

**Union des Associations Européennes de Football ("UEFA")**

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*To the attention of Mr Theodore Theodoridis, UEFA General Secretary  
With copy to Mr Mattias Grafström, FIFA General Secretary*

17 December 2024

**Initiation of the Process for the Recognition of New Pan-European Club Competitions**

Dear ,

As you know from our prior interactions, A22 Sports Management ("A22") is an advisory firm dedicated to providing strategic consulting services to professional sports teams and related organizations throughout Europe. For many years, we have focused on creating and organizing new pan-European club football competitions in an effort to bring innovation and new ideas to the sport.

As part of this initiative, A22 has engaged extensively with a broad spectrum of football stakeholders including clubs, leagues, government officials, broadcasters, technology companies and importantly fans and players. The December 21, 2023, decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union ("CJEU" or the "Court"), which examined the compatibility of certain UEFA/FIFA statutes with EU competition law, significantly expanded and deepened these discussions. The ruling provided stakeholders with the confidence to engage more openly about the critical challenges confronting the sport, and their insights have been instrumental in shaping the proposal outlined in this submission.

As our initiative has progressed over time, A22 faced recurring, intense resistance from your association – conduct which is inconsistent with an entity that must at all times be open, transparent and free from conflicts of interest. Now that the CJEU ruling has applied the law and fundamentally changed the governance standards in international club football, the era of conflict should be behind us and we are hopeful all parties can come together to work jointly for the good of the sport.

**Key Issues and Challenges Identified**

Our extensive engagement with the football community has revealed a broad consensus on several key challenges confronting the sport. These challenges include:

- A. Fan Affordability** – The cost to watch live matches has grown steadily and has reached a point where it is simply unaffordable for far too many fans. The need for multiple

subscriptions, implementation of geo-fencing and other complex restrictions further limit access to audiences, while worsening piracy across Europe and beyond.

- B. Live Match Video Distribution** – For the past 30 years, the sale and distribution of live match video has relied on a model of multi-year, country-by-country media rights auctions. While this approach worked well during the early years of pay-television in Europe, it is now showing its limitations. This is evident in declining auction values for live match rights across multiple European domestic leagues.

Meanwhile, streaming platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, and others have transformed the home entertainment landscape. These services offer viewers unmatched convenience, the flexibility of subscription-based or ad-supported options, and interactive features that provide a vastly superior user experience—capabilities that the traditional distribution model cannot match. Such services also provide a direct connection between the platform and the users, a connection football clubs have been seeking for years with their global fan bases.

- C. Development of Women’s Club Football** – There is strong consensus that women’s football possesses tremendous potential. To fully realize this, it is essential to greatly expand access to live matches at home through free viewing options, reaching a significantly larger audience. The current auction-based model for cross-border women’s matches will not achieve the widespread fan engagement necessary to drive and accelerate growth in the women’s game.

- D. Format and Competitiveness of European Club Competitions** – Existing cross-border club competitions fail to maximize fan, player and club experiences. There are too many matches that result in predictable outcomes, diminishing excitement and engagement. This is clear from TV viewership data which shows that there are too many matches which fans are not interested in watching. Commentary in media outlets and social platforms also support this conclusion.

The current competition format is also overly complicated and difficult for many fans—and even some players and coaches—to understand. As well, it deviates from meritocratic principles due to the absence of home-and-away matches in the initial stage.

- E. Governance** – Since 1955, UEFA has had sole control over the governance of club competitions at European level. While the competitions are dependent upon the participation of clubs and their players, clubs have no direct vote in how the competitions are actually run. This stands in sharp contrast to most domestic leagues, where governance is handled collectively by the participating clubs. The current structure for cross-border competitions is fundamentally inequitable and has created an untenable conflict of interest between UEFA’s dual role as both a self-established “governing body” and the monopoly operator of pan-European club competitions.

### **The Unify League Proposal**

To address the challenges outlined above, we have developed the Unify League—a proposal for new pan-European club competitions designed to provide comprehensive solutions. The league will feature 96 clubs, with qualification based on annual performance in domestic

leagues. The format includes a 14-match League Stage (7 home and 7 away matches) running from September to April, followed by a knockout stage starting with the quarterfinals. Importantly, the schedule will require fewer matchdays than the current competitions. Additionally, the proposal includes the launch of the Unify streaming platform, offering free, ad-supported live match viewing to fans worldwide. A detailed description of the format is provided in the Appendix to this letter and is also available at [A22Sports.com](https://www.a22sports.com).

Specific key benefits of the Unify League proposal include:

- **Based on Sporting Merit** – Participating clubs will qualify based upon annual performance in their domestic leagues.
- **Inclusive** – Includes a broad spectrum of clubs from across the 55 UEFA territories. Over 200 clubs will qualify each year and gain access to the competition either directly or via qualification playoffs, ultimately resulting in 96 participants across four leagues.
- **Intensely Competitive** – Reduces the number of matches which lack competitiveness thereby generating tension and fan interest throughout the full season. Returns to the historical traditions of football by re-establishing home and away matches in the League Stage.
- **Technologically Forward Looking** – Takes advantage of the latest in technological advances through the launch of the Unify platform, a direct-to home streaming service that will carry all live matches for both the men’s and women’s competitions. Unify will offer advanced user experiences, greater viewing flexibility and can easily adapt to changing technologies and fan preferences.
- **Fan Centric Via Free Offer** – The Unify streaming platform will offer fans free viewing of live matches (advertising supported) along with innovative subscription-based offerings, dramatically improving the affordability of home viewing to hundreds of millions of fans. It will also directly connect clubs to their global fan bases for the first time.
- **Expands the Women’s Game** – The Unify platform will also significantly increase access to women’s football at European level by offering free distribution of all live matches, solving the sport’s greatest need: bringing live in-home viewing to the widest possible global audience. It is noteworthy that the Unify strategy of free, ad supported viewing has recently been adopted by FIFA (via DAZN) for its upcoming Club World Cup in mid-2025.
- **Improves Governance** – Enables clubs to govern cross-border competitions with the same autonomy they have in managing their domestic leagues. Self-governance will also provide the flexibility needed to adapt to technological advancements and the evolving preferences of fans, players, clubs, and leagues.
- **Solidarity Payments** – Annual solidarity payments for grassroots initiatives and non-participating clubs will be materially in excess of those from existing European club competitions. To ensure fair and transparent allocation of these funds we propose that an independent entity be appointed to manage this process.

- **Is Compliant with UEFA’s Definition of the “European Sports Model”** – The Unify League is based on sporting merit. Annual qualification is dependent upon club performance in domestic leagues and with substantially increased solidarity payments (see above).

### **Background to the Submission**

One of the critical challenges facing European club football is governance. Clubs participating in the UEFA Champions League have no direct governance rights over the competition’s structure and management; that power is vested entirely in UEFA. This arrangement is fundamentally inconsistent with the club-led governance model seen in nearly all domestic leagues and has resulted in substantial and unsustainable conflicts of interest. This is the case because since 1955, UEFA has been the sole monopoly organizer of pan-European club competitions, including the Champions League and its predecessors. During this time, UEFA enacted Articles 49 and 51 of its statutes which require that any entity wishing to organize a pan-European competition obtain UEFA’s approval under threat of sanctions. By combining the roles of regulator, monopoly operator, gatekeeper for new competitive entrants, and enforcer of sanctions, UEFA amassed an extraordinary level of control over the European football ecosystem. This concentration of power creates significant conflicts of interest and violates European Union law. More importantly, it stifles innovation and prevents the development of new initiatives that could benefit players, clubs, and fans alike.

This conflict issue became particularly relevant for A22 in January 2021, when speculation emerged in the press about the creation of a “European Super League”. Despite no formal announcement or details being disclosed, UEFA and FIFA publicly and categorically opposed the idea, threatening participating clubs and players with bans from all UEFA and FIFA sponsored competitions, including national competitions.

Confronted with this severe public stance, A22 and 12 of the world’s leading football clubs had no option but to seek legal protection to prevent governing bodies from using their sanctioning powers to shut down the initiative without any due process. Therefore, on April 19, 2021, the same day the European Super League proposal was announced, the European Super League Company and A22 filed a legal claim asserting breaches of EU competition law. The claim also sought injunctive relief to prevent UEFA and FIFA from taking pre-emptive measures to block the proposal before the court could review the matter. On April 20, 2021 less than two days later, the court granted the requested protective relief, reflecting the gravity of the situation in the eyes of the court.

On December 21, 2023, the CJEU delivered its landmark ruling clarifying the legality of the contested UEFA/FIFA statutes under European competition law. In common language the CJEU concluded that:

- UEFA holds a monopoly over cross-border club football competitions, acting as the sole operator.
- UEFA (and FIFA) statutes requiring prior authorization for third parties to launch alternative competitions had as their object, the prevention of competition with UEFA’s own tournaments. These statutes, given their explicitly anti-competitive impact, violate EU law.

- The combination of UEFA/FIFA's pre-authorization rules, sanctioning powers, and monopoly control over cross-border club competitions constitutes an abuse of a dominant position, which is also incompatible with EU law.

The CJEU ruling has the force of law in the EU, preventing UEFA and FIFA from using their power to block new initiatives aimed at fostering innovation in European club football. To smooth and clarify processes in the future, the Court was also very prescriptive about what kind of authorization rules in the future might be acceptable under EU law. To date however, (after nearly one year) FIFA has no rules and the UEFA rules, adopted in 2022 and updated in 2024, are in direct conflict with the Court's directives, stating explicitly that any proposal that competes with existing UEFA competitions will not be officially recognized (please see Appendix B).

What is clear is that the decision, in the context of the existing international football governance framework, unequivocally upholds the right of clubs and independent promoters, such as A22, to create new European club competitions. The challenge now is how to proceed collaboratively and constructively.

### **The Way Forward**

We believe disputes are counterproductive to addressing the challenges facing football. Neither A22, nor any of the clubs we have advised or engaged with, seeks conflict with UEFA, FIFA, national federations, or any other football stakeholders. Football is a vital part of Europe's cultural fabric, and it is appropriate to pursue consensus and collaboration. Since the establishment of FIFA in 1904 and UEFA in 1954, both organizations have made significant contributions to the sport by:

- Supporting football's growth, ultimately making it the world's most popular sport.
- Organizing numerous successful competitions for players of all levels and ages.
- Implementing critical regulations to address doping, gambling, and other integrity-related issues.
- Enforcing rules on player health, stadium safety, and other initiatives critical to the welfare of the game.

These contributions are substantial and deserve recognition. However, while consensus is important, progress and innovation in football, as in any domain, require the freedom to propose new ideas without fear of threats or intimidation and the ability to act on those ideas. These freedoms are fundamental rights guaranteed under EU treaties. It is unfortunate we had no other choice than litigation in 2021. However, as a result the CJEU ruling provided transparent and binding directives about how to realign UEFA/FIFA statutes with EU law, thereby easing the dialogue and freedom to innovate that we seek. Simply put, legal disputes should be behind us – the highest court in the European Union has spoken. The time has come to move forward collaboratively for the benefit of the sport.



We hope this submission is received in the spirit in which it has been prepared: one of cooperation, consensus, transparency, good governance, and compliance with European Union law. We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss this proposal, as well as the insights gained from our multi-year stakeholder dialogue, at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Bernd Reichart  
CEO – A22 Sports Management, S.L.



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A – Graphic Overview of the Unify League Competition**

A22  
**UNIFY LEAGUE**  
OVERVIEW

MEN'S COMPETITION



# *A22 — UNIFY LEAGUE OVERVIEW*

- *CROSS-BORDER EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITION*
- *QUALIFICATION BASED ON ANNUAL PERFORMANCE IN DOMESTIC LEAGUES*
- *96 PARTICIPATING CLUBS FROM 55 COUNTRIES*
- *NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER DOMESTIC LEAGUE BASED ON A EUROPEAN COMPETITION COEFFICIENT*

**55**  
**DOMESTIC**  
**LEAGUES**

# **UNIFY LEAGUE**

▶ **32 CLUBS**

▶ **32 CLUBS**

▶ **32 CLUBS**

**96 CLUBS**  
**PARTICIPATING**

**STAR**  
LEAGUE

**GOLD**  
LEAGUE

**BLUE**  
LEAGUE

**UNION**  
LEAGUE

**STAR**  
LEAGUE

**GOLD**  
LEAGUE

**COMBINED**

DIRECT ANNUAL  
QUALIFICATION

12

8

20

PLAYOFFS

2

7

9

TITLE  
WINNERS

**STAR GOLD**  
CHAMPION CHAMPION

**BLUE**  
CHAMPION

3

**TOTAL**

16

16

32

**BLUE**  
LEAGUE

DIRECT ANNUAL  
QUALIFICATION

14

PLAYOFFS

17

TITLE  
WINNER

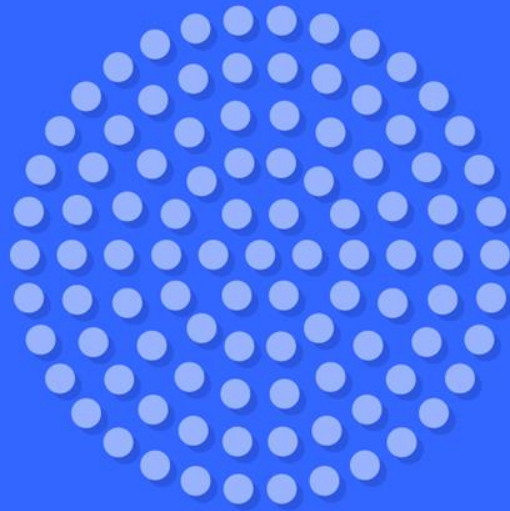
**UNION**  
CHAMPION

**TOTAL**

**32**

**UNION**  
LEAGUE

**55**  
DOMESTIC  
LEAGUES



**PLAYOFFS**  
**100+ CLUBS**



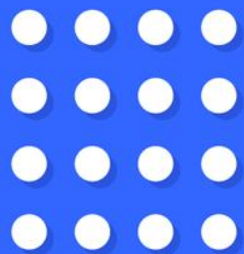
**UNION**  
LEAGUE

**32 CLUBS**

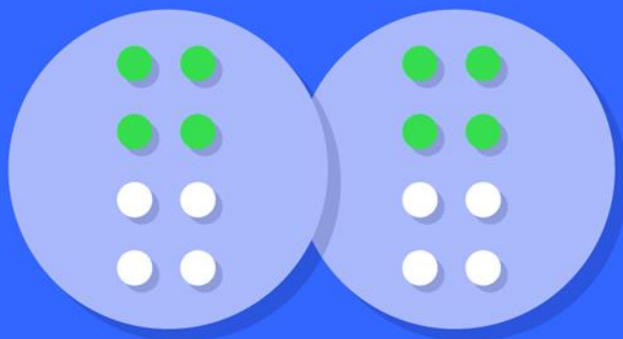


# LEAGUE STAGE — STAR / GOLD

16 CLUBS



2 GROUPS OF 8  
TOP 4 GO TO KNOCK-OUT STAGE



8 CLUBS



14 MATCHES  
7 HOME · 7 AWAY

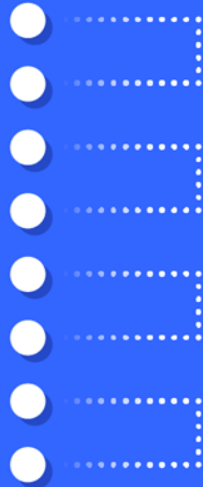
SEPTEMBER TO APRIL

# ***KNOCK-OUT STAGE — STAR / GOLD***

***SEEDED DRAW***



***QUARTER***



***SEMI***



***FINAL***



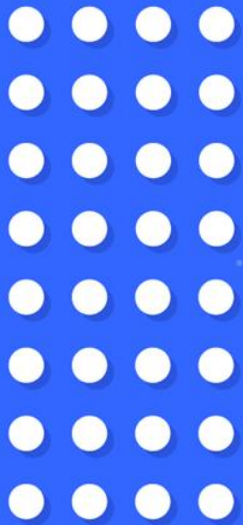
***CHAMPION***



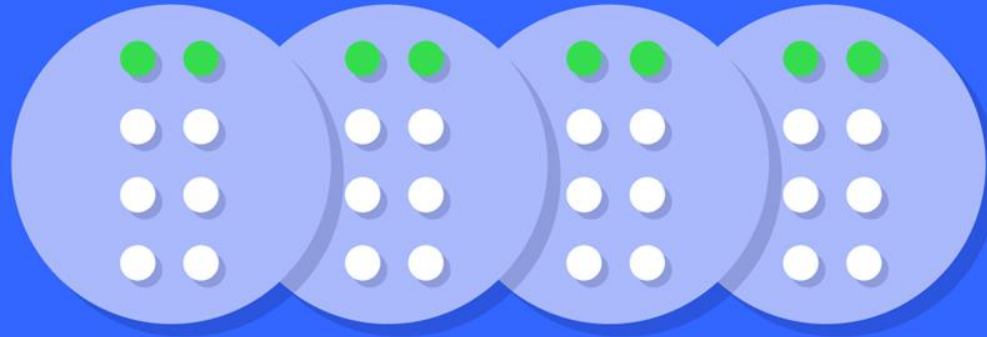
***APRIL TO MAY***

# LEAGUE STAGE — **BLUE** / UNION

32 CLUBS



4 GROUPS OF 8  
TOP 2 GO TO KNOCK-OUT STAGE



8 CLUBS



14 MATCHES  
7 HOME · 7 AWAY

SEPTEMBER TO APRIL

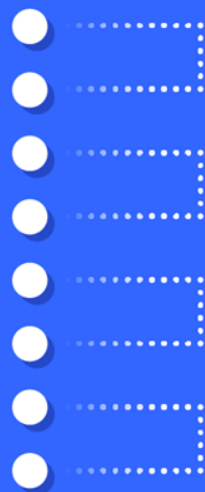


# ***KNOCK-OUT STAGE — BLUE / UNION***

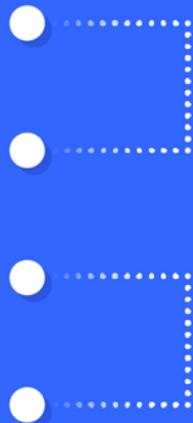
*SEEDED DRAW*



*QUARTER*



*SEMI*



*FINAL*



*CHAMPION*



*APRIL TO MAY*

A22  
**UNIFY LEAGUE**  
OVERVIEW

WOMEN'S COMPETITION

# *A22 — UNIFY LEAGUE OVERVIEW*

- *CROSS-BORDER EUROPEAN CLUB COMPETITION*
- *QUALIFICATION BASED ON ANNUAL PERFORMANCE IN DOMESTIC LEAGUES*
- *32 PARTICIPATING CLUBS FROM 52 COUNTRIES*
- *NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER DOMESTIC LEAGUE BASED ON A EUROPEAN COMPETITION COEFFICIENT*

# UNIFY LEAGUE

**52**  
**DOMESTIC**  
**LEAGUES**

▶ 16 CLUBS

▶ 16 CLUBS

**32 CLUBS**  
**PARTICIPATING**



**STAR**  
LEAGUE

**GOLD**  
LEAGUE

**COMBINED**

DIRECT ANNUAL  
QUALIFICATION

12

9

21

PLAYOFFS

2

7

8

TITLE  
WINNERS

**STAR** **GOLD**  
CHAMPION CHAMPION

—

2

**TOTAL**

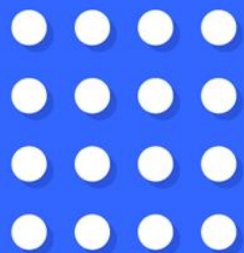
**16**

**16**

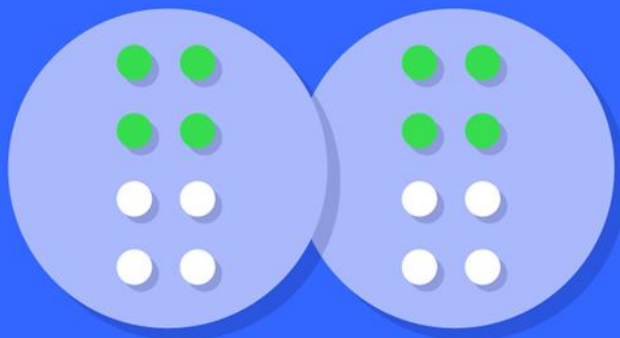
**32**

# LEAGUE STAGE — STAR / GOLD

16 CLUBS



2 GROUPS OF 8  
TOP 4 GO TO KNOCK-OUT STAGE



8 CLUBS



14 MATCHES  
7 HOME · 7 AWAY

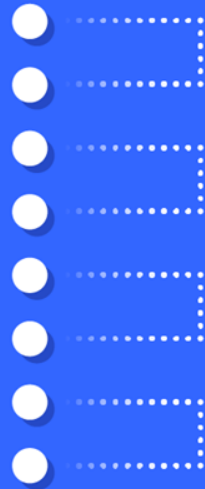
SEPTEMBER TO APRIL

# ***KNOCK-OUT STAGE — STAR / GOLD***

***SEEDED DRAW***



***QUARTER***



***SEMI***



***FINAL***



***CHAMPION***



***APRIL TO MAY***

## Appendix B – UEFA/FIFA Pre-Authorization Statutes

With respect to UEFA/FIFA pre-authorization statutes for new cross-border club competitions, the CJEU directives are clear and concise:

- “... it is legitimate to subject the organization and conduct of international professional football competitions to common rules intended to guarantee the homogeneity and coordination of competitions within a calendar and are intended to adequately and effectively promote the holding of sporting competitions based on equal opportunities and merit.” (para 144 CJEU)
- Commercial Court 17 of Madrid similarly wrote: “The existence of rules for prior authorization and participation in competitions are legitimate when they aim to ensure homogeneity and coordination of competitions within a calendar and are intended to adequately and effectively promote the holding of sporting competitions based on equal opportunities and merit.” (page24 CC17Madrid)

Helpfully, the court rulings are very prescriptive. Pre-authorization rules, such as UEFA Statute Articles 49 and 51, may be considered legitimate only if they are applied to ensure that proposed new competitions align with the football calendar and adhere to broadly meritocratic principles. These restrictions are logical given the significant conflict of interest between UEFA’s combined role as both monopoly operator and gatekeeper of new entrants.

However, we note that neither UEFA nor FIFA currently have rules in place that comply with the Court's directives. FIFA has no such rules, and the existing UEFA rules, (as detailed below) appear to deliberately conflict with the CJEU ruling. Nonetheless, the Unify League proposal fully aligns with the CJEU decision, and, consequently, would always comply with any future rules or statutes that may be introduced by UEFA or FIFA to the extent such rules or statutes themselves respect the CJEU’s requirements.

With respect to the timing of any process for recognition, the Court has also been very prescriptive. Specifically, it stated:

“The power in question must also be placed within a framework of transparent, non-discriminatory detailed procedural rules relating, inter alia, to the time limits applicable to the submission of an application for prior approval and the adoption of a decision thereon. In that regard, the time limits set must not be liable to work to the detriment of potentially competing undertakings by denying them effective access to the market ...” (para 136 CJEU)

Accordingly, we would expect given this directive, the process for recognition of the Unify League could be completed in an expeditious manner. In this regard we are available at any time at your convenience to discuss our proposal and clarify any questions you may have.

*Comment on UEFA Authorization Rules Governing International Club Competitions – Edition 2024*

When ESLCo/A22 initiated its competition law claim against UEFA and FIFA on April 21, 2021, UEFA had no rules outlining the process for approving new European competitions under Articles 49 and 51 of its Statutes. Since then, UEFA has introduced such rules, most recently in a document titled 'UEFA Authorization Rules Governing International Club



Competitions – Edition 2024.” These rules were adopted after the December 2023 CJEU ruling and, as such, should align with the Court’s directives. However, even a cursory review reveals that this is not the case. While a comprehensive, paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the numerous ways the 2024 Rules fail to meet the CJEU's requirements is beyond the scope of this submission, a single example is sufficient to demonstrate this non-compliance.

- **“Article 7 – Sporting merit criteria (paragraph 4)**

“In order to protect the sporting merit of UEFA Champion Club Competitions, the good functioning of the international calendar as well as the health and safety of players, authorisation of an International Club Competition shall be subject to the following cumulative conditions **so that it shall not adversely affect the good functioning of UEFA Champion Club Competitions with respect to:**

**(a) the participation of the following qualified clubs for determination of a champion club of Europe in each respective category:**

**(i) the club is qualified to play as the winner of the top domestic league championship; or**

**(ii) the club is qualified to play as runner-up or qualified through the top domestic league championship in accordance with UEFA’s association coefficient ranking; or**

**(iii) the club is qualified to play as the titleholder of the UEFA Champion Club Competition; or**

**(iv) the club is qualified to play as the titleholder of the UEFA Europa League;”**

In simplified terms, this paragraph states that any club or promoter seeking to organize a new European club competition will only be officially recognized by UEFA if it doesn’t compete with **the existing UEFA Champions League**. This is an obvious abuse of UEFA’s dominant, monopoly position and appears to intentionally defy the CJEU ruling which is in effect EU law.

The CJEU has made clear that A22 and UEFA must be on equal footing when proposing and organising European competitions. Thereafter clubs are free to decide which tournament they want to play. Rules, procedures (or lack of procedures) favouring UEFA’s own competitions versus those that might be proposed by A22 (or any other third party) are incompatible with EU law.

## Appendix C – Competition Format Detailed Description

### *IFAB*

The Unify League men's and women's competitions will all be played in accordance with the IFAB Laws of the Game.

### *Unify Men's League*

The Men's Unify League will have 96 participating clubs divided into four tiers: Star, Gold, Blue and Union Leagues. The Star and Gold Leagues will each be comprised of 16 clubs. The Blue and Union League will each be comprised of 32 clubs.

In the Star and Gold Leagues, the 16 participating clubs will be drawn into 2 groups of 8 clubs each (Group A and Group B) while in the Blue and Union League the 32 participating clubs will be drawn into 4 groups of 8 (Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D) (the "League Stage").

In the League Stage, clubs will play each other home and away within their respective groups of 8. There will therefore be a total of 14 matches per club, with 7 at home and 7 away.

The winner of each game will be awarded 3 points, in case of a draw each team will be awarded 1 point, and losers will receive 0 points. The sum of points obtained over the 14 League Stage matches will determine each club's standing in its group. If two or more clubs have equal points upon completion of the League Stage, the following criteria will be applied, in this order, as tie breakers:

- a. higher number of points obtained in the League Stage matches played among the teams in question;
- b. superior goal difference from the League Stage matches played among the teams in question;
- c. higher number of goals scored in the League Stage matches played among the teams in question
- d. if, after having applied criteria a) to c), teams still have an equal ranking, criteria a) to c) are reapplied exclusively to the matches between the remaining teams to determine their final rankings. If this procedure does not lead to a decision, criteria e) to j) apply in the order given to the two or more teams still equal;
- e. superior goal difference in all League Stage matches;
- f. higher number of goals scored in all League Stage matches;
- g. higher number of away goals scored in all League Stage matches;
- h. higher number of wins in all League Stage matches;
- i. higher number of away wins in all League Stage matches;
- j. lower disciplinary points total based only on yellow and red cards received by players and team officials in all League Stage matches (red card = 3 points, yellow card = 1 point, expulsion for two yellow cards in one match = 3 points)

Each of the four men's leagues will have its own year-end knock-out stage. In the Star and Gold Leagues, the top 4 clubs in each group of the League Stage will qualify. In the Blue and Union Leagues, the top 2 clubs in each group will qualify.

The knock-out stage for each of the leagues starts with the quarter finals.

In the Star and Gold Leagues, the 4 quarter final pairings will be:

- Match 1: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group A vs. 4<sup>th</sup> in Group B
- Match 2: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group B vs. 4<sup>th</sup> in Group A
- Match 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group A vs. 3<sup>rd</sup> in Group B
- Match 4: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group B vs. 3<sup>rd</sup> in Group A

In the Blue and Union Leagues, the 4 quarter final pairings will be:

- Match 1: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group A vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group D
- Match 2: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group B vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group C
- Match 3: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group C vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group B
- Match 4: 1<sup>st</sup> in Group D vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Group A

All quarter final pairings will be played over two legs, home and away. If after the two legs clubs are tied, they will play two 15-minute periods of extra time at the end of the second leg. The club that scores the most goals during extra time qualifies for the following round. If at the end of extra time the tie persists, a penalty shootout will decide the qualifier.

For all 4 competitions, the semifinals will be:

- Winner of quarter finals Match 1 vs. Winner of quarter finals Match 3
- Winner of quarter finals Match 2 vs. Winner of quarter finals Match 4

The semi-finals will be single legged and played on a neutral ground. The winner will qualify for the next phase. In case of a draw, there will be two 15-minute periods of extra time at the end of the game. The club that scores the most goals during extra time qualifies for the following. If at the end of extra time the tie persists, a penalty shootout will decide the qualifier.

The final will be a single legged game at a neutral ground. In case of a draw, there will be two 15-minute periods of extra time at the end of the game. The club that scores the most goals during extra time will be declared the winner. If at the end of extra time the tie persists, a penalty shootout will decide the champion.

### *Unify Women's League*

The Women's Unify League will have 32 teams divided into two tiers, the Star and Gold Leagues, each featuring 16 clubs. The format of the Women's Star and Gold Leagues will be the same as the Men's Star and Gold Leagues with two groups of 8 clubs each in which the participating clubs play each other home and away in the League Stage. The top four clubs in each group will qualify for the knock-out stage starting with the quarterfinals. The knock-out round will be conducted in the same way as the men's competition described above.

### Qualification Process – Men’s Competition

Clubs from all 55 UEFA National Associations may enter the Unify League through one of three paths:

- Champion of a Unify League competitions in the prior year
- Direct qualification from domestic competition
- Qualification via the relevant playoff process

The champions of both the Star and Gold leagues will earn a spot in the following season’s Star League, while the champions of the Blue and Union Leagues will earn a spot in the following season’s Gold and Blue League, respectively.

All clubs participating in the top domestic competitions across UEFA’s 55 National Associations at the start of the season can gain direct access to either the Star, Gold, Blue or Union leagues or qualification play-offs based on domestic league performance in the prior season. Direct qualification and play-off slots for each of the Unify League competitions will be assigned based on a European competition coefficient (“Country Ranking”), a transparent, objective ranking based on the performance of clubs from each association in European competitions.

The composition of the different Men’s competitions will be as follows:

	Star	Gold	Blue	Union
<b>Direct access</b>	12	8	14	--
<b>Qualifiers</b>	2	7	17	32
<b>Champions</b>	2	1	1	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>

Direct access spots will be allocated as follows:

Country Ranking	Star	Gold	Blue	Total
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	3	2	2	<b>7</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	3	1	2	<b>6</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	2	2	2	<b>6</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	2	2	1	<b>5</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	1	1	2	<b>4</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	1	--	2	<b>3</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--	1	<b>1</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--	1	<b>1</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>

The number of clubs from each UEFA National Association who will gain access to the league stage of each competition can be seen in the tables below:

**Best Case for each Country:** This table represents the number of clubs per association that would qualify to each competition if each club from said association were to win all their qualification play-off matches.

Country Ranking	Star	Gold	Blue	Union	Unify Total	Current Competitions
1 <sup>st</sup>	3	2	3	2	10	8
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	2	3	2	10	8
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2	2	3	2	9	7
4 <sup>th</sup>	2	2	3	2	9	7
5 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	3	2	8	7
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	3	2	7	6
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2	2	6	5
8 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	2	2	5	5
9 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	2	2	5	5
10 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	2	2	5	5
11 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	2	2	5	5
12 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	1	2	4	5
13 <sup>th</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	1	13 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> : 2 20 <sup>th</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup> : 1	13 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> : 4 20 <sup>th</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup> : 3	13 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> : 5 16 <sup>th</sup> -50 <sup>th</sup> : 4 51 <sup>st</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup> : 3

**Worst Case for each Country:** This table represents the number of clubs per association that would qualify to each competition if each club from said association were to lose all their qualification play-off matches.

Country Ranking	Star	Gold	Blue	Union	Unify Total	Current Competitions
1 <sup>st</sup>	3	2	2	1	8	7
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	1	2	2	8	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2	2	2	1	7	6
4 <sup>th</sup>	2	2	1	2	7	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2	2	6	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	2	2	5	4
7 <sup>th</sup>	--	1	1	2	4	3
8 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	2	1	3	3
9 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	2	--	2	3
10 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--	1	1	2
11 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--	1	1	2
12 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--	--	--	2
13 <sup>th</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--	--	--	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> : 1 15 <sup>th</sup> -55 <sup>th</sup> : --

### *Qualification Process – Women's Competition*

Clubs from all 52 UEFA National Associations that organise a women's domestic league may enter the Unify League through one of three paths:

- Champion of one of Unify League competitions in prior year
- Direct qualification from domestic competition
- Qualification via the relevant playoff process

The champions of both the Star and Gold leagues will earn a spot in the following season's Star League.

All clubs participating in the top domestic competitions across UEFA's 52 National Associations that organise a women's domestic league at the start of the season can gain direct access to either the Star or Gold leagues or qualification play-offs based on domestic league performance in the prior season. Direct qualification and play-off slots for each of the Unify League competitions will be assigned based on a European competition coefficient ("Country Ranking"), a transparent, objective ranking based on the performance of clubs from each association in European competitions.

The composition of the two Women's competitions will be as follows:

	Star	Gold
<b>Direct access</b>	12	9
<b>Qualifiers</b>	2	7
<b>Champions</b>	2	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

Direct access spots will be allocated as follows:

Country Ranking	Star	Gold
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	4	2
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	3	2
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	2	2
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	1	2
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	1	1
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	1	--
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>

The number of clubs from each UEFA National Association who will gain access to the league stage of each competition can be seen in the tables below:

**Best Case for each Country:** This table represents the number of clubs per association that would qualify to each competition if each club from said association were to win all their qualification play-off matches.

Country Ranking	Star	Gold	Unify Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	4	2	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	2	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2	2	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	3
5 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
8 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
9 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
10 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
11 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	1
12 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	1
13 <sup>th</sup> -52 <sup>nd</sup>	1	--	1

**Worst Case for each Country:** This table represents the number of clubs per association that would qualify to each competition if each club from said association were to lose all their qualification play-off matches.

Country Ranking	Star	Gold	Unify Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	4	2	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	2	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2	2	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	3
5 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	2
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	--	1
7 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
8 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
9 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
10 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
11 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
12 <sup>th</sup>	--	--	--
13 <sup>th</sup> -52 <sup>nd</sup>	--	--	--

### *Calendar*

The calendar for the Unify League competitions is fully compliant with the existing international match calendar.

- Qualification playoffs for the Unify League will be played between July and August, as is the case currently
- The League Stage will consist of 14 matchdays, and will be played between September and April

- The Knock-Out Stage will consist of 4 matchdays and will be played between April and May
- All matches will be played on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, except for the Finals which will be played on a weekend
- The Unify League will only occupy 1 weekend matchday, as is the case in current pan-European club football competitions
- Overall, the Unify League will occupy 27 matchdays in total (including Qualification Playoffs), compared to 29 matchdays used in the current pan-European club football competitions

Please see below for an illustrative calendar displaying the dates over which Unify League matches will take place.



**2025/26 Calendar for Men's Unify League:**


	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu									
<b>Jul</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
								UL	UL						UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL				UL	UL	UL									
								Q	Q						Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q				Q	Q	Q									
<b>Aug</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
								UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL															
								Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q															
<b>Sep</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30									
	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int							UL	UL	UL												UL										
<b>Oct</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
		UL	UL																						UL	UL	UL												
								Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int																
<b>Nov</b>																																							
								UL	UL	UL																													
<b>Dec</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
								UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL																						
<b>Jan</b>																																							
<b>Feb</b>																																							
<b>Mar</b>																																							
<b>Apr</b>																																							
<b>May</b>																																							
<b>Jun</b>																																							

 UNIFY League

 UNIFY League Qualifying

 International Break

 Total Matchdays (including Qualifying and Finals)

 Player Rest (unused matchdays in current pan-European club competitions)

**2025/26 Calendar for Women's Unify League:**

	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu							
<b>Jul</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
								UL	UL						UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL				UL	UL	UL							
								Q	Q						Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q				Q	Q	Q							
<b>Aug</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
								UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL													
								Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q					Q	Q	Q													
<b>Sep</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
	UL	UL	UL												UL	UL	UL										SL										
<b>Oct</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
					UL	UL									UL	UL	UL								Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int		
<b>Nov</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
															UL	UL	UL							UL	UL	UL											
<b>Dec</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
	Int	Int													UL	UL	UL																				
<b>Jan</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
															UL	UL	UL								UL	UL	UL										
<b>Feb</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
								UL	UL	UL					UL	UL	UL								Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int		
<b>Mar</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
															UL	UL	UL											UL	UL	UL						Int	Int
<b>Apr</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int								UL	UL	UL										UL	UL	UL								
<b>May</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
								UL	UL	UL														UL	UL		UL	UL		Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	Int	
<b>Jun</b>					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
					Int	Int																															

 Women's UNIFY League

 Women's UNIFY League Qualifying

 International Break

**Appendix D – Additional Considerations**

The Unify League and its participating clubs will comply with the following regulations as proposed by UEFA:

- UEFA Anti-Doping Regulations – Edition January 2021
- UEFA Equipment Regulations – Edition June 2024
- UEFA Disciplinary Regulations – Edition June 2024
- UEFA Medical Regulations – Edition July 2024
- UEFA Fair Play Regulations – Edition July 2015
- UEFA Safety and Security Regulations – Edition June 2019
- UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations – Edition May 2018