Chapter - II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sincere efforts have been made by the research scholar to locate the related literature. After reviewing the scientific literature on soccer, one can not get help but come to the conclusion that there is practically no literature available on observational studies of Indian soccer. The investigator was able to find the trends and situation of Indian soccer through various literature searched. The research scholar was able to locate many articles on Indian soccer related to the present study. Whatever studies/materials could be found by the investigator, are referred to below. The investigator in this chapter also presents the material related to trends and practice of international professional soccer in order to get a comparative view on Indian soccer.

Ghosh¹ in his article, “Has the nursery shifted to some other place,” published in the Hindu newspaper on 12 September 1991 reported that Bengal was once regarded as the nursery of Indian football. But of late, the standard in the state has deteriorated deplorably. And the most tragic part is the present state of affairs - which hardly ensures unearthing of talent and proper grooming of the juniors.

He also reported that the big three clubs of Calcutta after gleaning the best of the home state, recruit outstation players. Of late, they have shown the inclination to import foreign players.

Derick D’Souza, former Indian coach and Indian international in his interview to the Blitz newspaper said that the main reason why our standards have plummeted is “new players are not coming up.” Clubs all over are relying on old players and this is especially true of Calcutta, the nursery of Indian soccer, which has gone dry, he said.

The Calcutta clubs are now totally dependent on outside recruits. The club that prided itself on its tradition of fielding only local talent, shows that they now accept the reality that Bengal has declined, he averred.

Another major reason for the slide in standards is because “we are late starters in the game,” said D’Souza, “We start our basics very late and hence our players peak only when they are 25-26, whereas abroad a player matures around 16 and is ready for international competition.” He therefore recommends the All India Football Federation for shifting its focus to youngsters as things can only progress from down below.

He also said, “The scoring part is our main weakness. Against foreign teams you get one or two chances and if you don’t score you can’t win.”

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In the words of Armando Colaco, the technical director of Churchill Brothers club, "There is hardly any system today in Indian soccer," and the absence of professionalism does not allow a coach to concentrate fully on his wards as he already has his other job to worry about.

Colaco laments the absolute lack of talent now emerging from Goa, which is why he says that he still relies on old war-horses. And "the only vehicle to bring about change in the Indian soccer is professionalism," avers Colaco.

Derick D'Souza spoke at length to the Deccan Herald newspaper about Indian soccer. He said, "We played the game for the love of it. It was something like a hobby. There was no television, no video games during our younger days. We used to derive satisfaction and pleasure out of playing football. And of course the aim was to play for the country. We used to practice ourselves for hours together. There was no coach when we were sub-juniors and juniors. But still our basics were strong because of our own training."

He further says, "Now a days, I feel that the players are too selfish. Everyone wants to make as much money as possible as fast as they can. Nobody parts with the ball, eventually ending up with nobody scoring. Now all our top clubs rely on 'imported' players for goals."

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He further adds that “physical disparity is a disadvantage always for Indians. During my days we had taller, well-built players. We were able to match our Asian rivals. But now you see, most of the footballers are short and puny. The present day players are not as brainy as well.”

He says, “Unless the present system changes, the Indian senior players will continue to perform the way they have been for sometime now; they are definitely overworked. Take for example players of big Calcutta clubs, they have to play unlimited number of tournaments. Though the All India Football Federation resolution restricts them from playing more tournaments, there other office tournaments like the Inter-Bank, Central Revenue, Public sector and the like. And after all these when they come for the national duty they obviously tend to take it easy.”

He says the remedy for this is, “Reduce the number of tournaments but make them more lucrative. Money is a vital ingredient for development of football. Unless more money is pumped into the game at all stages it is difficult to see the game picking up.”

He suggested that, “What we need is more and more academies. But I am not happy with the Tata Football Academy. Academies should never form their own teams. They should concentrate, at least initially, only on training. Spot the youngsters right from the age of six, take care of the child’s every aspect and then train him. But the tragedy in India is that most of the footballers come from poor families and once the player
reaches a certain level of excellence he is out of the residential coaching set-up there are so many distracters which work against his game and this is the reason so many youngsters who held promise have faded out too early.”

He also suggested that, “At least all the top clubs should get together and realise the drawback of overworking the players. They should find sponsors to raise funds rather than making money from tournaments, one after the other. They should resolve to release the players to the national camps irrespective of their commitments. Then I think the players can show improved performance from the national teams.”

Shreekumar and Raghunath⁵ in their article reported that the frenzied crowds whose hysterical cries for goals resounded through maidans all over the country, have thinned down, resulting in loss of revenue. The reason for this indifference is not far to seek. The Indian players have failed to rise to the expectations of an increasingly discerning public whose appetite for good football has been whetted by watching international matches on television. The crowds now want to see the dribbling skills of a Maradona, the dazzling footwork of a Marco Van Basten and the powerful shots of a Rudd Gulitt. The power, that speed, those clinically precise passes, are, unfortunately all missing in India.

They say, "There is no dearth of talent in the country as such. But improper selection procedures, long camps, lack of money and nasty politicking have combined to give good soccer a run for its money."

Former Indian international Arun Ghosh says, "The duration of the camps should be shortened as most of our players become stale even before the camp is over." He adds: "In most of the camps we find that some of the players have been overplayed while most have been underplayed. Only organised domestic schedules can set right these imbalances."

They further say, "Lesser money is another factor which hinders the progress of the game today. Comparison is made with the sponsorship and endorsements that cricket gets. While one can name a galaxy of cricket stars, past and present - from Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi to Roger Binny, Kapil Dev to Sachin Tendulkar - endorsing a horde of consumer goods and hitting pay dirt in the process, one can only name Chuni Goswami, who used to endorse Horlicks. Which of course creates a lot of heartburn among footballers. And lack of will to fight."

"Introduction of professionalism is the only way out. Clubs should take interest in the welfare of their players. Companies from the private sector can also play a major part in sponsoring some players," says V.P. Sathyan, former captain of the Indian team.
The sportstar\(^6\) reported that it is indeed regrettable that successive administrations did precious little to make constructive use of the mass popularity the sport enjoys even today. Unaware (or probably unconcerned), our administrators lived in a world of their own, when a wave of changes revolutionised the whole concept towards style, system, training and coaching, not to speak of the degree of sophistication in the game's governance. Overawed as they were by the three Calcutta clubs, their outlook never stretched beyond the maidans of Calcutta. The national agenda was drawn up by the big three - East Bengal, Mohmadan Sporting and Mohun Bagan. So much so, even the policies formulated for the growth of Indian soccer had to have the stamp of approval of the triumvirate. Sophistry was the obvious consequence.

The realisation that India had become a non-entity even in the sub-continent hit the administration in full force not long ago. Efforts at remedying the situation have had some impact. Launching the Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup fulfilled the need for exposure to international competition, but financial constraints and rank bad organisation in recent times have taken the sheen off it. The All India Football Federation is unable to rope in any major soccer nation, although the All India Football Federation spokesmen are never tired of mentioning the participation of every conceivable former world champion country in

the competition. Even those who agree to participate treat it as an event for their under-21 squads. What the future holds for this allegedly prestigious tournament is anybody's guess?

Sports World\textsuperscript{7} reported that in the mid sixties an Asian All Stars football team invariably included two or three Indian players. An all time high was reached in 1967, when four Indians were selected for the Asian All Stars team, with the redoubtable Mohun Bagan stopper-back Jarnail Singh as skipper. The quarter were Jarnail, left back Atlaf Ahmed, midfielder Yusuf Khan and goalkeeper Peter Thangraj. Now in 1993, there are no Indian players in the Asian All Stars team. The last Indian to be selected was goalkeeper Atanu Bhattacharya in 1985.

The root of the problem with Indian football is that the players show greater loyalty to the clubs than the country, according to Derick D'Souza,\textsuperscript{8} the former coach of the national team. The clubs pay them well whereas they hardly get any money for representing the country, added D'Souza. The situation, he felt, could be improved by finding sponsors for the national team.

D'Souza also pointed out the example of South Korea who have qualified for the finals in the United States: "We used to beat them regularly in the old days. Now they have built up a strong team by going

\textsuperscript{8}The Indian Express (Mumbai) 16 June (1994): 22.
to the grass-roots. There are a dozen football academies in South Korea,” he says.

The former coach lamented that players were being allowed to represent their clubs while a camp for the Indian team was on, “when they return to the camp most of them are not fit,” he said.

However, he was optimistic that India could perform well at the international level if the players were given the exposure that they sadly lack.

India are still playing football of the 1920s not of the 90s, said K. Bhaskaran, veteran football writer. He decried the All India football Federation’s apathy towards the game and felt that the money available to the sport was being wasted away.

Mr. Bhaskaran was also critical of long camps. Germany, he pointed out, not only had short camps of about 10 days for the 1994 World Cup, but also at different venues.

Mario Mendes9 reported about India’s chances of qualifying for the World Cup after interviewing former Indian international players. Sanjiva Uchil (Represented India from 1948 to 1955) said our standard has gone down considerably. He said, “During our days it was very good. We were of some international class till 1970. If the standard improves we have good chances of qualifying for the World Cup.”

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He suggested that while selecting the national team, the All India Football Federation authorities should not play to the tunes of the Bengal players, who avoid attending the national camps under some pretext or the other and somehow manage to get into the national squad; we must select the squad purely on merit.

S. S. Narayan (1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Olympics goalkeeper) said, “We have no chance of qualifying for the World Cup in the near future. It will take years together to build up a formation of the past. Leave alone the World Cup, we have no chance of qualifying for the Olympics even.”

He further said, “We need a top class foreign coach and not the left overs that we get from abroad. Besides, the All India Football Federation should change its attitude of depending far too much on Bengal players and playing to their dictatorial attitude.”

Fortunato Franco (1960 Rome Olympics) says, “We will never ever qualify so long as the powers that be in Indian football continue to rule. Unless there is a cleaning up of the administration at the grass-root level, we cannot look beyond the present state of soccer affairs. Take for example the case of Bangladesh; people are starving in that country and we can’t beat them. The national team comprises mostly of Bengal players only; they are not dedicated to the country.”
He adds, "We lack professional approach, the main team should be retained for 2 to 3 years. During our day, we never played for money, today the players play only for money. The team without Bengal players fare much better, as in 1974, as they are only loyal to their club and not the country."

Mario Mendes\(^{10}\) in his article "Red cards to refs," reported that referees appear to be unsure of their competence and fail to win the respect of the players. Quite often their decisions are inconsistent and questionable. The referees lack the authority on the field and as a result resort to controlling play by way of showing yellow caution cards or red expulsion cards to errant or sometimes innocent players.

He also presented the views of other personalities to support his article. Madhav G. Suvarna (former FIFA referee) said, "Sometimes cards are necessary to be shown to the players. But often, that can be avoided by talking to the players. Most referees do not use this diplomacy."

Mr Suvarna also said, "The use of psychology is imperative too, for in the heat of the moment, players do indulge in unfair means. Today, most of the referees adopt control of play by flashing cards."

Ireno Vez (former junior international) said, "There is no doubt that the standard of refereeing has dropped. There are no good referees with the exception of one or two. They control play by just flashing out

\(^{10}\)Mario Mendes, "Red Cards To Refs," *Mid-Day* (Mumbai) 26 September (1994): 32.
unjustified cards and that instead worsens the situation. The showing of cards has become a mockery.”

Shukla\textsuperscript{11} reported that the time has come when even sports critics have given up contemplating the reasons for the decline in Indian football. At the most, they discuss this issue briefly when some major national or international football championship is on. Perhaps, we have never cared to honestly analyse why, from being a regional force, we have moved into South Asian backwaters and international oblivion in the world’s most popular sport.

After all, what has gone wrong that our standard has slumped to an all-time low? Pradeep Kumar Bannerjee, former Olympian, Arjuna and Padma Shri award winner, feels physical inadequacy is the main reason for India’s stagnancy in the football world.

“You look at the 1962 Asian Games champion Indian side, except ‘Arumai’ all the others were solidly built. Now look at the present national side. Of course, the present set of players are skillful and resourceful, but they certainly lack in physique, which is imperative to perform well at the international level,” says P. K. Banerjee.

One of the best mid-fielders in the game, former India captain Parminder Singh, feels, “India can only improve its standards by switching over to professionalism at the earliest. Look at Japan, South Korea, Saudi

\textsuperscript{11}Vivek G. Shukla, “If the Ingredients are not Good, What can the Cook Do?,” \textit{Sunday Observer} (Mumbai) 4 March (1995): 19.
Arabia: all of them have introduced professional football with a national league and the improvement is mind-boggling. With the opening of economy, I don’t think money will be a problem. Only a beginning has to be made.”

However, former Indian captain Inder Singh, believes Indian players do not have the right attitude. He is bitter about the manner in which the players prepare themselves. “somehow we Indians train to win only local tournaments. The goal of other countries is to excel in the World Cup, Olympics and other major tournaments. They train themselves accordingly. Training has become far more scientific. There is absolutely no place for defeat. We ignore learning these lessons. The result is written on the walls. We are simply nowhere in the football world.”

Parminder Singh and P. K. Bannerjee agree. They believe the desire to excel just does not exist in Indian football.

Parminder Singh says, “During my career I have seen many players who were not at all keen to perform well for the country. Their only aim was to play for either of the three giant Calcutta clubs in order to make some quick money. They hardly considered playing for the country as the greatest joy or, for that matter, honor.”

P. K. Bannerjee, who has coached the national team on several occasions, agreed that players needed to benefit monetarily from the game but felt that financial gains should be secondary in the players’ mind set.
“Nobody can deny the fact that money matters a lot in today’s world and that the players should earn as much as they can. But the players must not compromise with national honor for petty considerations.”

Shyam Thapa, the former international star forward, feels football standards could be improved to a respectable level with the introduction of a national club championship. This kind of championship, he says, could be completed in five or six months. “The biggest gain in organising such a championship is that the interest among footballers will remain for almost half the year.”

Cricic Milovan, the Yugoslavian coach who was in charge of the national soccer team for the 1984 Calcutta Nehru Cup, had then suggested to the All India Football Federation that a national league be established.

The 1986 World Cup in Mexico was a watershed for Indian football. It was the first time the tournament was telecast live in India. Indian football lovers were stunned by the breathtaking speed, skill and stamina in the game. Perhaps this is why, feels Parminder Singh, “that spectators have lost all interest in Indian teams. Most of them avoid going to the stadium these days to watch matches though the love for the game is still very strong in Bengal, Kerala and Goa.”

Regarding the introduction of foreign coaches, P. K. Bannerjee is unsure about that. “A coach role,” he says, “at senior level is very
limited. It is akin to a cook. If the ingredients are not good, what can the cook do? Unless we produce good players, no coach can do anything to lift our standards. Also, most of the foreign coaches who have come to India have had communication problems. They take a long time to understand the psychology of an Indian player. That is why I feel most of them have not been able to do much."

Inder Singh feels the need for more and more football academies in the country on the lines of the Tata Football Academy. "If we start now, at least after 10 years we will have a set of players who can compete with the best in the world," he says, but adds, "The process should be continuous. Every state in India should have at least one such academy."

Mendes\textsuperscript{12} in his article, "Are foreign coaches the answer?" reported that there is the problem of communication when a team is assembled from several linguistic parts of India. The Bengalees tend to huddle together during the camps. So do the Malayalees, the Goans, the Punjabis and the Kandadigas. It is natural.

While this happens, the coach is hard put to get down to the lowest common denominator. Hindi does not help, for none of the groups named take it as the link language. Football, by nature, lacks civilised disposition on the part of the players, both on and off the field. This has

\textsuperscript{12}Dennis Mendes, "Are Foreign Coaches the Answer?," \textit{Afternoon} (Mumbai) 9 April (1995): 31.
extended to the spectators. Hooliganism in the stands, spilling onto the streets, and players assaulting referees are not uncommon occurrences.

Add to this the problem of a medium, the former Indian foreign coach Akramov confronted many problems due to language. The only language he was comfortable with was Russian. He needed an interpreter to coach the team.

Marar\(^{13}\) reported that the feeling among Goan coaches is that the local players are taking everything for granted. They do not give 100 per cent, with a few notable exceptions. Besides, Goan players/clubs do not like to play in tournaments outside the state. The players are so attached to their families that they do not want to be away from home for long. So the clubs were forced to look outside for new talent.

Crasto\(^{14}\) wondered where Indian football, with the rampant chopping and changing of players and foreign coaches is heading? That is the key question today as India hopes to do well in the Olympic qualifiers. It becomes more relevant with the negligible progress being made by the All India Football Federation in the matter of raising standards for a better showing on the international front.

He adds, "Will Mr. Dasmunshi, the president of All India Football Federation, import another foreign coach for Rustom Akramov,


who took over from Czech coach, Jiri Pesek, or will the federation revert to old procedures of having an Indian coach as deputy. The second premise should be more acceptable knowing that the trainees must know what the coach has in mind. It is no sense having a good coach when neither the coach nor the trainee is certain about the impact being made."

Derick D'Souza said that "We need more football academies to start from scratch. Boys have to be taken in hand from the under-10 age group, and taught the basics." "Better to utilise the panel of Indian coaches already in the All India Football Federation fold, and let the foreign coach dictate the overall policy so that gradation in proficiency be attained," he added.

Mendes\textsuperscript{15} reported the reactions of players, ex-internationals, coaches and administrators on Indian soccer in his article, "Heading nowhere."

Bruno Coutinho (former captain Indian team) said, "The players who are good enough to play competitive soccer also attend the selection trials are just getting burnt out. There are far too many matches right through the season. Than comes the camps. I feel guilty for not being able to do justice to my club, Salgaocar. Except for the Goa league, I was away either touring with the national team or attending camps. The boys are all exhausted. We just don’t feel like attending camps. I feel such

camps should be scheduled two weeks prior to the departure of the Indian team for any international competition.”

Baichung Bhutia (India’s striker) said, “I have played over 70 matches in a season. I am burnt out. I need to keep away from football for some time for a brief rest as my body is unwilling to take the toil.”

Brahmanand Shankwalkar (former India goalkeeper) said, “There has been too much talk about laying emphasis on youngsters. But the sudden move to ignore some of the established senior players and including inexperienced players for international tournaments is one of the reasons behind our poor performances in the recent past.”

He further said, “National camps should be organised in phases and India probables allowed to represent their clubs. With the national League in the offing and the lucrative contracts for top players, the probables can be expected to look after themselves, especially the fitness part. There should not be too many changes in the national side. One or two here and there is alright. More importantly, players must be insured against injury even during the camp.”

Syed Naeemuddin (former Indian coach and ex-international) said, “Everything is wrong with our administrative system. We are relying far too much on foreign coaches. A foreign coach is not more important than knowledge of foreign techniques.”
He added, "Even noted German coach Deitter Crammer had suggested that India must groom its own coaches. He had remarked that there is plenty of coaching talent, only it had to be tapped and groomed properly."

Sukwinder Singh (Indian coach) said, "First of all, we should make our own circle of good coaches. There is talent aplenty, what we lack is know-how about where we should start seriously. We lack planning. We talk about coaching for under-16 and 19 but the implementation is zero."

He further said, "All India Football Federation should also take the blame for not preparing their annual calendar in advance so that the clubs and state associations can plan their programme."

Henry Britto (secretary, Salgaocar S.C.) said, "The long coaching camps for the seniors is a sheer waste of resources. Instead they should utilise the expertise of the foreign coach to groom the under-10 and under-12 players with an eye on the future."

He adds, "The All India Football federation lacks planning, programming and vision. They are killing the hen that lays the golden eggs. It is the clubs who spend huge sums of money to lure the players and pass them on to the federation. Let the federation start a nursery and produce players. Then they will understand the pains of doing so."
FIFA Magazine\textsuperscript{16} presented a study entitled, "Tradition, wealth and size - or is there more to it?" in the August 1996 edition. The purpose of the study was to find out the following: What significance can be attributed to cultural, demographic and economic factors in international football?; to what extent do they contribute to an association's sporting success?

In order to address this question, FIFA had the factors "tradition," "economic strength," and "size" analysed and evaluated in relation to an association's position in the FIFA/Coca-Cola Ranking of 24 April 1996. Since it was essentially impossible to assess the "tradition" factor objectively for all associations, the gauge used for these purposes was the year in which an association was founded as well as the year that it joined FIFA (which to some extent indicate the degree of an association's institutionalisation and its interest in international football events). For the factors "economic strength" and "size," 1996 World Bank data was used. In order to avoid distorting the figures through the inclusion of associations which play only sporadically, only those associations which have participated in at least 12 "A" international games in the past four years were taken into consideration. Consequently the number of associations assessed was limited to 128. Following conclusions were drawn from the study.

\textsuperscript{16}FIFA Magazine (August 1996) : 7-11.
1. The majority of the associations which are today regarded as the great footballing nations have already existed for three-quarters of a century or longer and have, in most cases, been members of FIFA for a similar length of time and have therefore participated fully in international competition. The fact that "tradition" cannot be the sole decisive factor is demonstrated by the example of a number of South American and European associations which have a strong tradition but which clearly have difficulty keeping up with the world's best.

2. The links between economic strength or large populations and international footballing success are considerably less clear, although these two factors must not be underestimated. When considered individually, these factors do not show any inherent clear-cut advantages. Luxembourg, Switzerland (rich in terms of money and tradition), Singapore and the Gulf States no more occupy top positions than countries which are great simply in terms of population (China, India, Indonesia).

3. A strong economy, a large pool of players and international experience have a fundamental positive effect on an association's current performance level, and yet the success of certain nations at the highest level demonstrates that these links cannot be interpreted too rigidly.
Warrier\textsuperscript{17} in his article, "Needed a change in leadership," reported that the crucial question that needs to be asked is whether Mr. Dasmunshi, president and Mr. Lakshmanan, secretary All India Football Federation can do something constructive for the game in the next four years. Their past record provides little hope for the future.

As a congressmen Mr. Dasmunshi is deeply involved with Indian politics and Mr. Lakshmanan is a businessman. Their integrity and love for the game are beyond doubt but their organisational skills leave a lot to be desired.

Since both are preoccupied with their own hectic activities they have not been able to devote sufficient time to football and chaos thus reigns supreme at the All India Football Federation.

It is the lack of a clear programme for growth from the grass-roots that has hampered Indian football. There has never been a programme - transparent or otherwise - to nurture talent at the lower age groups. The odd preparatory camps before international matches and the conduct of the national age group championships are all the All India Football Federation has to show.

The appointments of the coaches for the junior teams, good referees for tournaments, the allotment of dates for various all-India level tournaments and the All India Football Federation's conduct of

\textsuperscript{17}Sunil Warrier, "Needed a Change in Leadership," \textit{The Times of India} (Mumbai) 13 October (1996): 24.
championships directly under it have all left a lot to be desired and provoked a lot of criticism.

It was left to a FIFA panel that visited the country to suggest a reform. Among the many recommendations by the two member study group, the All India Football Federation is currently pursuing only the national league. It has turned a blind eye towards coaches’ development, tapping of potential, a national youth programme and utilisation of sponsorship money.

About the same time that the study-group gave its recommendations, the All India Football Federation, drawing a connection between the quality of the game with the number of matches teams play in a calendar year, decided to reduce the work load of the players by imposing restrictions on the conduct of the tournaments. But, like several important decisions, this too has remained unimplemented.

The vastness of the country has no doubt posed many difficulties for the All India Football Federation. As an administrative body it has functioned fairly well. But as the body entrusted with the onerous task of promoting the game and improving the standards the All India Football Federation has drawn a blank. Hence it is time to infuse some fresh blood.
Baichung Bhutia\textsuperscript{18} in his interview to the Indian Express newspaper said, "We need good coaches at the grass-root level. Because that's where the skills are really acquired. Indians lack greatly in technical skill like trapping, shooting, ball control etc. After you join a club, all the coach can teach you the different moves and game plans, but basic techniques cannot be taught. Good coaches, foreign or local, should be there to hone basic skills."

He further said, "I don't think JCT have been playing all that much, as compared to Calcutta clubs. But I sincerely believe that by playing so much one loses out an valuable practice time. In Calcutta one hardly gets any practice time."

He adds, "You may gain experience by playing matches but that is not a compensation for practice. Take me for instance, I may have earned some name and fame, but I still believe that I have learnt nothing much in the past five years of my playing career. I am still the same player, in terms of technique, as I was when I began playing in Calcutta. It is very important that a player must get a break from playing all the time and spend more time in practice."

\textsuperscript{18}Baichung Bhutia, "Experience Cannot Compensate for Practice," \textit{The Indian Express} (Mumbai) 17 November (1996): 22.
Goveas\textsuperscript{19} in his article for the Pioneer newspaper discussed the start of the National league and various other problems of Indian football. According to him, "Progressive thinking is something which has been sadly missing from Indian sport. And, whenever there have been stray attempts to implement path-breaking ideas, they have been helplessly bogged down in the morass that represents the administration of Indian sport."

He says, "The system of a national league has been adopted, and very successfully, by nearly most countries. Within a short period the J-league has emerged among the most competitive and qualitative leagues in the world, while the Chinese league is one of the largest drawers of crowds and sponsors in its country."

He asks, "In this scenario, why is it so difficult to envisage a successful national league in India? We do have our share of clubs and teams in the country with large fan followings in their home cities and states."

He says, "There is no denying the need of a national league. But it is not necessary that on every occasion the ends justify the means. In this case, the haphazard and amateurish manner in which the All India Football Federation has approached the national league leaves much to be desired."

He stated that various decisions had been taken in the All India Football Federation executive meeting in February, 1996 with regard to the national league but not a single one has been implemented to date.

One of the decisions taken at the meeting was to stagger graded tournaments to every alternate year. By graded tournaments, the All India Football Federation means the tournaments other than the Durand Cup, the Rovers Cup, the IFA Shield and the Federation Cup. The tournaments affected by this ruling would have been the DCM, Bordoloi, Sait Nagjee, Mammen Mapillai, Governor’s Gold Cup and Kalinga Trophy, to name a few. These tournaments provide staging associations with funds to conduct their activities throughout the year. Will it be that easy to just stagger these tournaments or do away with them?

The international football governing body, FIFA had stipulated that a player will play only 60 matches per season. But, the All India Football Federation is in no position to monitor a player’s season. They, after all have to depend on the reports they get from the secretaries of the respective clubs.

Bhaskar\textsuperscript{20} reported that Asian Football Confederation (AFC) secretary, Peter Velappan, warned that the glamour and prestige of what then was known to be one of Asia’s premier events (Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup) will nose-dive, unless the home team builds up a

\textsuperscript{20}K. Bhaskar, “NFL: Calling the Shots!,” \textit{Mid-Day} (Mumbai) 9 December (1996): 46.
good record in it. His foreboding has come true, and the AFC clearly has relegated the status of the tournament by turning it from being an annual event to a biennial one from 1989.

One of the remedies that the AFC secretary suggested was the introduction of professional football in India. But the people who had a finger on the pulse of Indian football knew that it is easier said than done.

The vastness of the country, the different set-ups and ways of working in different states, or more bluntly the lack of organised administration of the game, pricked optimism of the introduction of professionalism, or even semi-professionalism.

For all the misconceived beliefs of many people, there was not the kind of money in Indian football for it to go truly professional. Gate takings, which then were the only source of revenue, could briefly sustain the rising costs of staging events and preparing teams for national and international commitments, leave alone sprucing up existing facilities. The earnings from a season of almost ten months, was pittance to what is gained at a single cricket Test match.

But the All India Football Federation and its agents, the International Management Group (IMG) and the Leisure Sports Management of Calcutta, have persuaded Philips to pump in money for the National Football League that could not have been visualised a few years back.
The amount involved is mind-boggling as far as Indian football is concerned, if not when set against those for professional football in Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and the European countries.

Mendes\textsuperscript{21} in his article, "Where has the flavor gone," in Afternoon newspaper stated that football fans are missing the regional flavor. The Rovers Cup tournament is in full swing at the good old Cooperage, and the famous Calcutta teams, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal, have not lived up to expectations. We are not talking of quality, but just the brand of football which indicates the region a team belongs to. We used to see the Goan way of soccer, the Punjab style and the South Indian method. With football going professional in India following the launching of the national league, it is unlikely that the brands of football will return to the respective states. Mohun Bagan have hired Russians, Sri Lankans and North Indians as well as some from the South, and East Bengal, Dempo, Churchill Brothers and JCT have been following the trend. Old-timers feel that in the coming millennium victory is going to be the watch word rather than a constructive piece of work. Philips are the major sponsors of the first national league. Indeed the championship will be called the Philips League, with more than a crore being allotted as sponsorship. The Philips people wish it were a permanent arrangement. Transfers and selections are going to be tough, and managements will try

\textsuperscript{21}Dennis Mendes, "Where has the Flavor Gone?," \textit{Afternoon} (Mumbai) 16 December (1996): 21.
to win by hook or by crook. What we can watch now is the khichdi of Goan, Calcutten, Punjabi, Kannada, Malayali, Russian and Nigerian ingredients. It’s the menu, folks. You have no choice.

The Cooperage, football stadium (Mumbai), which is an apology for a stadium, needs toilets and better seating arrangements for the spectators as well as the Press. One journalist pointed out that this is a problem we have been facing for the last 40 years. But will the money pouring in from the Philips League make a difference?

Banerjee22 reported that addressing the press conference in Calcutta, Mr. Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, president of the All India Football Federation said, “The entry of Philips into football will definitely bring professionalism to the game in India. In fact the Philips League will be India’s richest football tournament.”

“Given the Philips experience in Europe, Latin America, China and Japan, we are confident that the Philips League here in India will signal the start of a lucrative professional football league,” said Mr. Alok Gupta, business group head, colour televisions, Philips India.

“The decision to use more venues will facilitate the spreading of the game into newer and non-traditional areas,” said Mr. Dasmunshi.

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Banerjee in his article, "National League needs to be nurtured," states, "As we step into a new era, I have one word of caution. We are beginning a new routine with the old set of players bred in an antiquated system. To really improve the standard of the game, we either need a fresh crop of players or the existing bunch be over hauled in such a way that they look like new players. It eventually boils down to one's attitude."

He further states that, "the national league has to be nurtured in a dedicated manner by both players and the sports administrators. If not, the ambitious attempt will become nothing but the packaging of a stale and fermenting product in a glossy cover."

He adds, "The start of a national league cannot be the only answer towards professionalism. The dividends cannot come overnight. Its effects will come only after a long-term development programme. For this, I feel, it is important for all top Indian teams to build back-up teams which will ensure a supply system where the old can be exchanged for new. There is an immediate need to categorise tournaments and fix the number of tournaments a team can play. The All India Football Federation has shown the predilection of such an effort but everything went haywire as many clubs jumped the gun and entered any number of tournaments to fill up their coffers."

Suryanarayan\textsuperscript{24} in his article, "Professionalism and Indian football," stated that National leagues had done wonders to the game in Japan. Why? People there, it is said, identify themselves with teams as do business houses. For, it's fame and money that form the success portion of any professional league. The spin off is the rising standards of the game for no longer can a player be a spectator or an invisible component in the team's scheme of things, but a performer with a well marked function. Specialists, as the experts would say.

True, much planning has been done before the launch, the venture even withstood the storm in the form of the parent body's annual elections, but the question is whether Indian football is prepared for this major operation. Professionalism, obviously, does not mean just the 'financial aspect', though it is an important component, but whether the climate, the settings in India and the players' mental build up are conducive for such a major exercise.

It is tempting to state that 'professionalism' already exists in Indian football, the roots being in Bengal. There is no denying the football ethos in Calcutta. The three major clubs, Mohun Bagan, Mohammedan Sporting and East Bengal have their own legion of supporters. The players

too show their commitment and it is said, get financially rewarded too.
The question is how much Indian football has gained.

The popularity of the game precedes any talk of professionalism. Football is as much a spectator sport as cricket is but the similarity ends there. A cricketer can afford to be a professional because he has a stature, a backing and a following. The effort has to be to build such an image for a footballer and that can come only when football as a sport in India becomes (as it is known all over as the world) the most popular sport. The critical need is, even as experiments on the national league proceed, image building. This need not be restricted to the players but also the people who administer the sport. Professionalism in fact should start there. For instance the day All India Football Federation is able to chart out clear dates for major football events, a year in advance and win the confidence of the various clubs and the players, then perhaps we will reach some where in professional efficiency.

In short, there is so much more to be done. We seem to be only working on a ‘concept of professionalism’ without being too professional about it! Indeed it would be akin to missing the wood for the trees if it is to be believed the ‘money’ and interest of ‘private TV net work’ in football lately are to be linked to the game’s popularity.

What must amuse observers for the moment is the reported comment of a senior football administrator, in the context of the launching
of the new club in Kochi, "You will now see what professional players are like." Need anything more be said on what professionalism in football has been in India thus far!

Mather\textsuperscript{23} in his article, "Beyond 2000 A.D.,” stated that efforts had been made with the ultimate objective of building up a strong national side by engaging foreign coaches like Cyrick Milovan, Joseph Gali, Jery Passcle, Rustham Akormov in the project. Despite all these efforts we have not achieved our desired goals.

The introduction of professionalism in Indian football is another step towards improving our standards, even though there are merits and demerits in the way professionalism is being introduced in India. But, ultimately, it will contribute much to the promotion of football in our country. I do not wish to elaborate on the pros and cons of this issue at this stage.

The national league matches contributed much to the benefit of players on the financial side, but how far has it benefited the performance of players at international level?

Ghosh\textsuperscript{26} in his article, "A big mess," stated that the Philips National Football League has given rise to certain question, concerning its administration. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) president, Priya


Ranjan Dasmunshi had said that the league will turn fully professional in a few years time. But the manner in which it started was astonishing.

The league is AIFFs tournament but it asked the IFA to organise the Group A section, even though the state body is in a mess with the joint secretaries moving in opposite directions.

In the Philips League regulations it is said, “The training grounds in good conditions shall be made available to the participating teams two days prior to the match.” But several teams complained that no proper facilities were provided.

Even though the first phase of the league was completed, the participating teams did not receive the players’ kit containing 30 balls, three sets of full kits for each registered player, blazers, kit bag, sweat shirts and boots.

On the inaugural day, the players of both East Bengal and Mohammedan Sporting were introduced to the Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda. The East Bengal players were dressed casually, with some in tracksuits and some in playing shorts.

The less said about the fixture the better. Even if we ignore the problem created due to participation of three Calcutta teams in the Bangabandhu tournament, in Dhaka, how could the AIFF justify the clash between the cluster matches for Santosh Trophy and the national league?
Due to clash of fixtures of national league and Santosh Trophy many state teams suffered a setback in their preparation for the Santosh Trophy.

The Hindustan Times\textsuperscript{27} newspaper reported that Bade Mian Mohammad Habib, former international and Tata Football Academy coach said, "The Bengal players are made to play a lot of matches in a season and that is the reason why they are not able to concentrate on matches." Habib is also very critical of the fact that most of the contemporary players have lost their self-pride and that it doesn't really make any difference to them whether they lose or win.

He further said, "During my years as a player, I remember how upset we used to be when we lost any match. Our self-pride was hurt and we were always on the lookout for revenge in the next match. This spirit is totally missing these days and the clubs are only greedy about money." He added, "In those days, Mohun Bagan, on principal, played just two outstation tournaments, the Durand and the Rovers Cup. Now a days, they have even started playing in a lot of commercial tournaments."

"Today, all the players are working somewhere or the other and then they are expected to play for the office tournaments," he said.

Habib has another complaint, says he, "Players like Peter Thangaraj, Chunni Goswami, Yusuf Khan, P.K. Banerjee, Balaram and

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{The Hindustan Times: Sunday Magazine} (New Delhi) \textsuperscript{16 February} (1997): 7.
others were players with great will-power. They could never digest any defeat even when they were playing against top class foreign teams and most of them had the ambition of playing a couple of Asian Games for their country. But these days, the players are not ambitious. They are satisfied with donning the national colours and that is all they want.

Kapadia\textsuperscript{28} in his article, “Strategic moves,” stated that Indian football is in a state of flux. Just like the Indian economy in its period of transition from a controlled economy to a market economy is facing many teething problems, similarly Indian football is also in a transition phase. Several experiments are being tried out in the 1996-97 national Philips League. Time will tell if these innovations are successful or not.

For the national league, each team is allowed to field five foreigners. This move was criticised as it was interpreted as a restriction of opportunity for upcoming Indian players. However, the All India Football Federation’s rationale for such a move is very pragmatic. They hope that the presence of foreign players will improve the standard of play.

Another reason cited is that as Indian football lacks many charismatic players at present, they hope that foreign players can become cult figures in the national league and attract the crowds. After all, besides Baichung Bhutia and I.M.Vijayan and to some extent Bruno Coutinho, there is no Indian footballer for whom people queue up to take autographs.

The pitfalls of permitting five foreigners per side is that the national league may become a dumping ground for obscure foreign talent. Indian coaches will have to be more discerning in their foreign recruits, otherwise such a move will be self-defeating.

Teams from Goa and JCT from Phagwara also offer lucrative money and better facilities than the Calcutta clubs. Chibuzor, the foreign player said, "The atmosphere in Calcutta is still superb but the clubs are not professionally run. The players are over worked and promises are often not kept."

Churchill Alemao, the owner of Churchill Brothers, by splurging big money in transfers has suddenly taken football in Goa out of the feudal trap. Earlier shipping magnates of Dempo and Salgaocar acted like a cartel and kept players' prices restricted to about Rs.5000 per month. The entrance of Churchill Brothers in the buyers market has led to a dramatic improvement of players' fees as both Salgaocar and Dempo now have to compete to secure quality players.

Such changes are a welcome sign in the changing atmosphere of Indian football. However it is to be seen if in this transitional season, the crowds will be a trickle or a flood.

Kapadia\textsuperscript{29} in his article, "New directions," states that when this generation becomes old, they will look back on the 1996-97 football season

in India and remember it as the year of 'old order changeth, giving way to
the new.' Traditional tournaments have lost clout, status and importance in
terms of allocation of dates and participation of teams.

Sukwinder Singh, the JCT coach said, "We cannot risk injuries
to key players on the eve of the national league. By winning the DCM
tournament we can earn a certain amount of money but nowhere near the
Rs.35 lakhs which we can get for emerging champions of the national
league. We have to get our priorities right."

Former All India Football Federation (AIFF) secretary
P.P.Lakshmanan, had always maintained that for the national league to
flourish, the traditional tournaments should be held every alternative year.

How the mighty have fallen! Just two years ago, the golden
jubilee DCM tournament was a resounding success with packed crowds,
massive media coverage, lucrative gate money and high quality
entertainment. All the top Indian teams took part along with ultimate
champions Bahaman Club of Iran, and teams from Nepal and Uzbekistan.

For the DCM tournament it is like playing snakes and ladders,
from the pinnacle of success they have plunged to the depths of despair. In
the 1994-95 tournament, all the major clubs of India made frantic efforts to
participate, now the organisers are desperate to rope in some of the best
teams of the country. Rajat Mukherjee, DCM secretary, boldly said, "We
are willing to conduct the DCM tournament every alternate year. But this rule must apply to all the other major tournaments also."

The Durand tournament by their Defense Ministry connections managed to have their semi-finals and final telecast live. The Durand, Rovers and IFA Shield had greater clout and managed to acquire suitable dates from the All India Football Federation. But how long will they survive as major tournaments of India? Times are changing. The advent of big money in the national league and the Kalyani Black Label Federation Cup means these major historical tournaments will soon be relegated to being fringe tournaments getting canceled or reduced to a low key event.

The AIFF president, Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi said, "From 1997 onwards all domestic tournaments will be graded according to their merits and tradition. The highest category in this gradation will be for the Super six tournaments, the Durand, Rovers, IFA Shield, DCM, Bordoloi Trophy and the Sait Nagjee Trophy. The top teams can participate in the tournaments of their choice but we will choose a panel of national players and put restrictions on them as regards the number of matches they can play."

The advent of satellite TV, multinationals and big time sport promoters like IMG has certainly changed the structure of the Indian football season forever. Now it is to be seen if the clubs also get more
professional and provide greater facilities for their players, like
gymnasiums, sauna baths, a masseur, a trainer and insurance cover.

The Hindu\textsuperscript{30} newspaper reported on the National Football
League and its impact on clubs and players. It reported that some felt that
the hectic traveling would have a terrible impact on the players. Still others
felt that the players must get used to it. "A professional circuit in a huge
country like ours would make the player mentally and physically tough,"
reported some of the Indian coaches.

P.K. Banerjee said, "Injuries to players are common. And it
becomes an eternal problem to teams which are involved in a professional
circuit. The Philips league must have made the authorities of club teams
and institutional teams realise the importance of adopting a different
method of recruitment. Each team must have at least three quality talented
players for each position of play."

Danny McLennan, one of the very few successful foreign
coaches in Indian football, also emphasised the need for a fool-proof
system through which clubs could devote more time and attention to the
upcoming talent. McLennan, the Churchill Brothers coach from Scotland,
said that in a large country like India with several languages, various food
habits and different climate conditions, teams, especially professional
teams, need a prolonged spell of preparatory period, so as to help the

\textsuperscript{30}The Hindu (New Delhi) 6 March (1997): 20.
players settle down as a formidable combination well in time for the
league."

"An Indian football season should be a clearly identified six
months for the National Football League and a couple of major
tournaments. The off-season could be utilised for finding fresh talents and
for obtaining transfers," McLennan added.

Menon\textsuperscript{31} in his article, "League expansion will have growing
appeal," states that the inaugural national league has amply proved that it is
the best way forward for Indian soccer. Keen competition among the top-
fight clubs and a rise in the general standard of the game were the
immediate results of a bold venture attempted by the All India Football
Federation.

Instead of remaining regional clubs with modest reputation,
most of the teams now have the realistic prospect of going even higher in
this nationwide league where money is not a scarce commodity. The
league has given the opportunity for the participating clubs to flourish,
because the money coming into the game at the highest level seems to
increase all the time. The winner’s share in the inaugural Philips league was
a whopping Rs 35 lakhs, unheard of in the domestic circuit previously.

\textsuperscript{31}K.N.K.Mennon, “League Expansion will Have Growing
Danny McLennan, the Scottish coach of Churchill Brothers, was of the view that the expansion of the league will go a long way in further raising the standard of Indian soccer.

Just as the coaches are generally enthusiastic about the concept, a larger nationwide league will extend the safety zone, reducing the risk of relegation and hugely improve the chances of keeping their jobs.

Basu\(^{32}\) in his article, “A stitch in time......,” stated that JCTs winning the inaugural Philips National League was the best thing that can happen to Indian football. The title not only went to the correct hands, but also stressed the point that the time has come when Indian soccer needs a true cosmopolitan approach to lift its level of performance and standard.

Thankfully, JCT itself has taken the lead to shatter all the age-old beliefs. The poor performances of its team in the 1993 and 1994 season forced it to change the policy of taking only Punjab based players and give an all India colour to the team. It was the most positive approach and a farsighted move which swung the fortunes of the team within no time.

This league came as an eye-opener for all those who opted for localised approach in the game. These teams not only fared poorly, but were also forced to change its views on the whole policy.

Goa’s Salgaocar club used to recruit only local players, the top Goan side got themselves totally exposed in the long drawn league and had to take the seventh place among eight teams. The Salgaocar manager Henry Britto said, “Our policy of taking mainly Goan players has failed miserably. We have to change our style of recruitment if we have to do better from next year.”

Teams like ITI or Kerala Police or Indian Bank are the burning examples of paying the price for not following what has now become a world wide policy.

Basu\textsuperscript{33} in his article, “AIFF should keep the ball rolling,” stated that ‘success’ is a seven letter word which could hardly be found in the AIFF’s dictionary till the Philips National League was launched. The league not only made up for all the failures of the federation in the recent past, but was also successful in giving a new direction to Indian football.

One of the main reasons for the league being an instant hit was the meticulous planning of the championship and its perfect execution. For the first time, the AIFF put its minds together in designing the whole project and worked in the right manner in giving a shape to the fortune of the league.

The AIFF has finally risen to the occasion, but there is a long way to go. To conduct one edition is always easier than to keep the ball

rolling for many years. The federation should immediately pull up its socks and work for the coming years instead of sleeping over its own success.

A section in the soccer circles also felt that the institutional teams are getting too much importance in the national league because of their money power. There are those who feel that institutional teams are part of the Indian soccer scene. The Services and the Railways should be given equal importance in the national league, since they are the biggest recruiters of footballers in the country till today.

Srivatsa\(^{34}\) in his article, "The roots syndrome in Indian soccer," stated that there cannot be a lasting football boom with only two or three pockets in a vast country like ours, though it has come a long way from the days of Calcutta being the only market for selling and buying of players. Today, there are three clubs in Goa, one in Punjab and one in Kerala besides the three in Calcutta which are truly professional.

Unless other traditional centers like Hyderabad and Bangalore are nurtured back to strength, the scattered talent will have little motivation as was clearly shown by the Kerala players who, given the opportunity, have decided to go back home to play for the newly formed F.C. Kochi.

The roots syndrome is a key factor. The outstation JCT pros made no secret of their dislike for Phagwara and felt homesick whenever they were there for training.

The Hindu\textsuperscript{35} newspaper reported the words and suggestions of Chuni Goswami, a former international in improving the National Football League. He said, "National Football League is certain to elevate the standard of Indian football in the long run, but I would be happy if the AIFF considers some amendments when it plans the National Football League next year. The matches this year (1996-97), were sandwiched giving little time to the clubs and the players in between. This happened because the league was restricted to just a little over 45 days."

He added, "It would have been better if the league was run through a longer period like what they do in Europe. It would then give the clubs a distinct advantage of preparing well for their matches. Moreover, the interest among the public would also be sustained in a better fashion though the tremendous success of the league this year itself has helped many players to emerge as true heroes."

Chuni also had a word of advise to the present-day players: "Please do understand that professionalism does not mean commercialism. Money is certainly important. But players should never lose focus about their own commitment to the game which has not changed a wee bit through the years. The grammar of football still is based on the principles of how one receives the ball, dribbles it and passes it and one can master all these things if only he gives back hundred per cent."

\textsuperscript{35}The Hindu (New Delhi) 1 April (1997): 19.
Sports World\textsuperscript{36} reported the views of Chibuzor, a foreign player. He says about Churchill Brothers club, "A healthy football environment, a disciplined coach also is given a free reign."

"Not too many on the Maiden realise that a good footballer may not turn out to be a good coach," he told Sports World. "And the good coaches, Nayeem or P.K. Banerjee for instance, are almost never allowed the freedom required to function," he added.

He says about the European recruits of Calcutta clubs, "Their climate, the facilities they are used to, the environment in which they play their football is so different from India that the adjustment is extremely difficult... the Calcutta clubs end up searching for the right answers in the wrong places."

As for the state of our nation's football, he sounds gloomy: "Indian football is not looking up because Calcutta, the Mecca of national football, is dying," he said.

Though he felt the national league was a "welcome move," it was just one step in the right direction. A lot more has to be done, especially on the administrative front; he said, "professionalism has to hit them first.... the schedule is still far too hectic."

The Hindustan Times\textsuperscript{37} newspaper reported that the Indian team, who gave great performances in all the six matches they played in the


\textsuperscript{37}The Hindustan Times (New Delhi) 13 April (1997): 23.
Nehru International Gold Cup, 1997, had not received any payment, except a daily allowance of Rs.150 per day.

An Indian team member, who did not wish to be named said, "We were promised Rs.10,000 each for every victory. And Rs.15,000 each for a semi-final win. Unfortunately, we could not win any of the six matches despite giving our best. So now we are only entitled to only Rs. 150 per day."

Another player chipped in and said, "Even the members of the foreign teams here are receiving $10 per day per player. The federation could have given us at least that. The idea of performance based money is good, but the basic payment should be more. The cricket team gets all out for 81 runs, but nobody denies them their basic money, do they?"

The players admitted that there have been some improvements from the players' point of view in the recent past. "We get good hotels, good food, good transport and everything necessary for training purposes. But Rs.150 per day during the tournament and Rs.20 per day during the camp. It is nothing but a joke."

Sarkar\textsuperscript{38} in his article, "Black power," stated that African players form the nucleus of the first-ever Philips National League. Which is saying a lot when you think that for most of the African football players

in India the passage to this country was made for reasons other than football.

They came out of Africa to study. And though most of them still claim to be doing that - especially the ones on student visas - they admit that it does not top their priorities anymore. Giving Indian football a touch of 'Black Power' does.

But that is changing, albeit slowly. The arrival of big money in Indian football has given the hitherto cash-strapped clubs' ambition a fill up and some are recruiting professional African soccer players.

What makes these African players tick here is perhaps the similarity of climatic conditions and the fact that facilities, or the lack of it, football wise, is not too different from what they have back home.

And though roping in African recruits dates back to 1979 - when Nigerian Daveid Williams turned out for East Bengal - as far as Indian football is concerned, never before the first national league did we see so many in one tournament.

We have had Nigerians in the past but the winds of change have ushered in even Kenyans, Zimbabweans and Sudanese. At least two of our African recruits used their stint in India as a toe-hold to better things in life - both as a footballer and otherwise. Emeka - after leaving India for good now plies his trade with Deportivo de le Coruna in Spain and has played
for Nigeria in the 1994 World Cup. Chima too got a national call-up for USA '94 but injury scuppered his aspirations.

Both have gone on record saying it was their stint in Europe that moulded them into what they are now. Chima’s involvement and passing skills have improved several notches.

But like it or not, ‘black magic’ is making its presence felt in Indian football.

Biswa in his article, “Sudden death?,” discussed Calcutta football and its clubs. He states that years of rigged matches masterminded by shadowy club officials, intimidation of pliant referees, lack of astute management and audience exposure to quality international football on television have led to a freefall in standards and interest. Three soccer magazines in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s sold over 1.5 lakh copies every week; today the only survivor, Khela, struggles to sell 20,000 copies. The crowds, too, have thinned. East Bengal played seven matches in Calcutta in the inaugural Philips National League (1996-97), and only twice did gate receipts touch Rs.4 lakhs. The rest mostly yielded just over Rs.20,000.

The emergence of clean corporate clubs outside Bengal has dealt a body blow to the Calcutta clubs. Punjab’s JCT, F.C.Kochin and Goa’s Churchill Brothers exemplify the trend: professionalism, foreign coaches, excellent in-house training infrastructure.

The US-based ESPN - which had forked out Rs.1.05 crore to IFA 1996-97 year in return for telecasting rights to the local Super Division League and the IFA Shield - had slashed its sponsorship.

"Once Calcutta was the melting pot of Indian soccer where all the good players came to show off skills. Now they are going elsewhere, even our best is deserting us," says former Indian Olympics captain and coach P.K.Banerjee. For the first time in its 104 year history, IFA tried to bail out the Big Three by loaning them Rs.12 lakh each to recruit some stars.

Local playing standards have nose-dived. Gone are the days when legends like Banerjee, Chuni Goswami and Balaram mesmerised crowds with nifty footwork, explosive shots and deceptive on-field scheming. Banerjee finds disconcerting changes on the Maidan and he says, "Players have become commercial, without becoming professional, and lack discipline. Naturally, their quality has fallen and public interest has waned."

Getting back to the glory days won't be easy. Goswami suggests importing coaches, organising foreign trips, mandatory under-20 teams for Super Division clubs and restricting the number of matches - East Bengal played a staggering 60 matches last year, 40 more than in the halcyon '70s. Banerjee says he has been 'crying hoarse' over the need for an all-Bengal league for the past 25 years so that more matches are played
competitively in the districts that have traditionally sent the best footballers to Calcutta.

For, as the declining legions of boisterous supporters reveal, discipline, talent and professionalism - the Big Three qualities of professional football - too are turning rare sights on the Maidan.

Basu⁴⁰ in his article, “Soccer team silence critics,” stated that footballers in India are often accused of not having the right attitude towards the game. They are still considered a bunch of amateurs, whose sole criteria regarding professionalism are the monetary dealings. The footballers, many feel, turn truly ‘professional’ during the transfer season, but never follow the same attitude when it comes to playing on the field. They get more than they deserve, but deliver very little is the common complaint.

While footballers are regularly dumped with ideas of how to bring a fresh air of life towards their approach to the game, none come forward to teach a few things to the extremely old fashioned critics and mainly former players, who do not let even one opportunity go to have a dig at the Indian footballers and the game in the country.

Pessimism has caught on with a section of the critics and veteran players so badly that even reasonably good performances by the Indian team never leave them convinced. They would find some way to

ridicule the team’s showings and demean the top players in the eyes of the public.

The Indian team’s performance in the 1997 Eider Nehru International Gold Cup has also called for such criticism. That India failed to win even one match out of six encounters was promptly highlighted and the team members were dismissed with contempt. The presence of a big crowd looked more encouraging than the host team and the view was declared with no uncertain terms.

None gave a thought to the fact that India came out with three most creditable draws during the league phase and held Iraq for 120 minutes before losing in the tie breaker. India’s ranking was 121 and Iraq was 23 ranks below India in the FIFA rankings, Iraq came with the best available team. “Six of our men are playing outside Iraq. We did not consider them for building this team. But this is definitely the best available team within Iraq,” said the Iraq manager.

China was at that time 79th in the ranking and came with a team which was practicing in Brazil for the last 32 months. Asian Games champions (1994) Uzbekistan came with a team which they had fielded for the pre-Olympic next year. The Indian lads, paid Rs.150 per day, fought gallantly with these teams but could not satisfy the arm-chair critics.
Worst is the attitude of the former players, still dazzled by their own display 40 years ago when the game was far less competitive compared to the present day.

Now that the Indian football is looking up slightly after a successful national league, it is time to encourage the boys. Running them down will not take Indian football anywhere.

Kapadia⁴¹ in his article, “An enhanced image,” stated that the inaugural Philips League certainly surpassed expectations, as regards crowd involvement, media interest, quality of football and the image of the game in the country. Thirteen matches of the Philips League, second phase, were shown live by ‘Star Sports’. The quality of the coverage certainly enhanced the image of Indian football.

The Philips League was popular amongst the fans, media and players. The most popular venues were the Nehru stadium, Fatorda (Margao), and the Salt Lake stadium, Calcutta. At Goa, there were regular crowds of 20-35,000 for all the matches. At Calcutta, some of East Bengal’s key matches had crowds of 70,000. Initially, there was limited spectator response in Mumbai, Chennai and Ludhiana. However, due to favorable media coverage, the number of spectators increased at Mumbai and Chennai. When JCTs home matches were shifted to Delhi, midway

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through the national league, media coverage improved rapidly and a crowd of 20,000 witnessed JCT versus East Bengal.

Within a year, the league has become a big hit amongst the players. This was reflected in the recruitment drive by agents for the next season. Players wanted to sign for clubs which were certain to play in the Philips National League of 1997-98.

The Philips League has done what it set out to achieve: it has laid the seeds of professionalism in Indian football. The Indian Bank squad consisted of employees, except for the Maldivian recruits. However, manager D.V. Sundar was encouraged by the performance of his side and said, "We hope to convince our management that we should recruit players to play under our banner and form a successful semi-professional outfit next year." These are welcome signs of embryonic professionalism.

The ultimate success of the Philips League was that it has sent transfer prices spiralling. Now many Indian sides are willing to pay large sums of money to procure talent.

Sarkar⁴² in his article, "No Grooming of Youngsters," stated that there has been one drawback in all the talk of big money and club transfers. Like in the past, no club has shown any foresight to groom youngsters. The concept of having junior sides is still a theoretical one as far as Indian clubs are concerned. With no youngsters being honed for the

future, the clubs are forced to eat into each others' players' lists. The result: one club inevitably builds up their team at the expense of another.

Not too long ago, Chima Okerie had called for developing junior teams as an essential pre-requisite for improving the standard of the game in India. Clubs in Denmark, he explained, have age-group teams ranging form five year olds to 16 year olds apart from at least two senior teams. Not only does this help promote the game at the grass-roots, he said, but it also enables clubs to cut "shopping" costs in a market getting increasingly dearer.

But our myopic football officials have so far failed to see the benefits of such long term planning just as they have failed to understand why gymnasiuums - barring JCT, no other Indian club has one - proper diet monitoring and having a trainer and a coach is very important.

To spend money on all this, they argue, would lead to spiralling costs. But they don't mind, at the same time, to go on a buying binge. Thus the Baichungs, the Vijayans, the Doras and the Pereiras - adding up to a bunch of 30 to 40 players - move from one club to another, each time with a fatter cheque. This bunch stays constant while Indian football continues to be the loser.

Only the All India Football Federation can force the clubs to change. But given their reluctance in making the under-19 club teams mandatory, it is unlikely things will improve. If the AIFF is not willing to
do anything, then how can you expect the state associations to behave differently? So far, none among the 30-odd affiliated units have done anything of note for the juniors. Only the Goa Football Association has a long term coaching scheme for youngsters.

Kapadia\(^4\) in his article, “The enigma,” stated that through the passing years, Indian football has remained an enigma, an unresolved dilemma. In domestic tournaments, football from 1947-1997 has remained the most popular spectator sport in India. It drew capacity crowds in Calcutta, Delhi or Mumbai in needle matches involving Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Mohammedan Sporting, Hyderabad City Police (late Andhra Pradesh Police, from 1947-67) and later JCT or BSF. Another paradox is that despite many talented players, from Sailen Manna and Venkatesh to Baichung Bhutia and I.M.Vijayan, India has underachieved at the international level.

A major reason for lack of progress has been the decline of efficient state associations. In the 1950s, besides Bengal and Bombay, the state associations in former Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Kerala were active and promoted the game vigorously. Now, many of these traditional centres of excellence have declined. For instance, till the 1970s, there were nine tournaments in a season in Kerala alone. Now there are

none. In Hyderabad, often the local league remains unfinished. So local
talent is not being properly harnessed.

Arbitrary selection, inadequate preparation, insufficient
international exposure and match practice and scant attention to age-group
teams has been the bane of Indian football for nearly five decades. Sadly,
Indian football, like the proverbial leopard, does not change its stripes.
The national team does not get adequate match practice. Teams like the
U.S.A., Saudi Arabia and South Korea play over 25 matches a year, India
barely plays ten international games a year. This malady has remained from
the 1950s to the present day.

India's junior and sub-junior teams are chosen only for
participation in Asian championships and get limited exposure. There is
little follow-up on talented players that emerge from remote areas like the
North-East, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In most countries the age
group teams play in the same tactical formation as the senior team but in
Indian football there is little co-ordination between the various national
coaches.

Efforts to improve football standards remain haphazard. From
1982 to 1996, India experimented with five East European coaches,
including the renowned late Milovan Ciric, Josef Gelei and Dr. Rustam
Akramov but it was of little avail. The coaches always complained of
excessive domestic tournament schedules and of little attention being given
to the national team. To rectify this anomaly, the AIFF, in the 1997 season, has taken the right step of listing a pool of 43 National players who will just play 45 matches per season.

Bose\(^4\) in his article, "The return of the football fan to Calcutta ‘maidan’," stated that:

-Over one lakh people filled the stands for the Federation Cup football final in 1996 between East Bengal and Dempo.

-Over 80,000 turned up at the JCT - East Bengal national league match on February 16, 1997.

-Over 70,000 came for the McDowell Cup final between East Bengal and F C Kochi in 1997.

-A record 1,32,000 had the stands bursting at its seams for the Federation Cup semi-final between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal on July 13, 1997.

-More than 1,10,000 came for the 1997 Federation Cup final between East Bengal and Salgaocar on July 20.

-Again 1,10,000 saw the Calcutta Football League match between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal on August 3, 1997.

The first impression one gets from the head count at each of these above football matches at the Salt Lake stadium, is that the crowds are back. But one look at another set of figures, say that of Federation

Cup semi-final between Dempo and Salgaocar at Guwahati on July 12, 1997, which attracted just about 2,000 spectators, sets one wondering why only football at Salt Lake in Calcutta.

There could be a host of reasons for the crowds return to football. It could be Mohun Bagan coach Amal Dutta's 'Diamond System'; club loyalties; or maybe a sudden shift in televising patterns of the news channels which now have begun showing Asian football too, to direct Asian countries and India.

Of the above, traditional club loyalties is most likely the biggest crowd puller. Any match involving Mohun Bagan or East Bengal had their fans converging to the stadium in thousands. Which is probably why football followers in Guwahati could not associate themselves with teams from Goa. These sides were as foreign to them as teams from Sir Lanka or the Maldives.

However, the initial crowd figures in Calcutta left even the old-timers and experts stunned. This had not happened for a long-long time. The odd match would draw a big crowd but so many matches in succession attracting such large numbers was something totally unexpected. Could this be the revival of Indian football? The organisers would like to believe so.
Bose reported that Asian Football Confederation (AFC) secretary general Peter Velapann feels that the skills and the technique in football have improved remarkably in the SAARC region. "This is the best I have ever seen in this region," Velapann said at the conclusion of the India-Maldives final of the SAFF Football Championship.

The secretary general felt that the system, gameplan and tactical discipline has improved remarkably. "There is a sense of urgency in football in the region now. Moreover, the coaches have a greater role to play."

Velapann admitted that for a long time the SAARC region had been left behind due to various reasons, like the lack of administration and infrastructure. This time, when he saw the SAFF Championship, Velapann admitted to being pleasantly surprised at the performances of teams from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Maldives. "Of course, India was always a major power in this region."

He felt that the time has come for the football associations of the region to put in a lot of thinking and planning into management of affairs. Velapann said that FIFA and the AFC will donate money to the football association of the region for the development of the game. FIFA plans to give one million dollar on a four year plan. "But of course, the money will not be given just like that," he added. FIFA has certain criteria

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under which the money can be granted for each association which submits concrete plans for youth development schemes, playgrounds, equipment and coaches. "We help the association recruit good coaches."

The Indian Express\(^46\) reported the words of Caritan Chapman, India international and he says, "We are not at all inferior to our foreign counterparts in any area of the game, as our performances in the Nehru Cup and SAFF Cup clearly indicate."

"What we need is better playing facilities and sponsorship in a big way. Foreign exposure is also a must for the players. For years now, we have been inviting teams from abroad for tournaments here. Strangely, we are not being invited to the foreign tournaments. Playing abroad will indeed help us to be more familiar with the international standards."

Menon\(^47\) reported that the West Rifa coach Taelman Rene Jaen admitted that the huge turnout in the Scissors Cup matches at Kochi, Kerala (1997) was indeed a pleasant surprise. "I had been to almost all parts of the world, either as a coach or as a traveller. Quite rarely do we see such huge crowds for almost every match in a tournament. It is a rare scene even in Europe," said the coach who had trained club sides in five countries besides being in charge of Kuwait's national junior team for a season.

\(^{46}\)The Indian Express (Kochi) 23 September, 1997, p.20.

\(^{47}\)Ravi Menon, "India Need Foreign Coaches, says Rene," The Indian Express (Kochi) 30 September (1997): 21.
The Belgian was surprised by FC Kochin’s gallant display in the final. “They do have a number of skillful players. Individually they are among the best. Surprisingly they have failed to combine as a team in most of the matches. I felt some of them were a bit selfish with the ball. They were playing for the stands, it seemed. It’s not the professional way of playing soccer,” the veteran coach reminds.

Rene felt that a major reason behind the lack of team spirit could be the absence of a better management and the organisation at the club level soccer. “You need experienced professional coaches to build up the game here. The best solution could be to go for good foreign coaches.”

Rene also felt that India needed more playfields to improve the soccer standards. “FC Brugge, a leading first division club in Belgium owns 18 grounds for the purpose of training only. They are well-maintained too. Here the grounds are not looked after well, it seems. There was hardly any grass on the corporation stadium, the venue of Scissors Cup. The practice grounds too were in a pitiable condition. Without good grounds how can you improve your game?” he asks sarcastically.

Ghosh⁴⁸ reported that football was the most popular sport in India till the early 1980s. But people lost interest in the domestic amateur

football league, particularly after the All India Football Federation (AIFF) organised the Jawaharlal Nehru international tournament in the eighties. Indians became disillusioned with the local variety of the game. Between the first and second Nehru tournament, India won the World Cup cricket title and, in 1986, for the first time, Indians watched World Cup football matches live on television. People run after success and glamour. Cricketers became superstars and kids all over the country took to the game. The cricket authorities in the sub-continent utilised the situation and two of the last three World Cups were staged in the region. And that is how football gradually lost its impact among the young generation.

He points out that India succeeded in introducing a semi-professional league in 1996 with the active support of FIFA, which breathed new life into Indian football. He added that this helped football players, referees and administrators both financially and popularity-wise. Now players and referees are richer, as the clubs also spend a lot of money on their players, knowing full well that they can get greater returns. He suggested that a lot of things have to be done for the betterment of the game. The greatest drawback in Indian football is that many of the clubs do not have their own ground.

The Indian Express\(^49\) reported that in Tata Football Academy (TFA) promising youngsters are selected from tournaments at various

grass-root levels like sub-junior, school level championship, Subroto Cup and talent search organised by Sports Authority of India for induction into the academy.

The basic objective of TFA, explains Arun Ghosh, director TFA, is to provide mainstream national football with a perennial pool of young footballers trained and oriented to international standards.

TFA also has its own team of spotters who embark on a country wide talent scouting of boys in the age group of 14 years. They are then trained for four years in the academy which has all the latest modern facilities before they are fed to the mainstream of Indian soccer.

The academy, built on a 25,000 sq. ft. area amidst green surroundings, not only provides intensive training but also all-round developmental opportunities with facilities for formal education and vocational training.

In order to make the cadets equipped to match international standards, selected trainees are regularly sent to world famous institutions such as Sports University of Cologne, PSV Eindhoven club (Holland), Sao-Paulo club (Brazil) for specialised training. Foreign coaches of international repute are also invited to the TFA from time to time. These exposure trips have helped the cadets immensely to hone their skills.
Vinod⁵⁰ in his article, "There is plenty of scope for improvement," stated that it is indeed doubtful whether any other new project in Indian football had received so much media and public attention as what FC Kochin got even before the first professional club of the country became a reality. Perhaps it was the novelty behind the whole idea of setting up a club of this stature, which had caught the imagination of the fourth estate and the football fanatics of the country.

The club has acquired the services of a Scottish Coach, George Blues, as the team’s technical director. The former winger with the Scottish first division clubs such as Dundee, Flack Irk and Berwik Rangers, who joined the Kochi side in early September, 97 speaks about Indian football: "I feel that the Indian players on the whole are too slow in shaping up moves. This happens solely because most players often tend to play to the galleries, which needless to say is a dangerous trend. There are two specific areas on which I would like them to concentrate. Almost all the Indian players are quite weak with the off-ball play and man-to-man marking. If they concentrate and work hard on these two aspects, it will definitely do Indian football a world of good. In fact, no team can survive without indulging in tough man-to-man marking in today’s world football scene. If you give space for the rival player to manoeuver, it is just like inviting disaster."

He further said, "The players are all willing learners and quite disciplined. It is just the case that they have not been taught about the importance of these things when they were young. These are basic fundamentals and should be taught right from the bottom. You cannot expect anyone to improve after having reached a certain level. But then, there is definitely scope for improvement, if one is prepared to concentrate and work very hard."

He adds, "If you run a tournament, whether it be for a week or more, you should be able to provide adequate training facilities to all the participating teams. This is very important as the coaches would like to try out certain things and iron out the deficiencies, on the off days, which they would have spotted in the previous match. Here, at tournament place we have been running helter-skelter to get a good practice facility. This should not happen if the officials concerned are keen enough to improve the standard of Indian football."

George Blues, the former technical director of FC Kochin spoke to the Asian Age about Indian football and said, "To improve Indian football financial support from the government is very helpful. If the administration at the highest level takes active interest in promoting the game and is ready to invest at the grass-root level, the results are bound to show in due course of time. For instance, the Qatar government had spent

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31George Blues, "Vijayan is a Lot Like Asprilla," The Asian Age (Calcutta) 19 October (1997): 17.
a lot of money to bring in Dutch coach Weil Coerver to teach the fundamentals of the game to the younger players. After Coerver had worked with the juniors for about three years, they showed a tremendous improvement in basic skills which automatically translates into better performance in match situations. It is very important to work at the fundamentals with juniors at an impressionable age. The former internationals of the country can also help by involving themselves with the juniors during their spare time."

He added, "The potentially good players should be picked from the schools. The federation's spotters can get in touch with the sports teachers in schools and invite the talented boys for trials. The district schools too can't be ignored, as talent very often remains untapped in the districts, particularly in a country like India where sports infrastructure is mostly limited to the big cities. But, if this policy is to succeed, the schools must first develop a sports culture and it has to be made mandatory in the curriculum."

He further said, "I think age-group set-ups should be made mandatory for all the clubs if they have the back-up system. A youth system is very important at every club." "The national league is definitely a great idea and a big step forward. The fruits of this move will be seen in a few years' time as the footballers find a national platform to show their wares," said Blues.
“I think, Vijayan is a lot like Asprilla, Colombian international. Both are naturally gifted players and do things their own way. You can’t really teach them any routine as they are delightfully unpredictable.” says George Blues.

Shankar⁵² in his article, “Birth pangs of a corporate football firm,” states that the business part of F.C.Kochin is a different story altogether, one of tremendous forethought, unforeseen glitches and corporate sway, all of which went into the actualisation of this innovative entity.

For a start, a major part of the project was spent in selling the idea of a professional club to the players, many of whom could not comprehend the concept. For others in the football circle, the mechanics of this concept is a hazy area even now.

He further states that F.C.Kochin players are full time employees of the club like in any private organisation. Their designation? Professional footballers. According to Babu Mather, the secretary general of the club, “Here, they are employees on a one year contract. And, all they have to do in live and think football.” Besides, the club is run like any private firm with a proper office system, employing staff and an office manager.

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Ghosh\textsuperscript{53} reported that the Mohun Bagan and the crack side from Kerala F.C.Kochin got direct entry into the II National Football League, 1997-98 without going through the qualifying rounds, it only points out the whimsical functioning of the august body (AIFF). Any sensible person would question the reason behind withdrawing the qualifying norm for these two teams. It never said before that performance in all India tournaments or in the local league would also be a criterion for earning a place among the elites. That there is no positive policy on the part of AIFF was focused more when F.C.Kochin was not allowed to figure even in the south zone qualifying rounds of the Federation Cup.

Last season, in the Calcutta zone of preliminary league, Mohammedan Sporting finished fifth among six teams while Mohun Bagan too could secure the penultimate position in the six-team format in the Goa zone. If Mohun Bagan gets a direct entry despite finishing fifth last season why should Sporting be left out as it too has a big following? These questions only expose the Quixotic functioning of the AIFF. Otherwise, who can believe that out of the title sponsors contribution of Rs.72 lakhs, less than Rs.40 lakhs would come to the AIFF coffers? That means almost 50 per cent of the main sponsor’s money went as agent’s commission. And expenditure soared to Rs.3.5 crores.

Suryanarayan\textsuperscript{54} reported that two teams which participated in the inaugural national league last year (1996-97) are yet to receive the prize money. Indian Bank officials confirmed that till date its team had not received the Rs.7.5 lakh for finishing fifth in the final table. Similarly it is reported that Air India, which finished sixth, was yet to get the Rs.5.5 lakhs.

Now clearly these are not things that the clubs would like to take up with the AIFF considering the embarrassment involved. Besides in the present moment when rules are being changed or amended or even bent to expand the national league bunch from eight to ten (without a qualifying tournament) no club would venture to take up matters that can possibly have a backlash. But then justice demands what has been assured and that is varying prize money for teams finishing from places one to six in the national league should be complied with.

Srivatsa\textsuperscript{55} in his article, “Footballer is getting his due at last,” stated that our footballers will soon give the cricketers a run for their money. They have realised that when the cricket team can create such a hallow in a caboodle of just nine Test-playing countries, they too can have their place under the sun in a universal sport like soccer. The spectator response to the Durand Cup and DCM tournament in the capital (1997)...


\textsuperscript{55} V. Srivatsa, “Footballer is Getting His Due at Last,” \textit{The Sunday Times} (New Delhi) 2 November (1997): 22.
has clearly shown that the crowds are flocking back to football stadiums. The Ambedkar stadium was bursting at the seams for the semi-finals and finals of the two tournaments, breaking all turnstile records.

The All India Football Federation can justifiably take credit for this turn of events. The inaugural Philips national league has truly revived the game and made the players feel they are wanted. They were accorded a new, more respectable, status as they were flown for all their games and were put up at decent hotels.

The biggest offshoot of the revival of Indian football is the spread of the game. It is no longer confined to Calcutta alone. Even the Calcuttans are leaving the metropolis in search of lucrative offers and joining clubs in Kerala and Goa. If only cities like Hyderabad, Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai also throw up teams like Kochin the league can be fiercely competitive.

Ever heard a footballer being paid Rs.50,000 for playing for the country? The members of the victorious Indian team in the SAFF tournament are being paid that kind of money. They also received an incentive bonus of Rs.10,000 for their creditable showing in the last Nehru Cup in Kochi. With the kind of money they are getting, the players are putting their best foot forward.
Gone are the days when a Calcutta pro was more concerned about his limbs for fear of losing the following year’s contract! Today the players are ready to give their 100 per cent.

The AIFF has gone about the league fairly methodically thus far, but it is yet to come up with a viable extension of the league. Vague plans are afoot to start a Second Division league.

There are already some danger signals. The influx of overseas players has given a facelift to the league, but it has also created a hiatus in the development of Indian soccer. The trend to import strong, sturdy stoppers from Nigeria and Ghana may help the clubs to win matches, but that will push Indian talent out of contention just as the British are realising that the overseas goalkeepers are pushing their men out and the Italian fearing that their strikers are being elbowed out.

George Blues⁵⁶ said his team (F.C.Kochin) had played over 20 matches in around 40 days. “This is not right either for the players or for the spectators and I believe it should be looked into seriously. Granted, tournaments are important, but they have got to be spaced out so that we don’t drain the players. In Qatar, a footballer plays around 35 games per season. Here, we have already played two-thirds of that in a fraction of that time,” he said.

⁵⁶George Blues, “Tournaments in India Have to be Spaced Out,” The Telegraph (Calcutta) 15 November (1997): 17.
He also said, "There should be a one month break before the national league during which the transfers should be conducted. The tournaments should be held at the start of the season. Then, when the national league starts we would have fresh players and not a tired bunch of footballers."

He said, "I also don't like the idea of annual contracts. You work on a player for one year and bingo, suddenly he's gone. Contracts should be long term, for at least three years. Stability, after all, is the bedrock of a good team. India should be looking to achieve the standards of the best in Asia. Japan, South Korea, China and Saudi Arabia are the countries I am talking about. I don't think that India is too far away. The reason why they have moved ahead is simply because of more exposure and that they have spent a fortune in trying to tune-up their skills."

He suggested that, "Begin young and with a programme that will involve schools. Get the young ones to play six-a-side, seven-a-side till they are 14. This is the time to teach them to control and manipulate the ball."

Menon\(^5\) reported that the F.C.Kochin, it seems, has sparked off a 'soccer revolution' of sorts in the state (Kerala). Going by the latest indications, three more professional clubs are set to make their appearance on Kerala's starry soccer horizon in the coming season.

Of the three, one is based in Kochi, the city which gave birth to the country’s first-ever professional club a year ago. The other two belong to Kozhikode and Kannur, two soccer-crazy towns in the northern part of the state. All the three are likely to make their entry in the next season.

“The Kerala Football Association assures its full support to any efforts by the soccer enthusiasts to form professional clubs. Professionalism, with good intentions, will indeed help the development of the game,” said the KFA secretary K. Bodhanadan.

Mohammad58 in his article, “A step backward,” stated that at a time when the others make a progressive leap, we sadly, are taking a step in the opposite direction, and there is no talk about Indian football showing any signs of improvement and the decay threatens to eat into the roots of this great game.

He further states that, “Why have we been so callous towards football? Is it because we do not figure even in the top 100 in the world? Is it because football is not considered everyone’s game, a reputation enjoyed by cricket, and hockey to a lesser extent in the country? But then, irrespective of what critics may say, football still is the most popular sport in the country.”

He adds, “Cricket, everyone claims, is the number one sport of this nation hungry for heroes. But then there are no gates for domestic

cricket while you would hardly come across a football tournament without tickets. People are paying to buy domestic football and yet there is a certain disdainful attitude towards this game."

He further states that, "Football today badly needs a messiah to pull it out of the rut. And the blame should be shared by the AIFF and the players themselves. The causes of the current Indian condition are the following: very little quality international exposure, virtually non-existent match practice and no attention is paid to the age group tournaments in the country."

T. Shanmugham, a former Olympian said in his interview to Sports World, "The professional league introduced from 1996 will definitely bring in some more changes within the next few years. We are bound to progress from where we are now."

He further says, "All over the world, the governments have taken a lot of interest in promoting football. The governments' involvement is enormous in providing all sorts of encouragement. But in India it is only the All India Football Federation which is looking after the game. It needs lots of funds. The government's help is needed in building the infrastructure. Encouragement should also be given right from the school level. But nowadays, even grounds are not available to play.

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There used to be so many grounds all over. I feel every school should have a ground of its own."

He further adds, "Football is a game where the body coordinates with the mind. A player should be physically fit and have the mental make-up for today's football. They should have that desire to play football and come up. Of course, compared to the Europeans' physique, we are certainly lacking. The Europeans are also so conditioned that they can do anything in a split second. This needs top fitness."

He suggested that, "Players with high standards who donned Indian colours should be chosen to improve the football standards in the country. They should be involved in the game's administration or selection, etc..."

Basu in his article, "NFL should project national integration," stated that the concept of 'home and away matches' in the Philips National Football League is fast turning into a concept of playing in the 'friendly' and 'enemy' territories. And the teams who are contributing the most in steady growth of the unhealthy trend are the Goan sides. Football to them, it seems is a medium for the outburst of regionalism. And they stretch it to a point where the very purpose of the national league gets defeated.

The kind of fun created by Goa's Dempo Sports Club during their four-day stay in Calcutta to play away matches against Mohun Bagan

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and East Bengal in the 1997-98 season of National Football League is the example of the wrong posture the Goan teams are taking while playing the matches outside their state.

The worst part of the whole episode was that some of the Goan teams have gone on record saying the Calcutta teams will have to pay dearly when they visit the west-coast state to play their quota of matches. It is an argument of sheer bad taste, but what is more amusing is the studied silence the National Football League committee chairman Alberto Colaco is observing in this respect.

The kind of partisan attitude showed by the people connected with football in Goa during the 1994 Federation Cup is yet to be over shadowed by any other episode. Open calls were given for the referee’s head and Mohun Bagan was subjected to the worst kind of humiliation, and physical violence. Yet, no one talked about walking out on the organisers.

The time has come when the AIFF should call an emergency meeting of all the participating teams to try to iron out the bitterness. The national league also in one way projects national integration. The competitive edge should be there, but not the rancor one is witness to.

Banerjee61 in his article, “We are moving backwards,” stated that, “The last national league (1996-97) was a clear two goals up. There were better facilities and fewer problems. Transport was better organised.

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Then, players' kit was no worry last season. This year (1997-98) teams have to take care of the kit themselves."

"Better facilities included full kit for the squad as well as 16 balls for each side. Any way you look at it, we are moving backwards." Banerjee added.

He also does not take kindly to the anomalies in ground conditions. He described the ground used for some of the matches - the Rabindra Swarabar, scene of an India vs. Iran match in 1984 - as a grazing ground, hazardous to play on because of its awkward bounce.

Banerjee is glad that inaugural league flops - the Calcutta sides - have shown attempts to re-address their approach to the National Football League in particular and soccer in general. "Calcutta clubs East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting were sadly confined to the British amateur code of thinking." Banerjee explains.

Banerjee views the continued presence of foreign players, notably Africans in the national league, quite favorably. He appreciates the near impossibility of drawing footballers from first class nations to the league because of financial limitations but enthuses on the benefits that Indian soccer can reap, nonetheless.

"Playing with and against big-bodied African players will go a long way in helping our players overcome fears en route to the international arena," feels Banerjee.
Bhattacharyya\textsuperscript{62} reported that while the corporatisation of the "Big Two" has created waves in the Maidan, the third big force - Mohammedan Sporting has slid to the depths of despair now; while the club management is not averse to a tie-up with any corporate house, there is no taker in sight as yet.

The century-old institution, which has failed to move with the times, has found itself increasingly marginalised over the last few years. While the club officialdom is at a loss to explain why sponsors are not coming forward, sports marketing firms confer about the "obvious problems" is marketing the team.

"There is no other option but to associate ourselves with any industrial house. However, we cannot identify ourselves with tobacco or liquor companies as that would be going against our religion," said Suleiman Khurshid, the club's president for seven years now.

Elaborating on the problem of 'selling' Mohammedan Sporting to the prospective sponsor, Mr. Amit Sen of Altair Inc. feels that the nomenclature of the team is a major problem. "The name limits the appeal to a particular community, and that is certainly a deterrent. This is quite a paradox as it's again the name which brings in the crowd in certain parts of

the country like the capital or Mumbai,” said Mr. Sen, an old hand at marketing the game.

Unlike the other two where the full strength of 8000 odd members renew their annual memberships (ensuring a fixed revenue to the tune of Rs.17 lakh), only a few hundred supporters renew it in favour of the black-and-white brigade. There is no option for the club but to seek a corporate alliance for survival.

Bhaskaran\textsuperscript{53} reported that: Blues, the technical director F.C. Kochin said, “The imports have not helped our football. Indeed, they have had a negative impact: they have blocked out avenues for our own players. At the same time, though, it must be admitted that there are few local players of quality. You just have to ask our club officials who scout for players to confirm this.”

George Blues has suggested that the All India Football Federation should step in with a regulation to curb import of mediocre foreigners. This is wishful thinking. Not only because of the AIFFs record, as can be deduced from efforts to bridge the gap that the senior and influential AIFF had pointed to in 1970, but also because the AIFF could run headlong into confrontations with powerful clubs.

The AIFF could help by improving the conduct of the national league, which could be spread over a longer period so that teams could

sustain a challenge of being at full strength for most of the matches. the
crowding of the programme into about three months i.e. 18 matches per
team. In addition, the schedule, taxing travel and poor practice facilities at
most venues have affected adversely the standard of play this season, not-
withstanding the upset results that have lent spice to the competition.

Unfortunately, neither the AIFF nor the clubs are giving of their
best to make the national league a stepping stone to making our football
professional. It is time we realise that money alone cannot talk in modern
football.

The Times of India\textsuperscript{64} reported that: Vijayan, the Indian striker
said, “After the start of professional league the standard of football will
definitely improve. For instance, the competition this year (1997-98) has
been better than the last one. The start of the second division league will
also make some difference, with clubs worrying about promotion and
relegation.”

He further said, “Club football is certainly looking up and with
more professional clubs coming up in various parts of the country players
will have better opportunities and tougher competition. But he says, he is
against the clubs going for too many overseas players.”

\textsuperscript{64}The Times of India (New Delhi) 13 March (1998): 18.
He also says that foreign players in the league are no better than our own. There is no point in bringing players who do not measure up to the Indians. Invariably, the clubs are going in for players of low caliber.

About junior players he says, “Basically, junior players face a problem of finding the right clubs and regular practice. If they join good clubs they get to play with good players, but unfortunately players from academies like TFA, barring a few, have found the going tough.”

Sarkar in his article, “The shift in power,” stated that the significant aspect of the second edition of the league is that the axis of power has shifted to Calcutta. After a bad start to the competition, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal’s finishing first and second, respectively, have re-affirmed Calcutta’s status as the Mecca of Indian soccer, albeit amid tougher competition.

Government apathy denying Mohun Bagan and East Bengal home advantage; complaints about refereeing; travel travails for Dempo and East Bengal; conducting matches in ill-maintained stadia like the Ambedkar and the Rabindra Sarobar have been the flip side, football-wise. Frequent changes in schedule and an unplanned television coverage were the glitches on the marketing front. The second league, therefore, did not build on the beginning made last year.

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Professionalism is still a lonely word among most football officials here. They must get their act together first before expecting the players to embrace professionalism. Till then, we will be flirting with trying to break into the top 100 in FIFA rankings, national league or no national league.

Bose\(^{66}\) reported that IFA conducts a very exhaustive two-tier Calcutta Super Division League in which the city giants field their best teams. This league is a prestige issue in this football mad metropolis.

If a player turns out in all these matches as well as all the national league games, he has very few coupons left. Add to that the Federation Cup matches and all the invitational tournaments that the clubs play every season. Santosh Trophy does not quite figure in the scheme of the club officials. The clubs from other parts of the country do not play as many games and therefore the coupon system has not affected the state teams too much. The Goan teams were of course, more judicious.

Before the start of the Santosh Trophy in 1998 AIFF had decided to exempt the national tournament for the Santosh Trophy from the National Players’ Coupon System. Therefore, Bengal team took part in the Santosh Trophy with full strength.

The\(^{67}\) reported that Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd., sponsors of the Santosh Trophy for the last five years,

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are unhappy with scheduling of the tournaments this time. In fact, this will be a key issue in their annual review of the tournament.

"Though we have no plans of pulling out, we will definitely take it up with the All India Football Federation," BPCL spokesman M. Somaya said. The company had wanted the AIFF to discuss the scheduling of the tournament before finalising the dates. However, the AIFF did not do that.

"The tournament has been scheduled at the fag end of the season when almost of the players are tired. Many have also exhausted their quota of 45 matches," Somaya added. "Moreover, it is being held in the middle of the inter-state transfer season. The tournament thus is being deprived of glamour."

Somaya said the BPCL will request the AIFF to hold the Santosh Trophy at a more convenient period next year so that they can derive more mileage out of it.

The company has put in a total of Rs.8.5 lakh for prize money this year (1998), from which the winning side will get Rs.2.5 lakh. The runner-up will earn Rs.1.5 lakh while the losing semi-finalists will get Rs.1 lakh each.

Ghosh\textsuperscript{68} reported that the second national league had a checkered run. It stumbled in the very beginning as soon after the

\textsuperscript{67}The Indian Express (New Delhi) 17 April (1998): 16.

inauguration, the league had to be postponed by a week for various reasons. In fact, it was steeped in problems. Monsoon in Chennai, cricket in Margao and Kochi and a tussle between the State Government and AIFF over the hoarding rights at the Salt Lake stadium in Calcutta retarded the progress of the league.

The chairman of the National Football League organising committee, Mr. Alberto Colaco said, “Except in Mumbai, grounds of no other centres belong to the respective state associations. As a result multiple sports events are held at the same venue. In Delhi, Chennai and Calcutta there are exclusive grounds for football but the authorities had other programmes.”

He further says, “I feel a shortage of time to hold so many matches in the present format is the main reason for such topsy-turvy happenings. So, fixtures should be released at least two months in advance. At each place there should be one alternate venue, and those venues should be approved by the league committee.”

“National league has come to stay as far as football is concerned. It has brought back popularity and enhanced the prestige of the game,” he adds.

The Hindu\textsuperscript{69} newspaper reported that “National League is very important for Indian football, but it is more important for the Indian team.

\textsuperscript{69}\textit{The Hindu} (Chennai) 27 April (1998): 18.
to compete in the coming Asian Games and for that India needs exposure," observed the ace striker Bruno Coutinho.

"The Indian team should be sent abroad. The opponent can be any country or West Asia, or Central Asian teams like Uzbekistan. According to him even poor performance aboard would not affect the morale of the team as those encounters would be more of training-cum-match practice. Since the '88 Asian Games in Seoul, India has not been participating in it and that is not good for Indian football", he observed.

According to him it is a good thing that the national league has been introduced, but at the same time some of the present tournaments should be scratched. Even though national players have been restricted to playing in 45 matches, that rule is not being strictly adhered to and too much of football is proving to be costly.

Bose\(^70\) reported that the 54th Santosh Trophy will go down in history for the wrong reason: empty stands. Not that the organisers, the Assam Football Association, were lacking in their attempt to draw the crowd. They even had a part of the tournament played under flood lights. Yet, the first time the figures in the stands crossed the 1,000 mark was in the second semi-final, when Bhaichung Bhutia played his first game.

“We were watching the game when a gentleman sitting besides us wanted us to identify Bhaichung,” Bruno Coutinho recalled. The Bhutia hype proved good for the organisers. “It does not make much sense having a tournament of this stature at a place where there is no crowd in the stands,” one of the team managers said. Another went a bit further: “It is a punishment for the players.”

Old timers recall the period when the Nehru Stadium used to draw full houses for a football match. “It was a great sight just a decade ago,” former international Abdul Latif remembers. “Even for the Bordoloi tournament, the crowd response was phenomenal.”

The Indian Express\textsuperscript{71} newspaper reported that: Ivo Sajh-Scheich, Slovenian chief coach of India’s under-21 side 1998 suggests that under-8 should be the starting point and it will take about 18 years from then on for players to reach their prime and ready themselves for top international matches.

According to Ivo, youth soccer runs wild and free in India, without proper training and organisation. “I have watched talented young players play village football in Goa. Many of them have potential but unfortunately there is no system to train them,” he regrets.

He says, “In Slovenia and as in rest of Europe, the youth leagues are so numerous that I have lost count of them. We, of course,

\textsuperscript{71} \textbf{Internet Website}: http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/19980510/13050224.html.
have the national leagues for the under-16s and under-18s - something that must be set up in India as soon as possible.”

He suggested that, “Children should play competitive soccer for 10 months in a year and not just three months. This would help them develop skills faster.”

He places academies ahead of a career in soccer, believes studies in no way ought to affect playing. European children study while traveling and in their hotel rooms after training. “A good student usually makes a good soccer player.”

He says, “Indian players will not cope with minimal fitness requirements at professional club level in Europe. As a matter of fact, your players will not even last 35 minutes against European footballers.” Ivo is of the view that national camps must concentrate only on technical preparation, physical fitness must be worked upon throughout the year.

“I believe training methods must change - both at club level and national level,” he advises.

Although Ivo has noticed the spirit of motivation among many of his players, he believes that a majority of them are “schoolboyish” when it comes to training. “Your players work hard only when they are being watched,” he said.
John in his article for India Today about foreign players playing in India stated that a new style of soccer, more robust and more varied, is on show on Indian grounds as an avalanche of foreign players, most of them from African countries, strut their wares. Nearly fifty foreign players play for different clubs of India, he reports.

"There is a new euphoria in Indian soccer. This must inspire the local players who get the chance to rub shoulders with players of a higher calibre," says former international soccer star Chuni Goswami. Malcolm Thorpe of the International Management Group, which manages the league, feels that "foreign players can add that extra edge and provide better competition."

He states that most of the foreign players hired in India are not of standard. He also states that the agents dupe the clubs by bringing second-rate players and clubs have to live with it; apart from the draining of their meager resources, the sudden departure of two or three players can leave huge gaps in their (club) formations.

Srivatsa in his article, "Struggling to find a way out of the rot," stated that in the last three decades the stock of Indian football has been toeing downhill with no one to check it. The administrators are happy protecting their positions. When the national league was started two


seasons ago one thought there was some light at the end of the tunnel. The league was to make the game professional. It did to some extent and there was great excitement in the first year. But in the next year the teams appeared to be merely going through the motions. A lot of African players descended on the country and the market rate of some of the top Indian pros went up to seven figures a season.

Still the ethos remained the same. The first pro club sprang up in Kerala and now another has come up in Mumbai. Those great Calcutta clubs, which provided the lucre for the top guns of the nation for decades have also undergone a metamorphic change. Both the Calcutta league and the IFA Shield will have sponsors this year and that should make the clubs sit up.

All of a sudden, there is plenty of money in soccer. The national league arena seems to have become the level playing field for the corporate houses! One house has gone to the extent of "buying" up both the Calcutta giants Mohun Bagan and East Bengal clubs. The players have also started getting endorsements, though not on the same scale as the cricketers. All this is good, but what has it done to the Indian football? The players seem to be happy with the money they are logging just like the tennis players had been happy with the money they earned from the Indian circuit.
The national league has also undermined the major soccer
tournaments like the Durand, DCM, IFA Shield and Rovers Cup. They are
no longer the pampered babies of the AIFF. Maybe, this is one way of
telling the organisers to pump in more prize money. Then the restriction
on players playing in a stipulated number of matches. The players are
naturally unhappy. It will also be interesting to see what will happen to
them when they have to be huddled in the national camps, while others are
busy playing in the tournaments.

Brijnath⁷⁴ in his article, “The way to win,” reported that three
seconds or so is all it takes for reality to kick India in the teeth. Three
seconds of physical explosion over 10 yards, for 980 million Indians to
understand why they go un-represented at the soccer World Cup. Watch
Ronaldo, frozen, leaning over the ball. Then, driven by the Rolls Royce
engines in his thighs, he erupts into action, using muscle to barrel his way
past defenders, his legs, seemingly carved from some fallen oak tree,
flexing finally to thunder the ball towards goal. Often the eruption is
interrupted, by tackles of barely restrained violence.

In these three seconds, a complex mix of strength and speed,
lies the heart of modern sport. And also an understanding of Indian
soccer’s world ranking of 115 (Lebanon is at 96). Says George Blues,
technical director at F.C. Kochin: “I.M.Vijayan, one of India’s best, is

⁷⁴Rohit Brijnath, “The Way to Win,” India Today 29 June
quick over a short distance but in Europe he would be average. And if he kicks the ball at 60 mph, Ronaldo’s would easily be 90 mph.”

P.K. Banerjee, adds a more provoking thought: “There is not a single Indian player who will be able to rise for weeks after one of those typical tackles.”

Over 10 yards the Indian striker (Vijayan) is at least a yard and more behind Ronaldo, and the speed of his kick 33 per cent slower.

Venkataraman, after interviewing Danny McLennan reported that: Danny McLennan said, “The main drawback is that players here have not been taught young. It is not possible to teach players in the mid-20s basic skills like ball control and dribbling. There should be a national coaching programme. What you have here is fragmented. Every state should also have its own programme, with a regional director of coaching co-ordinating with the national director. Each state should have a team in every age group. There also has to be a qualified programme for coaches.”

He further said, “The players get enough money, players like Bhaichung Bhutia are paid a handsome sum by their clubs, and also get a lot from endorsements. Even some of the lower rung players get enough to live comfortably. The incentive is there. But I feel the system of transfers should be changed. Players should get a three or five year contract, so that they feel secure. Also, the practice of restricting inter-

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club transfers to once a year should stop. If a coach needs a goalkeeper, he should be able to go out and buy one at any time. Now, even if a coach can identify a weak link in the team, he has to wait a whole year before he can change the side. If you have a roof leak in May, you don’t wait until next May to fix it.”

He also said, “National league has been quite successful. But it’s not long and tough, though. The league should be played over six to seven months, and with about 18 teams. If you have a good league, you get good players, and a strong national side. Too many foreign players can restrict the development of a country’s own players. It has happened in Italy and Britain is heading that way. One must be discerning about the quality of players brought here. If they are good, maybe playing with them may mean some of the skills and attitude may rub off on the Indians.”

He added, “As far as the game goes, India is pretty backward. Other Asian countries like Japan or Korea, are way ahead. The players have potential but it is undeveloped. There are players like Bhaichung Bhutia, who could easily play overseas, but there are not enough talented players. They would do well to learn from Norway. They were like India 20 years ago. But with a good youth programme, they are now a successful team in international soccer. India is making a little progress, but the pace is tardy. They must set their standards higher.”
Warrier\textsuperscript{76} reported that while in Europe and South America, a soccer transfer fee involves a few lakhs of dollars, a sum of Rs.30,000, extremely paltry in comparison, has made news in India, simply because it is the first time a club has ‘fixed’ a price and ‘sold’ a player.

Mahindras, who signed on goalkeeper, Salim Ansari from Dempo earlier this season, received a shock a couple of months ago when the Goan organisation advised the All India Football Federation to keep the player’s inter-state transfer pending until the Mumbai conflict paid a fixed amount as transfer fee. The sum fixed by Dempo was Rs.30,000.

According to Botelho, general secretary of Dempo Sports Club, the fact that the All India Football Federation has not framed guidelines regarding transfer fee holds no water as regulations formed by FIFA, the world body, and Asian Football Confederation, the continental association, provide for it.

Sarkar\textsuperscript{77} reported that bad grounds and shoddy planning overall robbed the third Kalyani Black Label Cup(1998) of the sheen usually associated with the country’s apex knockout soccer showpiece.

The timing of the tournament gave Calcutta teams an advantage. While all other teams suffered from a lack of match practice,
the early start of the Calcutta league helped the city’s entrants to get into
better shape.

Save for Bangalore, turf conditions drew condemnation almost
everywhere else. Delhi was not a footballer’s paradise either. But among
all the venues chosen for this tournament, to give it a more India wide
look, Siliguri was the worst.

First, the final was deferred by one week, after the fixture was
released, apparently to accommodate the sponsors. However, realising
that Doordarshan would have problems slotting the match on a particular
date, it was brought forward.

Bhutia\textsuperscript{78} laments that Indians generally lack the physique that
this hardy game demands. He has a point, “That is why Chima Okeris,
Chibuzor and Stephan can run rings around most defenders,” he says.
“Also what Indian football desperately needs is preparation at the grass-
root level - ball trapping, positioning and dribbling skills have to be
nurtured from a young age.”

Bhutia also feels that part of the reason Indian football is
lagging behind is because of the excessive exposure at the domestic level,
especially for the Calcutta teams. In fact in 1993 he had said, “Matches

\textsuperscript{78}Bhaichung Bhutia, “The Media is Only Concerned When
Cricketers are Injured,” The Sunday Times (New Delhi) 11 October
need to be spaced out. I would like to be in the reckoning for at least ten years, but the way it’s going, I may not even last for five.”

An avid follower of cricket, he acknowledges that cricketers get the lion’s share of media attention. “When Javagal Srinath returned from the Caribbean with a strained shoulder, everyone was worried. When a cricketer is injured, everyone is upset, no one bothers about us.”

Though he is the highest paid footballer in India and endorses various brands including McDowell’s celebration rum, Bhutia feels that sponsorship is not enough for footballers to widen their experience with some European experience.

Sports World79 after interviewing Chima Okerie reported the following: Chima said, “Tata Football Academy is one good thing that happened to Indian football. Their graduates carry themselves well, on and off-the-field. Moreover, financially too players are now better off.”

He said further, “What has remained constant over the years is the depressing lack of self-belief among Indian footballers. You would have thought that, by now, Indians would have taken notice of their abilities - I have never seen more skillful footballers elsewhere. But performance never reflects potential and I am surprised that the powers - that - be have not identified the problems, leave alone seeking a remedy.”

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"Indians have a tendency to hold on to the ball too much, which, in turn, reduces mobility. Pedestrian pace, the result of eight to 10 dribbles in each move, is Indian football's biggest problem. Players' skills must complement the team game. That rarely happens here. That's why foreign teams run rings around Indian clubs. Playing at a faster pace is a matter of habit - there's no reason to be unable to do it," he added.

He suggested, "The game needs more dynamism. Younger coaches, in sync with the times, could be a solution. Young management-trained personnel too should be roped in to run the clubs. I am surprised nobody exploits the business angle better."

Basu reported that after following the European mode of 'home and away league' in the strict sense for two seasons, the AIFF finally bowed to its own style of functioning to do away with the system. The double tier-league with 12 teams divided into two groups in the first stage gives an impression that the National Football League Committee itself is as doubtful as others about the ability of some teams in the fray.

Starting with eight teams in the inaugural season, it would have been ideal not to increase the teams in the national league. Given the prevailing standard of Indian football, anything more than eight teams gives rise to the feeling of a crowded show and uneven competition. No one knows it better than the AIFF bosses do. Yet the league committee has

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packed the league with teams who have lost all legal right to remain in the fray.

The nature of inside or outside pressure that made AIFF keep two demoted teams like Churchill Brothers and Mahindra and Mahindra in the premier division is indeed a mystery.

Not a word has been said to encourage the teams in building up their own infrastructure, a factor which almost brought the league to a halt last season. The national league committee has also not cleared their stand, if like last season, some associations back out from holding the matches at the last moment.

The national league is the sole right step the federation has taken in the recent past for improving the standard of the game. It’s the only place in Indian football where one can breathe fresh air. There is a need now to implement the pollution control act.

The Hindustan Times\textsuperscript{81} reported that the All India Football Federation came down heavily on the clubs playing in the national league for using the services of “some below standard foreign players thus denying a lot of local players the chance to play.”

The AIFF president Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi said, “Some of these footballers are found to be below the standard of local players and they don’t help at all in enhancing the spectators’ interest in the game.

\textsuperscript{81}\textbf{The Hindustan Times} (New Delhi) 5 January (1999): 22.
There are instances when some players were found to be total fraud, having no locus standing back in their own country.”

To stop this practice, the federation has urged the clubs to recruit foreign players only after cross-checking with the AIFF, who in turn can get necessary information from the international body. The federation has also made it a rule that a foreign player could only be allowed to play one week after his registration with the national body.

The Hindu\textsuperscript{82} newspaper reported that it’s time the AIFF woke up. The president of the federation, Mr. Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, has been repeatedly saying that “the national league is still in the experimental stage, despite the fact it’s into its third year now.” But then one normally learns from mistakes. However, that has not been the case with the AIFF.

It’s only in the 11th hour that the AIFF realises the task at hand. Home and away basis is welcome, but hardly a thought has been given to the players concerned, for they now have very little time to recover. As it is, the entire national league is to be finished by the 10th March to enable the players to represent their respective states in the Santosh Trophy.

Squeezing in a tournament like the national league, without due consideration, in an haphazard manner will only kill the cause. At it is the AIFF have been setting precedence the last two years - by giving direct

\textsuperscript{82}The Hindu (New Delhi) 6 January (1999): 19.
access to the first division to teams with clout and changing formats to keep the relegated teams still in the fray.

Also the hotel/accommodation facilities need to be given a better thought. At least in the metros, finding a decent hotel should not be much of a problem, if players' comfort is given a thought well in advance.

Two editions is a long enough period to rectify these nagging problems. Even if it has taken 15 years for the league to take shape in England and eight years in Japan (as stated by Mr. Dasmunshi), can't we improve at least on the basic necessities in two years?

Vasudevan\textsuperscript{83} reported that "Indian referees need more exposure if they are to come anywhere near the international level," said Shetty, a referees instructor of the Asian Football Confederation and vice president of the Bombay Referees Association. It is only by the trial and error method that we will learn the finer points, said Shetty, with a wealth of experience behind him.

On the positive side, Shetty felt there is no dearth of talent in the Indian referees. The conscience of a referee has to be clear when he gives a decision and he should stick to his guns when he gives it. One should understand that he is as much human as the player who spurns numerous chances in a match.

\textsuperscript{83}K.V. Vasudevan, "Indian Referees Need Exposure." \textit{The Indian Express} (New Delhi) 8 January (1999): 21.
Like in cricket, past players should be encouraged to take up refereeing, which will go a long way in improving the standard, he maintained. A beginning has to be made sometime and it up to the federation to design ways and means to promote the game, according to the mild mannered Shetty, now in his early sixties.

Hakim\(^{84}\) said, “Football was our life. The passion was such that we played tournaments three times more than what the current crop of players play without cribbing.” He also said, “Today players are pampered a lot but the resultant dedication does not seem to surface.” He adds, “I don’t say play without money. But does one give his optimum like the way our soccer heroes - Chunni Goswami, P.K. Banerjee, Peter Thangaraj, Mevalal - gave. No, instead several coaches today, for vested interests, give in to the whims and fancies of players, which is harmful when the country’s pride is at stake.”

Stressing on Hyderabad, where Hakim has spent a major part of his life, he says, “It’s a pity that the administrators have caused this downfall. Hyderabad has produced more than a dozen Olympians, a fair clutch on the Asian level and seven international referees, but today there is not a single national referee, leave alone players in the national camp.”

He added, “People (administrators) were a dedicated lot that time. I remember my father getting Rs.8,000 by selling our old house. He

\(^{84}\)S.S. Hakim, “Today’s Players are a Pampered Lot,” The Indian Express (New Delhi) 14 January (1999): 17.
gave the money as a loan to the association in the 50s, which only came back four years later when a visiting Russian team played a match there, and money could be raised."

Another matter of concern is the fact that second string teams (meaning other than NFL teams) are receiving a raw deal. "The AIFF consider just the national league teams as high profile," he said asking. "What about the other teams? They never get a chance."

Sports World\textsuperscript{85} reported after interviewing Shabbir Ali, ex-international: He says, "The presence of foreign coaches helped abolish the practice of the so-called regionalism or quota system. A foreign coach will be good for Indian football as they are far superior in every aspect. If most of the Asian countries can recruit foreign trainers, I don't find any reason why we should not be doing the same."

Regarding the prospects of the national side, he says, "I am optimistic that we will improve only by proper planning and if a proper schedule is chalked out. A couple of more institutions like the Tata Football Academy, Williamson & Magor should come up to hone the budding youngsters. The AIFF should arrange foreign trips for the national side and organise, if possible, more camps."

Regarding the difference between his playing days and current days, he says, "In terms of money, football has obviously undergone a sea

change. I am happy that the current players are being paid a handsome remuneration, which was never heard of during our days. Likewise, the coaches are also paid handsomely these days. Above all, with money pouring in from all quarters especially from the corporate houses, it shows that the game has taken a giant step towards professionalism from its infancy, which is very heartening. However, the media coverage was far better in our times unlike nowadays. It was surprising to hear some ex-players complain that the present players are not dedicated and they only run after money. This is not true. In an age of professionalism, the players today are even more keen to maintain their form and performance which can fetch them handsome deals with the reputed clubs."

Herald Sports Watch,86 after interviewing the coach Amal Dutta, reported the following: He said, "As far as talent is concerned I sincerely believe that India has no dearth of talents, because we are a country of 95 crore population. But the question is how popular the sport is and what are we doing to enhance its popularity. When we talk of professionalism, these are the things that we will have to take into consideration first. Football is limited to only a few states. We need teams like JCT of Punjab which has built up a good infrastructure. It fends for its players and is therefore doing well. Goa is another breeding ground for budding footballers but it lacks infrastructure. Goa, with a population of

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12 lakh, is not in a state to produce many good footballers. So you have to bring in foreign players."

He further said, "We need to work on a few things. Firstly, the big teams should lead by example as far as professionalism is concerned. These teams should have their own infrastructure. They should build three teams in various categories. The first eleven team, under-19 and the under-16 teams, so that they can nurture their own talents from grass-root level."

About national league he says, "Today the national league is conducted at the Cooperage grounds, Mumbai which is being leased out for marriage parties 24 hours before the match. At Calcutta you will find a rock concert being held where a singer will be dancing and singing on the grounds leaving all sorts of trash on the turf. For good football we need good pitches. The All India Football Federation will have to seriously look into this matter. Fortunately for Goa, the Fatorda ground is well maintained and is one of the best grounds in the country we have played till date."

He further adds, "The All India Football Federation has made a blunder, by changing the format at the last minute. In a league every team must play against everybody on a home and away basis and should not be divided into groups. The AIFF should work on a calendar instead of shuffling the league format every year. So far the league has created nothing but confusion. And there is miss-management and lack of
coordination among organising committee members. We need a professional secretary to conduct football affairs. And not a politician to supervise football in the country. A lot of money is involved in a tournament of this magnitude and it needs to be marketed. Every match in India should be house-full, or else the purpose behind the league stands defeated."

About Doordharshan he says, "Doordharshan is concentrating only on cricket. They are not supporting football. Cricket is not an universal game. This again is the problem of the AIFF. ESPN on the other hand is doing a good job in telecasting the other leagues of the world. Doordharshan should follow suit and telecast clippings as a curtain raiser to the national league. AIFF feels that their duty ends and begins with the league. Their duty is not over. In fact their duty has not even started. Sports is entertainment and if we have millions of Indians witnessing movies and theaters, why should we not have houseful stadiums for a match? Indian football needs motivation. Because football is the number one game in the world. The AIFF has to push the game in every state."

"The refereeing standard is also poor. Once the team is relegated that should stand but the AIFF has reinstated the relegated teams which only shows the lack of professional attitude of the AIFF bosses." he adds.
Marar\textsuperscript{87} reported that it has not been a matter of choice for both coaches Bimal Ghosh (Air India) and Sukwinder Singh (JCT) - that they have to depend on Indian and local talent, but a question of circumstances. Air-India cannot recruit foreigners unless the central government permits a change of recruitment policy, while the Phagwara side's ambitions have been curtailed by recession and an exodus of Indian/foreign stars to the glamour clubs.

Neither team has the cash to splash when competing against Mohun Bagan, East Bengal or Salgaocar in the race for the Vijayans, Bhutias or Coutinhos with Rs.15-20 lakh price tags against their name, nor can they expect any money coming through corporate sponsorship enjoyed by clubs like F.C.Kochin (Coca-Cola), BMFC (Gulf Lubricants) and the Big Two from Calcutta (United Breweries). Both Air-India and JCT have to make do with available talent and resources in a league where the disparity between the haves and the have nots is glaring.

The fortunes of both teams have also followed a certain pattern forced to mould stars out of available local talent, only to find them snatched away by big clubs at the end of a successful season. While the rebuilding process begins all over again for coaches Ghosh and Sukwinder, the affected clubs cannot demand any compensation for the hours and money involved in making stars out of mortals.

\textsuperscript{87}Nandakumar Marar, “Desi Remedies for Air India’s Ills,” \textit{Mid-Day} (Mumbai) 15 February (1999): 42.
D'Cruz® reported that after Philips failed to enlighten, Coca-Cola are struggling to provide the fizz. Sponsorship of the National Football League (NFL) has changed hands, prize money has increased, but how much closer has the event come to turning Indian soccer professional?

Olympian, P.K. Banerjee joins players and coaches in fondly recalling the first ever National Football League in 1996-97. "We thought it was good, though not very good. But now, looking back, it was excellent. Close to being professional," Banerjee says. "The second NFL took two steps backward and the current (1998-99) one has slid down further," Banerjee's joy turns to despondency.

The maladies plaguing the NFL persist. Poor marketing of the event resulting in almost absent TV coverage, poor spectator response at all centres save Goa and Calcutta and lukewarm patronage from the press does not show the league in a good light amid overwhelming competition from cricket.

It was perhaps inevitable that sponsors Philips called it a day after less than adequate mileage from the first two NFLs. The other disappointments continue.

A thoughtless calendar, that contributed to the current absurdity in format, also threatens to burn out players who have hit the big-time in terms of earnings.

The Bhutias, Vijayans and Ancheris are hoped to have inspired a generation of players despite cricket’s mega bucks - albeit for a few. The Tata Football Academy lads, now involved in NFL competition, see a potentially lucrative future in the making. But how long will they last?

The common refrain from players is that the schedule is punishing. With the league crammed into a period of less than three months, players have little or no time to recuperate between matches.

NFL chairman Alberto Colaco says, “The NFL could commence on October 1 and run all through the way to mid-February, going concurrently with the Federation Cup, as in Europe. The DCM, Durand and Rovers Cup could follow, concluding just in time for transfers that begin on April 1.”

Churchill Brothers coach Danny McLennan’s views should count. The Scotsman believes, the NFL only reflects the general state of the sport in the country.

The former Glasgow Rangers striker who has coached nine national squads in Asia, and Africa calls for a total ‘constitutional overhaul’ of Indian football. He does not comment on whether administration of the sport in the country is adept or not, but is sure of one thing as he affirms.
"It's time you get actual footballing people at the helm. You have former players and coaches who know and understand the needs of the game and they should be given charge."

"The government here may have to, at a point, step-in to stop Indian football bumbling along the way it is," McLennan added.

Basu\textsuperscript{89} reported that the National Football League Committee (NFLC), in reducing the Super Six round of the NFL into a double leg affair, has effectively killed the very essence of the championship. The committee, in a way, has also handed out a raw deal to two teams, from the extreme northern and southern parts of the country. Both JCT and F.C. Kochin have cleared major hurdles on their way to the Super Six round only to lose the major advantage of playing at home.

But scrapping of 'home and away' system is certainly not the right way to streamline the issue. In doing it, the NFLC has not only reduced the charm of the championship, but has also coveted the league into yet another ordinary tournament. Knowingly or unknowingly, a clear advantage has been handed out to the four teams from Goa and Calcutta.

The whole exercise is also not in consonance with the announced NFL, policy of spreading the game to all parts of the country. Goa and Calcutta are the two most popular football centres in the country.

other than Kerala. NFLC matches there will really not help in popularising the game in other regions.

Not too much has been done in keeping the interest of the sponsor alive in this edition of the national league. While NFL could hardly compete with cricket in terms of publicity, the league also did not receive much coverage in the electronic media, a vital aspect in winning the confidence of sponsors these days.

Bhattacharjee\(^9\) in his article, "Backward bend," states that the enthusiasm with which National Football League began in 1996-97 is no longer in evidence. The National Football League is fast losing its depth and meaning. The current format of this premier championship has dispensed with the relegation system and, as a consequence, the number of participating teams has risen from eight to 12. Last year (1998), Churchill Brothers were demoted to the second division and as they threatened to disband the team, the reprieve came almost immediately. The AIFF chose to keep them in the first division!

That is the worst example of how a parent body bows to the threats of a team it's supposed to have framed the rules for.

The Hindu\(^9\) newspaper reported that the system of 'home and away' matches the National Football League followed in the first phase and

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er editions was meant to ensure that each Association and team benefitted. However, barring Calcutta and Margao, it is doubtful if any other centre has gained much. In Chennai, for instance, the crowd patronage is minimal, and it is said to be the same in Delhi and Ludhiana.

Monetary gains apart, 'home advantage' and familiar conditions do encourage a team. More so in a competition of this nature where the stakes are high. Natural justice requires that all teams face similar conditions. But it was not followed in the third national league (1998-99).

Warrier\textsuperscript{92} reported that having made a mockery of the third National Football League (1998-99), the question that officials of the All India Football Federation need to address is whether they have the moral right to enforce relegations this year. The answer would be an annoying 'No'.

In an unprecedented move, AIFF, citing pressures from sponsors Coca-Cola and Doordarshan decided to reinstate Churchill Brothers and Mahindra and Mahindra, the two bottom-placed teams of last year NFL.

Then, the AIFF split the teams into two groups of six each. Emerging from this qualifier were three from each group to form the Super Six. The charm of any NFL is the matches played on a home and away

\textsuperscript{92}Sunil Warrier, "To Relegate or Not is the Question for AIFF," The Times of India (New Delhi) 26 February (1999): 20.
basis, but the AIFF scrapped it by deciding to host it at two centres - Goa and Calcutta.

This clearly gave teams from these two centres an unfair advantage while leaving F.C.Kochin and JCT, Phagwara, seething, yet with no option but to play. The reason cited was lack of funds and time.

Neither Air India nor Indian Bank, the two teams on the current relegation list, have played each other nor the #4 and #5 placed teams in either group. Thus, there has been no attempt by the AIFF to assess the ‘other six’ on an unified platform.

Having experimented for three years, it’s time the AIFF comes out with a policy decision regarding the number of teams in the premier NFL - it does appear 15 should be the ideal targeted figure - and find a fixed slot of four-five months and finish it in that period.

Basu\(^9\) reported that football is known for throwing up new heroes everytime the ball is rolled on the ground. But sadly, the current league (1998-99) has not seen an influx of players, who have the skills to take the centrestage in the forthcoming seasons.

What is depressing is that the top players of the league are foreigners, Churchill Brothers goalkeeper Edward Ansah and stopper back Osuman Hussain have come from Africa to steal the lime light.

As the season comes to an end, there is no sign of a new lot of players stepping into the shoes of Baichung Bhutia or I. M. Vijayan, Raman Vijayan, Carlton Chapman, Tushar Rikshit or Basudev Mondal. With no one around to replace them, these footballers will again be the most sought after during the time of transfers.

Ciccarelli94 conducted a survey on the review of the historical and sociological perspectives involved in the acceptance of soccer as a professional sport in the United States. The study traces the history and development of professional soccer in the United States from 1850 to the present. An integral part of the work deals with the sociological concept of the dominant minority societal structure and its relation to immigration in the United States. As a result, soccer, a sport which had been played throughout the United States before any other team sport and which had also been played throughout the World, acquired a foreign connotation. Upto the time of depression, any native born American playing soccer was doing so virtually by accident rather than by design. With the closing of the door to immigration in the early 1930's, players' sources for the professional leagues dwindled and there was suddenly a need for the "grass roots" development of American players. During this period the American soccer league published magazines for youth, ran clinics, and made a

concentrated effort to foster soccer in the United States. In 1950, the effort proved worthwhile as United States defeated England in the World Cup in Brazil. This incredible event was hailed as the forerunner to a great era of soccer in the United States but proved to be more of a culminating activity as promotional activities centred around the importation of an entire foreign team to stage exhibitions.

In 1968, a legitimate professional league, the North American Soccer League was established complete with a television contract. Interest was revived in America and many youths begin to play the game. The professional club owners continued to recruit only foreign players; and despite a great interest in youth soccer, professional soccer continued to lose a great amount of money because of low attendance.

Schleppi95 conducted a study on history of professional association football in England during the Second World war. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of sport in a country under the stress of modern warfare. Newspapers of England, soccer books, records of the governing bodies of soccer, selected club records based on war involvement, and public records were examined. Players, newsmen, referees, and club officials, and others who were part of the war scene were interviewed. The usual historical research procedures were used in the

study. The research was done in England in the Spring of 1971. During the war between 75 and 95 per cent of the clubs functioned each year. Even though there were severe restrictions due to the war, the game continued. The war structure of professional soccer, complied with the sometimes Herculean efforts of the few persons remaining at the clubs to keep them going, produced a fast recovery following the war, with only one year needed for a post war “transitional” period. The game received practically no criticism from the public or government. Except for taxes and necessary limitations the game gained governmental support as evidenced by the ground rebuilding during and immediately following the war. Most newspapers, even when the paper was scarce, carried sports news. However, only one or two exclusively sports publications continued during the war. Thus, although modern warfare involves nearly the whole society in its complicated machinery, sport, especially games of national interest develops its organisation to a high point to: (1) maintain a feeling of “normalcy”. Sport was one of the few things people could look forward to from week to week, and one which gave a feeling of fighting or working for a national culture. (2) Maintain civilian morale by diversion during leisure time. (3) Help avoid cultural shock that might result from the loss of implanted activity. In conclusion, sport contributed to the war effort in an intricate way, not just as escape mechanism.
Burnett\textsuperscript{96} conducted a study on an assessment of the vocational and social status of professional football players. This assessment was accomplished by determining the general characteristics, educational status, vocational standing, and sociological attitudes of individuals playing professional football during the 1972 season. A sub-problem of the study was to make a comparison between the vocational and social status of professional football players of 1949 and those of 1972. The study highlighted that the main reasons for playing professional football were financial gains and for love of the game, while the outstanding disadvantages were insecure working conditions and the risk of physical injury. The average professional football player had played 4.5 years in professional football, four years in college football, three years in high school football, and less than two years of football previous to high school.

Most professional football players are college graduates, were physical education majors, and feel that football has a generally positive influence upon the players' individual character values. Most players hold the head coaches, both past and present in high esteem and do not feel that they place too much emphasis on winning in professional football.

Governali\(^7\) conducted a study on the professional football players and his vocational status. The primary purpose of this study was to provide guidance materials for physical educators, who must counsel young men desirous of playing professional football and an interview schedule was developed to gather information that would answer some pertinent questions on the vocational status of professional football players. This schedule was used as a basis for obtaining needed information through informal and intimate interviews. The 74 per cent response represented the 100 per cent sample. The questionnaire listed 49 items which would return information dealing with the players' educational, geographic and socio-economic backgrounds, reasons for entering professional football, salary and security, health and accident hazards, relation of post-football occupation to major studies in college, the extent to which professional football did or did not aid players in seeking outside employment, attitude of the players towards the professional sport, advantages and disadvantages of the game, and plans for the future.

The results of the study showed that players first began competing professionally for the following reasons in the order of their importance: to gain football coaching experience; to save money; for personal satisfaction; for love of the game; and to acquire money

specifically for a home, a business, or professional advancement. Few entered the game because they were jobless and in need of money.

The study highlighted that the advantages of playing the professional game in order of their importance, according to the players, are: general financial gain; business contracts and publicity; coaching experience; satisfaction and prestige; specific financial gain for a home or a business; travel and education; free time; and social acceptance. Many players indicated that they played professionally because they loved the same.

The disadvantage include: the risk of physical injury; being away from home; insecurity of job; retarding or interfering with lifetime career; seasonal job; bad environmental condition; no future in the job; interruption of education; and too much work and travel.

Professional football players hold a highly favorable attitude toward the professional sport. Seventy per cent of the players would allow their sons to compete professionally if they had talent, and ninety four per cent of the them would play again if they had it to do over. In general, the players feel that playing professional football is worthwhile.

Jable\(^{98}\) conducted a study on the birth of professional football: athletic clubs in Pittsburgh Ring in professionals 1892-1893. Professional

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football emerged in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1892 when two local athletic clubs, the Pittsburgh Athletic Club (PAC) and Allegheny Athletic Association (AAA), brought in ringers (outstanding players) and paid them to play for their football teams. Club reputations depended upon the success of their athletic teams. In addition, winning was a must because many of the clubs' members wagered heavily on their own teams. Football provided certain Americans with a strenuous, masculine activity which they believed was necessary to overcome the importance associated with Victorianism. Initially the club members themselves participated. However, when winning become essential from an ideological and financial stand-point, athletic clubs recruited the best football players available. Further evidence of professionalism during the remainder of the 1892 season as presented. Professional football resulted chiefly from two forces: (1) the necessity for athletic clubs' football teams to win for financial gain and notoriety, and (2) the need for certain Americans to identify with physical prowess in order to remove the stigma of Victorianism.

Banerjee\textsuperscript{99} investigated the attitude of the Senior Division Football players of Calcutta football league towards professionalism. He administered a questionnaire to the Senior Division Football players of selected clubs of Calcutta. The questionnaire included 25 statements and

players were asked to answer in YES or NO. From the analysis of the data it was found that players prefer professionalism in soccer.

World Soccer\textsuperscript{100} reported that in May 1993 professional league was started in Japan, known as J-league. Japanese newspaper have hailed Japan's new professional J-league, saying the sport has taken its place in two short months as a part of the national culture.

The Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan's top selling newspaper, said: "The league has exceeded expectations. There were full houses everywhere. Its popularity was due to a feeling that the game was new and exciting, and to attacking teams, strong foreign players and fast play."

"Now, sports typical of Japan are not just Sumo Wrestling and Baseball. We can say that Soccer has taken root as a new sport in the national culture."

World Soccer\textsuperscript{101} reported that the Chinese, booted out of four World Cups by countries a fraction of their size, were planning to introduce professional football to help develop the game in time for the 2002 competition. The long-range target is part of a 10 year reform strategy devised at an official soccer summit in the northern part of Dalian.

The world's most populous country vowed to dominate Asian soccer by the same year. The scheme is to be helped by the establishment

\textsuperscript{100} World Soccer 33:12 (September 1993): 25.
\textsuperscript{101} World Soccer 34:3 (December 1993): 51.
of 20 professional clubs with up to 500 players, and youth teams at 40 per cent of primary schools and 25 per cent of high schools.

Sports World\textsuperscript{102} reported on the 1994 World Cup Cameroon team - of the 22-members Cameroon squad, ten play abroad and twelve at home. There is little money for the home-based players. Earnings from the club are about Rs.2,500 per week. The annual income from football of Stephen Tataw or Vivien Foe is much less than that of Krishanu Dey or Vijayan. Many of the home based players work as civil servants or in banks or as sports teachers to augment their income.

Ghosh\textsuperscript{103} in his project work mentioned that the richest football league of the World is the Italian League. Transaction of money in this event is quite unbelievable. About 200 crores of Rupees are involved in this huge industry. Nowhere else other than Italy is such a huge amount of money involved. It is mainly the involvement of media attention which makes this league the most popular in the world. Italian TV channels spend about three or four hours in average for football everyday. For the telecasting rights they have to pay huge money. The amount is about 100 crore Rupees.

Italian football federation gets the money from various betting syndicates also. This amount is about Rs. 40 crores. What happens by this


\textsuperscript{103}Rajib Kumar Ghosh, “Indian Football Towards a New Era,” (Unpublished Project Work for Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication & Journalism, University of Burdwan, 1997).
is massive publicity of this star packed league. Emotion of football-lovers is often controlled by the sports dailies of Italy. "Gazzetta De La Sporte" and "Courriere De La Sporte," two sports dailies have a circulation of about one million copies daily. In Italy there are seven sports dailies and the owner of everyone is willing to continue last their business forever. That is the magic of football. Business magnates of Italy therefore run after money from football. A.C. Milan, the most popular Club in Italy is run by a TV giant and ex-prime minister of the country Silvio Beflusconi. Ernesto Pellegrini, the owner of the largest food supplier concern of Italy, finances another popular club Inter Milan. Juventus is run by the auto giant, the owner of Fiat Automobiles, Gianni Agnelli. Money is mainly spent on hiring the internationally famed footballers. To snatch Roberto Baggio, Italy's highest paid player from a leading club Fiorentina to his own club Juventus, Agnelli had to spend $1.3 million (about Rs.7 crores). Megastar of football, Argentina's Diego Maradona, would receive Rs.2.5 crores per year from his Italian Club, Napoli. All these are examples from extremely professional football of Europe.

Asian Football Confederation News Magazine\textsuperscript{104} reported that the football federation of Sri Lanka has developed a plan to educate sports teachers in the coaching of basic footballing skills. Four centres have been

\textsuperscript{104}Asian Football Confederation News Magazine (Internet Website: \url{http://www.asianfootball.com/afc/pub/april97/magazine/afc.4-97.html}).
set up where teachers will be taught how to coach and develop tactics and technique with children. The programme will emphasise the provision of one trained coach per school, spread awareness that success can only be achieved with training and that a standard programme is needed.

The football federation of Sri Lanka will provide the technical team, teaching materials, equipment etc. while the education ministry will select the participants and make the necessary arrangements for their arrival.

It is hoped that the three year programme, which will operate in three stages at three levels, will work with 200 schools, 200 teachers and 2200 players on the first stage; 100 schools, 100 teachers and 1100 players on stage two; 50 schools, 50 teachers and 550 players on the third stage. At the conclusion it is hoped that Sri Lanka will have at least 50 schools and 550 players trained well enough to give higher level performances.

World Soccer\textsuperscript{105} reported the players' wages (highs and lows) at international soccer. The country-wise wages are as follows:

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textbf{Belgium:-}
    \begin{itemize}
        \item \textbf{Top earner:} Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht) - $550,000\text{p.a.}$
        \item \textbf{Lowest:} First team pro at Westerlo - $21,000\text{p.a.}$
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{105}World Soccer 38:6 (March 1998): 27.
France:-

Top earner: Marco Simone (PSG) - $1.9million p.a.

Lowest: First team pro at Chateauroux - $15,000p.a.

Germany:-

Top earner: Mathias Sammer (Dortmund) - $2million p.a.

Lowest: First year pro at Wolfsburg - $25,000p.a.

Holland:-

Top earner: Ronald de Boer (Ajax) - $850,200p.a.

Lowest: First team pro at NEC - $20,000p.a.

Italy:-

Top earner: Ronaldo (Inter) - $3.5million p.a.

Lowest: Massimilano Caniato (Udinese) - $13,000p.a.

Hamilton\(^{106}\) reported that football clubs across Europe are preparing to raise substantial sums of money through stock market flotations. This unprecedented ‘dash for cash’ has been fuelled by the prospect of a huge injection of revenue from pay TV, and been made necessary by the wage and transfer demands of players in the post-Bosman era.

Two clear developments were identified. The first was the move by clubs, primarily in England but increasingly across Europe, to raise money through public share issues. The second was the activities of

external institutional investors, most notably ENIC, the English National Investment Company, whose principle shareholder is Jew Lewis, a Bahamas-based tax exile and reportedly, Britian’s richest man.

ENIC currently owns, wholly or partly, football clubs, in four different countries: Rangers (Scotland), AEK Athens (Greece), Slavia Prague (Czech Republic) and Vicenza (Italy). Over the past month it has been linked with a further four: Rapid Vienna (Austria), Ferencvaros (Hungary), Boavista (Portugal) and Bordeaux (France).

All the above are successful in their own countries and so have the potential to succeed in European competition, where there are growing possibilities for lucrative TV and sponsorship deals.

Financial pundits talk of ‘the virtuous circle’ when describing this merging of financial and football worlds. Investment in a club leads to the hiring of better players, which leads to better results, success and silverware, which leads to increased TV audiences and revenues, and hence more money to invest in better coaches and players. And so on.

The rush of clubs to float is by no means confined to Europe. From Argentina (where Boca Juniors have launched an investment fund with a difference—players’ contracts are the assets) to Zambia (where Mulfulira Wanderers plan an entry on the Lusaka stock exchange), everybody wants to cash in on football’s global success.
But Europe is where the real action is Lazio shareholders have approved plans for a flotation on the Milan Bourse which would make the Italian club the first listed Serie A outfit.

All are trying to emulate the success of English clubs; Manchester United, now one of the top 250 companies on the London stock exchange, raised £16m through a three per cent share expansion in late 1996. Newcastle United raised nearly £50m from their flotation.

Sports World\textsuperscript{107} reported that England’s Premier League is seemingly the best in the world as it attracts the best talent. There were more English-based players at the World Cup ‘98 than from any other country. Sixteen of the 32 teams had players who plied their trade in the Premier League or the Ist Division in England.

Overall, there were 75 England-based players at France 98. Spain and Italy were the next best with 70.

Sports World\textsuperscript{108} reported that the wealth of talent in the Nigerian team is amazing to behold. Their entire 22-member World Cup 98 squad plays abroad. Third goalkeeper William Okpara is the only one from the African continent and even he plays for well known South African club Orlando Pirates. Of the remaining 21 players, 19 are from top European clubs including five in Spain, four each in France and Turkey and three in Holland.

\textsuperscript{107}Sports World (July 1998): 52.
The Sportstar\textsuperscript{109} reported that Liverpool (one of the top clubs of England) wants to insure teenage England star Michael Owen for 100 million dollars in case the striker’s career is halted by injury.

Liverpool, striving to regain a domestic league title for the first time in nine seasons, has no intention of letting Owen go and, in case he suffers a career-threatening injury or illness, is looking for a company which will insure him for 100 million dollars. That figure, which takes into account his transfer value and what the club earns in sales of shirts and souvenirs, would top the reported 82.5 million dollar insurance cover Inter-Milan has placed on Brazilian star Ronaldo.

FIFA Magazine\textsuperscript{110} reported that overall 417 Brazilian players are playing in the leagues of the other countries. Of which 32 are playing in Japan and 19 are playing in China.

Sports World\textsuperscript{111} reported that an interesting aspect in the Asiad soccer (Bangkok ‘98) was the large number of foreign coaches on view. China, trying to revive their football fortunes, were coached by Englishman Bob Houghton who replaced Chinese Qi Wusheng. Houghton’s brief is to see China qualify for the finals of the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and the 2002 World Cup.

\textsuperscript{110}FIFA Magazine (December 1998): 17.
\textsuperscript{111}Sports World (January 1999): 45.
Another Englishman on view was Barry Whitbread with Singapore. He took the island nation to their first-ever regional title, when they lifted the Tiger Cup in Vietnam in September 1998. Former England striker Peter Withe is with Thailand. In fact, he is the most popular European in Thailand today, as he guided the national team to the semi-finals. Oman were coached by the Brazilian Badu Viera.

Asian nations are taking football very seriously and are spending big money to secure quality foreign coaches. Japan was coached by Frenchman Philippe Troussier who was recommended by Arsenal’s coach Arsene Wenger.

Herald\textsuperscript{112} newspaper reported that Manchester United has retained its top slot as the richest football club in the world, despite gate attendances that are well below European giants such as Barcelona and Real Madrid. In fact, Manchester’s turnover in the 1996-97 season was almost 50 per cent higher than that of its closest rival, Barcelona.

According to Gerry Boon, head of the football squad at Deloittee and Touche accountants, shrewd marketing and sales of replica kits were the key to United’s off-pitch sales success. The clubs earned 87.9 million pounds (144 million dollars) compared with 58.9 million pounds reaped at Barcelona. The world’s richest top-10 include three

\textsuperscript{112}Herald (Panjim) 4 February (1999).
clubs from the English Premiership, three from Italy, two from Spain and two from Germany.

The annual report of the Arsenal Football Club Private Limited Company¹¹³ (England) which won the Premier League title for the season 1997-98 have mention the detail activities of their club while stating their accounts. The detail financial statements are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. TURNOVER</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover comprises the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate receipts</td>
<td>£10,631,845</td>
<td>£9,976,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting and other commercial activities</td>
<td>£12,046,867</td>
<td>£7,129,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail income</td>
<td>£4,479,295</td>
<td>£3,868,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£27,158,007</strong></td>
<td><strong>£20,975,177</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. COSTS AND OVERHEADS LESS OTHER INCOME</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment costs</td>
<td>£15,278,711</td>
<td>£10,062,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>£1,191,480</td>
<td>£1,106,885</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other operating charges</td>
<td>£8,710,749</td>
<td>£7,360,131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>(£34,537)</td>
<td>(£100,251)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payable</td>
<td>£111,409</td>
<td>£1,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£25,257,812</strong></td>
<td><strong>£18,430,782</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other operating charges include:-
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets - (7,730)
Auditors' remuneration - audit - non-audit services £20,500 £37,300 £20,000 £32,970
Operating lease payments - plant and machinery - other £20,144 £142,572 £18,000 £167,104

Employment costs are stated after charging exceptional costs of 666,000 consisting of payments made to employees whose contracts of employment were terminated during the year.

3. TRANSFER FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer fees payable</td>
<td>10,545,145</td>
<td>12,055,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer fees receivable</td>
<td>(7,069,500)</td>
<td>(5,900,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,475,645</td>
<td>6,155,564</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. DIRECTORS EMOLUMENTS

Management remuneration including pension contributions 253,616 253,158

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>highest paid director</td>
<td>134,931</td>
<td>134,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors pensions:-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contributions paid in the year</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions in respect of highest paid director</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. EMPLOYEES

The average number of persons employed by the company during the year was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playing staff</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training staff</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground staff</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff costs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages and salaries</td>
<td>13,382,828</td>
<td>8,758,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security costs</td>
<td>1,181,105</td>
<td>774,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pension costs</td>
<td>714,778</td>
<td>528,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15,278,711</td>
<td>10,062,063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. **TAX ON LOSS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES**

United Kingdom corporation tax based on the loss for the year (325,000) (1,325,000)
Adjustment in respect of prior years 17,878 (331)

(307,122) (1,325,331)

7. **TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freehold Properties</th>
<th>Short Leasehold Properties</th>
<th>Plant and Equipment</th>
<th>Motor Vehicles</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At 1st</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1996</td>
<td>26,417,328</td>
<td>732,834</td>
<td>5,616,140</td>
<td>113,645</td>
<td>32,879,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td>863,376</td>
<td>6,558</td>
<td>574,176</td>
<td>23,418</td>
<td>1,467,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27,280,704</td>
<td>739,392</td>
<td>6,190,316</td>
<td>137,063</td>
<td>34,347,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                   | Freehold Properties | Short Leasehold Properties | Plant and Equipment | Motor Vehicles | Total   |
| **Depreciation**  | £                   | £                          | £                   | £              | £       |
| **At 1st**        |                     |                            |                     |                |         |
| June 1996         | 1,538,515           | 424,607                    | 2,574,574           | 42,418         | 4,580,114 |
| Charge for year   | 552,213             | 17,400                     | 605,947             | 15,920         | 1,191,480 |
| **At 31st**       |                     |                            |                     |                |         |
| May 1997          | 2,090,728           | 442,007                    | 3,180,521           | 58,338         | 5,771,594 |

| **Net Book Amount** |                     |                            |                     |                |         |
| **At 31st**        |                     |                            |                     |                |         |
| May 1997           | 25,189,976          | 297,385                    | 3,009,795           | 78,725         | 28,575,881 |
| **At 31st**        |                     |                            |                     |                |         |
| May 1996           | 24,878,813          | 308,227                    | 3,041,566           | 71,227         | 28,299,833 |

Grants received from the Football Trust during the year, totalling £600,000 have been deducted from the cost of fixed assets.
At 31st May 1996 the company had the following capital commitments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorised and contracted for</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,150,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **STOCKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goods for resale</td>
<td>599,818</td>
<td>572,849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **DEBTORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade debtors</td>
<td>466,224</td>
<td>200,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other debtors</td>
<td>4,285,729</td>
<td>2,332,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepayments and accrued income</td>
<td>237,511</td>
<td>69,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation tax recoverable</td>
<td>1,617,999</td>
<td>1,462,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,607,463</td>
<td>4,064,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other debtors include £3,625,000 in respect of player transfers (1996: £1,825,000). Other debtors also include £88,000 (1996: £105,000) receivable in more than one year in respect of executive box licences being paid on an instalment basis.

10. **CREDITORS:** Amounts falling due within one year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade creditors</td>
<td>409,491</td>
<td>437,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tax and social security</td>
<td>1,612,653</td>
<td>665,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other creditors</td>
<td>5,344,420</td>
<td>4,419,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accruals and deferred income</td>
<td>5,939,251</td>
<td>3,942,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,305,815</td>
<td>9,464,661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other creditors include £4,718,959 (1996: £3,750,000) in respect of player transfers.

11. **CREDITORS:** Amounts falling due after more than one year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debenture subscriptions</td>
<td>14,437,500</td>
<td>14,437,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other creditors</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income</td>
<td>514,000</td>
<td>950,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15,201,500</td>
<td>16,137,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The debenture subscriptions have been applied in the development of the Highbury Stadium. Under the issue terms the debentures are repayable at par after 150 years. The debentures are interest free.

12. DEFERRED TAXATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unprovided deferred taxation:</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation tax deferred by accelerated capital allowances</td>
<td>1,215,000</td>
<td>1,095,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other timing differences</td>
<td>(3,300)</td>
<td>(3,300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,211,700</td>
<td>1,095,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. CALLED UP EQUITY SHARE-CAPITAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORISED</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary shares of £1 each</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLOTTED, ISSUED AND FULLY PAID</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary shares of £1 each</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. SHARE PREMIUM AND OTHER RESERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Share Premium Account £</th>
<th>Building Reserve £</th>
<th>Profit and Loss Account £</th>
<th>Total £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 31st May 1996</td>
<td>237,201</td>
<td>928,175</td>
<td>8,814,082</td>
<td>9,979,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Loss) for the year</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(1,268,328)</td>
<td>(1,268,328)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 31st May 1997</td>
<td>237,201</td>
<td>928,175</td>
<td>7,545,754</td>
<td>8,711,130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. RECONCILIATION OF EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS’ FUNDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening equity shareholders’ funds</td>
<td>10,035,458</td>
<td>12,309,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained (loss) for the financial year</td>
<td>(1,268,328)</td>
<td>(2,285,838)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations received</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing equity shareholders’s funds</td>
<td>8,767,130</td>
<td>10,035,458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. LEASING COMMITMENTS

Commitments due under operating leases for the period to 31st May 1998 are:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997 £</th>
<th>1996 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land and Buildings</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leases expiring in:-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to five years</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>4,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over five years</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>4,380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. CASH FLOW STATEMENT

(a) Reconciliation of operating profit to net cash inflow from operating activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997 £</th>
<th>1996 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating profit</td>
<td>1,977,067</td>
<td>2,446,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>1,191,480</td>
<td>1,106,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Profit) on fixed asset disposal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(7,730)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase) in stock</td>
<td>(26,970)</td>
<td>(122,593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)/decrease in debtors</td>
<td>(574,517)</td>
<td>2,263,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) in creditors</td>
<td>2,436,195</td>
<td>(720,901)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash inflow from operating activities</td>
<td>5,003,255</td>
<td>4,965,694</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profit on ordinary activities before transfer fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997 £</th>
<th>1996 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>(34,537)</td>
<td>(100,251)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payable</td>
<td>111,409</td>
<td>1,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit on ordinary activities before transfer fees</td>
<td>1,900,195</td>
<td>2,544,395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Operating profit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in cash in the period</td>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in net debt</td>
<td>(1,209,208)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net debt at 1st June 1996</td>
<td>(11,737,010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net debt at 31st May 1997</td>
<td>(12,946,218)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gross cash flows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments for purchase of players</td>
<td>(9,576,186)</td>
<td>(9,781,750)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts from sale of players</td>
<td>5,257,000</td>
<td>4,501,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4,319,186)</td>
<td>(5,280,564)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returns on investment and servicing of finance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>34,537</td>
<td>100,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest paid</td>
<td>(111,409)</td>
<td>(1,954)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76,872)</td>
<td>98,297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Capital expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets</td>
<td>(1,967,528)</td>
<td>(1,535,080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts from sale of tangible fixed assets</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,967,528)</td>
<td>(1,519,880)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Financing:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donation received</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(d) **Analysis of Changes in net debt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At 1st June 1996</th>
<th>Cash flows 1997</th>
<th>At 31st May 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand, at bank</td>
<td>£2,700,490</td>
<td>(£1,209,208)</td>
<td>£1,491,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt due after more than one year:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- debenture subscriptions</td>
<td>(14,437,500)</td>
<td>(14,437,500)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>(11,737,010)</td>
<td>(1,209,208)</td>
<td>(12,946,218)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The financial five year summary of Rangers Football Club PLC,¹¹⁴ Scotland are as follows:

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>£'000</strong></td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
<td>£'000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turnover</strong></td>
<td>19,954</td>
<td>15,883</td>
<td>18,939</td>
<td>30,708</td>
<td>31,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating profit/(loss)</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>(286)</td>
<td>1,704</td>
<td>7,108</td>
<td>6,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net interest payable</td>
<td>(1,343)</td>
<td>(470)</td>
<td>(1,096)</td>
<td>(947)</td>
<td>(704)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net transfer fees</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>(3,720)</td>
<td>(1,619)</td>
<td>(8,957)</td>
<td>(18,270)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Loss)/profit before tax</td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>(4,476)</td>
<td>(1,011)</td>
<td>(2,796)</td>
<td>(12,911)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>1,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer to/(from) reserves</strong></td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>(4,446)</td>
<td>(827)</td>
<td>(2,137)</td>
<td>(11,228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets</td>
<td>59,395</td>
<td>59,544</td>
<td>65,867</td>
<td>68,865</td>
<td>73,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current and deferred liabilities</td>
<td>(24,573)</td>
<td>(29,178)</td>
<td>(36,318)</td>
<td>(41,453)</td>
<td>(17,179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets</strong></td>
<td>34,822</td>
<td>30,376</td>
<td>29,549</td>
<td>27,412</td>
<td>56,021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>