

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS – OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC AND MEDIA INFLUENCE

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### Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought great financial problems to the whole world. The football industry also felt the negative effects. A two-month break from not playing football matches affected all football factors. The clubs lost income from various sources, among which they were most financially affected by the lack of fees for TV rights and the loss of earnings from the game itself. The Covid-19 pandemic caused problems even after the return of football competitions, among other things due to the ban on spectators coming to the stadiums. There was no income from non-football sources, such as concerts and other events held at football stadiums. Due to the firm connection between the media, the economy and football, the aim of this paper is to present, from an economic and media point of view, the situation in which the football industry in Europe finds itself under the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Key words:** football, Covid-19, competitions, media, economics.

## ПАНДЕМИЈА КОВИД-19 И ФУДБАЛСКА ТАКМИЧЕЊА – ПРИКАЗ ЕКОНОМСКОГ И МЕДИЈСКОГ УТИЦАЈА

### Апстракт

Пандемија Ковид-19 донела је велике финансијске проблеме целом свету. Негативне ефекте осетила је и фудбалска индустрија. Двомесечна пауза неоди-гравања фудбалских утакмица погодила је све фудбалске чиниоце. Клубови су изгубили приходе из различитих извора, међу којима их је финансијски највише погодио недостатак накнада за ТВ праваи губитак зараде од саме утакмице. Пандемија Ковид-19 задавала је проблеме и након повратка фудбалских такми-чења, између осталог и због забране доласка гледалаца на стадионе. Прилив новца изостао је и из не-фудбалских извора, попут концерата и других манифе-

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стација одржаваних на фудбалским стадионима. Услед велике повезаности медија, економије и фудбала, циљ овог рада јесте да из економског и медијског угла представи ситуацију у којој се наша фудбалска индустрија у Европи под утицајем пандемије Ковид-19.

**Кључне речи:** фудбал, Ковид-19, такмичења, медији, економија.

### *INTRODUCTION*

From the earliest communities to the present postmodern age, the human race has faced various infectious diseases. Is history constantly repeating itself or has every great challenge of infection, disease, alienation and fear in a specific way affected the social, mental and spiritual life of people?

Except for the mass mortality of the population who found itself on the 'path of the infection', epidemics had been changing the course of human history, stopping invaders, destroying previous empires, stopping or starting wars, allowing religions to spread, causing economic crises, influencing the change of identities and taking people's lives (Bollet, 2004; Jonhston, 2016; Osheim, 2008; Peckham, 2013).

On December 31, 2019, China reported the appearance of the new SARS-CoV-2 virus to the World Health Organization, and a day later, on January 1, 2020, it closed the Wuhan Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market (Singhal, 2020). The spread of the virus has had an exponential growth, being transmitted from person to person (Huang et al., 2020). Global connectivity, the ability to travel quickly and easily from one destination to another, has contributed to the spread of the infection (MacKenzie, 2020). Since football is a team sport that abounds in close contacts both during the matches and trainings, between teammates, with opposing players, as well as with members of the professional staff (Corsini et al., 2020), given the mode of the coronavirus transmission and epidemiological measures recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), all football and sports competitions were expected to be interrupted. A big and dramatic change in the lives of people on the planet due to social distancing and quarantine (Clark, Davila, Regis & Kraus, 2020) has led to changes on the football fields as well.

Numerous restrictions in everyday life have caused the emergence of negative economic effects and cannot yet be reliably estimated how much they will affect the world economy and the standard of living in the future. In the mid of 2020, the International Monetary Fund made a very pessimistic estimation that the global economy would shrink by three percent during that year, which is more than during the global economic crisis of 2008/09 (IMF, 2020). Estimations for 2021 are slightly better, with a projected growth of six percent due to the emergence of the vaccine against Covid-19 which enabled a reduction in the number of newly

infected and the relaxation of restrictive measures (IMF, 2021). These indicators have influenced the increase of social activities, among others in the football industry as well. However, there is no doubt that the financial shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will leave a deep trace on the financial solvency of all football factors, both directly and indirectly.

The aim of this paper is to present, from an economic and media point of view, the situation in which the football industry in Europe finds itself under the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a firm connection between economic and media influence on football, especially when the amount of money invested in TV rights to broadcast football competitions is considered (Wilson, Ramchandani & Plumley, 2018). It has already been difficult for some time to imagine football without television, or television programs not including football, because football, like all other industries, has taken over all already established commercial and marketing aspects (Boyle & Haynes, 2004, 7-8).

#### *EVENTS IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC*

With the declaration of state of emergency on March 15, 2020 in Serbia (Legal Information System, 2020), all sporting events were suspended including football. A similar thing happened in other countries, as well, so on March 13, 2020, professional football was suspended in the United Kingdom (Bond et al., 2020). On March 12, the European Football Federation (UEFA) announced the postponement of all under-17 and under-19 men's and women's competitions (UEFA, 2020a), and three days later announced the decision to stop the strongest European competitions such as the Champions League, Europa League and all competitions for younger categories, such as the Youth League (UEFA, 2020b). Other national football federations in Europe (except Belarus, where football was played unhindered during the lockdown) also made decisions based on UEFA's reputation, interrupting their competitions at all levels. On the same day when the competitions in the junior categories were postponed, the Spanish Football Association also interrupted its national championship (Lowe & Jackson, 2020). Some of the federations have completely ended their football championships under the influence of political decisions at the state level, such as France, where all sports competitions were suspended until September 1, and the team which was occupying the first place at the time, Paris Saint-Germain, was named the champion (BBC, 2020). In the Netherlands, the football championship was also over, but without declaring the winner of the championship (Telegraaf, 2020). However, most national federations have left open the question of the continuation of their championships, giving deadlines for a possible return to competition.

The leading competition of national teams organized by UEFA, Euro 2020, which was supposed to be held in June and July of the same year, was also called into question. However, already on March 17, the European Football Federation decided that it was in the interest of human safety to postpone the championship for the next year, 2021 (UEFA, 2020c), considering that the competition was planned to be held in eleven host countries, which would be a great health risk for the competitors, organizers and spectators.

The coronavirus also influenced the preparations for the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020. Firstly, the information that the Olympic Games would not be postponed was released to the public: "We never talked about canceling the Games..." (Danas, 2020a), the Organizing Committee announced; "We may have to postpone the Tokyo Olympics" (AA, 2020), said the then-Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. However, as the spread of the coronavirus turned into a pandemic, no one was surprised by the postponement of the Olympic Games for the next year. After the meeting of IOC President Thomas Bach and the Prime Minister of Japan, the Games were officially postponed (Politika, 2020). That was how football lost another big competition in 2020.

After two months of the pandemic and two months without football, the competitions have been restarted. In Europe, the German national Bundesliga was the first who continued the national football season on May 16 (Protić, 2020). Shortly afterwards, other national federations decided to continue the championships<sup>1</sup> (Hammerschmidt, Durst, Kraus & Puumalainen, 2021). The football championship in Serbia restarted on May 29 with the matches of the 27<sup>th</sup> round of the Serbian Super League (Superliga, 2020). The European Federation announced the continuation of the strongest club competition in the Champions League for August 7, 2020 (UEFA, 2020d). The format of the remaining rounds, from the quarterfinals to the finals, has been changed from the usual two games (home and away) to a mini-tournament with one game each in one city, Lisbon.

After the return of football, all the competitions had one thing in common: attendance of the spectators was not allowed on the stadium. Thus, regardless of the continuation of the competition, football still had heavy losses in the economic respect, because the spectators were not allowed to fill the stands of the large stadiums. There were certainly rare exceptions to this rule, because while Europe was in the lockdown, the semifinal match of the National Cup between *Crvena Zvezda (Red Star)* and *Partizan* was played at the Partizan Stadium in Serbia in the presence of a large number of fans (estimated at about 16,000 spectators) (BBC

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<sup>1</sup>Austria June 2, Spain June 11, Sweden June 14, England June 17, Switzerland June 19, Italy June 22.

News, 2020). The mentioned game of eternal rivals is emphasized as one of the main culprits of the worsening of the epidemiological situation in Serbia (Danas, 2020b). Of course, the foreign media reported on this event with disbelief, but at the same time they regretted that due to the coronavirus, this atmosphere of cheering at matches in their countries was missing (Blic Sport, 2020; DW, 2020).

In the summer of 2020, football matches, as well as other sports competitions were held in front of empty stands. In that period, one of the most important characteristics of football before the Covid-19 pandemic was missing and that is the typical stadium atmosphere (Drewes, Daumann & Follert, 2021a). The use of new technologies has made it easier to get used to 'new normality'. Due to the lack of live spectators during television broadcasts, in order to simulate the atmosphere of a full stadium and the sounds of cheering, the effects of the event were amplified, so sports fields resounded with artificial applause (Drewes, Daumann & Follert, 2021b). In this way, to some extent, the presence of spectators in stadiums can be replaced, but the feeling of togetherness and belonging cannot be compensated, and the boundaries between the real and the virtual, between reality and the media illusion cannot be erased. "Being a fan... means getting together with others and being free" (Cooper, 2011, 56). With the new football season (2020/21), the situation was improving. According to the epidemiological situation in some countries, a certain number of spectators are allowed in stadiums under the condition that the epidemiological measures are respected: wearing masks, social distancing, enhanced hygiene (Conn, 2020). UEFA tested the return of the spectators to the stadiums at the European Super Cup match at the end of September 2020 in the Puskas Arena in Budapest (UEFA, 2020e). After a successful pilot match, a decision was made to return a maximum of 30 percent of the respective capacity to all UEFA matches, where local laws permit (UEFA, 2020f). The possibility of a partial return to the stands had a positive effect on spectators and fans all over Europe, which influenced the strengthening of the social component of every football competition.

Apart from club competitions, a significant event caused by the coronavirus in 2021 was the playing of the postponed European Football Championship. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the idea of a championship that would be played in several European countries with a lot of travel by national teams, encountered harsh criticism. The symbolic unification of the old continent through the football game was a noble idea, but at the same time an organizational "nightmare", because it implies thousands of kilometers that national teams have to cover in order to play their matches. The Covid-19 pandemic postponed the competition for the next year.

The corona was not outfought this year either, but the championship had to be held with the request of UEFA to the host cities to fulfill

the minimum of audience quota (B92, 2021a). Some cities did not succeed (Bilbao and Dublin), so the host cities within the same state were either replaced (Seville instead of Bilbao) or the host country was completely excluded (Republic of Ireland and Dublin). The rule on limiting the number of spectators at stadiums depended on the regulations of the state and health authorities and ranged from 20-100 percent of occupancy. UEFA has allowed more than 60,000 spectators for the semi-final and final matches played at London's Wembley, in cooperation with the English authorities, in compliance with strict rules when entering the stadium; complete vaccination with two doses of vaccine, at least 14 days before the arrival at the match (UEFA, 2021). The European Championship is over, and the weeks to come will show how successful it was from the point of view of health safety. In any case, the championship organized in this way will not be repeated, because UEFA has already abandoned such an idea (B92, 2021b).

#### *ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON EUROPEAN FOOTBALL*

Football clubs have grown from sports organizations based in local communities to sports corporations operating on an economic basis (Calabuig, Prado-Gascó, Núñez-Pomar & Crespo-Hervás, 2021), although professional football is considered to be “social business, which is basically an economy, but by nature still social” (Morrow, 2013). Taking the position of a corporation implies that football clubs are organized like other companies, only differing in their readiness to take risks and get into debt by providing quality players in order to achieve the maximum possible result. Football clubs primarily need a continuously good result on the field, even at the cost of current financial difficulties, in order to be able to count on economic profit in the long run. Therefore, any potential crisis, such as the injury of key players, the departure of sponsors due to poor results, makes the football corporation (club) financially vulnerable (Hammerschmidt et al., 2021). The result is very important, because, for example, relegation negatively affects the club's income (Schreyer, Schmidt & Torgler, 2018). It is estimated that the European football market is around 25 billion pounds worth, and that the joint income of the "League of Five" (England, Germany, Italy, Spain and France) for the 2017/18 season amounted to 13 billion pounds (Deloitte, 2019). In the next season (2018/19), the value of the football market in Europe already increased to 28.9 billion euros (Dašić, Tošić & Delečić, 2020). However, the crisis that arose with Covid-19 threatens to shake the empire of the football industry.

This pandemic is considered to be the largest global state of emergency since World War II, which may also affect the onset of the global economic crisis (Mohr et al., 2020). The previous global economic crisis

in 2008 also affected the sports sector (Parnell, Spracklen & Millward, 2017). However, the professional football industry did not have large losses, moreover it made significant profits (Deloitte, 2017). On the other hand, the crisis caused by the pandemic definitely affects the change at the basis of the football (sports) industry (Parnell, Widdop, Bond & Wilson, 2020). The football industry has a significant impact on the economies of many countries (Hammerschmidt et al., 2021), while football as a sport affects not only earnings in the sports sector, but also in the economy, social spheres and cultural sector (Escamilla-Fajardo, Núñez-Pomar, Ratten & Crespo, 2020). Given the connection with other spheres of society, the postponement of football (sports) competitions, in addition to economic implications, also has a significant social impact. Sporting events contribute to the daily routine of people's lives and their interconnectedness (Krustrup & Parnell, 2019).

Covid-19 not only affected the discontinuation of the competitions, but also created financial problems (Parnell, Bond, Widdop & Cockayne, 2021). Club owners, shareholders, sponsors, the media found themselves in a situation previously unknown to them, which forced them to reorganize their operational and commercial strategies (Parnell et al., 2020). If the business model of any sport is observed, including football leagues, there are three principal income streams for sports leagues: broadcasting (sales of media rights), commercial (sponsorship and advertising partnerships) and match day revenue (ticketing and hospitality) and, as it turned out, all three sources were greatly affected (Hall, 2020). At first, while there was no football, there was no broadcasting either, and therefore no potential advertising. Instead of the abundance of information that usually accompanies sports (football) events, sports journalists most often reported on the number of infected athletes and sports workers. They conveyed information about the rules that would prevail during future competitions, about the conditions of accommodation of athletes and the maximum number of potential spectators. In the end, ticket revenues were lacking, as was the possibility of additional income coming from money spent in club shops at stadiums.

In some of the largest European football clubs, losses have exceeded one billion euros (Skinner & Smith, 2021). Similar losses were experienced by the organization of the Olympic Games, which led to the polarization of Tokyo residents (Sato, Oshimi, Bizen & Saito, 2020). The financial loss due to the postponement of EURO 2020 for 2021 is estimated at around 300 million pounds (Parnell et al., 2020), while the total losses in the football leagues for the 2019/20 season are estimated at 4.14 billion, of which more than half of that amount makes a loss from broadcasting (Football Benchmark, 2020). Similar data for the same season is valid for the Premier League in England, where revenues were reduced by 1.1 billion euros, with 50 percent of that amount permanently lost, and

with most of the money lost due to the ban on fans to attend matches, but also because of the rights of television broadcasts (Dašić et al., 2020). Consequently, the states had to react by granting the clubs certain financial resources. Probably the richest aid to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic was granted in the United Kingdom, whose government approved 300 million pounds to save some professional sports, including football (Skinner & Smith, 2021). In German football, there have been cases where certain clubs in the First and Second Divisions were at risk of insolvency (Zülch, Ottenstein & Manz, 2020). The consequence of that was the organization of richer clubs in the Bundesliga, which helped other clubs financially through the solidarity fund. Four Bundesliga clubs that participated in the Champions League provided 20 million euros in aid to other clubs in the league (Daumann & Follert, 2020).

Although the final economic impact of Covid-19 has yet to leave its full mark, it is already predicted that clubs in smaller football countries and those in lower leagues of larger countries will feel the biggest blow (or have already felt it), because they mostly depend on the income of the match (Deloitte, 2021). While, for example, the German Bundesliga, which was among the first to restart, may float out financially with empty stands, securing money from television broadcasting rights, the clubs in lower leagues will not have that chance due to the constant fear of infecting those spectators who would come to watch live football matches (Horky, 2021).

Football clubs that were in a good financial situation before the Covid-19 pandemic withstood this crisis more easily. This primarily refers to large clubs that did not have huge debts and bad investments. However, smaller clubs, with weaker financial potentials, as well as those that are not well run, could be in big trouble, and find themselves facing closure. As already mentioned, the football industry also affects other social sectors, so closing down clubs, especially those that are deeply involved in their local communities, could have a negative economic effect on all people living in that community (Bond et al., 2020).

Given that the inflow of money due to the Covid-19 pandemic is significantly lower, the players were also hit, because the clubs, financially burdened, were forced to negotiate with the players to reduce salaries or to limit them (salary cap) like in American sports leagues (Drewes et al., 2021a). Such kind of organization of business means an agreement that the club can spend a limited amount of money on the salaries of players, which is determined at the level of the entire team. Implementation of this approach requires that all clubs at some level of the competition agree to such a deal. Unlike American sports, such rules are not applied in European football, but the level of earnings of each individual player is determined by negotiations between the player (his manager) and the club. The analyses indicate (Dietl, Franck & Nüesch, 2006) that

salary restrictions such as the US club business system are unlikely to be possible for several reasons: due to the league entry and exit system (there are none in US leagues), limited player transfer periods, and less important in terms of competitive balance between clubs in order to attract the interest of fans, which is insisted on in American sports leagues.

In order to overcome the financial difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some European clubs such as *Milan*, *Real*, *Barcelona*, *PSG*, *Southampton* are entering a business with cryptocurrencies, which goes beyond traditional types of sponsorships. Finally, it is believed that the long-mentioned idea of forming a European Super League was prompted by the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic (Skinner & Smith, 2021), although in the end, at least for now, it failed (Chanda & Saha, 2021).

#### *MEDIA POSITION IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL AFTER THE APPEARANCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC*

The role of the media in professional football is of great importance, not only because of the amount of money invested in sports, but also because of the powerful position of broadcasters who broadcast football live to the spectators around the world (Manoli, 2017). A review of the business financial reports of the football industry (Deloitte, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) shows what share in the financial profit of football clubs has the income received from media for TV broadcasting rights. All successful football leagues in Europe have such incomes. The lucrative television offerings, which rose from £304 million in 1992 to £4.46 billion for UK rights for the 2019-22 cycle (Wilson et al., 2018), helped the English Premier League become one of the richest professional sports leagues in the world (Deloitte, 2020), because reports indicate that 59 percent of the total income of clubs comes from the right to TV broadcasts. It follows that the media are no longer just intermediaries between spectators and football clubs, but equal business partners who help clubs strengthen their brand, expand their influence on current and potential consumers (Manoli, 2020).

The higher the revenue from television rights and the more different sources to fill the budget, the more capable the club is of overcoming potential adversities, while small clubs without strong media support become unsustainable (King, 2017). In most of the strongest European leagues, the rights to broadcast TV transmission are sold collectively (at the level of the entire league), which enables a more equal distribution of income between clubs and an increase in competitiveness. A good example is the purchase of the English Premier League, the most lucrative contract in the world in the football industry, which amounts to around three billion pounds a year and is divided relatively democratically ac-

according to the results achieved by the clubs (Maguire, 2021). However, there are cases such as in Portugal, where each club sells the rights to broadcast its matches to media separately. On such occasion, clubs at the top of the table receive ten to fifteen times more funds from TV broadcasts than middle-ranking clubs. In the countries that apply collective sales of TV rights, the difference between clubs averages 2.3 times (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021).

Since March 2020, televisions have found themselves in an unenviable position, because football (sports) events did not take place, so the broadcasts were suspended. That is why sports televisions in Germany broadcast historical matches from the World Cups and German Cups, as well as important (e.g. farewell) matches of famous German football players, at a time when the program was scheduled to play matches. Some televisions also broadcast matches from the archives between teams that would have played according to the schedule if there had not been the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Schallhorn & Kunert, 2020).

After the events related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the return of football, at first, did not mean the return of fans to the stadiums. However, football returned by means of small screens, which allowed the media to get an even more powerful position, because in the case of a longer duration of pandemics and constant minor or major restrictive measures, would have been the only link between fans and football competitions. Given the fact that the media were in a slight decline in their power before the Covid-19 pandemic (Manoli, 2017), the current situation could affect them. In the English Premier League, billions of pounds of TV revenue will be called in question if football is not played, which puts pressure to broadcast matches even if the stadiums are empty. The Premier League can thus survive with stadiums closed for the spectators, but in matches broadcast worldwide, in some other, smaller leagues, there is still a need for spectators (Bond et al., 2020).

Some theories also suggest that the demand for television broadcasts could decline if television fans would miss the typical stadium atmosphere when watching football matches. For that matter, the payment of the television subscription could be reduced, and that way the value of the television rights as well (Drewes et al., 2021a). Nevertheless, the financial influence of the media in the football industry still plays a significant role. Due to the restrictions caused by Covid-19, football clubs had to give up the income from the game itself (banned presence of spectators at stadiums), which was not a great trouble to rich clubs, because their revenue from ticketing is of secondary importance (Follert, 2018). But, they hurried up to restart the competitions (unlike other sports), because, apart from sports reasons, they were counting on renewed revenues from television marketing (Quitau, 2020). Revenues from TV rights can be said to be, in fact, the main reason for the hasty launch of the competi-

tions. The need for the clubs was to receive the latest installments regarding the TV rights fee, because most broadcasters in the European countries stopped all payments to clubs for broadcasting rights on locked channels at the time of the suspension of football competitions, which led the clubs to an unenviable financial situation (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021). In England, there was even a vote in different levels of men's and women's football competitions. Only the first two strongest men's competitions decided to continue the championship, while the others decided to completely stop their championships. The decision to continue the championship was supported by the fulfillment of the agreement on TV rights (Moore, 2021). However, even after the return of football competitions, the situation with the income from broadcasters has not completely improved. Clubs that played in international competitions received lower compensation for broadcasting than was originally agreed because UEFA changed the Champions League and European League final system and instead of two games in each elimination round to the final, designated just one to be played. Any decrease in the number of matches also affected the decrease in broadcasting revenues (Maguire, 2021).

The position of broadcasters in the period of re-establishment of football competitions, on the example of Portugal, was such that they could choose the days and dates of all matches, considering that there were no spectators. This model of organization was, in the given circumstances, the most suitable for broadcasters in order to satisfy as many spectators as possible and to earn maximum subscriptions. On the other hand, the economic crisis has caused a large number of families not to be able to afford a subscription for locked channels in order to watch the matches. In order to avoid crowds in bars, restaurants, cafes where matches can be watched on locked channels, the Portuguese authorities bought the rights to TV broadcasts of the best matches every week, thus enabling people to enjoy football on unlocked channels at home (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic and all the restrictions it caused, opened new, above all, technical possibilities for broadcasters. At first, without spectators in the stands, and now, with insufficient occupancy and not being allowed to go to a football match, allows televisions to broadcast the reactions of fans who watch the matches in their homes instead of showing the reactions of fans in stadiums. In the era of smartphones that many people own, it is possible to record and send or broadcast live their own reactions to events on the football field. In that manner, the television can broadcast those recordings several times during the broadcast of the match and thus actively involve the viewers in the event (Majumdar & Naha, 2020).

### *CONCLUSION*

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought great financial problems to the whole world. The football industry also felt the negative effects, especially those clubs that largely depend on the income from the match-day revenue because the return of football after a two-month break in the spring of 2020 was accompanied by the lack of live spectators ("ghost games"). To the clubs in the major leagues in Europe, the income from matches is of secondary importance. Their interest is, above all, broadcasting and advertising, so the return of football competitions was important because of the TV broadcast that would be seen all over the world, and because the income from TV rights at major clubs amounts to more than 50 percent of the total profit.

Nevertheless, the financial burden due to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic affected all factors in the football industry. Clubs were forced to reduce and limit the salaries of players and other employees, because the planned budgets were limited due to the lack of inflow of money from various sources. For example, there was no income from non-football sources at all. Due to the ban on gatherings, clubs could not make money on concerts and other events for the needs of which the organizers rented club spaces. Therefore, the management of the clubs had to devise other ways of earning money, to be more creative in terms of placing their brand, to use all the advantages of the technological progress of the modern world, the possibilities of new, social media. Likewise, in times of crisis, it is necessary to make more careful decisions related to investment, primarily the amount of transfers fee when buying players, as well as the salary amount.

A certain number of fans returned to the stadiums. The appearance of the vaccine helped to facilitate the organization of football competitions and the number of spectators. One of the most important characteristics of football in terms of the typical stadium atmosphere is present again. In this regard, the financial situation in terms of earnings from matches is improving; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has not abated and in many countries stadium occupancy is not maximal. It resulted from the medical authority restrictions in each country, as well as from the spectators' fear of being infected.

The management of football clubs will be greatly influenced by the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the dynamics of the appearance of new patients. Many industries find it difficult to adapt to the new situation. The struggle for the survival of the global economy will last for a long time, because nature first stopped, and then limited the free flow of people, goods and capital. It remains to be seen how the football industry will cope in times of crisis.

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## ПАНДЕМИЈА КОВИД-19 И ФУДБАЛСКА ТАКМИЧЕЊА – ПРИКАЗ ЕКОНОМСКОГ И МЕДИЈСКОГ УТИЦАЈА

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### Резиме

Од најранијих заједница до данашњих дана људски род се суочавао са различитим заразним болестима. Историјски посматрано, сваки такав изазов на различите начине утицао је на друштвено-економски, ментални, духовни живот људи. Епидемије су мењале токове људске историје, заустављале освајаче, ру-

шиле царства, обустављале или покретале ратове, узимале животе људи. Када је Кина децембра 2019. године Светској здравственој организацији пријавила појаву новог вируса SARS-CoV-2 уследила је велика и драматична промена живота људи. Многобројна ограничења у свакодневном животу условила су појаву негативних ефеката у свим сферама друштва.

Како је фудбал тимски спорт у коме се бележе блиски контакти наутакмици и тренингу између саиграча, са противничким играчима, као и са члановима стручног штаба, било је очекивано да се с обзиром на начин преноса корона вируса и епидемиолошке мере које је препоручила Светска здравствена организација прекину сва спортска, односно фудбалска такмичења. Циљ овог рада је да из економског и медијског угла представи ситуацију у којој се наша фудбалска индустрија у Европи под утицајем пандемије ковид-19. Велика је повезаност економског и медијског утицаја на фудбал, поготово када се има у виду количина новца која се улаже у ТВ права на преносе фудбалских такмичења. Већ дуже време је тешко замислити фудбал без телевизије, или телевизијске програме у којима нема фудбала, јер је фудбал као и све друге индустрије преузео све већ успостављене комерцијалне и маркетиншке аспекте.

Пандемија ковид-19 донела је велике финансијске проблеме целом свету. Негативне ефекте осетила је и фудбалска индустрија. Двомесечна пауза неигравања фудбалских утакмица погодила је све фудбалске чиниоце. Клубови су изгубили приходе из различитих извора, међу којима их је финансијски највише погодио недостатак накнада за ТВ права и губитак зараде од саме утакмице. Пандемија ковид-19 задавала је проблеме и након повратка фудбалских такмичења, између осталог, и због забране доласка гледалаца на стадионе. Фудбалским клубовима који су од спортских организација са упориштем у локалним друштвеним заједницама, прерасли у спортске корпорације које функционишу на економској бази, потребан је континуирано добар резултат на терену да би могли да рачунају на економску добит на дуже стазе. Стога, свака потенцијална криза чини клуб финансијски рањивим. Власници клубова, деоничари, спонзори и медији нашли су се у ситуацији која им до тада није била позната, а која их је натерала да реорганизују своје оперативне и комерцијалне стратегије. У неким од највећих европских фудбалских клубова губици су премашили и милијарду евра. Сличне губитке доживела је и организација Олимпијских игара.

Пандемија ковид-19 и сва ограничења која је проузроковала, отворила су нове, пре свега, техничке могућности емитерима. У прво време потпуни недостатак гледалаца на трибинама, а сада, недовољна попуњеност и одсуство потпуне слободе одласка на фудбалску утакмицу, даје могућност телевизијама да уместо приказивања реакција навијача на стадионима, емитују реакције навијача који утакмице прате у својим домовима. Телевизија те снимке може да емитује и више пута током преноса утакмице и тако активно укључи гледаоце у догађај.

Пандемија ковид-19 не јењава, и у многим земљама попуњеност стадиона гледаоцима није максимална. Разлог томе су ограничења која одређују медицинске власти у свакој држави, као и страх гледалаца од могућности заражавања. На пословање фудбалских клубова много ће утицати дужина трајања пандемије ковид-19, као и динамика појаве новооболелих. Многе индустрије, па и фудбалска мораће да се прилагоде новонасталој ситуацији.