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## FOREWORD

Football – the world’s favourite game – is facing a number of problems and challenges: resulting mainly from the fact that the ‘beautiful game’ is the world’s most lucrative sport. As such, considerable fortunes are being made not only on but also off the field of play. Not least in relation to the transfer of players from one club to another in which, at the international level, mega sums are regularly paid for high profile players. Most of these transfers are handled by football agents, many of whom, over the years, have not only become millionaires but, in the process, have also gained a bad reputation, bringing their profession and also football itself into disrepute.

In this book – another first for the T.M.C. Asser Institute in the arena of International Sports Law – the legal provisions at the national and international levels governing players’ agents in forty countries around the world are explained and compared. Basic issues such as what are player’s agents, why and how should they be regulated are addressed. Whilst there is little doubt amongst football clubs and governing bodies that players’ agents should be regulated, the issue of regulation in any sport is always a delicate one. Over-regulation can do as much harm as under-regulation: it is always a matter of degree and striking the right balance between the two. However, it is generally agreed that certain minimum norms and standards of behaviour by player’s agents must be met to protect the integrity of football and all those with a stake and interest in its future, including players, clubs and fans alike. In particular, the problem of dual representation - that is, where, for example, an agent acts both for the player and the club or both clubs involved in the transfer - is a particular concern and is well covered in this book. Attempts to circumvent this unfair practice should also be outlawed and thereby more transparency introduced.

The contributors to this book are all acknowledged experts in the field of players’ agents and the Publisher and the Editors are to be congratulated on producing a useful, informative and timely book. One, which, I am sure, will quickly establish itself as a welcome and valuable addition to the growing literature on the evolving and fascinating subject of International Sports Law.

It is a book, therefore, that I can unhesitatingly recommend to all those for whom football, like the legendary Liverpool Football Club Manager, Bill Shankly, is not a matter of life and death, but very much more important than that!

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\* Prof. Roger Blanpain is one of the founders and the first President (1965-1975) of the Fédération Internationale des Footballeurs Professionnels (FIFPro), that was established on 15 December 1965.