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Sports Law 2025

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Sweden: Law & Practice
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SWEDEN



Law and Practice

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Nordia Law is a Nordic commercial business law firm with offices in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, Oslo and Helsinki. It is regarded as one of the leading law firms on the Swedish market with regard to complex litigation and arbitration matters. The firm offers quality legal

services within all areas of commercial law to clients in the Nordic region and abroad. It has a highly esteemed sports law department, which has handled many of the most high-profile cases in Swedish sports law for many years.

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1. Regulatory

1.1 Anti-Doping

Doping is a criminal offence under the Swedish Doping Act. However, the Act only criminalises certain specific doping substances such as anabolic steroids, testosterone and growth hormones. These substances may not be imported, transferred, manufactured, offered for sale, etc. Anyone wilfully contravening the Act may be sentenced to a maximum of six years' imprisonment.

Sweden adopted the World Anti-Doping Agency Code (the "WADA Code") in 2004. The Swedish national governing bodies (NGB) regulatory framework (based on the WADA Code) generally apply to all athletes who engage in competitive sports in Sweden.

Doping within sports is monitored by the Swedish Anti-Doping Agency (the "ADSE"). Its primary purpose is to ensure that sports in Sweden are free from doping. The ADSE is responsible for implementing the WADA Code, conducting doping controls, investigating doping misuse, and providing education and information on anti-doping matters. The ADSE investigates all positive doping results and decides whether the matter should be reported for disciplinary action to the Doping Panel (the first instance penal body for cases involving anti-doping rule violations within sports).

The Doping Panel's decision may be appealed to the Supreme Sports Tribunal by the convicted person or by the ADSE. The Supreme Sports Tribunal is normally the final instance body. Depending on the circumstances of the case, it may also sometimes be appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (the "CAS"). However, the CAS may dismiss the case.

1.2 Integrity

Sweden ratified the Council of Europe's Macolin Convention in December 2024. The Convention is the only legally binding international framework dedicated to combating the manipulation of sports competitions. It promotes collaboration among governments, sports organisations and betting operators to address suspicious activities. The ratification of this Convention strengthens Sweden's ability to fight match-fixing through enhanced international co-operation.

Sweden adopted a new Gambling Act in 2019, introducing specific criminal provisions related to match-fixing. Match-fixing and other manipulation of sports activities previously had no specific and separate penal provision in the Criminal Code. Under the provisions of the Gambling Act, anyone who takes inappropriate actions to manipulate the outcome of a game that is subject to licence requirements under the Act may be jailed for a maximum of six years for cheating (ie, gambling fraud).

The Gambling Act is supervised by the Swedish Gambling Authority. The Authority has created a special council concerning match-fixing and may halt and/or prohibit specific types of betting. Match-fixing continues to be a major concern in Sweden (as it is internationally) and may in the long run damage the credibility of the sports movement and cause losses to other stakeholders, such as the gambling industry.

Efforts to prevent match-fixing are complicated when operations are run in different countries. Match-fixing also often involves organised crime and the associated risk of threats and pressure against individual athletes and other officials. The betting companies must monitor the gambling market in a satisfactory manner and report

deviant gambling patterns and suspicions of match-fixing to the Swedish Gambling Authority.

In 2015, the Swedish Sports Confederation adopted a general code to fight the manipulation of sporting competitions, covering all sports in Sweden. The code was revised in 2019 and applies to all members of the federation (ie, the special NGBs for each sport, clubs and individual athletes who participate in sport activities for a club). Under the code, sanctions may be imposed on individuals (temporary ban for up to ten years), fines for NGBs and clubs as well as cancellation of results achieved in competitions, etc.

In January 2025, the Swiss company Sportradar reported a significant decrease in the number of suspected match-fixing cases in Europe and Sweden. The Swedish Professional Football League has been working for many years to continuously educate and raise awareness among elite club players and leaders on the issue, which is considered one of the contributing factors for the decline.

1.3 Betting

The new Gambling Act has created better opportunities for foreign operators to receive a gambling licence in Sweden. The Act applies to gambling of money, which is allowed in Sweden. The Act is accompanied by secondary legislation, including the Swedish Gambling Tax Act and various regulations on responsible gambling and state lotteries. The Gambling Authority has overall responsibility for licensing and supervising the enforcement of the Gambling Act. Any gambling directed at the Swedish market without a licence from the Authority is prohibited.

1.4 Disciplinary Proceedings

A regulatory or disciplinary offence by an athlete (including doping matters) will normally be determined by a disciplinary committee or similar body in line with the relevant NGB's internal rules.

2. Commercial Rights

2.1 Available Sports-Related Rights

In addition to sponsorship and broadcasting rights, there are several other notable sports-related commercial rights in Sweden, such as merchandising, hospitality and ticketing.

Merchandising involves the sale of branded products such as apparel, accessories and memorabilia. Sports clubs and organisations often partner with manufacturers and retailers to produce and sell merchandise featuring team logos, colours and player images. This not only generates revenue but also helps build and maintain fan loyalty.

Hospitality rights often include premium seating at the venue, exclusive access to lounges and special event packages for fans and corporate clients. Sports venues and clubs offer hospitality services to enhance the spectator experience, often at a higher price point. These services can include catered meals, private viewing areas and meet-and-greet opportunities with athletes.

Ticketing is a crucial commercial right, encompassing the sale of tickets for sporting events. This includes primary ticket sales through official channels and secondary ticket sales through resale platforms. The availability of secondary ticket sales allows fans to purchase tickets from other individuals, often at different prices. Sweden has implemented the EU Online Ticket

Resellers Regulation which requires online platforms to conduct due diligence on sellers and provide clear information about ticket listings. This helps prevent fraudulent practices and ensures that consumers are aware they are purchasing from third-party sellers.

2.2 Sponsorship

Sport in Sweden has a long tradition of being an independent voluntary movement (generally known as the Scandinavian or Nordic model) and has always been a popular platform for sponsorship from various business actors. The business community sees an obvious marketing advantage in being able to associate itself with well-known sports events, NGBs, leagues, local clubs or individual athletes.

The commercialisation of the sports sector has been massive and fast-growing over recent decades. The sports rights-holders (such as NGBs, leagues, event organisers, clubs and individual athletes) have become significantly more professional and business-oriented and sponsorship is usually at the core of revenues.

The key terms of a standard contract between sponsors and sport rights-holders are usually:

- the duration of the contract;
- the territory in which the sponsor can use the sponsorship rights;
- the nature and scope of the sponsor's rights (exclusive or non-exclusive rights to naming and title rights, advertising rights and official supplier rights, etc);
- the use of the parties' respective intellectual property rights;
- the financial arrangements;
- warranties from the parties (for instance, that the sport rights-holder owns and control all rights related to the sports event); and

- relevant termination rights.

In individual sponsorship agreements, sponsors tend to protect themselves against serious sporting offences on the part of an athlete, such as doping and match-fixing. The sponsors sometimes go further and require the use of a morality clause, which may give the sponsor additional protection against other moral issues on the part of an athlete (such as drug abuse, gambling and other behaviour that does not reflect the sponsor's brand values). In some cases, the morality clause can be reversed, enabling the athlete to terminate the agreement if the sponsor or the brand suffers reputational damage.

2.3 Broadcasting

Broadcasting agreements are the most valuable source of revenue for sport rights-holders. Streaming services on the internet and other new media significantly increase these revenues. The broadcaster usually has the exclusive powers to licence public screenings of a sport event. Swedish law does not recognise independent proprietary rights to an event per se (see **3.1 Relationships**). However, event organisers will be able to restrict illegal broadcasting through control of access to the event and the terms of entry. The Swedish Copyright Act provides that radio or TV broadcasts may not be transmitted to the public without the consent of the broadcaster.

Broadcasting rights in most high-profile sports are sold collectively by the governing bodies or the leagues on behalf of its member clubs. For example, Warner Bros Discovery holds the broadcasting rights for the *Allsvenskan* and *Superettan* football leagues. Another notable example is the four-year deal between Viaplay and the Swedish Football Association (the "SvFF"), which grants Viaplay exclusive rights

to a wide range of football content, including national team matches and various football cups.

Broadcasters and rights-holders typically negotiate venue access agreements that allow them to broadcast live events from stadiums. Broadcasters and rights-holders work together to prevent unauthorised use of their content, such as online piracy, for instance via illegal IPTV services.

3. Sports Events

3.1 Relationships

As mentioned in **2.3 Broadcasting**, Swedish law does not recognise independent proprietary rights in a sports event per se. The idea or concept for a sport event is not protectable under Swedish intellectual property laws. However, the sport event organiser generally protects the event and the commercial rights related to the event through a combination of real property law, contractual provisions, intellectual property law and tort law.

The event organiser generally holds control of access to the venue of the event. This means that the event organiser may restrict third-party access and ensure, through various agreements, that entrants are not entitled to benefit commercially from their attendance.

The event organiser may also protect the various commercial rights in the event through agreements related to the entry to the event (ticketing), sponsorship, broadcasting, merchandising, catering, hospitality, etc.

Entry to the event is based on the ticketing agreement between the organiser and the spectator (governed by the Contracts Act and the

general principles of contract law). The ticket terms and conditions must be brought to the attention of the spectator at the time of ticket purchase. Access to the event may be granted on specific terms, usually described on the ticket itself, or by notices placed at the venue.

If the ticket is purchased on the internet, the specific ticket conditions will be listed on the seller's website. The event organiser may impose specific terms for entry, such as refusing access to the event for security reasons, restrictions on ticket resale and recording footage of the event, restricting access to the event to certain specified areas of the venue and specifying the ticket holder is over a certain age.

3.2 Liability

Event Organisers

An event organiser's non-contractual civil liability is partly governed by the Swedish Tort Liability Act and partly by Swedish case law. Event organisers have a pronounced duty of care for the spectators' and the athletes' safety. If a spectator is injured because of dangerous premises, a breach of duty will arise for the event organiser (for instance a sports club who own its own arena or a club which leases the premises). Non-contractual liability normally covers personal injury and loss of, or damage to property. Compensation for pure financial loss is excluded, except in the case of criminal behaviour.

Liability requires an event organiser's negligence and must be evaluated in each specific case by reviewing whether the organiser has fulfilled its obligations deriving from applicable legislation and the safety instructions of the sport governing bodies. Damages may be reduced if the plaintiff has contributed, by fault or negligence, to the injury sustained. Damages are only awarded for

injury sustained. Swedish law does not recognise the use of punitive or exemplary damages.

Athletes

An athlete's non-contractual civil liability is governed by the same sources of law as the organisers' non-contractual civil liability. Athletes may be held liable for damage or injury caused to other athletes, officials or spectators when the athlete acts intentionally or negligently. The liability is evaluated on a case-by-case basis in the light of the athlete's obligations resulting from legislation and the governing body's sport-specific rules.

The athletes' criminal liability is based on the concept of non-acceptable risk-taking. Athletes have normally accepted the risks inherent in the specific sport. However, violence between athletes may constitute a criminal offence, even in sports involving more aggressive physical contact (such as boxing or ice hockey). However, if the athlete adheres to the relevant sporting rules, their actions will most likely not incur any civil or criminal liability. Sports-related violence is subject to public prosecution. Authorities will generally have to investigate criminal matters ex officio.

Spectators

A spectator's non-contractual civil liability is governed by the same sources of law as the organisers' and athletes' non-contractual civil liability. A spectator may be held liable in respect of damage to property or personal injury caused to the event organiser, other spectators or athletes. Liability for damages only arises when the spectator acts intentionally or negligently. Spectators may also incur criminal liability for offences under the Criminal Code.

Specific legislation relating to the access to sports events was introduced in 2015 following some tragic incidents at Swedish football grounds (such as the death of a football fan after pre-match violence in 2014). An individual may be prohibited from entering a venue where a sport event is going to be held. The public prosecutor may issue a banning order against, for instance, a violent supporter, for up to three years. Anyone breaking the banning order will be sentenced to a fine or maximum of two years in jail. In 2017, new anti-hooligan legislation was introduced for a ban against covering one's face at sporting events. A spectator at the arena who intentionally covers their face in a way that prevents identification may be sentenced to a fine or a maximum of six months in jail.

4. Corporate

4.1 Legal Sporting Structures

The Sports Confederation is the unifying organisation of the sports movement in Sweden and has the task of supporting, representing, developing and leading the movement, both nationally and internationally.

The Sports Confederation consists of 72 special sports federations and 21 district sports federations, which organises more than 250 different sports and almost 20,000 local sports clubs. Almost a third of Sweden's inhabitants are members of a sports club (as athletes, officials, coaches or supporters).

Sport in Sweden is historically organised as an independent voluntary movement (known as the Scandinavian or Nordic model). A long experience of collaboration with central government and local authorities has led to the sports movement being entrusted with the task of organis-

ing sport in Sweden on its own, but with the help of financial support from the state and local authorities. For historical reasons, all sports are organised through voluntary non-profit associations. The right to participate in clubs and societies is guaranteed by the Swedish Constitution.

Only non-profit associations can be members of the Sports Confederation. All local sport clubs are organised as non-profit associations with the purpose of organising sports activities, having both professional teams and sport for all within the same organisation.

The Sports Confederation supports its members and represents the entire sports movement in contacts with the government, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it negotiated several financial compensation packages for its members due to the losses caused by the pandemic.

SISU Idrottsutbildarna is the Sports Confederation's educational organisation. The Sports Confederation and *SISU Idrottsutbildarna* have different roles but complement and support each other in the daily work of developing sports in Sweden.

The clubs are organised according to two principles: one geographical and one linked to the specific sport. The geographical organisation takes the form of district sports federations while particular sports are organised in special district sports federations and special sports federations.

The Sports Confederation has its own judicial system, with the Supreme Sports Tribunal its final instance body. The Supreme Sports Tribunal deals with appeals against legal decisions handed down by the special sports federations.

A sport club must hold a specific participating (sporting) licence with its special sports federation. However, the clubs may transfer its rights under the licence to a limited liability company, on the condition that the club is the majority owner of the shares/voting rights in the limited liability company (the "51% rule"). The limited liability company is prohibited from transferring the sporting rights to a third party. Many sports clubs with professional teams, for instance, within football and ice hockey, have used this opportunity to attract financial investors from private business. There are currently only two football clubs that are publicly listed on the stock exchange: *Hammarby IF* and *AIK Fotboll*. The ice hockey clubs *AIK Hockey* and *Djurgården Hockey* have also raised capital through the Pepins trading platform.

All Olympics-related matters are handled by the Swedish Olympic Committee. The Committee consists of 38 member federations, the national sports federations for the Olympic sports and 18 recognised federations (ie, recognised by the International Olympic Committee, but not currently on the Olympic programme).

4.2 Corporate Governance

Swedish law does not provide for specific corporate governance codes within sports. However, sport governance is a growing concern among stakeholders, not least due to the significant commercialisation of sports over recent decades.

Professional teams organised within a limited liability company need to comply with the provisions of the Swedish Companies Act. Listed limited liability companies are subject to specific rules regarding corporate governance, such as the Swedish Corporate Governance Code. The

Code may also be applied voluntarily by non-listed companies.

However, most clubs are organised as non-profit associations. Under Swedish law, the board is responsible for the organisation and management of the organisation's business. The board has overall responsibility for assessing the financial situation of the organisation and ensuring that the accounting, management of assets and the financial situation of the organisation are monitored in a safe manner. The board represents the organisation officially and has the power to sign agreements on behalf of the organisation.

A board member (or an officer) of a non-profit association or a limited liability company may be held responsible for damages caused to the organisation (or its members or shareholders) in the performance of their duties.

Board members are primarily responsible for any acts and omissions within the scope of the board's area of responsibility. However, board members may also be liable for acts committed by an officer of the organisation within the day-to-day management if the board has neglected its duty to supervise.

Board members are required to keep themselves updated regarding the organisation's current financial situation and make decisions based upon sufficient information. A board member (or an officer) may also be liable for damage that they intentionally or negligently cause a third party by violating the statutes of the association or the provisions in the Companies Act.

Furthermore, a board member may be subject to a wide range of other provisions in specific legislation. For instance, related to book-keeping,

annual accounts, tax payments or environmental matters.

Board members and officers of an organisation may also incur criminal liability under certain provisions of the Companies Act and other offences under the Swedish Criminal Code, such as credit fraud, breach of trust and bribery. Insurance policies against liability exposure for board members and officers may be obtained and are quite common.

4.3 Funding of Sport

Swedish sports are primarily funded through a combination of government support and other revenue streams, such as sponsorship agreements. The Sports Confederation and *SISU Idrottsutbildarna* are the main organisations responsible for distributing financial resources. The majority of their funding comes from the Swedish government's fiscal budget. This support is aimed at promoting public health, fostering citizen participation, and supporting organised sports. The funds are distributed to sports clubs and organisations through a structured system. This ensures that financial support reaches a wide range of sports clubs and their members. The distribution is based on the needs and performance of the clubs, with a focus on promoting sports participation and excellence at all levels.

Other traditional revenue streams derive from the transfer of players (mainly for the elite clubs), broadcasting rights, arenas (such as ticketing, hospitality and merchandising), online sales and lotteries. New opportunities for monetising fan engagement in the digital era are growing rapidly, such as exploiting image rights, the use of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and the metaverse, etc.

4.4 Recent Deals/Trends

Investor interest in the Swedish sports sector is mainly focused on individual top athletes. Investments from private equity firms, venture capital funds and other investment institutions in professional elite teams are still rare, due to the restricted control of the club by its members. However, the growing number of sports tech start-ups is attracting investors from these groups. There are currently about 170 sports tech start-ups in Sweden.

The Scandinavian sports equipment retail market has seen significant growth, with total revenues reaching EUR4.57 billion in 2020. This growth is driven by factors such as population and economic growth, as well as an increasing number of people attending fitness clubs. A notable deal is Accent Equity's Investment in Unisport, where Accent Equity acquired the Indoor Division of Unisport-Saltex, which specialises in indoor sports facilities and equipment.

5. Intellectual Property, Data and Data Protection

5.1 Trade Marks

Many stakeholders within the Swedish sports sector (including individual top athletes) seek trade mark protection. Sweden has domestic protection through the Trademarks Act and has also implemented the EU Trademark Directives and adopted the Madrid Protocol. EU trade marks are recognised in Sweden, as well as international trade mark registrations administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (the "WIPO"), designating Sweden.

Trade marks are registered by the Swedish Patent and Registration Office and the protection applies for ten years. Renewal can be made for

an unlimited number of consecutive ten-year periods. The owner of the mark can bring an action against anyone making unauthorised use of the mark. Trade marks may consist of words, signatures, symbols, patterns, etc, provided that the signs are distinctive. Descriptive terms, generic terms or confusing marks cannot be registered. A trade mark may be assigned or licensed.

One notable case in the sports industry is the trade mark dispute between the SvFF and a local sports club over the use of similar logos. The SvFF successfully defended its trade mark rights, ensuring that their brand remained distinct and protected.

5.2 Copyright/Database Rights

No particular form of copyright covers sports events specifically and an athlete's performance during the event would not be protectable in itself. However, the provisions of the Copyright Act may be applied anyway. Any recording (sound, visual and audiovisual recordings), broadcast and footage of the performance may be protectable under the Copyright Act. The Copyright Act protects the expression of an original work (for example, broadcasts and sound recordings) for a period of between 50 and 70 years. The protection will arise automatically on the expression of the work.

The Copyright Act also provides protection for the compilation and use of sports databases for commercial reasons. To receive protection, certain conditions must be fulfilled (such as a substantial investment in the obtaining, verifying or presentation of the contents of the database).

5.3 Image Rights and Other IP

Image rights are protected by Swedish law under Act 1978:800 on Names and Images in Advertising (the “Names Act”).

According to the Names Act, an individual’s name or picture cannot be used for marketing purposes without the explicit permission of the individual. Violations of the Names Act may lead to fines. The person whose image rights has been exploited is entitled to reasonable compensation for the infringement. The infringer will also have to pay compensation for other damages suffered by the individual.

The public prosecutor may also initiate a criminal action for violation of the Names Act if the injured party has submitted a complaint over the infringement or if a prosecution is necessary in the public interest.

As mentioned in 5.1 Trade Marks, many Swedish professional athletes choose to protect their names as trade marks in line with the Trade-marks Act. The Names Act may be applied on most types of trade mark uses as well, ie, both Acts may be applicable in infringement cases.

5.4 Licensing

NGBs, clubs and athletes may exploit their intellectual property rights through licence agreements. Swedish law does not contain any provisions restricting the assignment of IP rights to third parties.

5.5 Sports Data

The use of data in sport is fast-growing, both in order to improve athletes’ performance and for commercial reasons (for instance, to engage with local supporters and consumers). Clubs may also use mobile app data and machine learning to personalise marketing campaigns

and analyse game data. The use of new technology in the digital era can engage new fans and drive revenue from ticket sales and sponsorships.

5.6 Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”) came into effect in 2018 and applies to all Swedish NGBs and clubs that monitor their athletes. In 2022, specific legislation was introduced for the handling of personal data in connection with the sports movement’s anti-doping work.

The Act covers the ADSE’s and the NGB’s processing of personal data in connection with all their anti-doping activities. The Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection (the “IMY”) is the supervising authority. So far, NGBs and other sport stakeholders have generally been compliant with the regulations and no hefty sanctions have been imposed.

6. Dispute Resolution

6.1 National Court System

Public courts are not normally involved or likely to intervene in sports disputes. A regulatory or disciplinary offence by a participant will normally be resolved within the respective NGB’s internal dispute resolution mechanisms (disciplinary committee or arbitration). The individual athlete must abide contractually to the rules of their club, the relevant NGB, the Sports Confederation and the rules from international governing bodies.

Most NGBs have their own disciplinary committee or arbitration board. In certain circumstances, the Supreme Sports Tribunal deals with appeals

against sport-related decisions and disciplinary sanctions handed down by the relevant NGB.

Public courts have jurisdiction over all disputes outside the sport governing bodies' internal dispute resolution systems (such as civil and criminal liability cases).

6.2 ADR (Including Arbitration)

As mentioned in **6.1 National Court System**, a regulatory or disciplinary offence by an athlete or other similar sports disputes (such as breach of contract claims) will usually be determined by a disciplinary committee or arbitration panel in line with the relevant NGB's rules.

6.3 Challenging Sports Governing Bodies

An arbitration award from a NGB is enforceable as a court judgment under the Enforcement Code. The award must be in writing and signed by a majority of the arbitrators.

There are no established principles in Sweden regarding when the public courts can examine and decide on lawsuits in relation to decisions of NGBs (for example, decisions on membership issues or disciplinary sanctions). The public courts are generally very restrictive when it comes to challenging decisions from NGBs and there are very few court cases on this issue. However, a public court may set aside a decision from a NGB if the decision is based on obvious unreasonable circumstances, such as discrimination because of gender, race or religion.

7. Employment

7.1 Sports-Related Employment Contracts

The relationship between clubs and professional athletes is governed by Swedish employment law. Professional athletes in commercialised team sports (eg, football and ice hockey) are regarded as employees. In most cases, standard form employment contracts set out by the relevant NGB are used. In many cases, these standard employment contracts form an integral part of the collective bargaining agreement in place for the specific sport.

Temporary or fixed-term employment is generally allowed, up to a maximum of two years. Longer fixed-term employment has been agreed in some collective bargaining agreements (such as within football).

The individuals and clubs must adhere to the transfer restrictions set out by the governing bodies and the corresponding rules from international governing bodies, such as FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players and FIFA's Transfer Matching System.

7.2 Employer/Employee Rights

All Swedish employers must take reasonable care of their employees' health and safety. The employers are also required by law to protect their employees from abuse, discrimination, sexual harassment, etc. The Sports Confederation and *SISU Idrottsutbildarna* are working proactively with their members to implement several regulations, guidelines and educational programmes related to, for example, doping, sports integrity, diversity, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, safeguarding and protection of minors.

7.3 Free Movement of Athletes

Sweden is subject to the EU rules regarding the free movement of labour, cross-border competition and discrimination. Following the Bosman case of 1995, NGBs and clubs adjusted their internal regulations to comply with EU law. It is prohibited to restrict the number of foreign athletes from EU member states, but the number of non-EU athletes may be limited to some extent.

The Swedish Football Association has adopted rules where at least half of the players noted in the club's player list must be "*home-grown players*", ie, must have been registered with a Swedish football club for at least three years between the ages of 12 and 21.

Athletes who are EU citizens have the right to live and work in Sweden without a residence permit or a work permit. Professional athletes who are non-EU nationals need to apply for a work permit to compete for a Swedish club. The requirements include having a valid contract with a club affiliated with the Sports Confederation, a salary of at least SEK14,300 per month before tax, and health and accident insurance. The Sports Confederation must also certify that the employment is vital for the positive development of the sport.

Non-EU citizens from certain countries (such as Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Indonesia and most African countries) may need a visa to travel to Sweden.

8. Women's Sport

8.1 Women's Sport Overview

Women's sports are well established in Sweden in most disciplines. Indeed, in some sports, such as alpine skiing and biathlon, the Swedish women have, due to their greater international

success, received far more media attention than the men.

The government is investing in sport and expects the sports movement, at all levels, to redouble its efforts to achieve gender equality in sports, and to give all those with an active interest the same opportunities to participate, regardless of their gender. The largest women's sports in Sweden are still athletics, football and gymnastics but other sports such as ice hockey, basketball and handball continue to develop.

There has been a sharp increase in audience figures during women's sports events in recent years and events from women's top sports leagues are regularly broadcast on TV and other mainstream media, which obviously attracts new sponsors, etc. In 2021, the Swedish Football Association introduced equal compensation for the national teams.

9. Esports

9.1 Esports Overview

Despite its comparatively small population, Sweden is one of the world's leading countries within esports and esports continue to grow rapidly. Some of the world's best-selling games are produced in the Nordic countries and the Nordic region is a huge gaming community.

Sweden is also home to DreamHack's esports tournaments, the biggest esports events in the world. The Swedish eSports Association is the umbrella organisation for Swedish competitive electronic gaming. The Association currently has three national esports teams; women's, men's and junior. They represent Sweden at the European and World Championships in the Dota2,

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) and Rocket League disciplines.

There has been an ongoing debate on whether or not esports should be recognised as an official sport in Sweden. However, in 2023, the Sports Confederation finally recognised esports as an official sport and admitted the Swedish eSports Association as a member.

In January 2022, the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund's Savvy Gaming Group acquired ESL Gaming and DreamHack from Modern Times Group for USD1.5 billion.

10. NFTs, AI and the Metaverse

10.1 Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

NFTs are digital assets that may lead to new revenue streams for Swedish leagues, event organisers, clubs and individual top athletes, etc. NFTs, like cryptocurrencies, are technologies that at the time of writing remain in a grey area in terms of legal recognition in Sweden.

NFTs have received huge interest globally, but the industry itself is in a very early stage, and the legal recognition of NFT transactions is still untested in Sweden. *IFK Göteborg* has become the first club in Sweden, to start selling NFTs in collaboration with their sponsor *merinfo.se* and the marketplace *Atlanten*.

However, the development of NFTs in Swedish sports has generally been slow so far. Nevertheless, NFTs may have great potential to offer new sources of revenue for the sports industry as they offer new types of engagement with the fans. Potential risks with NFTs are mainly copy-

right infringements and violation of the GDPR/data protection regulations.

10.2 AI

Sweden follows the EU regulations on AI, including the AI Act. The Swedish government has also developed a national AI strategy to guide the responsible development and use of AI across various sectors, including sports.

Sports organisations and sponsors in Sweden are leveraging AI in the following innovative ways:

- fan engagement: AI is used to personalise fan experiences, such as providing tailored content recommendations and enhancing stadium experiences;
- performance analysis: AI-powered tools analyse athletes' performance data to help coaches tailor training programmes and improve player performance;
- injury prevention: AI analyses biomechanical data to identify potential injury risks and suggest preventive measures; and
- sponsorship activation: AI helps generate monetisable digital content, such as augmented broadcast feeds and social media graphics, to increase sponsorship revenues.

10.3 The Metaverse

In Sweden, the metaverse is being explored across various sectors, including sports. Some practical applications include virtual events, training and simulation for athletes and fan engagement, such as using the metaverse to offer the club's fans immersive experiences (virtual meetings with players, exclusive behind-the-scenes content, etc).

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