A Middle Eastern Showcase: Qatar’s 2022 World Cup

Taylor Imeson, Mousslimatou Mbacke, and Jess Dixon
University of Windsor

“Welcome Junior Ethics Committee Member”

You walk through the large doors of a distinctive glass structure in Zurich, Switzerland. Inside, men and women dressed in sharp business attire are walking around in every direction, their hands occupied with suitcases, smartphones, or paper documents embossed with a logo you know all too well. None of these sights have sunk in yet until you look up and see a giant blue banner emblazoned with the organization’s logo and motto, “For the Game. For the World.” You realize how fortunate you are to have become a member of the Junior Ethics Committee at one of the world’s most powerful sport governing bodies. Welcome to Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) headquarters.

Each year, FIFA’s Ethics Committee sorts through thousands of applications to find six highly qualified individuals who will make up the Junior Ethics Committee. The chosen individuals will work under the organization’s Investigatory Chamber members. These members are responsible for investigating cases and issues that affect FIFA on an executive and association level. Once the six junior members have been selected, they are randomly assigned to an Investigatory Chamber member (see Appendix A).

You have been selected as one of the six Junior Ethics Committee members who will have the privilege of being a part of FIFA’s Investigatory Chamber. Specifically, you will be working with Mr. Ahmad Yahya, a member from Mauritania. Besides executing various administrative tasks assigned to you by Mr. Yahya, you will also be expected to attend several meetings organized by the Ethics Committee. If Mr. Yahya is absent for one of the meetings, you will be expected to represent him, take minutes on his behalf, and update him once the session concludes.

During the orientation session, junior members are personally welcomed to FIFA by its acting president, Issa Hayatou, and given a tour of FIFA headquarters. Some of the perks that come with working at FIFA include free access to the headquarters’ fitness center, meditation room, and international food court with meals prepared by top chefs. In addition, trips to Switzerland’s top tourist attractions and sport venues are organized every other weekend. In sum, you are currently living an enviable lifestyle.

One reason why some individuals may not envy you is because you entered FIFA at a very tumultuous time in the organization’s history. The eyes of almost every football fan and critic are on FIFA because the organization is embroiled in multiple scandals relating to Qatar’s winning the rights to host the 2022 World Cup and the bidding process leading up to it.

Today is November 20, 2014, and the meeting with the Ethics Committee is conducted a little differently than usual. Chairmen of the committee, Michael Garcia and Hans-Joachim Eckert, want to put the junior members’ investigatory skills to the test. They propose that the Junior Ethics Committee analyze the information that will be provided to them regarding the Qatar 2022 World Cup and make the most ethical decision based on their findings. Each junior member is to work alone throughout the entirety of this assignment. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Eckert advise you to make a decision that is ethical and effective, considering the amount of time that remains before the 2022 World Cup begins. The time allocated for this assignment is 2 wk, and each junior member must present his or her findings to the Ethics Committee in a written report.

The authors are with the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Address author correspondence to Taylor Imeson at imeson@uwindsor.ca.
Opening Half: What Is FIFA?

History of FIFA

FIFA was founded in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1904. The organization governs 209 member associations, ensuring the “constant improvement of football” across the globe (FIFA, 2014e). The Congress, Executive Committee, General Secretariat, and several other committees make up FIFA’s organizational structure (FIFA, 2014e).

Initially, the founding of the International Football Federation in 1863 was to recognize European national federations. It was not until 1904 that FIFA was formed and established as an umbrella that would govern all willing national organizations. Rules and standards were developed to govern all national organizations fairly and consistently, which led to the establishment of the Laws of the Game of the Football Association Ltd. (FIFA, 2014b).

Mission, Vision, Values

The overall mission of FIFA is to build a better future for all through football. The organization strives to achieve this by following three main pillars:

- Developing football everywhere and for all
- Organizing inspiring tournaments
- Caring about society and the environment (FIFA, 2014d)

History of the FIFA World Cup Football Tournament

Before the establishment of FIFA, some of the national football associations had been planning to host their own international football tournaments. These football associations would eventually be recognized by the organization. When FIFA was created in 1904, it was decided that an international tournament would be the responsibility of the international organization (FIFA, 2014b). After seeing the success of the Olympic football tournament, FIFA decided that it was time to host its own international football competition. In May 1928, the decision was made to plan and host a tournament in 1930, with Uruguay being selected as the first host nation. The first World Cup faced some hardship because only 13 national teams decided to participate. However, fans were excited, and both FIFA and Uruguay experienced great financial gains. The next World Cup in 1934 saw the establishment of qualifying rounds and the format of the tournament that is played today (FIFA, 2014a).

Second Half: A Historic Win for Qatar

On December 10, 2010, Qatar was awarded the rights to host the 2022 World Cup, making the emirate the first Middle Eastern country to host the event. The Qatari bid committee beat out strong competitors, including the United States, Australia, South Korea, and Japan (Jackson, 2010).

The State of Qatar is located in the western part of the Middle East. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are to its west, and the United Arab Emirates is to its south. The population of the state is about 1.68 million people, with most of the inhabitants living in the capital, Doha (“About,” n.d.). The country is home to a diverse group of people from more than 100 different countries who are employed in various sectors of Qatar’s economy. The official language is Arabic; however, English is spoken widely among the inhabitants (FIFA, 2010a). Qatar is run by His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the head of state, as a constitutional monarchy (FIFA, 2010b). Qatar has a gross domestic product per capita of $91,379, making it the wealthiest nation in the world. The country’s petroleum industry accounts for 85% of its export earnings and 60% of its gross domestic product (McMullan, 2014).

The Qatari bid committee included several powerful individuals. The chairman of the committee, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, is the son of the former emir of Qatar. The chief executive officer, Hassan Al-Thawadi is currently the director of the Legal Department at the Qatar Investment Authority. The president of the Qatar Football Association, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, is a member of the board of directors for the Supreme Committee of Qatar 2022. Another key member of the bid committee was Englishman Mike Lee, who helped London...