

UEFA says will boycott World Cup if FIFA pushes private investor proposal

FIFA's \$20 billion subsidiary plan has united critics across Europe, CONCACAF and beyond

● **UEFA Demands full abandonment of proposal**

● **Calls World Cup not for sale**

● **FIFA defends investor plan**

AFP | Paris

European football's governing body UEFA said yesterday it would boycott the World Cup should FIFA press ahead with its private investor plan.

"No UEFA national teams will participate in any FIFA competition for so long as these proposals remain alive, unless this proposal has been abandoned in its entirety and binding assurances have been given that FIFA will never again open its governance or competitions to private ownership," UEFA said in a statement.

"The World Cup cannot be treated as an investment product... No part of it should ever be surrendered to private investors.

The World Cup is not for sale."

FIFA, football's world governing body, on Tuesday announced plans to create a commercial subsidiary to run its biggest events, such as the World Cup and Club World Cup.

Under the proposal, private investors would be allowed to acquire stakes in the company but would remain minority shareholders, FIFA said. The governing body hopes to raise up to \$4.2 billion based on a valuation of \$20 billion for the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) initiative.

If approved, the project could provide each of FIFA's 211 member associations with a one-off payment of \$20 million in early 2027 and increase their funding allocation for the 2027-2030 cycle from \$8 million to \$20 million.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Wednesday described the initiative as a "golden opportunity to turbocharge the development of the game globally".

But UEFA, whose president Aleksander Ceferin boycotted the World Cup final to show unhappiness with FIFA, argued that "this model has no place in world football".

"Football's future cannot be dictated by the expectations of those whose first duty is to maximise financial return. Nor can the interests of national associations, leagues, clubs, players and supporters become subordinate to investor returns. Football cannot mortgage its future for financial gain.

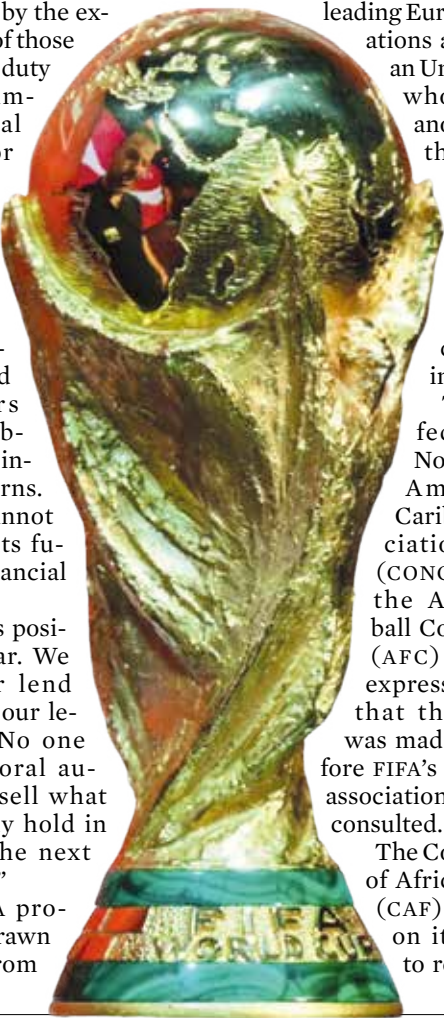
"Europe's position is clear. We will never lend this model our legitimacy. No one has the moral authority to sell what they merely hold in trust for the next generation."

The FIFA proposal has drawn criticism from

not only UEFA but also several leading European federations and European Union officials, who view it as another step in the commercialisation of sport and have raised concerns over potential conflicts of interest.

The Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) have also expressed concern that the proposal was made public before FIFA's 211 member associations were fully consulted.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has called on its members to review FIFA's



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UEFA said the World Cup was built over generations by players, national teams and supporters, arguing that no one has the moral authority to sell what is held in trust for future generations

controversial plan.

Never for sale

UEFA, in its statement yesterday, said that the World Cup was "one of football's greatest sporting legacies. It has been built over generations by players, national teams and supporters across every continent".

"It is both irresponsible and indefensible that a proposal of such significance for football was conceived in secret and brought to the brink of approval

without any meaningful consultation with those entrusted with stewarding the game," UEFA said.

"This is not merely a profound failure of leadership, but an abdication of FIFA's duty as the custodian of world football.

"National associations around the world are now presented with an ultimatum: accept the irreversible capture of football's greatest competitions or bear the consequences.

"This is not a 'democratic decision', but governance by intimidation – an act of coercion unworthy of an institution entrusted with the stewardship of the global game."

UEFA added: "Nobody should be in any doubt: UEFA and its national associations will oppose these plans with absolute determination.

"There are moments when institutions are judged not by what they are prepared to accept, but by what they refuse to compromise. This is one of those moments.

"Some things are simply too important to sell. The FIFA World Cup belongs to football. It always will. And so long as Europe has a voice, it will never be for sale."

Ngumoha scores as Liverpool beat Wrexham 1-0 in New York friendly



Liverpool's Rio Ndomahi celebrates scoring against Wrexham

AFP | New York

Liverpool won their second straight match under new coach Andoni Iraola as they beat Wrexham 1-0 in a pre-season friendly at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Teenage forward Rio Ndomahi scored from close range in the 75th minute, greeted by a roar from a largely pro-Liverpool crowd of more than 42,000 at the famous baseball stadium, the home of the New York Yankees and Major League Soccer's New York City FC.

The victory followed a 4-2 win over Sunderland in Nashville on Saturday, Iraola's first match in charge since the former Bournemouth manager replaced the sacked Arne Slot.

That victory was marred by an injury to defender Joe Gomez, who was among the absentees Wednesday along with new signing Jeremy Jacquet and World Cup players Ryan Gravenberch, Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak.

Iraola said before the game that the Netherlands' Gravenberch, Germany's Wirtz and Sweden's Isak could be back for the final game of Liverpool's US tour, against Leeds at Chicago's Soldier Field on Sunday.

Wrexham, on the rise in recent years under the ownership of Hollywood stars Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, missed out on the second-tier Championship play-offs on the final day of last season.

Howe set to leave Newcastle, with Al-Ahli's Jaissle to take over: reports

● **Howe revitalised Magpies over five years**

● **Won League Cup in 2025**

● **Club finished twelfth last season**

AFP | London

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe is reportedly set to make a shock exit from St James' Park, with Al-Ahli boss Matthias Jaissle expected to take charge of the Premier League club.

Jaissle would be a surprise choice to replace Howe, given his lack of experience at the top level.

The 38-year-old, a former Germany Under-21 international, was forced to end his playing career due to injury at the age of 25.

Jaissle's first managerial job came with Austrian side Liefering, whom he led to a second-placed finish in the second tier, the club's joint best-ever position.

He took charge at Red Bull Salzburg in 2021, winning successive Austrian titles as well as the Austrian Cup.

Jaissle joined Al-Ahli in 2023



Newcastle United's English head coach Eddie Howe (R) speaks with Newcastle United's English midfielder #03 Lewis Hall (L)

and led the Saudi club to AFC Champions League titles in 2025 and 2026.

In his five years at Newcastle, Howe revitalised a club that had struggled for decades.

He replaced Steve Bruce in November 2021 and won the League Cup in March 2025 -- beating Liverpool in the final to clinch the club's first major trophy since 1969.

The former Bournemouth boss also led Newcastle to Champions League qualification in 2023 and 2025.

But hampered by star strik-

er Alexander Isak's protracted move to Liverpool, Howe came under pressure as the Magpies finished 12th in the Premier League last season, with 17 defeats in their 38 games.

Newcastle reached the Champions League last 16 but were hammered 8-3 on aggregate by Barcelona.

The club have since been depleted by the close-season departures of Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali to Tottenham and England forward Anthony Gordon to Barcelona.

Speculation continues over

the future of Newcastle captain Bruno Guimaraes, who has been linked with a move to Premier League champions Arsenal.

Howe's final match in charge was a 4-1 defeat to Championship side Bristol City in a pre-season friendly on Wednesday.

The Englishman took charge at Newcastle after they were bought by a Saudi-led consortium, ending the turbulent reign of former owner Mike Ashley and propelling the club into the ranks of the super-rich.

The Magpies were second from bottom of the Premier League, five points from safety, but finished the season in mid-table.

The new owners were not shy of stating their long-term ambitions, targeting the Premier League title within 10 years.

Howe was not able to achieve that lofty goal, but he became widely admired for lifting Newcastle out of their decades-long malaise.

Former Newcastle striker Alan Shearer paid tribute to Howe on X, posting a picture of the outgoing Magpies boss holding up the League Cup with the caption: "Thanks Eddie. You gave us this day."

Newcastle start their Premier League campaign at home to Liverpool on August 23.