

## Germany's 50+1 Ownership



### 1) Discussion

- a) Do you watch a lot of German football? Who are your favourite teams?
  - b) Who owns your favourite football club? Are they good owners?
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### 2) Vocabulary

#### a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

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|------------------------|---|
| 1) Realm (noun)        | a) To exist or happen before something else.        |
| 2) To Exert (verb)     | b) Allowed to not do something that others must do. |
| 3) Rooted (adjective)  | c) Strong, healthy, or sturdy.                      |
| 4) Lenient (adjective) | d) Firmly connected or deeply established.          |
| 5) Exemption (noun)    | e) Not strict; allowing freedom or flexibility.     |
| 6) To predate (verb)   | f) A place or area where something happens.         |
| 7) Robust (adjective)  | g) To make an effort or use energy to do something. |
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**b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.**

Realm

To Exert

Rooted

Lenient

Exemption

To Predate

Robust

- 1) The history of AC Milan \_\_\_\_\_ the establishment of many Italian football clubs in the early 20th century.
- 2) Despite recent controversies, Manchester City received an \_\_\_\_\_ allowing them to compete in the Champions League.
- 3) In the \_\_\_\_\_ of European football, Bayern Munich reigns as one of the most dominant clubs.
- 4) Some referees are known for being more \_\_\_\_\_ than others, allowing for tough tackles and challenges during a game.
- 5) During his time at Manchester United, Sir Alex Ferguson \_\_\_\_\_ his influence on his club and the league.
- 6) Some critics argue that UEFA's Financial Fair Play rules are not \_\_\_\_\_ enough, allowing clubs like PSG to spend excessively.
- 7) Liverpool FC is \_\_\_\_\_ in its traditions of attacking football and passionate fan support.



### 3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

a) What is German Football's 50+1 ownership rule?

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#### **Germany's 50+1 Rule**

In the realm of European football, Germany stands out not only for its passionate fan culture and competitive leagues but also for its unique ownership model known as the 50+1 rule.

The 50+1 rule requires that a club's members (supporters) must retain majority control, meaning they own more than 50% of the voting rights. This effectively prevents external investors or corporations from exerting complete dominance over a club's decisions, including transfers, ticket pricing, and other strategic choices.

One of the key benefits of the 50+1 rule is its preservation of club identity and fan involvement. Clubs remain rooted in their communities, fostering a deep bond between supporters and their teams. This has contributed to sustainable financial practices and more stable governance structures compared to clubs in other European leagues that rely heavily on external investment.

However, the rule also has its drawbacks. Critics argue that it limits the financial competitiveness of German clubs in European competitions, where clubs from leagues with more lenient ownership rules often outspend them. This financial restraint can make it challenging for German clubs to retain top talent or compete for high-profile transfers.

While the 50+1 rule is generally strict, there are exceptions. Clubs can apply for exemptions that allow external investors to hold a majority stake under certain conditions. For instance, VfL Wolfsburg and Bayer Leverkusen are exceptions due to historical ties with Volkswagen and Bayer, respectively. This exception recognizes long-standing financial support that predates the introduction of the rule.



The 50+1 rule is deeply ingrained in the fabric of German football culture. It has fostered competitive balance within the Bundesliga, where even smaller clubs can challenge larger ones due to more equitable distribution of power and resources. This has led to a robust league structure with a reputation for exciting, unpredictable matches and strong fan engagement.

In conclusion, while the 50+1 rule may pose challenges in terms of financial competitiveness on the European stage, its benefits in preserving club identity, fostering community ties, and maintaining sustainable football operations cannot be overstated. It stands as a testament to Germany's commitment to maintaining football as a sport for the people, by the people, ensuring that clubs remain rooted in their communities for generations to come.

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#### **4) Discussion**

- a) What do you think about Germany's 50+1 ownership model? Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
- b) Do you think it stops some German clubs from competing with other European sides?
- c) Do you think the model would benefit other leagues?
- d) Do you think fans should have more influence in their clubs?

