount+, the Champions League Final being played on a different continent seems to be focused on the commercial possibilities rather the interests of fans. You can only imagine the reaction if the NFL were to take its showpiece Super Bowl and host it in Europe, or the NBA to take the NBA Finals 'on the road' as opposed to games being played in the cities of the two teams contesting the event.

Even an organization like WWE, which frequently puts on pay-per-view events in places like London and Saudi Arabia, has yet to host its showpiece event, Wrestlemania, outside of North America. While the NBA, NFL, and WWE have all

hosted significant games and events outside of the US, with 'London games' now a staple of the NFL season, outside of friendlies no competitive game from a European league has been played on foreign soil. So, what is motivating Čeferin, a man who was elected on a manifesto of good governance reforms and improving competitive balance in European football, to take his showpiece event to the other side of the world?

The answer, it seems, is money. In the interview Čeferin alludes to the commercial sophistication of the sponsorship market in the US, suggesting that sponsorship sales in the region for UEFA are 'so-so' and suggesting that there is significant scope for growth. While Čeferin makes some questionable claims about audience figures when comparing to events like the Super Bowl and the NBA Finals, the fact that Europe's showpiece event kicks off at midday on the West Coast will undoubtedly present commercial challenges for European soccer's governing body.

The past few years have seen UEFA try to better understand the US market, appointing Relevant Sports as their US agency of choice to sell both media and sponsorship rights across North America. A more unique approach to social media for Champions League coverage on Paramount, fronted by Kate Abdo with a supporting cast of Thierry Henry, Jamie Carragher, and Micah Richards, provides meme-worthy content that is picked up on both sides of the Atlantic.

Much like F1, which has grown significantly in terms of popularity and audience in the US since the takeover by Liberty Media, UEFA has seized the potential of social media to reach an entirely new audience, and with the popularity of soccer growing in the US, with the MLS and NWSL leagues growing in terms of audience and revenue, UEFA is wanting to capitalize.

The next World Cup will also present UEFA with a massive opportunity, with the US, Canada, and Mexico hosting the showpiece soccer event in 2026. Čeferin's 'let's see' comment in his interview may not be as flippant as it sounds. With Munich hosting the Champions League Final in 2025, 2026's version is still yet to be awarded, is there a world in which FIFA and UEFA enter a pact for mutual

benefit – the Champions League Final taking place on one coast while the World Cup Final could take place on the other?

Čeferin is not naive and will know the strength of feeling that a suggestion of playing the Champions League Final in the US would generate, especially among fans. Much like the European Super League, the backlash across social media was predictably negative, with fans suggesting their fandom was being exploited for commercial benefit. While the theory of playing the game in the US is sound, logistically, taking one of Europe's showpiece events to be settled on another continent simply is impractical. Would fans of the finalists travel to Dallas or New York to watch the game? Some undoubtedly would, but UEFA and Čeferin specifically would no longer be able to claim that they were a fan-focused organization. Maybe sports fans should merely accept this direction of travel, that they are merely consumers and therefore sources of revenue. In practical terms, most tickets for Champions League finals are made available to corporate partners and UEFA delegates so are the fans even a consideration for the governing body when it comes to this sort of decision-making?

UEFA's recent track record when it comes to fan concerns, including the attempt to blame Liverpool fans for the complete mismanagement of the 2022 Champions League Final in Paris, shows an organization that is focused on the commercial bottom line. Revenue from corporate partnerships dwarfs the revenue made from ticket sales, and, given, the marketing strength and power of US brands along with the kind of sponsorship revenues the likes of the NFL and the NBA are able to generate, Čeferin is perhaps right in attempting to lead UEFA and the member nations and clubs towards this utopia.

One of the reasons that UEFA has restructured the Champions League group stage to a 'Swiss Format' league is in order generate additional revenue, an attempt to head off the attempts of clubs like Real Madrid, Barcelona, and Juventus to break away and form the European Super League. Ultimately, the driver behind that move was financial, with all three clubs under constant financial pressure from the Premier League and its member clubs and their staggering commercial revenues. The potential additional revenue stream from a

US leg of the Champions League could make for a persuasive argument against such a breakaway.

Whatever Čeferin's motivation in making the comments truly was, it does make the possibility of a game or two from the Champions League being played in the US a real possibility. While the final itself may not be feasible, could the prospect of playing in front of a US audience and developing a fanbase in the US be enough to lure some teams over to play a game in the group stage in a US city? For example, could Celtic be adopted by the Irish population in Boston? Or could the City Football Group realize its vision and take Manchester City to play a Champions League match in NYC FC's stadium – to be completed in 2027 – in Willets Point?

While the 1994 World Cup reintroduced soccer to the US, Čeferin knows the next World Cup will present a tangible opportunity for soccer to colonize the US and it seems he is determined to take the opportunity.


Euroleague
Basketball