



The now infamous Jabulani ball - Getty Images Sport

## FIFA OWN GOALS?

**Matthew Glendinning** identifies the blots on FIFA's copybook in what was an otherwise memorable 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

**THE 2010 WORLD CUP** may well represent the high water mark in Sepp Blatter's career at the helm of world football. The FIFA president was entirely vindicated in his advocacy of the World Cup hosts as the Rainbow Nation delivered a much-praised and highly profitable tournament for FIFA.

Against this, a series of apparent own goals, highlighting FIFA's struggle to balance commercial exploitation and event management control, will have given the president and his men pause for thought.

Perhaps most alarming for the federation was the exposure of its conservative stance on the use of technology for goalline decisions - which withered under global scrutiny when a clear English goal - was missed by match officials in the high-profile second-round match against Germany.

Blatter's subsequent decision to "reopen the file on technology" and FIFA general secretary Jérôme Valcke's assertion this would be the last World Cup without assistance for referees on goalline decision showed how keenly FIFA felt the resultant loss of credibility.

Yet other apparent FIFA own-goals - such as the PR disaster that was the Jabulani ball - has thus far received no such review.

A key cash-generating component of the official partnership arrangement between Adidas and FIFA, both sides had much to gain from a popular World Cup ball, says Nick Fitzpatrick,

partner with the law firm DLA Piper and an expert in sports contract law.

"With the ball, Adidas wants to maximise the benefits of top-tier sponsorship by demonstrating its cutting-edge sports technology and state-of-the-art design," says Fitzpatrick. "FIFA will want to maximise revenues from their partnership and supply arrangements and get a top-quality ball.

"The fact there has been so much negative press in regard to its performance is unfortunate, but it's unfeasible that the contract does not include rigorous testing and approval processes. The match-ball is too fundamental and it is implausible that FIFA would have sacrificed control for cash."

But critics will argue that these tests clearly need updating and FIFA admits that the Jabulani issue will be one of the main topics to be discussed by national team coaches at a World Cup de-brief expected to be held in September.

Another FIFA own-goal was the governing body's response to Dutch beer brand Bavaria's 'ambush' during the Netherlands-Denmark group stage match. There were a reported 400 cases of ambush marketing and trademark infringement cases dealt with by FIFA in the run-up to and during the World Cup, but did the Bavaria intervention backfire?

According to Pauline Dore, senior associate at UK solicitors Lewis Silkin, the ambush was tough to defend: "One must consider such

activities in the context in which they are carried out. Apparently, the dresses [worn by 36 models the crowd] were the same type as those given away in Bavaria beer gift packs during its pre-World Cup campaign in the Netherlands.

"The company also ensured that the dresses were instantly recognisable to the Dutch public by arranging to have one modelled by Sylvie van der Vaart, the wife of Real Madrid's Rafael. In other words, this was a classic example of ambush marketing. Bavaria received a huge amount of publicity around the world on the back of this marketing stunt - far more than it could have hoped to receive if it had paid official sponsorship fees. On the losing side is, no doubt, Budweiser, which despite paying millions of dollars in sponsorship fees, was eclipsed for a few days by a small Dutch brewery."

But before leaving South Africa - what of the vuvuzelas, which also drove some fans to distraction at last year's Confederations Cup? Should they have been controlled by FIFA within the stadium?

"My personal view is that there is a line that organisers have to draw between controlling what comes into the ground to protect their partners and other restrictions that simply stifle the event," adds Fitzpatrick. "What is more natural in South Africa than to demonstrate their passion for football with music? Love them or loathe them, it's a no-win situation and I would not condemn FIFA."

INSIGHT



**MATT CUTLER**  
Deputy Editor

SportBusiness International

Following the month-long World Cup period, where hundreds of millions of us across the globe were fed by what seemed to be a non-stop drip of football programming, news and informed opinion - the period since Spain lifted the trophy has been somewhat a footballing purgatory.

But it's back. The 10-11 football season is finally approaching and football fans in England, France and Italy in particular are moving their focus swiftly from the trials and tribulations of their respective national teams to how exactly their team is going to afford the star players they're connected with in the gossip columns and internet forums.

Football finance is the hot topic in European football, with governing body UEFA looking at regulation from 2013 to restrict excessive spending that's left a number of European clubs in financial difficulties. The situation may not be the financial Armageddon many say it is - for years it's been no secret that football clubs don't make money - but the economic crisis has certainly had an effect and forced clubs to scrutinise their finances carefully.

Spurs chairman Daniel Levy made Premier League history last month by making the decision to sell the club's shirt sponsorship for the four different competitions the team will be playing in.

It's a regular strategy on the other side of the Atlantic. NASCAR race teams, for example, have employed a split-sponsor model for the two main circuits, Nationwide Series and Sprint Cup Series, and Joey Logano can be seen racing a vehicle mainly sponsored by GameStop on Saturday and then one mainly sponsored by The Home Depot on a Sunday.

This issue SportBusiness correspondents across Europe look at the financial health of the top five European leagues to assess whether more club bosses, like Levy, need to look outside the box to stabilise their revenue streams.