

In recent years, the sports industry has undergone a radical transformation, marked by a substantial surge in athletes' transfer values, broadcasting fees for sports events, and income from image rights. While these changes present new avenues for industry growth, they also give rise to numerous disputes and challenges.

Within the football industry, disputes involving multimillion-dollar sums have become commonplace. Consequently, there is a pressing need to enhance dispute resolution mechanisms that align with the unique principles and characteristics of football and other sports. Sports arbitration has long been recognized as the predominant method of resolving disputes in the global football arena, both domestically and internationally. Article 15 of FIFA Statutes explicitly advocates for the prioritization of arbitration by all relevant parties in dispute resolution. The appeal of sports arbitration within football stems from its confidentiality, flexibility, speed, and the ability to select an arbitrator possessing specialized expertise. These attributes make it an attractive choice for football players, clubs, coaches, federations, confederations, and leagues. So, what exactly is sports arbitration?

Sports arbitration can be broadly defined as an alternative dispute resolution method involving impartial and neutral third-party arbitrators. This process aims to swiftly and cost-effectively resolve disputes between sports law entities by employing an impartial arbitral tribunal based on the *lex sportiva* or other applicable laws, ultimately securing a final and equitable resolution. International experience reveals that a diverse range of football-related disputes can be successfully addressed through sports arbitration:

- Employment contract disputes of football players
- Transfer contract disputes of football players.
- Image rights disputes
- Disputes between clubs and professional coaches
- Disputes concerning federation decisions.
- Sponsorship disputes
- Broadcasting rights disputes
- Disputes arising in anti-doping efforts.
- Disputes related to alleged violations of the fair play principle.

Numerous decisions by arbitration tribunals have left a lasting impact on global sports development, influencing both local and international spheres. The 2014 Chelsea FC v UEFA case addressed pivotal issues related to sanction foundations. Similarly, in the same year, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) shaped the ban on football activities following the "Suarez-Cellini" incident during the FIFA World Cup. Furthermore, the 2021 "Noravank" FC case before CAS brought about revolutionary changes in Armenian football.