

## The European Super League



On the evening of Sunday 18 April 2021, the day before the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) was due to agree a radical new format for the European Champions League, an announcement was made on the formation of the European Super League.

*“We will help football at every level and take it to its rightful place in the world.”*

Although there had been discussions about the formation of such a league, it caught both those in football and the general public by surprise. It was clearly a challenge to, and potential replacement of, the European Champions League, which was organised by UEFA. It would also present challenges to existing national leagues, with which it would run in parallel. The new competition would include 12 founding clubs from Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom, with a maximum of 15 permanent founding members. It was expected that other clubs would join soon. The underlying model would be based on US sports practices, such as no promotion or relegation and tight controls on club spending.

Although expecting considerable debate and kickback from UEFA and national leagues, those involved were taken aback by the massive backlash the following day that came from many quarters, including the fans of most of the founding English clubs and politicians. Within 48 hours of the announcement, many of the founding clubs were considering withdrawing from the proposed league, despite having signed contracts.

By Wednesday 21 April, it was clear that there were big challenges facing all involved; in particular Super League chair Florentino Pérez, the founding clubs who were facing fan and political backlash, UEFA, and the national leagues.

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