



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Class Action Against FIFA and EU Football Associations on Behalf of Football Players Launched Today by “Justice for Players”, a Dutch Foundation

- The Justice for Players Foundation (“Justice for Players”) is launching a class action in the Netherlands against the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and several national football associations on behalf of professional football players, men and women, who have played for football clubs in member states of the European Union and the United Kingdom since 2002.
- Justice for Players is fighting for the rights of professional football players and to secure compensation for players whose earnings were compromised as a result of FIFA’s restrictive rules on termination of contracts and transfers (the “FIFA Regulations”).
- This legal action has been launched following The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruling in October 2024, which found that the FIFA Regulations are unlawful in the case against FIFA brought by Lassana Diarra and the international players' unions, FIFPRO Europe/FIFPRO World, the international players’ unions.
- Justice for Players has instructed Netherlands-based law firm Finch Dispute Resolution, which specialises in class actions in the Netherlands to represent it in the class action.
- Dupont-Hissel, the law firm that represented Mr Lassana Diarra, is also advising Justice for Players.
- This legal action is fully funded by Deminor, one of Europe’s leading providers of legal finance, so that players will not have to pay to join the legal action or assume the financial risk of this legal action.
- To find out more about the claim and to register your interest or your client’s interest in joining the legal action, please visit www.justiceforplayers.com

Amsterdam, 4 August 2025: The Justice for Players Foundation (“Justice for Players”), a Dutch Foundation has today launched a class action on behalf of professional football players who have been affected by the FIFA Regulations. The claim against FIFA and several national football associations, including the KNVB, the Football Association of the Netherlands, will be filed at the District Court of Midden-Nederland.

Justice for Players intends to represent all professional footballers who are playing or who have played in clubs in the European member states and the United Kingdom and who have been adversely affected by FIFA’s unlawful rules from 2002 to the present. Preliminary estimates indicate that the number of affected footballers may comprise approximately 100,000 players.

This case is being brought in the Netherlands under *the Dutch Act on the Settlement of Mass Damages in Collective Action* (WAMCA), which allows this legal action to be launched by Justice for Players on behalf of a large group of professional footballers.



The case has been launched following the CJEU judgment in October 2024 in the case brought by football player Lassana Diarra and FIFPRO Europe/FIFPRO World against FIFA, which found that the FIFA Regulations seriously infringed EU competition law and the right to free movement of workers, making it extremely challenging for a player to terminate their employment contract without just cause. In short, the CJEU ruled that the FIFA Regulations violated two core principles of European law: free movement of workers and fair competition.

By stating unequivocally that FIFA's rules were unlawful and that those rules caused all players to suffer a financial loss, the CJEU in its judgement gave the green light to a Europe-wide class action. This is a classic follow-on claim, in line with the EU Representative Action Directive, that seeks to ensure that the rule of law is upheld, that FIFA is held to account and that all players receive the compensation that is owed to them.

In particular, the CJEU noted that the FIFA Regulations had the effect of restricting the free movement of workers and competition by:

- establishing unlawful criteria for determining the severance "compensation" a player must pay to their former club;
- allowing the national federation of the former club to withhold the issuance of an International Transfer Certificate (ITC), without which a player cannot play for a new club;
- making the player's new club automatically jointly and severally liable for the compensation to be paid to the former club and
- allowing FIFA to impose disciplinary sanctions on the player and their new club.

The unlawful FIFA Regulations granted FIFA complete control over how and when players leave their current football clubs and under what conditions, effectively enforcing an extremely restrictive 'no-poaching agreement'.

A preliminary analysis by economists at Compass Lexecon has estimated that affected professional footballers have earned approximately 8% less over the course of their career than they would have if the FIFA Regulations had not been unlawfully restrictive.

Lucia Melcherts, Chair of the Board Member of Justice for Players, said: *"All professional football players have lost a significant amount of earnings due to the unlawful FIFA Regulations. "Justice for Players" is bringing this claim to help achieve justice for footballers and fairness. The past and even current system unduly favours FIFA who has far too much unilateral power. In any other profession, people are allowed to change jobs voluntarily. The same should be true in football, particularly as the average career span of a professional footballer according to a FIFPro study is only 8 years long."*

Franco Baldini, Board Member of Justice for Players, said: *"As a former professional footballer, agent and someone who has worked in football in various managerial capacities, I have had first hand experience, in particular with the Mexes case in 2004, of how much control and power FIFA has over the players. So I am very proud to be part of the Foundation "Justice for Players" and to be part*



of something that could help change the existing system and make football more inclusive and more sustainable.”

Dolf Segaar, Board Member for Justice for Players said: *“This claim against FIFA brought by “Justice for Players” is an important and necessary next step that will allow footballers to assert their rights as EU workers and receive compensation from an organisation that for far too long has willingly ignored the rule of EU law. The CJEU ruled in a crystal-clear manner that the FIFA Rules on termination of contracts and transfer were blatant violations of EU competition law and free movement of workers. And the CJEU also made clear that such unlawful rules had caused players to suffer financial losses. Under EU law, victims of such violations are entitled to compensation for the losses they have suffered and that is an important part of what this class action is about”.*

Koen Rutten, Partner at Finch Dispute Resolution, said: *“For over 20 years, FIFA has enforced unlawful rules at the expense of professional footballers. Finch is supporting “Justice for Players” so that FIFA can be held accountable and ordered to compensate footballers whose earnings have been impacted by these unfair and illegal rules. Not only are we seeking damages for footballers who have been disadvantaged by the rules that mainly benefit FIFA and the football associations, but through this legal action we are seeking changes to the FIFA Rules so that professional players can finally have greater control over their careers.”*

For further information please visit: www.justiceforplayers.com

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Notes to Editors

About Justice for Players

Justice for Players was founded to advocate for the interests of professional footballers across Europe. The board comprises of three members: Lucia Melcherts, Dolf Segaar and Franco Baldini. Lucia Melcherts has been the chair of Stichting Massaschade & Consument (Foundation for Mass Damages & Consumers) since 2021. She also holds the position of Coordinating Specialist Advisor at



the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. Dolf Segaar founded his own law firm Segaar Law in July 2021, specialising in governance and litigation, with a strong focus on sports law. Franco Baldini is a former professional footballer and agent and spent over 20 years in different senior management roles at top international clubs and organizations, including AS Roma, Real Madrid, Tottenham Hotspur and the England National Team. He currently runs his own consulting firm IC20 Ltd.

www.justiceforplayers.com

About Finch

Finch Dispute Resolution is an independent Dutch litigation boutique law firm, founded in 2022. With a team of around 18 specialised litigators and 5 partners based in Utrecht, the firm handles corporate, commercial, financial, and class-action disputes—domestically and internationally.

<https://finch.nl>

About Dupont-Hissel

Jean-Louis DUPONT and Martin HISSEL are specialists in European law, particularly as applied to the sports sector. Together they have defended hundreds of cases, acting on behalf of all stakeholders in the professional sports sector, before the CJEU, the European Commission, the European Court of Human Rights, national competition authorities, national courts, international (including CAS) and national arbitration tribunals, and the internal judicial bodies of national and international sports associations. In particular, they have led and co-managed cases that resulted in landmark judgements of the CJEU regarding sports governance in the EU and beyond: Bosman (1995), Meca-Medina (2006), Royal Antwerp FC (2023), European Super League (2023), Lassana Diarra (2024) and RFC Seraing (2025).

www.Dupont-Hissel.com

About Deminor

Founded in 1990, Deminor is a leading international litigation funder with offices in Brussels, London, Hamburg, New York, Hong Kong, Madrid, Milan, Stockholm and Luxembourg.

Combining skill sets from 19 different nationalities and 22 languages, Deminor possesses a highly respected and diverse team of legal and financial specialists across a range of specialisms including arbitration, enforcement, intellectual property, competition, investments & tax, corporate & post-M&A.

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