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## Articles on the New Saudi Sports Law

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
**Article 1 of 20**  
**The Grand National Project**  
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In his interview with Fox News, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman emphasized the growing contribution of sport to Saudi Arabia's national economy and articulated the Kingdom's long-term vision for the sector. With the issuance of the Royal Decree by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, approving the Saudi Sports Law, the Kingdom has established, for the first time, a comprehensive legislative foundation for the regulation and governance of sport.

The new Sports Law represents a transformative legal framework that will fundamentally reshape Saudi Arabia's sporting landscape across its sporting, economic, and social dimensions. It provides long-awaited legislative clarity for the Kingdom's ambitious sports project, extending far beyond football to encompass every sport at the local, regional, and international levels. This is the true significance of the national sports project.

Comprising ninety-seven articles, the Law supersedes all provisions that conflict with its terms and replaces the existing constitutional framework governing Saudi sports federations and the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which has remained in force for more than four decades.

Recent developments in Saudi football have naturally attracted significant international attention. Beginning with the signing of Cristiano Ronaldo, followed by the Public Investment Fund's (PIF) investment in Al Ahli, Al Ittihad, Al Hilal, and Al Nassr, together with its acquisition of Newcastle United Football Club, the Kingdom has rapidly emerged as a major global player in sport. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has successfully hosted numerous continental and international sporting events across a wide range of disciplines, while preparing to host the AFC Asian Cup 2027 and the FIFA World Cup 2034. It has also staged the Italian and Spanish Super Cups, Formula One, Formula E, the Dakar Rally, and developed world-class equestrian competitions.

These achievements form only part of a much broader national transformation. Major international investments in golf, expanding equestrian programs, and the extensive initiatives delivered under the Quality-of-Life Program demonstrate that Saudi Arabia's vision for sport extends well beyond elite competition. Sport has become an essential component of national development, economic diversification, tourism, investment, and community participation.

Such unprecedented growth required a modern legislative framework capable of transforming the sports sector from one governed by fragmented regulations and administrative practices into a professionally regulated, well-governed, and investment-oriented industry.

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
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**Beginning the Implementation**  
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The Royal Decree approving the Saudi Sports Law grants all individuals and entities subject to its provisions a transitional period of one year from the date the Law enters into force to regularize their legal status and ensure full compliance with its requirements.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge His Royal Highness the Minister of Sport to notify all sports clubs, and in his capacity as President of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, to initiate the process of restructuring their governance by dissolving the current boards of directors and calling for new elections immediately following the conclusion of the current sporting season. This would enable newly elected boards to commence their mandates under the framework of the new Sports Law and lead Saudi sport into a new era of professionalism, governance, and institutional accountability.

The Ministry of Sport itself now assumes substantial legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Its foremost priority will be the issuance of the implementing regulations necessary to give full effect to the Law. Among the most important will be regulations governing the contractual relationship between clubs, federations, athletes, and coaches, establishing their respective rights and obligations while providing a

modern legal framework for professional sporting relationships.

The implementation of the Law also requires extensive coordination with other government authorities. This includes collaboration with the Ministry of Investment, the Ministry of Commerce, the Permanent Ministerial Committee responsible for Foreign Investment, the General Organization for Social Insurance, and the Insurance Authority. Such cooperation will be essential to ensure that athletes and coaches are properly recognized as employees within the private sector under a specialized legal framework appropriate to professional sport.

Likewise, coordination with the Ministry of Finance will be necessary in relation to the licensing fees and regulatory services introduced under the new legal regime.

During the coming weeks and months, the Ministry will be expected to undertake one of the most comprehensive regulatory exercises in the history of Saudi sport. This will include issuing model constitutional documents for the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, sports federations, clubs, and leagues, together with the regulations governing their organization, administration, operations, and contractual relationships. Standard forms, regulatory guidance, and legal documentation will also need to be developed to facilitate the implementation of the Law.

The objectives of the Saudi Sports Law extend far beyond regulatory reform. The legislation seeks to promote participation in sport, expand the number of active participants, support athletes, coaches, referees, and administrators, enhance their professional development, nurture sporting talent, encourage innovation in sports technology, promote research and academic studies related to sport, advance sports medicine, and strengthen the contribution of both the private and non-profit sectors to the Kingdom's sporting ecosystem.

Achieving these objectives requires close cooperation between the Ministry of Sport, sports entities, and all relevant governmental authorities. Such collaboration is indispensable to building an integrated sports sector capable of supporting the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 objectives.

For this reason, I believe the implementation process should begin with a comprehensive institutional renewal of existing sports entities. Reconstituting clubs, federations, and other governing bodies under the framework of the new Sports Law will ensure that their governance structures, institutional objectives, and operational practices are fully aligned with the legislative reforms and strategic vision embodied in the new legal framework.

The enactment of the Saudi Sports Law is not merely the introduction of new legislation; it represents the beginning of a comprehensive institutional transformation that will redefine the governance, administration, and future development of Saudi sport.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 3 of 20

#### The New Sports Landscape

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The Saudi Sports Law provides, for the first time, a comprehensive statutory definition of sport, establishing a clear legal foundation for the regulation of sporting activities throughout the Kingdom.

Under the Law, sport is defined as any activity that depends on physical performance, mental skill, or a combination of both, and is undertaken to enhance physical fitness, develop mental abilities, achieve competitive sporting results, or fulfil any combination of these objectives. Such activities are governed by recognized rules or established practices relating to participation, training, or officiating, whether practiced individually or collectively, competitively or recreationally, and whether on a professional or amateur basis.

By adopting this comprehensive definition, the Law removes any ambiguity as to the scope of activities falling within the Kingdom's sports regulatory framework.

The legislation also draws an important distinction between sports competitions and sporting events.

A sports competition refers to any competition organized by the relevant committee or sports federation as part of its approved program, resulting in the declaration of one or more winners, regardless of whether it is described as a league, championship, cup competition, tournament, or by any other title.

A sporting event, by contrast, encompasses regional, continental, or international sporting occasions hosted by the Kingdom, as well as other organized sporting activities that may not constitute formal competitions but nevertheless contribute to the sporting, social, cultural, or tourism objectives of the State.

The Law also introduces precise legal definitions for the principal institutions operating within the sports sector.

A sports facility is defined as any site equipped for sporting activities, including land, buildings, stadiums, and associated infrastructure, irrespective of whether ownership rests with the State, the private sector, or the non-profit sector.

A sports center is an entity that provides facilities enabling individuals to participate in or train for sporting activities.

A sports institute is an organization offering educational or professional programs designed to develop expertise within the sports sector. Such programs may address sports management, sports law, governance, marketing, investment, media, advertising, corporate social responsibility, crowd management, and other specialized disciplines essential to the professional development of the industry.

The Law also recognizes the sports academy as an institution responsible for identifying, developing, and nurturing athletic talent with the objective of producing elite sporting performance and long-term competitive success.

Similarly, a sports school is defined as an educational institution providing specialized academic and athletic instruction through integrated educational and training programs delivered alongside the general education curriculum.

Each of these entities will operate within a comprehensive licensing and regulatory framework established under the Sports Law and its implementing regulations. Their establishment, operation, and ongoing activities will be subject to legal oversight and coordination with numerous governmental authorities responsible for education, investment, commerce, labor, municipal affairs, health, and other sectors connected with the development of sport.

Consequently, the Ministry of Sport assumes an expanded institutional role extending well beyond its traditional administrative responsibilities. Under the new legislative framework, it becomes the central governmental authority responsible for regulating, coordinating, supervising, and developing the Kingdom's entire sports ecosystem.

This transformation reflects one of the most significant innovations introduced by the Saudi Sports Law. Rather than regulating only clubs and federations, the legislation establishes an integrated legal framework governing every component of the sports industry—from education and talent development to commercial investment, infrastructure, governance, and professional practice.

By defining these concepts with legislative precision, the Law provides the legal certainty necessary for sustainable growth, effective governance, regulatory consistency, and increased confidence among athletes, investors, institutions, and all participants within Saudi Arabia's rapidly evolving sports sector.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 4 of 20

#### New Legal Provisions

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The Saudi Sports Law extends beyond regulating sports institutions; it establishes sport as a national responsibility shared by government, the private sector, and society as a whole. One of its most significant innovations is the obligation placed upon the Ministry of Sport to cooperate with public authorities, private institutions, and non-profit organizations to encourage participation in sport through appropriate policies, programs, and initiatives.

This reflects a fundamental shift in legislative philosophy. Sport is no longer viewed solely as a competitive activity or an administrative function of sports organizations. It is recognized as a public policy objective that contributes to health, social development, economic growth, and quality of life.

The Law also places particular emphasis on ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities to participate in sport. The Ministry of Sport, together with sports entities, is required to provide the necessary support enabling persons with disabilities to engage in sporting activities and to participate in competitions and sporting events. Sports facilities must likewise be designed and adapted to ensure accessible physical and organizational environments, in coordination with the relevant governmental authorities.

In this regard, the Saudi Paralympic Committee and the federations responsible for disability sport assume a



vital role in implementing these objectives and expanding opportunities for participation and sporting excellence.

Another important responsibility assigned to the Ministry is the establishment of a comprehensive national sports database. In cooperation with the General Authority for Statistics and other relevant public bodies, the Ministry is required to develop mechanisms for collecting, measuring, and analyzing statistical data relating to every aspect of the sports sector.

Reliable data has become an indispensable component of modern governance.

Accurate statistics enable informed decision-making, facilitate strategic planning, support investment, and provide objective measures for evaluating the effectiveness of public policy. The creation of an integrated national sports database will therefore serve athletes, investors, policymakers, researchers, and sports organizations alike by providing transparent and reliable information concerning the Kingdom's sports ecosystem.

The Law also recognizes that the transformation of Saudi sport cannot be achieved without the active participation of the media.

Accordingly, it imposes clear responsibilities upon all media organizations broadcasting or publishing sports content, as well as upon individuals engaged in sports journalism or sports media. They are required to promote the values of sportsmanship, encourage fair competition, and refrain from publishing or disseminating content that incites hatred, discrimination, racism, violence, or sporting intolerance.

This represents an important legislative development.

Sports media should contribute to building a positive sporting culture that encourages participation, investment, and public confidence rather than creating division, hostility, or unnecessary controversy.

Violations of these obligations may extend beyond disciplinary measures under the Sports Law itself. Media conduct involving defamation, hate speech, or other unlawful acts may also constitute criminal offences under Saudi legislation, including the Anti-Cybercrime Law, which provides for severe penalties in cases involving unlawful electronic publication or online abuse.

Such offences may expose the perpetrator to significant criminal sanctions, including imprisonment and substantial financial penalties, without prejudice to the civil right of injured parties to seek compensation for any damage suffered as a consequence of unlawful publication.

The enactment of these provisions demonstrates that the Saudi Sports Law seeks not merely to regulate sporting activities but to establish a responsible sporting culture founded upon integrity, mutual respect, accurate information, and ethical conduct.

Ultimately, successful sports governance depends not only upon legislation and institutions but also upon responsible public discourse. By promoting ethical media practices and encouraging constructive public engagement, the Law strengthens the legal and cultural foundations necessary for the continued development of Saudi sport under Vision 2030.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 5 of 20

#### The Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee

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The Saudi Sports Law establishes, for the first time, a clear legal framework governing the Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee and defining its constitutional position within the Kingdom's sports governance system.

The Law recognizes the Committee as an independent, non-governmental sports organization possessing legal personality. It is established on a non-profit basis and serves as the sole body officially recognized within the Kingdom as the National Olympic and Paralympic Committee, exercising its powers in accordance with its Statutes, which are adopted and amended by its General Assembly.

This legislative recognition provides long-awaited legal certainty regarding the Committee's institutional status while reinforcing its independence in accordance with internationally accepted principles governing the Olympic Movement.

The Committee's principal mission is to promote and support the Olympic and Paralympic Movement

throughout the Kingdom. It exercises the powers assigned to it under its Statutes and undertakes all functions necessary to achieve its objectives and preserve the principles upon which the Olympic and Paralympic Movement is founded.

Among its principal responsibilities is the organization of Olympic and Paralympic sporting activities in coordination with the relevant national sports federations. It is also responsible for developing strategic plans for the advancement of Olympic and Paralympic sport and for cooperating closely with the Ministry of Sport in implementing the Kingdom's national sports strategy.

The Committee further represents the Kingdom before regional, continental, and international Olympic and Paralympic organizations, as well as before their counterpart national committees. It nominates Saudi representatives to those organizations and participates in international conferences, assemblies, and meetings relating to Olympic and Paralympic sport, in coordination with the Ministry of Sport where appropriate.

Another core responsibility entrusted to the Committee is the management of Saudi Arabia's participation in Olympic and Paralympic Games and other major international multi-sport events. This includes selecting and preparing national delegations, supporting athletes, coaches, and technical staff, and ensuring that Saudi participation reflects the highest standards of sporting excellence and institutional professionalism.

The Committee is also empowered to organize, host, operate, and commercially exploit Olympic and Paralympic competitions and events within the Kingdom. Subject to the approval of the Ministry of Sport, it may host regional, continental, and international championships, congresses, conferences, seminars, and official meetings associated with the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

To fulfil these responsibilities effectively, the Law grants the Committee broad organizational and administrative powers.

These include the authority to issue its own administrative and financial regulations, adopt governance rules governing Olympic and Paralympic competitions, determine membership fees and charges for services it provides, and establish companies or participate in commercial entities in accordance with the Companies Law and with the approval of the Ministry of Sport.

One of the most significant aspects of the new legislative framework is its affirmation of the Committee's financial and administrative independence.

The Committee is not established to generate profit. Rather, its purpose is to develop and strengthen the Olympic and Paralympic Movement within Saudi Arabia while supporting the work of nearly one hundred national sports federations representing more than four hundred individual and team sports.

This represents a profound shift in the legal philosophy governing Saudi sport.

The Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee is no longer viewed merely as an administrative institution responsible for coordinating international participation. Under the Saudi Sports Law, it emerges as a strategic national institution entrusted with promoting sporting excellence, strengthening governance, fostering international cooperation, and contributing to the long-term development of the Kingdom's sports sector.

The new legislative framework also reflects the balance between institutional autonomy and public oversight. While the Committee enjoys substantial operational independence, it remains an integral component of Saudi Arabia's broader sports governance system, working in partnership with the Ministry of Sport to advance the objectives of Vision 2030.

Ultimately, the Saudi Sports Law elevates the Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee to the position it occupies within leading international sports jurisdictions—an independent institution with clearly defined legal authority, modern governance structures, and responsibility for leading the Olympic and Paralympic Movement in a manner consistent with international best practice.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 6 of 20

#### Sports Federations

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The Saudi Sports Law establishes a comprehensive legal framework governing sports federations and defines their role as the principal regulatory authorities responsible for the administration, development, and governance of their respective sports within the Kingdom.

Under the Law, a sports federation is recognized as an independent, non-governmental sports organization possessing legal personality and operating on a non-profit basis. It is the sole entity officially recognized to regulate a particular sport within its area of competence, and no more than one federation may be established for the same sport.

Each federation exercises its powers in accordance with its own Statutes, while remaining consistent with the constitutions and regulations of the relevant international sports federations. This alignment reflects the Kingdom's commitment to integrating Saudi sport within the international sporting community while maintaining compliance with domestic legislation.

Membership of a sports federation extends beyond clubs alone. It may include athletes, coaches, officials, and other persons connected with the sport, in accordance with the federation's Statutes and implementing regulations. This broader membership structure promotes wider participation in governance and strengthens the institutional development of each sport.

The fundamental responsibility of every federation is to develop its respective sport, expand participation, improve technical standards, and enhance the Kingdom's competitiveness at the regional, continental, and international levels.

To achieve these objectives, each federation is entrusted with extensive legal and administrative responsibilities.

These include preparing strategic plans for the development of the sport, cooperating with the Ministry of Sport and the Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee in implementing national sports strategies, and representing the Kingdom before regional, continental, and international governing bodies.

Federations are also responsible for nominating Saudi representatives to international organizations, organizing and preparing national teams for participation in international competitions, and managing every aspect of their technical and administrative affairs.

In addition, they regulate the affairs of their members, licensees, and registered participants, establish the rules governing competitions, determine eligibility criteria for participation, organize and operate sporting competitions, and manage the commercial rights associated with those competitions.

The Law further authorizes sports federations to host regional, continental, and international championships, conferences, seminars, and sporting events within the Kingdom, thereby strengthening Saudi Arabia's position as a leading destination for international sport.

One of the most significant reforms introduced by the Sports Law concerns the federation's licensing authority.

Federations are empowered to license clubs, coaches, sports agents, and other professionals engaged in the sports sector in accordance with the regulations they issue. They are also responsible for registering professional and amateur athletes, referees, and other participants connected with their respective sports.

This licensing framework represents a major advancement in the professional regulation of Saudi sport. It establishes clear legal standards governing participation while enhancing transparency, accountability, and regulatory consistency throughout the sector.

The Sports Law therefore elevates the role of sports federations beyond that of traditional administrative organizations.

They become the technical, regulatory, and governance authorities responsible for directing the future development of their sports. Their responsibilities now extend to governance, strategic planning, commercial development, athlete welfare, licensing, regulatory compliance, and international representation.

Equally important is the emphasis placed upon institutional governance.

The Law requires federations to operate in accordance with principles of transparency, accountability, financial responsibility, and sound administration. Effective governance is no longer regarded as an internal organizational preference but as a legal obligation essential to maintaining public confidence and attracting long-term investment.

By strengthening the legal status and institutional responsibilities of sports federations, the Saudi Sports Law contributes directly to the professionalization of the Kingdom's sports sector.

Well-governed federations create stronger competitions, improve athlete development, encourage commercial investment, and enhance Saudi Arabia's international sporting reputation.

Ultimately, the federation becomes the cornerstone of each individual sport's development. Through effective governance, strategic leadership, and professional regulation, sports federations will play a decisive role in

realizing the ambitions of Vision 2030 and establishing Saudi Arabia as one of the world's leading sports jurisdictions.

THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW  
Article 7 of 20  
Sports Clubs  
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The Saudi Sports Law introduces a modern legal framework governing sports clubs, redefining their institutional role and establishing the legal foundations necessary for their sustainable development in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Under the Law, a sports club is recognized as a non-governmental sports entity possessing legal personality. A club may be established either as a non-profit sports institution or as a company incorporated in accordance with the Saudi Companies Law. In either case, the club is authorized to conduct only those sporting activities for which it has obtained the necessary license from the relevant sports federation, in accordance with its Statutes or Articles of Association and the applicable regulations.

This legislative approach reflects the transformation of sports clubs from traditional community organizations into professionally managed institutions operating within a comprehensive legal and governance framework.

The principal mission of every sports club is to promote participation in sport, increase the number of participants, identify and develop athletic talent, and compete in sporting competitions in accordance with the rules and regulations issued by the relevant sports federation.

Clubs are also expected to develop programs that support their sporting objectives while undertaking any additional responsibilities prescribed by the implementing regulations.

To enable clubs to discharge these responsibilities effectively, the Law grants them broad administrative and commercial powers.

These include the authority to issue internal administrative and financial regulations governing their operations and membership, establish community sports initiatives in accordance with applicable legislation, determine membership fees and charges for services provided, establish companies or participate in commercial ventures pursuant to the Companies Law, and acquire, own, manage, invest in, and dispose of movable and immovable property in accordance with the implementing regulations.

One of the most significant aspects of the new legal framework is its recognition that financial sustainability is no longer optional; it is an essential element of good governance.

Accordingly, clubs are expected to generate revenue, diversify their sources of income, and adopt investment strategies capable of ensuring their long-term financial stability. Commercial activity is therefore no longer viewed as inconsistent with the sporting mission of clubs. Rather, responsible investment has become one of the principal mechanisms through which clubs secure sustainable growth while continuing to fulfil their sporting and social responsibilities.

The Law further recognizes that effective governance begins with an active and well-structured General Assembly.

Membership of the General Assembly should no longer be viewed as symbolic. Instead, members must play a meaningful role in the governance of the club by exercising their voting rights, holding boards of directors accountable, approving strategic decisions, and contributing to the long-term development of the institution.

For this reason, clubs should establish transparent membership structures that distinguish between supporters, contributors, and members exercising governance rights. Such classification promotes institutional maturity and ensures that those responsible for making fundamental decisions possess the appropriate commitment and qualifications.

The responsibilities imposed upon boards of directors have likewise become considerably more extensive.

Board members, executive officers, senior management, financial directors, and committee members now assume clearly defined legal duties concerning governance, compliance, financial management, transparency, and institutional accountability.



These responsibilities are expected to be reflected in the new implementing regulations governing sports clubs, introducing higher standards of professional management than those previously applied.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore represents far more than an administrative reform of sports clubs.

It establishes a comprehensive governance model in which sporting success, financial sustainability, institutional accountability, and commercial professionalism are regarded as complementary objectives rather than competing priorities.

Successful clubs will no longer be measured solely by their achievements on the field of play.

They will also be evaluated by the quality of their governance, the effectiveness of their management, the sustainability of their finances, their compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and their contribution to the broader development of Saudi sport.

As Saudi Arabia continues its ambitious sporting transformation, sports clubs will become sophisticated institutions operating according to internationally recognized standards of governance while preserving their important social and community role.

The Saudi Sports Law provides the legal foundation for this transformation, enabling clubs to become stronger institutions, more attractive investment opportunities, and enduring contributors to the Kingdom's sporting future.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 8 of 20

#### Sports Leagues

Originally published in Arabic on 14 February 2026

The Saudi Sports Law introduces, for the first time, a comprehensive legal framework governing sports leagues, recognizing them as independent sports entities responsible for the professional administration and commercial development of sporting competitions.

Under the Law, a league is a non-governmental sports entity possessing legal personality. It may be established either as a non-profit sports organization or as a company incorporated pursuant to the Saudi Companies Law. In both cases, the league exercises its functions in accordance with its Statutes or Articles of Association, the regulations governing its activities, and the rules issued by the relevant sports federation.

The establishment of a league requires the participation of the clubs competing in the relevant sporting competition and is subject to the prior approval of the competent sports federation.

This requirement reflects an important principle of sports governance. While leagues are granted significant operational autonomy, they remain an integral component of the federation's overall regulatory structure, ensuring consistency between the commercial management of competitions and the technical governance of the sport.

The relevant sports federation is responsible for establishing the legal framework governing the formation of leagues. This includes determining the organizational model, legal form, governance structure, management procedures, and operational requirements, provided that these remain consistent with the provisions of the Saudi Sports Law and its implementing regulations.

Once established, a league assumes responsibility for managing and operating the sporting competition entrusted to it in accordance with internationally recognized best practices.

Its responsibilities extend beyond the scheduling of matches or administration of competitions.

The league is entrusted with the commercial management of the competition, including the marketing and exploitation of its commercial rights, broadcasting rights, sponsorship opportunities, licensing arrangements, and other revenue-generating activities that contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of the competition and its participating clubs.

The Law further authorizes leagues to undertake any additional responsibilities assigned under the implementing regulations, thereby allowing the regulatory framework to evolve alongside the continued development of professional sport in the Kingdom.

To discharge these responsibilities effectively, leagues are granted extensive organizational and administrative powers.

These include establishing permanent and temporary committees, delegating specific powers to those

committees in accordance with their governing documents, issuing internal administrative and financial regulations, determining membership fees and charges for services, and adopting governance procedures necessary for the efficient management of their affairs.

Leagues may also establish companies, acquire shareholdings in commercial entities, or participate in joint ventures in accordance with the Saudi Companies Law, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Sport where required.

They are likewise authorized to acquire, own, manage, invest in, and dispose of movable and immovable property in accordance with the implementing regulations.

One of the most significant reforms introduced by the Saudi Sports Law is its recognition that professional sporting competitions require professional commercial management.

Modern leagues are no longer limited to organizing fixtures and determining league standings. They have become sophisticated commercial organizations responsible for maximizing the value of sporting competitions, enhancing fan engagement, developing broadcasting and media strategies, attracting investment, and strengthening the commercial profile of the sport.

This legislative approach aligns Saudi Arabia with internationally established models adopted by many of the world's leading professional sports leagues.

The Law also creates opportunities for the future development of additional representative organizations within the sports sector.

Just as clubs may collectively establish leagues to administer professional competitions, other stakeholder groups—including players, coaches, referees, and additional participants within the sports ecosystem—may in due course benefit from organizational structures that strengthen professional representation and institutional dialogue within the framework of the Law.

Equally important is the contribution that leagues make to good governance.

Transparent governance structures, clearly defined responsibilities, objective decision-making processes, and accountable leadership enhance public confidence while reducing disputes and encouraging commercial investment.

Professional governance therefore becomes not merely an administrative requirement but an economic necessity.

Strong governance attracts stronger investment.

Stronger investment supports better competitions.

Better competitions increase commercial value.

Commercial success ultimately contributes to the sustainable development of Saudi sport.

The Saudi Sports Law recognizes this relationship and places sports leagues at the center of the Kingdom's strategy for the commercialization and professionalization of sport.

By providing leagues with legal certainty, institutional autonomy, and robust governance mechanisms, the Law establishes the conditions necessary for Saudi Arabia's professional competitions to compete successfully on the regional and international stage.

Sports leagues therefore emerge not simply as competition organizers, but as strategic institutions responsible for driving commercial growth, strengthening governance, and supporting the long-term success of Saudi Arabia's rapidly evolving sports industry.

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
**Article 9 of 20**  
**Sports Companies and Investment**  
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The Saudi Sports Law establishes a modern legal framework designed to strengthen investment in the sports sector while ensuring that commercial development proceeds in accordance with the highest standards of governance, integrity, and regulatory compliance.

The Law requires every sports entity to comply with its provisions and implementing regulations and to cooperate fully with the Ministry of Sport in implementing its programs, strategic initiatives, and national objectives. This obligation reflects the principle that all participants within the sports sector share

responsibility for achieving the Kingdom's long-term vision for sustainable sports development.

Beyond institutional compliance, the Law imposes a duty upon sports entities to adopt preventive measures and awareness programs aimed at protecting the health, safety, and well-being of athletes during the practice of sporting activities. Creating a safe sporting environment is therefore not merely a matter of good practice but a legal obligation.

Equally important is the Law's emphasis on promoting ethical values throughout the sports sector.

Sports entities are required to uphold integrity, encourage fair competition, promote the principles of fair play, and actively combat discrimination, racism, violence, hate speech, and doping. These obligations reinforce the broader objective of preserving sport as an environment founded upon respect, equality, and ethical conduct.

One of the most significant reforms introduced by the Law concerns the corporate transformation of sports organizations.

A sports club or league intending to operate in the form of a commercial company must first obtain the approval of the Minister of Sport before proceeding with its incorporation under the Saudi Companies Law. Furthermore, the General Assembly of a sports club established as a sports institution, or the governing body of a league established as a sports organization, may resolve to convert the entity into a company, subject to ministerial approval. The implementing regulations will determine the minimum capital requirements and other legal conditions applicable to such conversion.

The Law also introduces an important regulatory framework governing ownership and investment.

In particular, it authorizes the Minister of Sport to determine the maximum ownership interests that may be held by individual shareholders or foreign investors in sports companies. This mechanism provides the flexibility necessary to encourage investment while ensuring that strategic oversight remains consistent with national sports policy and the public interest.

Recognizing that sports investment increasingly involves both domestic and international capital, the Law requires close coordination between the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Investment, and other competent authorities when establishing the regulatory requirements applicable to mergers, acquisitions, foreign investment, and transfers of ownership in sports companies.

This integrated governmental approach promotes legal certainty, protects investors, and facilitates responsible commercial growth within the Kingdom's sports sector.

The Law also extends legal obligations beyond sports organizations themselves.

Athletes, coaches, sports administrators, referees, sports agents, media professionals, and every individual participating in the sports sector are required to comply with the provisions of the Sports Law, its implementing regulations, and the ethical principles upon which it is founded.

These include adherence to the principles of fair competition, respect for sporting values, rejection of discrimination and intolerance, and the promotion of integrity both on and off the field of play.

Importantly, the Law makes clear that its provisions do not prejudice the application of other legislation governing employment within the public and private sectors. Individuals participating in sporting activities remain subject to the general legal framework applicable to their employment relationships except where the Sports Law provides otherwise.

Collectively, these provisions place the Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee, sports federations, clubs, and leagues before a new era of legal responsibility.

No longer can sports organizations focus solely on sporting performance.

They must now operate in accordance with modern standards of governance, compliance, financial accountability, transparency, and institutional responsibility.

At the same time, the Law creates one of the most attractive legal environments for sports investment in the region.

By providing legal certainty, clearly defined corporate structures, regulatory oversight, and investor protections, the Saudi Sports Law establishes the conditions necessary for long-term domestic and international investment while safeguarding the integrity and public interest of the Kingdom's sports sector. As the commercial dimension of Saudi sport continues to expand under Vision 2030, legal expertise will become increasingly indispensable.

Lawyers, corporate advisers, governance specialists, compliance professionals, and regulatory experts will play a central role in supporting sports organizations as they navigate increasingly sophisticated legal,

commercial, and institutional environments.

Ultimately, successful sports investment depends not only upon financial capital but also upon sound governance, legal certainty, and professional legal advice.

The Saudi Sports Law provides the legislative foundation upon which that future will be built.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 10 of 20

#### The Athlete, Coach and Referee

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The Saudi Sports Law establishes, for the first time, a comprehensive legal framework governing the status, rights, and obligations of the principal participants in the sports sector, namely athletes, coaches, referees, sports agents, and organized sports groups.

By doing so, the Law recognizes that the success of any modern sports system depends not only upon effective institutions but also upon the legal protection and professional regulation of the individuals who constitute the foundation of sport.

#### The Professional Athlete

The Law defines a professional athlete as an individual who is duly registered with the relevant sports federation, regularly participates in a recognized sporting activity, and is contractually engaged by either a member club or the federation itself to perform sporting services in return for financial remuneration.

This definition establishes clear legal criteria distinguishing professional participation from amateur participation and provides the contractual certainty required for the development of professional sport.

A contractual relationship is therefore the cornerstone of professional sporting status.

Professional athletes are no longer regarded merely as participants in competitions; they are recognized as professionals whose rights and obligations arise from legally enforceable contractual relationships.

#### The Amateur Athlete

Conversely, an athlete who does not satisfy the statutory requirements of professional status is regarded as an amateur athlete.

The relevant sports federation is responsible for regulating the legal status of amateur athletes, defining their rights and obligations, and adopting the measures necessary to safeguard those rights within the framework established by the Sports Law and its implementing regulations.

This distinction between professional and amateur athletes reflects internationally recognized sporting practice while ensuring legal certainty for all participants.

#### Coaches

The Law similarly regulates the coaching profession.

A coach must be duly licensed to practice, registered with the relevant sports federation, and engaged under a contractual relationship with a member club or the federation itself to provide coaching services in return for remuneration.

Sports federations are authorized to establish additional licensing requirements governing entry into the coaching profession, including technical qualifications, professional classifications, continuing education requirements, and ethical standards.

Each federation is also responsible for defining the legal rights and professional obligations of coaches and for adopting the measures necessary to protect those rights and regulate professional practice.

This framework reflects the increasing professionalization of coaching within Saudi sport and recognizes the essential contribution coaches make to athlete development and sporting excellence.

#### Referees

The Sports Law likewise recognizes the central role of referees in maintaining the integrity of sporting competitions.

Each sports federation is entrusted with regulating every aspect of officiating within its sport.

This includes the appointment, registration, classification, contractual engagement where applicable, education, assessment, responsibilities, and legal obligations of referees.



By establishing clear regulatory authority over officiating, the Law promotes consistency, fairness, and confidence in sporting competitions.

#### Elite Athletes

One of the most significant innovations introduced by the Law is the formal recognition of elite athletes.

The Minister of Sport is empowered, in coordination with the Saudi Olympic & Paralympic Committee and the relevant sports federations, to issue and periodically update an official register of elite athletes.

To qualify for inclusion, an athlete, coach, or referee must:

- be a Saudi national;
- demonstrate outstanding sporting performance at the national, regional, continental, or international level;
- satisfy the technical criteria established by the Minister for the relevant sport;
- be registered with a Saudi sports federation; and
- actively participate in competitions organized by the relevant federation.

The establishment of an official classification for elite athletes represents an important legislative development.

It provides a transparent legal mechanism through which outstanding sporting achievement may be formally recognized and appropriately supported by the State.

#### Sports Agents

The Law also introduces formal regulation of the sports agent profession.

No person may engage in sports agency activities without first obtaining a license issued by the relevant sports federation.

Each federation is responsible for determining the licensing requirements, professional standards, and regulatory framework governing sports agents within its respective sport.

This represents an important safeguard for athletes and clubs alike, ensuring that representation within the sports industry is conducted professionally, ethically, and transparently.

#### Sports Groups

The Sports Law further recognizes the concept of organized sports groups, defined as groups of individuals who participate collectively in a particular sporting activity on either an organized or informal basis.

The implementing regulations will determine the legal criteria applicable to such groups, together with the rules governing their activities and the obligations of their members.

This provision reflects the Law's broad and inclusive approach to sports participation, extending legal recognition beyond traditional institutional structures to encompass emerging forms of organized sporting activity.

#### A New Legal Profession within Sport

Perhaps one of the most important consequences of these reforms is the growing need for specialized legal expertise.

As contractual relationships, licensing systems, governance obligations, disciplinary procedures, and regulatory compliance become increasingly sophisticated, lawyers specializing in sports law will assume a central role in protecting rights, resolving disputes, ensuring compliance, and supporting institutional governance.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore signals not only the professionalization of athletes, coaches, and referees, but also the emergence of sports law as an essential legal discipline within the Kingdom's expanding sports industry.

The future success of Saudi sport will depend not only upon exceptional athletes but also upon the strength of the legal framework that protects them and the professionals responsible for its implementation.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 11 of 20

#### Sports Discipline and Sports Arbitration

Originally published in Arabic on 22 March 2026

The enactment of the Saudi Sports Law marks a significant development in the administration of sports justice within the Kingdom. It establishes an integrated legal framework for disciplinary proceedings and

sports dispute resolution, reinforcing the principles of fairness, due process, and institutional independence. Modern sport cannot function effectively without a legal system capable of resolving disputes efficiently, consistently, and fairly. As the sports sector continues to expand through increasing commercial investment, professional participation, and international engagement, disputes inevitably become more frequent and more complex. A modern legal framework is therefore indispensable to safeguarding rights, preserving sporting integrity, and maintaining confidence among all stakeholders.

The Saudi Sports Law recognizes this reality by requiring sports entities to establish disciplinary mechanisms that operate in accordance with principles of transparency, impartiality, and procedural fairness.

Every disciplinary decision must be founded upon clearly established legal rules and must respect the fundamental rights of the parties concerned, including the right to be heard, the right to present evidence, and the right to challenge disciplinary sanctions through the procedures prescribed by law.

Disciplinary proceedings should never be regarded merely as punitive measures.

Their primary purpose is to preserve the integrity of sporting competitions, protect participants, ensure compliance with applicable regulations, and promote respect for the values upon which sport is founded.

For this reason, disciplinary bodies within sports federations and leagues bear an important institutional responsibility.

Their decisions must remain independent from external influence and free from conflicts of interest. Justice within sport must not only be done but must also be seen to be done.

Alongside disciplinary justice, the Law strengthens the role of sports arbitration as the preferred mechanism for resolving disputes arising within the sports sector.

Sports arbitration offers several advantages over ordinary judicial proceedings.

It enables disputes to be determined by specialists possessing expertise in sports law and sporting regulations, while ensuring greater speed, procedural flexibility, confidentiality where appropriate, and consistency with international sporting practice.

These characteristics are particularly important where disputes concern player transfers, contractual obligations, disciplinary sanctions, eligibility, governance matters, commercial agreements, or competition-related issues that require prompt resolution before sporting events proceed.

The growing complexity of professional sport makes specialist arbitration increasingly indispensable.

Disputes involving broadcasting rights, sponsorship agreements, commercial partnerships, image rights, intellectual property, employment contracts, and international transfers require decision-makers who understand both legal principles and the unique characteristics of the sports industry.

Accordingly, the Saudi Sports Law reflects the international trend towards specialized sports dispute resolution rather than reliance upon conventional litigation.

At the same time, arbitration must never compromise the principles of justice.

The independence of arbitrators, equality between the parties, procedural fairness, reasoned decisions, and respect for due process remain fundamental safeguards that underpin the legitimacy of sports arbitration.

The credibility of any sports justice system ultimately depends upon public confidence in its independence and integrity.

For Saudi Arabia, the establishment of a comprehensive framework governing disciplinary proceedings and sports arbitration represents an important step towards strengthening institutional governance.

Investors, athletes, clubs, federations, sponsors, and international governing bodies all seek legal environments in which disputes are resolved efficiently, transparently, and impartially.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore contributes not only to the administration of justice but also to enhancing the Kingdom's attractiveness as an international destination for sporting investment and major sporting events.

As Saudi sport continues to evolve, sports lawyers and arbitrators will assume an increasingly important role. Their responsibility extends beyond resolving disputes.

They will contribute to the interpretation of legislation, the development of jurisprudence, the promotion of good governance, and the protection of the legal rights of every participant within the sports ecosystem.

Ultimately, sporting success depends not only upon excellence on the field of play but equally upon confidence in the legal institutions that govern it.

The Saudi Sports Law establishes the foundations for a modern system of sports justice capable of supporting the Kingdom's long-term sporting ambitions and reinforcing its position as a global leader in sport.

THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW  
Article 12 of 20  
Anti-Doping and Sports Competitions  
Originally published in Arabic on 29 March 2026

One of the principal objectives of the Saudi Sports Law is to safeguard the integrity of sporting competition by ensuring that all participants compete under conditions founded upon fairness, equality, and respect for the rules of sport.

No sporting system can achieve credibility if success is obtained through unlawful means. Sporting excellence must always be the product of talent, dedication, preparation, and discipline—not the use of prohibited substances or practices that undermine the very essence of fair competition.

For this reason, the Law places considerable emphasis on combating doping as an essential component of sports governance.

The legislation requires all sports entities, athletes, coaches, medical professionals, administrators, and other participants within the sports sector to comply with the anti-doping regulations adopted by the Kingdom in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

Saudi Arabia's anti-doping framework operates in harmony with the World Anti-Doping Code (WADA Code) and the international standards governing testing, investigations, results management, therapeutic use exemptions, education, and sanctions.

This alignment demonstrates the Kingdom's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations while protecting the credibility of its domestic sporting competitions.

Anti-doping should not be viewed solely as a disciplinary issue.

Rather, it is a matter of public confidence, athlete welfare, and institutional integrity.

The use of prohibited substances not only creates an unfair competitive advantage but also exposes athletes to significant health risks and damages the reputation of sporting organizations, competitions, sponsors, and the nation itself.

Accordingly, prevention is as important as enforcement.

Sports federations, clubs, and educational institutions should invest in comprehensive awareness programs designed to educate athletes from an early age regarding prohibited substances, nutritional supplements, therapeutic medications, and the legal consequences of anti-doping rule violations.

Education remains the first line of defense against doping.

Equally important is the responsibility of coaches, physicians, physiotherapists, nutritionists, and sports administrators.

These professionals owe legal and ethical duties to athletes under their supervision.

Any person who encourages, facilitates, administers, conceals, or assists the use of prohibited substances may incur disciplinary and legal liability under the applicable regulatory framework.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore promotes a culture of shared responsibility.

Protecting clean sport is not the obligation of athletes alone; it requires the cooperation of every participant within the sporting ecosystem.

The Law also reinforces the importance of properly organized sporting competitions.

Competitions must be conducted in accordance with the regulations issued by the relevant sports federation and under conditions that guarantee equality of opportunity, respect for competition rules, athlete safety, and transparent administration.

Every competition should reflect the principles of fairness and sporting integrity.

Organizers therefore assume significant legal responsibilities concerning participant eligibility, competition management, disciplinary procedures, medical support, venue safety, and regulatory compliance.

Failure to comply with these obligations may expose organizers to disciplinary measures and other legal consequences prescribed by the Sports Law and its implementing regulations.

As Saudi Arabia continues to host an increasing number of regional, continental, and international sporting events, maintaining confidence in the integrity of those competitions becomes increasingly important.

International athletes, governing bodies, commercial partners, broadcasters, and spectators expect sporting

events to be conducted according to globally recognized legal and ethical standards. The Saudi Sports Law provides the legislative framework necessary to meet those expectations. By promoting clean sport, strengthening anti-doping measures, and ensuring the proper regulation of sporting competitions, the Law enhances Saudi Arabia's reputation as a trusted host of major international sporting events and reinforces its position within the global sporting community. Ultimately, sporting success is measured not only by medals, championships, or commercial achievements. Its true value lies in preserving the integrity of competition and ensuring that every victory is earned fairly, honestly, and in full compliance with the law.

THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW  
Article 13 of 20  
Sports Education and Professional Development  
Originally published in Arabic on 5 April 2026

The long-term success of any national sports system depends not only on infrastructure, investment, or legislation, but also on the continuous development of human capital. Athletes, coaches, referees, administrators, medical professionals, lawyers, and sports executives all require specialized education and ongoing professional development to meet the evolving demands of modern sport.

Recognizing this reality, the Saudi Sports Law places significant emphasis on sports education, professional training, scientific research, and institutional capacity building as fundamental pillars of sustainable sports development.

The Law requires the Ministry of Sport, in cooperation with the relevant governmental authorities and sports entities, to promote educational and training programs that enhance professional competence throughout the sports sector.

These programs are intended to develop technical expertise, administrative efficiency, governance standards, and specialized knowledge across every discipline associated with sport.

The objective extends beyond improving athletic performance.

Modern sport has become a multidisciplinary industry requiring expertise in law, governance, finance, marketing, medicine, technology, event management, communications, investment, and dispute resolution. Accordingly, the Kingdom's future success depends upon developing qualified professionals capable of leading sports organizations according to internationally recognized standards.

The Law therefore encourages the establishment of specialized sports institutes and educational centers dedicated to providing academic qualifications, vocational training, and professional certification.

These institutions may deliver programs covering sports management, governance, sports law, commercial rights, sponsorship, media, sports medicine, anti-doping, arbitration, compliance, and numerous other specialized fields that support the continued growth of the sports sector.

Scientific research also occupies an important position within the legislative framework.

The Ministry of Sport is encouraged to cooperate with universities, research centers, and specialized institutions in conducting studies relating to sports performance, governance, investment, public health, technology, infrastructure, and legal development.

Evidence-based policymaking has become an essential characteristic of modern governance.

Research enables decision-makers to evaluate existing policies, identify emerging challenges, anticipate future opportunities, and adopt solutions founded upon objective analysis rather than assumption.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore recognizes research not as an academic exercise alone, but as a strategic tool for institutional development.

Particular importance should also be attached to legal education.

As Saudi Arabia's sports industry becomes increasingly sophisticated, the demand for specialized expertise in sports law will continue to grow.

Lawyers, judges, arbitrators, in-house counsel, compliance officers, and legal advisers must develop a thorough understanding of the legal framework governing contracts, governance, disciplinary proceedings, intellectual property, employment, commercial investment, international regulations, and dispute resolution within sport.

The emergence of sports law as a recognized legal discipline presents significant opportunities for universities and professional organizations to develop specialized academic programs capable of preparing the next generation of legal professionals.

Equally important is the role of continuing professional education.

The legal, commercial, and regulatory environment governing sport continues to evolve rapidly.

Consequently, professional development should not conclude upon obtaining an academic qualification or professional license.

Instead, continuous education should become an integral component of professional practice for everyone engaged within the sports sector.

Sports organizations likewise bear responsibility for investing in their employees.

Well-trained administrators, executives, coaches, referees, and technical personnel contribute directly to stronger governance, better decision-making, improved regulatory compliance, and enhanced institutional performance.

Investment in people remains one of the most valuable investments any organization can make.

Ultimately, legislation alone cannot transform the sports sector.

The effectiveness of any legal framework depends upon the knowledge, competence, integrity, and professionalism of those responsible for implementing it.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore recognizes education and professional development as strategic investments in the future of Saudi sport.

By fostering knowledge, encouraging innovation, supporting research, and developing highly qualified professionals, the Kingdom is laying the intellectual foundation necessary to sustain its ambitious sporting transformation for generations to come.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 14 of 20

### Sports Violations

Originally published in Arabic on 12 April 2026

The effectiveness of any legal system depends not only upon the rights it creates but equally upon its ability to identify, prevent, and address violations of those rights. Without effective enforcement, legislation risks becoming merely aspirational rather than operational.

Recognizing this principle, the Saudi Sports Law establishes a comprehensive legal framework governing sports violations and the regulatory mechanisms necessary to protect the integrity of the Kingdom's sports sector.

The Law requires every sports entity, athlete, coach, referee, administrator, sports agent, and other participant operating within the sports ecosystem to comply fully with its provisions, the implementing regulations, and the decisions lawfully issued by the competent authorities.

Failure to comply constitutes a breach of the legal obligations imposed by the Sports Law and may result in disciplinary, administrative, civil, or criminal consequences, depending upon the nature and seriousness of the violation.

Importantly, the Law adopts a broad concept of sports violations.

A violation is not limited to misconduct occurring during sporting competitions. It extends to any act or omission that undermines the objectives of the Law, compromises governance, threatens sporting integrity, breaches licensing requirements, or violates the regulatory framework governing sports entities.

Accordingly, violations may arise from failures in governance, financial management, regulatory compliance, contractual performance, licensing obligations, athlete protection, ethical conduct, or administrative accountability.

This modern regulatory approach reflects international best practice by recognizing that threats to sport often arise outside the field of play.

Weak governance, conflicts of interest, financial irregularities, abuse of authority, manipulation of competitions, corruption, and non-compliance with regulatory obligations can be equally damaging to public confidence as misconduct during sporting events.



For this reason, prevention remains as important as enforcement.

Sports entities should establish robust internal governance systems capable of identifying risks before violations occur.

Effective compliance programs, internal controls, transparent decision-making processes, conflict-of-interest policies, whistleblowing mechanisms, and regular legal audits should become integral components of institutional governance.

Compliance is no longer a voluntary exercise.

It has become a legal responsibility shared by every organization operating within the Saudi sports sector.

The Law also emphasizes personal accountability.

Members of boards of directors, executive management, committee members, and senior officials cannot avoid responsibility for unlawful decisions or failures in governance merely because those decisions were taken collectively.

Every individual exercising authority within a sports organization assumes legal duties requiring honesty, diligence, impartiality, and compliance with the applicable legal framework.

This represents an important cultural shift.

Modern governance requires individual accountability alongside institutional responsibility.

Another significant feature of the Law is its recognition that sports violations may simultaneously engage multiple legal regimes.

Certain conduct may constitute a disciplinary offence under the Sports Law while also giving rise to civil liability for damages or criminal liability under other applicable Saudi legislation.

Accordingly, disciplinary proceedings conducted by sports authorities do not necessarily preclude separate proceedings before the competent judicial authorities where the circumstances so require.

This principle strengthens legal certainty while ensuring that serious misconduct receives an appropriate legal response.

The existence of multiple forms of legal accountability also serves as a powerful deterrent against behavior that threatens the integrity of sport.

As Saudi Arabia continues to expand its role as a global destination for major sporting events and international investment, the importance of effective enforcement cannot be overstated.

Investors, sponsors, athletes, international federations, and commercial partners all seek confidence that regulatory obligations will be enforced fairly, consistently, and transparently.

The Saudi Sports Law provides that assurance.

By establishing a comprehensive framework governing sports violations, the Law reinforces institutional integrity, strengthens governance, protects stakeholders, and enhances confidence in Saudi Arabia's rapidly developing sports sector.

Ultimately, the success of any legal framework is measured not by the number of violations it punishes but by the culture of compliance it creates.

The Saudi Sports Law seeks to foster precisely that culture one founded upon integrity, accountability, transparency, and respect for the rule of law.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

### Article 15 of 20

#### Sports Sanctions

Originally published in Arabic on 19 April 2026

No legal system can achieve its objectives without effective enforcement mechanisms. Rights and obligations derive their practical value from the existence of appropriate sanctions capable of ensuring compliance and preserving respect for the rule of law.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore establishes a comprehensive framework governing sports sanctions, designed not merely to punish misconduct but to protect the integrity of sport, strengthen institutional governance, and encourage compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.

Sanctions under the Law are founded upon an essential legal principle: proportionality.

Every disciplinary measure imposed must be proportionate to the nature, seriousness, and consequences of the

violation committed. Disciplinary authorities must carefully evaluate all relevant circumstances, including the intent of the offender, the extent of the damage caused, any previous violations, and the impact of the conduct upon the integrity of the sport.

Justice cannot be achieved through arbitrary punishment.

Rather, sanctions must be imposed through transparent procedures that guarantee due process, equality before the law, and the right of every individual or entity to present a defense.

Accordingly, disciplinary bodies exercising authority under the Sports Law bear a significant legal responsibility.

Their decisions must be objective, impartial, reasoned, and fully consistent with the provisions of the Law and its implementing regulations.

The range of sanctions available under the legislative framework is intentionally broad, enabling disciplinary authorities to respond appropriately to different categories of misconduct.

Depending upon the circumstances, sanctions may include warnings, financial penalties, suspension of licenses, temporary or permanent disqualification from sporting activities, deduction of competition points, exclusion from competitions, withdrawal of titles or awards, cancellation of licenses, or any other disciplinary measure authorized by the Law and the applicable regulations.

Importantly, the purpose of these sanctions is not retaliation.

Their primary function is corrective and preventive.

Effective disciplinary measures encourage future compliance, deter similar misconduct, protect participants, and preserve public confidence in sporting institutions.

The Law also recognizes that sanctions imposed against sports entities differ fundamentally from those imposed against individuals.

Where a club, federation, league, or other sports organization fails to comply with its legal obligations, disciplinary measures may extend beyond financial penalties to include regulatory intervention, suspension of activities, restrictions on participation, or other institutional measures designed to restore compliance and protect the public interest.

Conversely, sanctions imposed upon athletes, coaches, referees, administrators, sports agents, or other individuals are directed towards personal accountability and professional responsibility.

The distinction between institutional liability and individual liability reflects a mature legal system capable of identifying responsibility at the appropriate level.

Another important safeguard established by the Law is the requirement that disciplinary sanctions remain subject to review through the legal mechanisms provided under the sports justice system.

This ensures that disciplinary authority is exercised within the framework of legality and that affected parties retain the opportunity to challenge decisions believed to be unlawful, disproportionate, or procedurally defective.

Such safeguards reinforce confidence in the legitimacy of the disciplinary process.

Equally significant is the relationship between disciplinary sanctions and other branches of law.

Certain misconduct may simultaneously constitute a disciplinary offence under the Sports Law, a civil wrong giving rise to liability for damages, or a criminal offence under the Kingdom's general legislation.

The imposition of a disciplinary sanction therefore does not necessarily preclude civil or criminal proceedings where the facts justify additional legal action.

This integrated approach strengthens accountability while ensuring that serious misconduct receives an appropriate legal response.

As Saudi Arabia's sports industry continues to expand, effective enforcement becomes increasingly important.

Professional sport attracts significant commercial investment, international broadcasting agreements, sponsorship arrangements, employment relationships, and public attention.

These developments require a legal environment in which rules are respected and violations are addressed consistently and fairly.

The Saudi Sports Law provides precisely such an environment.

By establishing a modern and balanced disciplinary framework, it promotes responsible conduct, strengthens institutional governance, protects sporting integrity, and enhances confidence among athletes, investors, commercial partners, and international sports organizations.

Ultimately, sanctions should never be regarded as the objective of legislation.

The true objective is voluntary compliance.

A successful legal system is measured not by the number of penalties imposed, but by the degree to which its existence encourages lawful conduct and responsible governance.

In this respect, the Saudi Sports Law reflects the principles of modern regulatory practice: firm where necessary, fair at all times, and always directed towards the long-term development of Saudi sport.

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
**Article 16 of 20**  
**Enhanced Enforcement Measures**  
**Originally published in Arabic on 26 April 2026**

The effectiveness of any legislative framework depends not only upon the existence of legal obligations and disciplinary sanctions but also upon the availability of effective enforcement mechanisms capable of ensuring compliance.

Recognizing this principle, the Saudi Sports Law strengthens the Kingdom's regulatory framework by introducing enhanced enforcement measures designed to promote institutional accountability, improve regulatory compliance, and safeguard the integrity of the sports sector.

Modern sports governance requires more than reactive enforcement.

The primary objective of regulation should be to prevent violations before they occur through effective supervision, continuous monitoring, and responsible institutional management.

The Law therefore adopts a preventive regulatory philosophy that encourages sports entities to establish internal compliance systems capable of identifying legal and operational risks at an early stage.

Such systems should include governance policies, internal control mechanisms, financial oversight procedures, conflict-of-interest rules, compliance programs, and periodic legal reviews designed to ensure continuous conformity with the Sports Law and its implementing regulations.

Compliance should not be regarded as a periodic administrative exercise.

Rather, it should become an integral component of institutional culture and day-to-day decision-making.

Every board member, executive officer, committee member, and senior administrator bears personal responsibility for ensuring that the organization operates within the legal framework established by the Law.

This represents one of the most important developments introduced by the Saudi Sports Law.

Institutional accountability now extends beyond the organization itself to those entrusted with its management and governance.

Leadership therefore carries corresponding legal responsibilities.

The Law further empowers the competent authorities to adopt the measures necessary to ensure that sports entities comply with their statutory obligations.

Where breaches are identified, corrective measures may be required before disciplinary action becomes necessary.

This reflects the modern regulatory principle that prevention and remediation should, whenever possible, precede punishment.

Nevertheless, where violations persist or involve serious misconduct, the competent authorities possess sufficient legal powers to impose appropriate sanctions capable of protecting the public interest and preserving confidence in the sports sector.

Enhanced enforcement also contributes directly to investor confidence.

Domestic and international investors seek legal systems in which regulations are applied consistently, transparently, and without discrimination.

Effective enforcement reduces legal uncertainty, strengthens commercial confidence, and creates an environment conducive to long-term investment.

For sports organizations, enhanced regulatory oversight should not be perceived as an obstacle to growth.

On the contrary, good governance and regulatory compliance have become valuable competitive advantages.

Organizations that demonstrate transparency, accountability, financial discipline, and sound governance are more likely to attract sponsors, investors, commercial partners, and talented professionals.

The Law therefore encourages sports entities to move beyond minimum legal compliance and embrace governance as a strategic objective.

The stronger an institution's governance framework, the lower its legal risks and the greater its long-term sustainability.

This philosophy is entirely consistent with international developments in sports regulation.

Leading international sports organizations increasingly require robust governance systems, ethical standards, financial accountability, and effective compliance programs as conditions for participation, recognition, and commercial cooperation.

The Saudi Sports Law positions the Kingdom within this global regulatory movement.

By strengthening enforcement while promoting preventive governance, the Law establishes a modern legal environment capable of supporting continued growth, attracting investment, protecting stakeholders, and enhancing the international reputation of Saudi sport.

Ultimately, enforcement should not be measured by the number of investigations conducted or sanctions imposed.

Its true success lies in fostering institutions that voluntarily comply with the law because good governance has become part of their organizational culture.

That is the enduring objective of the Saudi Sports Law.

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
**Article 17 of 20**  
**Sports Inspection and Regulatory Oversight**  
**Originally published in Arabic on 3 May 2026**

A modern legal framework cannot achieve its objectives unless supported by effective regulatory oversight and institutional supervision. Legislation establishes rights and obligations, but it is inspection and regulatory monitoring that ensure those obligations are respected in practice.

Recognizing this fundamental principle, the Saudi Sports Law establishes a comprehensive framework for sports inspection, empowering the competent authorities to oversee compliance and ensure the proper implementation of the Law throughout the Kingdom's sports sector.

Inspection should not be understood as an instrument of punishment.

Rather, it is a mechanism for promoting good governance, identifying areas of non-compliance, supporting institutional improvement, and protecting the integrity of sport.

Its primary objective is preventive rather than punitive.

The Ministry of Sport, together with the competent regulatory authorities, is entrusted with supervising sports entities to verify their compliance with the Sports Law, its implementing regulations, licensing requirements, governance standards, and other applicable legal obligations.

This supervisory role extends to sports federations, clubs, leagues, sports companies, educational institutions, sports centers, academies, and every entity operating under the regulatory framework established by the Law.

Effective inspection contributes directly to institutional transparency.

It enables regulators to assess governance practices, financial management, administrative procedures, athlete welfare, licensing compliance, and the implementation of regulatory obligations before irregularities develop into more serious legal violations.

In this respect, inspection should be viewed as a partnership between regulators and sports entities rather than an adversarial process.

Both share the common objective of strengthening institutional performance and safeguarding public confidence.

The Law therefore encourages sports organizations to maintain accurate records, transparent financial systems, effective internal controls, and comprehensive documentation capable of demonstrating compliance with their legal obligations.

Well-prepared organizations should regard inspection as an opportunity to demonstrate sound governance rather than a source of concern.

An equally important aspect of regulatory oversight concerns licensing.

Sports entities must continuously satisfy the conditions upon which their licenses have been granted.

Compliance is therefore an ongoing obligation rather than a one-time administrative requirement.

Where deficiencies are identified, the competent authority may require corrective measures within specified periods before considering further regulatory action.

This graduated approach reflects internationally recognized principles of proportionality and administrative fairness.

Corrective action should ordinarily precede punitive measures where compliance can reasonably be restored. However, where serious breaches occur or corrective measures are ignored, the competent authorities retain the power to adopt appropriate enforcement action in accordance with the Law.

The inspection framework also strengthens investor confidence.

Commercial partners, sponsors, broadcasters, financial institutions, and international governing bodies are increasingly attracted to jurisdictions that demonstrate effective regulatory oversight and institutional accountability.

Transparent supervision reduces legal uncertainty and reinforces confidence in the stability of the regulatory environment.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore recognizes that inspection serves not only legal objectives but also important economic functions.

Strong regulatory oversight supports sustainable investment, enhances commercial credibility, and contributes directly to the Kingdom's ambition of becoming one of the world's leading sports destinations.

Inspection also promotes equality before the law.

Every sports entity, regardless of its size, financial resources, or sporting achievements, remains subject to the same legal standards and regulatory obligations.

Consistent enforcement strengthens public trust and reinforces the principle that no institution stands above the law.

As Saudi Arabia's sports industry continues to expand, effective regulatory oversight will become increasingly important.

New forms of investment, sophisticated commercial structures, international partnerships, and complex contractual relationships all require equally sophisticated regulatory supervision.

The Saudi Sports Law provides the legal foundation necessary to meet these challenges.

Ultimately, inspection is not an end in itself.

Its true purpose is to strengthen governance, improve institutional performance, encourage voluntary compliance, and preserve the integrity of Saudi sport.

When properly implemented, regulatory oversight becomes one of the most valuable tools for ensuring that the objectives of the Sports Law are translated into practical reality.

**THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW**  
**Article 18 of 20**  
**The Saudi Sports Arbitration Tribunal**  
**Originally published in Arabic on 10 May 2026**

One of the most significant institutional innovations introduced by the Saudi Sports Law is the establishment of a specialized judicial framework dedicated to resolving sports disputes. As the Kingdom's sports sector continues its rapid transformation, the volume and complexity of legal disputes arising from sporting activities have increased correspondingly. Modern sport requires a dispute resolution system that is both legally robust and sufficiently specialized to address the unique characteristics of the sports industry. Recognizing this need, the Saudi Sports Law provides for the establishment of the Saudi Sports Arbitration Tribunal, a specialized and independent institution entrusted with the resolution of sports-related disputes in accordance with the provisions of the Law and its implementing regulations.



The establishment of a specialized sports tribunal represents a natural progression in the evolution of Saudi Arabia's sports legal framework.

Traditional judicial proceedings, while essential to the administration of justice, are not always best suited to disputes arising within the sporting context. Matters such as player eligibility, disciplinary sanctions, contractual disputes, transfer regulations, competition administration, election disputes, governance matters, and commercial sports agreements frequently require urgent determination by decision-makers possessing both legal expertise and a thorough understanding of sports regulations.

A specialized tribunal provides precisely that expertise.

Its jurisdiction extends to disputes arising under the Sports Law, the regulations issued pursuant to it, the constitutions and regulations of sports entities, and contractual relationships concluded within the sports sector where arbitration has been agreed by the parties or prescribed by law.

The Tribunal therefore becomes an essential pillar of the Kingdom's sports governance framework.

Its purpose extends beyond dispute resolution.

By issuing consistent, well-reasoned decisions grounded in legal principles and sporting regulations, the Tribunal contributes to the development of a coherent body of Saudi sports jurisprudence.

Over time, this jurisprudence will provide valuable guidance to sports entities, athletes, lawyers, arbitrators, regulators, and investors, enhancing legal certainty throughout the sector.

The effectiveness of any arbitral institution depends fundamentally upon its independence.

Arbitrators must exercise their functions impartially, free from external influence, conflicts of interest, or institutional pressure.

Every party appearing before the Tribunal must be assured that disputes will be determined solely on the basis of the law, the evidence, and the applicable sporting regulations.

The Sports Law therefore reinforces the fundamental principles of procedural fairness, equality of arms, and due process.

Parties must have a meaningful opportunity to present their arguments, challenge evidence, respond to the opposing case, and receive reasoned decisions capable of independent scrutiny.

These safeguards are indispensable to maintaining confidence in sports arbitration.

Another important feature of the Tribunal is its contribution to commercial certainty.

Professional sport increasingly involves complex contractual arrangements concerning sponsorship, broadcasting rights, media rights, image rights, merchandising, investment, employment, and commercial partnerships.

Businesses entering the Saudi sports market require confidence that disputes can be resolved efficiently, confidentially where appropriate, and by decision-makers with specialist expertise.

The Tribunal provides precisely such a mechanism.

Its existence therefore strengthens Saudi Arabia's attractiveness as a destination for international sporting investment and commercial partnerships.

The Tribunal also plays an educational role within the legal profession.

As its jurisprudence develops, lawyers, judges, arbitrators, academics, and students will benefit from a growing body of specialized legal principles capable of advancing sports law as a distinct discipline within Saudi jurisprudence.

This development is entirely consistent with international practice.

Leading sports jurisdictions have long recognized that specialized sports dispute resolution contributes significantly to governance, regulatory consistency, investor confidence, and institutional credibility.

By establishing the Saudi Sports Arbitration Tribunal, the Kingdom joins this international movement while developing a dispute resolution system tailored to its own legal framework and national priorities.

Ultimately, the success of the Tribunal will not be measured solely by the number of disputes it resolves.

Its lasting contribution will lie in strengthening confidence in Saudi sports justice, promoting legal certainty, encouraging good governance, and supporting the continued growth of one of the world's most dynamic sports sectors.

The Saudi Sports Arbitration Tribunal therefore stands as one of the cornerstones of the Kingdom's new sports legal order, ensuring that justice remains an integral component of Saudi Arabia's sporting transformation under Vision 2030.

THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW  
Article 19 of 20  
Sports Governance and Regulatory Compliance  
Originally published in Arabic on 17 May 2026

The enactment of the Saudi Sports Law represents far more than a legislative reform of the Kingdom's sports sector. It marks the transition from a traditional administrative model to a modern governance framework founded upon transparency, accountability, regulatory compliance, and institutional excellence.

Governance has become one of the defining characteristics of successful sports organizations worldwide.

It is no longer sufficient for sports entities merely to achieve sporting success. They must also demonstrate sound decision-making, financial responsibility, ethical leadership, effective risk management, and compliance with the legal and regulatory framework governing their activities.

The Saudi Sports Law embraces this contemporary philosophy by placing governance at the center of every sports institution operating within the Kingdom.

Good governance begins with clearly defined institutional responsibilities.

Every board of directors, executive committee, senior executive, and administrative official must understand the scope of their legal authority and exercise that authority responsibly, transparently, and in the best interests of the organization they serve.

Authority without accountability undermines institutional confidence.

Conversely, accountability strengthens legitimacy, protects stakeholders, and enhances public trust.

For this reason, the Law requires sports entities to adopt governance structures capable of ensuring effective oversight, objective decision-making, and proper separation between supervisory and executive responsibilities.

Transparency is equally fundamental.

Sports organizations must maintain accurate financial records, adopt clear administrative procedures, preserve reliable documentation, and disclose information where required by law or regulation.

Transparent institutions inspire confidence among athletes, supporters, sponsors, commercial partners, regulators, and investors.

Regulatory compliance represents another cornerstone of modern governance.

Compliance should not be viewed merely as adherence to legal requirements following regulatory inspection.

Instead, it should form part of an organization's internal culture.

Every decision, policy, contract, and operational activity should be assessed in light of the legal obligations established by the Sports Law, its implementing regulations, and the applicable rules issued by the competent sports authorities.

Effective compliance requires structured governance systems.

Sports organizations should establish internal compliance programs, legal advisory functions, conflict-of-interest policies, codes of ethics, whistleblowing procedures, internal audit mechanisms, and risk management frameworks.

These measures reduce institutional exposure to legal risk while promoting responsible decision-making at every level of the organization.

Risk management has become particularly important.

The rapid commercialization of sport introduces increasingly complex legal, financial, operational, technological, and reputational risks.

Organizations that fail to identify and manage these risks may expose themselves to regulatory action, financial loss, contractual disputes, and reputational damage.

Accordingly, proactive governance should always anticipate legal risk rather than merely respond to legal disputes after they arise.

An equally important aspect of governance concerns ethical leadership.

Integrity must guide every decision taken by sports organizations.

Leaders should avoid conflicts of interest, exercise their powers honestly, respect equality and fairness, and place the long-term interests of their institutions above personal considerations.

Ethical leadership remains one of the strongest indicators of institutional maturity.

The Saudi Sports Law therefore seeks to establish not only legal compliance but also a culture of responsible governance.

This cultural transformation is essential to achieving the broader objectives of Vision 2030.

International investors, commercial partners, international sports federations, and global sporting organizations increasingly evaluate governance standards before entering strategic partnerships.

Strong governance has therefore become a competitive advantage.

Institutions demonstrating transparency, accountability, compliance, and effective leadership are more likely to attract investment, sponsorship, commercial cooperation, and international recognition.

The Kingdom's ambitious sports transformation depends not only upon world-class infrastructure and international competitions but equally upon institutions capable of managing those opportunities responsibly.

The Saudi Sports Law provides the legal framework necessary to build such institutions.

Ultimately, governance is not an administrative burden.

It is a strategic asset.

When properly implemented, governance protects institutions, enhances decision-making, reduces legal risk, strengthens public confidence, and contributes directly to sustainable sporting success.

The Saudi Sports Law recognizes this reality and places governance at the heart of the Kingdom's sporting future.

## THE NEW SAUDI SPORTS LAW

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#### The Future of Saudi Sports Law

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The promulgation of the Saudi Sports Law marks the beginning—not the conclusion—of a new era for sport in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Legislation, regardless of its quality, cannot by itself transform an industry. Its true value lies in its implementation, interpretation, and continuous development in response to changing economic, social, and technological realities. The success of the Saudi Sports Law will therefore depend upon the commitment of every stakeholder to uphold both its letter and its spirit.

The Kingdom has embarked upon one of the most ambitious sports transformation programs in the world. Driven by Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has repositioned sport as a strategic sector that contributes to economic diversification, public health, tourism, entertainment, education, foreign investment, and international engagement. This transformation requires a legal framework capable of supporting sustainable growth while safeguarding integrity, governance, and public confidence.

The Saudi Sports Law provides that foundation.

For the first time, the Kingdom possesses a comprehensive legislative framework governing every principal component of the sports ecosystem, including sports entities, athletes, coaches, referees, agents, competitions, investment, governance, licensing, disciplinary procedures, dispute resolution, inspection, and regulatory oversight.

This integrated approach reflects the maturity of the Kingdom's legislative vision.

Rather than regulating isolated aspects of sport, the Law establishes a coherent legal system designed to support the continued evolution of the sector as one of the Kingdom's most dynamic economic and social industries.

Nevertheless, legislation must remain responsive to future developments.

The global sports industry continues to evolve rapidly.

Artificial intelligence, digital broadcasting, esports, sports technology, data governance, athlete image rights, cryptocurrency sponsorship, environmental sustainability, and emerging forms of commercial investment are transforming the legal landscape of international sport.

Saudi Arabia must therefore continue reviewing and refining its regulatory framework to ensure that it

remains aligned with international best practice while responding to national priorities.

This is the hallmark of successful legislation.

Modern laws are not static instruments; they evolve alongside the societies and industries they regulate.

The implementing regulations issued under the Sports Law will play an essential role in maintaining this flexibility, allowing the legal framework to adapt to practical experience and future developments without compromising legislative certainty.

Equally important is the development of specialized legal expertise.

The implementation of the Sports Law will generate increasing demand for lawyers, arbitrators, judges, governance specialists, compliance professionals, academics, and regulatory experts with advanced knowledge of sports law.

Universities, professional organizations, and legal institutions should therefore invest in specialized education and professional training capable of preparing the next generation of Saudi sports law practitioners.

This represents a unique opportunity.

Saudi Arabia has the potential not only to become a global leader in sport but also to emerge as a regional and international center of excellence in sports law, sports arbitration, governance, and sports regulation.

The Kingdom's strategic location, ambitious investment program, and expanding international partnerships place it in an exceptional position to influence the future development of sports law throughout the Middle East and beyond.

International cooperation will remain equally important.

The continued exchange of legal knowledge with international sports federations, arbitral institutions, universities, and professional associations will strengthen Saudi Arabia's legal framework while enabling the Kingdom to contribute actively to the development of global sports jurisprudence.

The Saudi Sports Law should therefore be viewed as the beginning of an ongoing legal dialogue rather than a completed legislative project.

Its principles will continue to develop through judicial interpretation, arbitral awards, implementing regulations, institutional practice, academic research, and practical experience.

This is how enduring legal systems evolve.

Ultimately, the greatest achievement of the Saudi Sports Law will not be measured by the number of regulations issued or disputes resolved.

Its true legacy will be reflected in the institutions it strengthens, the confidence it inspires, the investment it attracts, the athletes it protects, and the opportunities it creates for future generations.

The Law establishes far more than a legal framework for sport.

It provides a legislative foundation for one of the most ambitious national transformation programs of the twenty-first century.

As Saudi Arabia continues its remarkable sporting journey under Vision 2030, the Saudi Sports Law will remain the legal cornerstone upon which that future is built promoting governance, protecting rights, encouraging investment, strengthening institutions, and ensuring that the Kingdom's sporting ambitions are supported by a modern, transparent, and internationally respected legal system.

The future of Saudi sport will be determined not only by success on the field of play but by the strength of the legal institutions that sustain it.

The Saudi Sports Law has laid that foundation.

Its future now belongs to those entrusted with its implementation.

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