

The Nottingham Conference: Fighting Racism and Creating Gender Equity in European Football

January 30th- February 1st, 2024

Nottingham Forest Conference on Racial and Gender Equity and Fandom: Convened by the Global Sports Initiative at the Weatherhead Center at Harvard University, Lilian Thuram and the Lilian Thuram Foundation and Sponsored by Nottingham Forest Football Club

The expansion of football/soccer has coincided with an increase in the different types of people who play the game. Women and Players of Color now occupy a very prominent position in the sport. Increased diversity has been received with enthusiasm by many, while others have been less receptive to inclusivity. Part of the challenge of diversity is understanding the different stakeholders in the sport and how they understand questions of inclusion. Clearly, one important stakeholder group are the players and another group are the fans, in particular, younger people and others who represent future fans and consumers. Their cultural attitudes, their politics and their expectations will play a major role in which clubs and organizations receive support and which do not.

To address questions of equity, the Global Sports Initiative at Harvard University, Lilian Thuram and the Lilian Thuram Foundation will convene a three-day conference with Nottingham Forest Football Club to address questions of racial and gender equity in European football. The conference will feature four-sessions on each day and will include a variety of practitioners and scholars.

During the sessions, the conference will bring together some of the most famous former Players of Color, such as Lilian Thuram, Thierry Henry, Christian Karembeu and Clarence Seedorf and other allies such as Robert Pires to discuss ways to confront racism, to learn about athlete advocacy and to affect change in this area. This gathering represents the first undertaking of this kind. We will also have a Hollywood director, Kyndra Kennedy, film the players on what racism has done to them. The film will serve as powerful evidence of the conference's anti-racism platform and will be distributed as a documentary film at some point.

The third day of the conference will be dedicated to understanding the history, the growth and the challenges of women's football. These sessions will bring together scholars, players, industry people and supporters to present research, to discuss experiences and to provide suggestions on how to move forward. Emphasis will be on what are the best practices for different stakeholder groups and on how different interests can more effectively work together.

Schedule

January 30th: Ceremony at the Stadium to Honor Former Players Fight against Racism with the Club Owners

Lilian Thuram, Thierry Henry, Robert Pires, Olivier Dacourt, Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf, Christian Karembeu, Claude Makelele, Paul Elliott, Viv Anderson, Gareth Farrelly, (Tentative Ian Wright, Rio Ferdinand)

January 31st: Fighting Racism, Empowering Players and Fans

8:45 AM Introduction Professor Stephen Ortega, Global Sports Initiative, Harvard University, Tentative Professor Sven Beckert, Global History Initiative, Weatherhead Center, Harvard University

9:00 AM Assessing the State of the Problem: Understanding the Range of Issues Involved

Moderator: Professor Daren Graves, Simmons University and Harvard University

Panelists: Professors Paul Campbell Loughborough University, James Esson, Queen Mary's, University of London, Friso Roscam-Abbing, Adviser on Communication & Spokesperson at European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Presilia Mpanu-Mpanu, Human Rights, UEFA, Anwar Uddin, FA England, Paul Elliott, FA, EDI advisor, Professor David Murphy, Strathclyde University (Translator, Lilian Thuram)

10:30 AM Athlete Activism and Fighting Racism: A Workshop for Former Players

Moderator: David Harris, Harvard Law School

Panelists: Professors Carl Suddler, Emory University, Hasan Jeffries, Ohio State University, Jeffrey Gonda, Syracuse University, Justin Morrow, Founder Black Players for Change, USC Equity Director, Kyndra Kennedy, Hollywood Filmmaker

Players to join: (See above) Lilian Thuram, Thierry Henry, Olivier Dacourt, Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf, Christian Karembeu, Robert Pires, Gareth Farrelly, Claude Makelele

12:30-1:45 PM: Lunch

2:00 PM Supporters Groups and Their Role in Challenging Racism

Moderator: Professor Stephen Ortega, Global Sports Initiative

Professor Mark Doidge, Loughborough University, Anika Leslie Walker, Nottingham-Trent, Fans Supporters Europe, Nilesh Chauhan, Director, Fans for Diversity Campaign, Nottingham Forest Supporters Group, Daniel Regev, Tel Aviv University

3:30 PM: Wrap Up Big Picture

Michelle Uva, UEFA, Salil Shetty, Open Society, Former Secretary General, Amnesty International, Harvard University Fellow, Lorna Lennon, Marketing Executive, Paris France,

Professor Paul Campbell, Loughborough University, Lilian Thuram, Professor Richard Giulianotti, UNESCO Chair Loughborough University, Kyndra Kennedy, Hollywood Filmmaker, Tentative Toby Lelliott Advocacy Director, Kerry Washington Organization

4:15 PM: Film Session with Players: What Racism Did to Me. Kyndra Kennedy, Hollywood Filmmaker

7:00 PM Keynote Dinner

February 1st: Looking for Gender Equity: Understanding the Women's Game

9:00 AM: State of the Women's Game

Moderator: Tamar Rappaport, Hebrew University

Research Panel: Nathan Goldberg & Saara Hassoun, FC Gotham, GSI Fellows, Anika Leslie-Walker, Nottingham-Trent University, Kat Craig, Lawyer, Sports and Human Rights, Dr. Martha Saavedra, UC Berkeley

10:30 AM Professional Group on Elevating Women's Football

Moderator Professor Martha Saavedra, University of California Berkeley

Sabrina Carrozza, PR Consultant, FC Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Serie A, Cristian Martin Vidal, Representative (Aitana Bonmati and other top footballers), Suzy Wrack, Guardian Journalist, Carly Davies, Nottingham Women's Team Coach, Heidi Beha, FIFA, Bex Smith, Founder, CEO Crux Sports, Former player

12:30-1:45 PM Lunch

2:00 PM: Women's Fan Groups: What Do Fans Think Needs to be Done?

Moderator: Mark Doidge

Professor Anika Leslie-Walker, Nottingham-Trent University, Debs Dilsworth, Fan Supporters Association, Nottingham Forest Fans Group, Amanda Jacks, Supporter Engagement, Liverpool Football Club

3:30 PM: Wrap-up, Big Picture: Dr. Martha Saavedra, UC Berkeley, Tamar Rapaport, Hebrew University, Alison Carney, Gender Equity Consultant, Donna Newberry, Coach and Video and Data Analysis,

Parting Goodbye: Stephen Ortega, Global Sports Initiative, Harvard University

