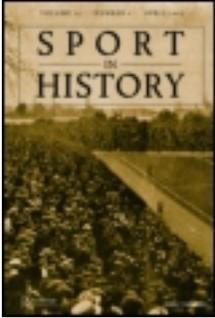


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A Competition that Shook European Football: The Origins of the European Champion Clubs' Cup, 1954–1955

Philippe Vonnard*

This article examines the establishment of the men's football European Champion Clubs' Cup in the mid-1950s. Its aim is to explain the reasons which led to the realization of this contest at this time in the sport's history. The creation of the competition was the result of the daily newspaper L'Équipe's undertakings. Its financial capacity, its experience in developing competitions and the ties it maintained with important figures in the field of football equipped the newspaper with the assets to foster a keen interest around the project and thus capitalize on a context in European football that was particularly favourable to the creation of this contest. This study was conducted based on the reading of the issues of L'Équipe and France Football from that time period, on unprecedented research in the archives of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), complemented with documentation obtained from the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA). In addition, this research benefited from a long interview conducted with Jacques Ferran, a journalist who participated directly in the development of the project.

Introduction

At the beginning of 1950s, an important number of competitions heightened the already significant popularity of European football and led to the creation of key structures which enabled it to establish its

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supremacy in international football. Among these competitions, the European Champion Clubs' Cup – an unprecedented tournament between clubs from across Europe – had a significant role in this process.

The idea of this competition was suggested on 15 December 1955 by French journalist Gabriel Hanot and came into being nine months later with the match between Sporting Lisbon and Partizan Belgrade. This swift fulfilment was mainly due to the efforts of the competition's main proponents, the French daily newspaper *L'Équipe's* football journalists who generated strong support for the proposal.

Although the inception of the Champions' Cup has already been discussed by journalists such as John Motson and John Rowlinson¹ and Jacques Ferran² – who was himself directly involved in the process – none of them have expressly addressed the reasons for its creation at that particular point in history. In 2007 the sociologist Gilles Montéréal³ provided a more detailed analysis in his study of *L'Équipe's* role in setting up sports competitions, and shed some light on the journalists' motivations for launching the competition. The political scientist Jürgen Mittag⁴ was undoubtedly first to place the creation of the event within the broader context of the development of football in Europe. In his article, which traces a brief history of European Cups between the 1920s and the 1990s, he underscored the economic importance of the Champions' Cup for clubs. In 2010, in his excellent history of the game, the historian Paul Dietschy⁵ also highlighted the transformations football underwent from an economic perspective as well as in terms of media coverage during the 1950s.

This article specifically examines the reasons for the emergence of this competition at this point in time. Using a socio-historical perspective,⁶ it brings to light how the particular conditions of one newspaper (its extensive network of foreign correspondents, the financial capacity to undertake the project and the desire of its journalists to contribute to the development of the game) and favourable circumstances combined to give rise to one of football's major contests. It argues that both the role of the actors who promoted the project and a number of key transformations in European football during the 1950s were the critical factors that rapidly made the Champions' Cup's a highly successful formula.

The first part of the article explains what made the context of the 1950s propitious to the creation of a continent-wide competition as well as why *L'Équipe* had both the capacity and the incentives to embark on this venture. The second part focuses on the sequence of events from the first draft of the project in February 1954 to its fulfilment in September 1955.

The study is based on the contents of *L'Équipe* and of the weekly journal *France Football* between December 1954 and September 1955. It was augmented by an analysis of the minutes of the FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football-Association*) emergency committee, which produced several rulings concerning the competition. It was in fact in FIFA's archives where the initial versions of the project were discovered. In addition, this study used documentation from the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) archives. The case of the Champions' Cup was indeed addressed several times by the organization, namely during its executive committee meetings as well as during its 1955 General Assembly. These materials were complemented with documents from the former East German Federation's archives in Berlin and the French Football Federation in Paris. An interview conducted in June 2011 with Jacques Ferran and various texts he and his then-colleagues had written during the establishment of the competition complete the body of research materials. These new materials provide fresh insights on the journalists' project as well as on UEFA's takeover of the contest.

Towards a European Cup

Although European competitions had already appeared during the inter-war period,⁷ it was only in the 1950s, with the structure of European football entering a new phase and becoming more professionalized, that Europe witnessed the lasting establishment of continent-wide competitions. This was no doubt sensed by several journalists of *L'Équipe*, who saw a chance to kindle the idea of European club competition. In the words of Jacques Goddet, head of the journal, 'the time was ripe to look for new formulas, better adapted to football's accelerated growth'.⁸ This section examines these major transformations which proved so crucial in generating favourable conditions for the creation of the Champions' Cup, namely the gradual move towards more professionalized structures and the founding of UEFA.

Professionalization

Although differences did exist from one country to another, a general tendency towards the recognition of the football player's occupation as a job in its own right was increasing. Professionalism was not in fact new, since between the two world wars a number of national associations had legalized this practice.⁹ However, as was demonstrated in the case of France by Alfred Wahl and Pierre Lanfranchi – and can be extended to several other European countries – footballers' status at the time was

closer to semi-professional.¹⁰ Basically, apart from players taking part in the Italian championship, the top players from the English and Scottish championship and the Danube Basin region championships (Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia), footballers did not live solely off the game and typically had other jobs. In this regard, the status of Real Madrid goalkeeper Ricardo Zamora was an exception.¹¹

This situation began to change between 1940 and 1970. The Dutch authorities, who until then had been opposed to the professionalization of sports, began tolerating such practices around 1955,¹² and the Swiss Football Association, which had banned professional players in the early 1940s,¹³ once again became more liberal at the end of the 1950s.¹⁴ In Germany, the best players were already earning relatively high salaries in this decade, and the professional championship, the Bundesliga, was born in 1963.¹⁵ In Portugal, the Lisbon clubs, Benfica and Sporting, were raising the league's level of play,¹⁶ while in Spain, Franco's regime encouraged the development of high-level football.¹⁷ In France, the status of footballers began to improve.¹⁸ In East European countries, professional sports were officially not tolerated, but in reality, elite players practised in conditions close to those of their West European counterparts and benefited from a number of financial and in-kind privileges.¹⁹ In fact, during this period, only the Nordic countries' officials maintained a very conservative standpoint regarding the professionalization of the game.²⁰ Furthermore, players' and coaches' salaries increased considerably in Italy²¹ and in England, where according to Matthew Taylor, football could be considered 'good work'.²²

The expansion of professional practices increased the players' availability, enabling clubs to more easily organize friendly games during the week. But more importantly, it had repercussions for their finances, and in response to their increasing payrolls, teams began touring foreign countries. This search for additional income was not a clear break, but rather the continuation of a process set in motion between the two world wars in countries where football structures were most advanced, such as Austria, Italy or Hungary. According to Jürgen Mittag,²³ this was one of the main reasons for the creation of a supranational club competition among these countries: the Mitropa Cup.²⁴

The creation of UEFA

The creation of a governing body of football in Europe, UEFA, provided new conditions and possibilities for setting up a continental competition. To understand the reasons behind the foundation of UEFA, we must first

turn to institutional changes at FIFA.²⁵ An extraordinary congress held in November 1953 in Paris decided that the vice-president and executive committee members (the number of which was increased and now included seats for Africa and Asia) were to be elected by continental bodies.²⁶ One of the consequences of this disposition was to impel the European associations to form a group.

However, the actual prerogatives of this cohort remained to be defined. Was it to be a simple election body, or would it also oversee the organization of competitions and even develop a continental football policy? Opinions differed on this issue. For some, such as Henri Delaunay of France and José Crahay of Belgium, an organization was required that would also run a European Nations Championship. For others, including Stanley Rous and Ernst Thommen, FIFA should remain the leading governing body as a European Nations Championship might become a threat to the World Cup. The Eastern Bloc countries had disapproved of the reorganizing of the international federation. Instead, they had been in favour of a more egalitarian model, with the same number of executive committee members for each continent. They therefore did not participate very actively in the discussions during the first few years.²⁷

The origins of UEFA can be traced to a meeting of European football officials held in Paris on 12 April 1954. It decided to form a European football association and to ratify its foundation at a later meeting in Bern in June. Statutes were drafted and a questionnaire on the nascent group's responsibilities was sent to the national associations. Its results showed that most associations were against its enhanced role, preferring an organization that would mainly discuss issues pertaining to the FIFA congress's agenda and elect European representatives to the executive committee.²⁸ Such an organization would therefore not have a permanent secretariat or a budget. The constitutive assembly, made up of 27 representatives, was held in Basle on 15 June.²⁹ In addition to endorsing the association's constitution, the assembly elected a six-member steering committee. In October of the same year, the steering committee settled on the name UEFA.³⁰ However, the organization's initial goals chiefly concerned the international federation. They included the election of European representatives to the executive committee and efforts 'to reach, if possible, a common understanding during FIFA congresses.'³¹ Although the establishment of competitions was not within UEFA's original remit, its founding marked a crucial landmark for European football. A continental body now existed, which could potentially set up European competitions. In fact, the idea of European Nations Championship was included in the European grouping's draft statutes from the outset.

Thus, European football club competition was framed within this wider historical context.³² To this we can also add the fast development of air travel,³³ which opened up the possibility for clubs to travel across the continent during the week to take part in games and be back in time for national championship games on weekends.³⁴ Furthermore, more and more stadiums were being equipped with floodlights, enabling games to be played in the evening, particularly during the shorter autumn and winter days.

L'Équipe's European cup project

It was therefore not a matter of chance that several initiatives for European competitions were developed during the first half of the 1950s. For example, Willy Treml, coach of Grasshopper Football Club Zurich, put forward the idea of a European club tournament in 1952. Similarly, between 1954 and 1955, three major figures of European and world football, Ernst Thommen, Ottorino Barassi and Stanley Rous, proposed the idea of a competition not amongst clubs but instead, between cities: the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup. It was in fact after a friendly game played at night between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Honved that Gabriel Hanot proposed the idea of a European club championship.³⁵

The launch of the idea

Sensing a potential for growth and taking advantage of emerging trends in European football, the journalists of *L'Équipe* rapidly started mobilizing their resources behind the idea, which soon gained considerable momentum. On 13 December 1954, the English club Wolverhampton Wanderers ('Wolves'), following victories against Spartak Moscow and Voros Lobogo, defeated Honved Budapest 3-2. This victory partially restored the image of English football, which had been tarnished by the recent results of the national team. Following losses against Hungary,³⁶ 6-3 at Wembley and 7-1 in the rematch in Budapest, the English were definitely no longer considered the 'masters of the world' at football.³⁷

Wolves' victory over a team made up of six players who were members of the Hungarian national team was thus portrayed as revenge by a section of the English press, public and representatives of the game. According to Richard Haynes, the fact that the second half of the game was broadcast live by the BBC accentuated this feeling.³⁸ Chauvinism pervaded the atmosphere at the end of the game. Stan Cullis, the manager of the English team, had no qualms about declaring to correspondents of the local newspaper, the *Express and Star*, that his team was now world

club champions. These words were relayed the very next day by the populist *Daily Mail*. David Wynne-Morgan titled his article on the match: 'Hail, Wolves "Champion of the world" now' and he did not hesitate to mention that 'the legend of Hungarian invincibility perished for ever in the Molineux quagmire.'³⁹

Gabriel Hanot, who had also attended the match, responded to these observations in *L'Équipe*, recognizing that Wolves had won a great victory. However, their success had been by the narrowest of margins – including one goal scored from the penalty spot – and on home ground. He therefore watered down his fellow journalists' excitement and replied: 'No, Wolverhampton is not yet "world club champion"!' Gabriel Hanot stressed that we must wait 'until Wolverhampton has played in Moscow and Budapest before proclaiming their invincibility. And other distinguished clubs at the international level remain: Milan and Real Madrid, to name but a few.'⁴⁰ But the journalist did not leave it at that and, in his article's subtitle, wrote that *L'Équipe* proposed to launch a European club championship.

The audacity of Gabriel Hanot's proposition needs to be seen in light of his background. A former high-level player himself, he had been engaged in the game since the early 1920s. His involvement in football went well beyond his role as a journalist, as he played a major role in shaping French football for nearly 30 years. A staunch advocate of professionalization, he actively championed its development in France,⁴¹ and later contributed to the creation of the *Amicale des Clubs Autorisés*, the first association to bring together professional clubs. After the Second World War, he served as national technical manager and supervised the setting up of a coaching degree in France, thereby becoming the first president of the French Coaches' Association.⁴² He therefore possessed an excellent knowledge of football and had, through his numerous roles, acquired an important stature both in France and abroad.⁴³ We might also say that he was among the great figures in the French 'tradition' – as noted by Paul Dietschy⁴⁴ – of founding sports organizations and competitions along with Pierre de Coubertin, Robert Guérin, Jules Rimet and Henri Delaunay. However, following Gabriel Hanot's idea, the journalists of *L'Équipe* proposed a more ambitious project, since it involved more teams, in equal numbers from the East and the West, and was expected to take place throughout the year. On 16 December, the head of the football section, Jacques de Ryswick, drew up a broad outline of the project.

L'Équipe: an extensive network of correspondents

Jacques de Ryswick also possessed a thorough knowledge of European football, having worked in the field of sports journalism since the early 1930s.⁴⁵ In addition, like his colleague, he did not hesitate to make daring propositions and remarks concerning the world of football. He was in charge of a weekly column in *L'Équipe* called '*Les A-propos de la balle*', in which he commented on a number of selected football highlights of the week. He made his substantial proposals on the organization of the competition in an article published on 16 December.⁴⁶ His idea was to set up a real championship among European clubs from a majority of countries on the continent. Matches would take place during the week over two legs. In addition, he called on club and federation officials to help the journal with the implementation of the contest. He wrote:

A project such as this will of course raise objections and cause many problems. But the idea has been floated once and for all. It now remains to be discussed. If all contribute to it, we here are certain that its realization can be smoothly conducted. We promise its developers considerable success and we promise football ... extraordinary additional outreach.⁴⁷

Over the next week or so, *L'Équipe* presented its readers with the opinions of several European football personalities in a column specially created for the occasion, titled 'Un projet de *L'Équipe*: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs.' These testimonies were gathered by the newspaper's foreign correspondents. On 23 December, the United Press correspondent in Germany, Hans Schaeffer, wrote that in his country, the project was received rather favourably. He supported his claim by quoting the president of Fortuna Dusseldorf and *Die Welt*, a Hamburg newspaper.⁴⁸ Journalist Ferdinand Wimer recounted the project's reception in Austria. He highlighted that the president of Rapid Vienna, Rudolf Schick, expressed his enthusiasm but also his preference for a cup system, as the international schedule was already busy.⁴⁹ Further reactions came from Sweden, where another United Press correspondent, Gunnar Hanners, noted that Djurgarden was 'getting geared up',⁵⁰ and from England,⁵¹ through George Chandler, of the same agency. From these first testimonies, we can see that a number of club managers, journalists and other institutional actors within European football seemed enthusiastic about the project. However, the words used in the articles were very generalized. They mention 'the Germans', 'the English' or 'the Austrians', although these were only the brief reactions of a limited number of actors. In fact, this process corresponded exactly with *L'Équipe*'s style of

journalism, geared towards sensationalism and rapidly delivered information.⁵² Additionally – and this trait would endure – in order to captivate their readers, the journalists presented the creation of the competition in the form of a serial, creating columns specifically for it.

The positive reactions made Jacques Ryswick declare on 30 December 1954: ‘No, the European championship is not a pipe dream! It is making its way towards the “ideal formula”’.⁵³ He also encouraged pursuing the idea, ‘no matter how many practical difficulties there may seem to be, no matter how difficult it is to shake up the traditions and organizations in place’.⁵⁴ The journalist attempted in this case to exert a certain amount of pressure on the European football officials – a strategy that his colleague Jacques Ferran also adopted a few weeks later.

Some days later, the correspondent in Spain, Fernand Sautes, indicated, also in a generalizing fashion, that ‘the project launched by *L'Équipe* had been heard in Spain. The entire press published it’.⁵⁵ However, he only mentioned few reactions that the project had generated in Barcelona. In Catalonia, stakeholders were not too keen to support *L'Équipe*'s proposal, mainly because of the competition it would create for the national championship. That did not prevent the journalist from concluding his article on a positive note: ‘To begin with, the attractive promise of profits in this international contest should tip the scales. In addition, it is highly likely that Spain's current reluctance will give way if other nations such as England, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Yugoslavia, Belgium, etc. accept the French offer’.⁵⁶ The following day, reactions from Belgium and Switzerland were offered to the readers. The president of Anderlecht, Albert Roosen, expressed his enthusiasm for the project to *L'Équipe*'s special correspondent, Jacques Legros, but was more in favour of a European Cup.⁵⁷ In Zurich, the managers of Grasshopper also showed an interest in the contest. This was hardly surprising as these clubs had already considered the possibility of setting up an international competition in the past.

In light of all these positive reactions, the Parisian journalists drafted the rules of the competition. Jacques de Ryswick noted in an article on 13 January that he soon hoped to be able to present the readers with the rules of the competition.⁵⁸ A copy of these rules, dating from early February 1955, has been located in FIFA's archives. The initial idea of a championship was replaced by one of a European Cup, in which teams would compete by knockout, over two legs. The final would consist of a single game in Paris. At the time, the journalists had pre-selected the 18 following teams: Anderlecht (Belgium), Partizan Belgrade (Yugoslavia), Chelsea (England), FC Copenhagen (Denmark), Rot Weiss Essen

(Germany), Flamengo (Netherlands), Servette Geneva (Switzerland), Hibernian (Scotland), Honved (Hungary), Real Madrid (Spain), Malmö (Sweden), FC Milan (Italy), Dynamo Moscow (USSR), Sporting Club Portugal (Portugal), Spartak (Czechoslovakia), Stade de Reims (France), FC Saarbrücken (Saarland) and Rapid Vienna (Austria).⁵⁹

In a little over a month, the idea launched by Gabriel Hanot had become a project, strongly encouraged by the head of the journal, Jacques Goddet. A true entrepreneur,⁶⁰ Jacques Goddet had rapidly seen the benefits this competition could yield for his journal. In fact, he indicated in his memoirs: ‘How would you have reacted to such a suggestion if you had been head of the journal? It was necessary, quite logically, to seize it and attempt to set it up.’⁶¹

The benefits for L'Équipe

Even though the Parisian newspaper never claimed a percentage or royalties for having set up this competition, the new contest provided a good opportunity to increase its sales. Jacques Goddet noted:

From a material standpoint, our team's objective has been fully met: the event itself has been, since 1955, followed with great interest by our readers and has substantially increased the sales of the journal – and indeed of your journals as well, my dear fellow editors? – in particular by automatically influencing the circulation of the weekday issues, since most matches take place on Wednesday evenings. This remains my main preoccupation.⁶²

To be sure, the contest became a source of fresh news, putting a stop to ‘the hollow articles of Wednesdays and Thursdays’.⁶³ Even better, a tournament which unfolded over several weeks could be covered in the form of a series, keeping readers in suspense. This strategy had already been perfected by *L'Équipe* in its coverage of cycling's Tour de France.⁶⁴

Gilles Montéreal, however, has challenged the possible ‘European Cup effect’ on *L'Équipe*'s sales. Firstly, the figures of that time were not very precise and secondly, sales increases depended mainly on the teams involved.⁶⁵ For instance, they swelled if a French team reached the semi-finals. Nevertheless, it is argued here that a broader perspective of the effects of the competition must be taken into account, since the potential gains go beyond the cup's confines. From then on, it was no longer enough for clubs to strive for victory in the national championship; they also had to contend for a spot in the European Cup. The contest to qualify for the European tournament was therefore added to the fight for final victory. This new aspect was a windfall for *L'Équipe* – and for its

European counterparts – since it stoked passions and interest for championship games, especially towards the end of the season. This situation would later be amplified with the development of additional European competitions. As Jacques Ferran told us, *L'Équipe* did not have the capacity to organize this competition on its own.⁶⁶ That is why, from February 1955 onwards, the journalists sought out the support of national and international football federations. In this task, they hoped to benefit from the ties that the newspaper cultivated with several officials.

From the European Cup to the Champion Clubs' Cup

Following their successful initial efforts, the project instigators contacted the national and international governing bodies. This was not only a requirement from a regulations point of view, but also because it seemed difficult, despite their connections and influence, for the journalists to undertake the creation of an international competition without the support of the federations.⁶⁷

The following section examines how, after an initially negative reaction to the Parisian journalists' project, the national and international football governing bodies were eventually forced to deal with the newly created European Cup, finally resulting in UEFA taking charge of its organization and thus creating the Champion Clubs' Cup.

FIFA and FFF's rejections

L'Équipe was relatively close to Jules Rimet, former president of the French Football Federation (FFF) and of FIFA.⁶⁸ However, despite the backing of this important figure, who had just been nominated honorary president, FIFA did not support the Parisian journalists' attempts. On 26 February 1955, Jules Rimet's successor Rodolphe Seeldrayers⁶⁹ wrote, in response to their query: 'The organization of a tournament such as this one does not depend on the prior authorization of FIFA, the statutes of which only apply to competitions between teams representing national associations.'⁷⁰ In his letter, the president nevertheless encouraged them to present their project during the upcoming UEFA congress. Alongside this, *L'Équipe* also turned to the French federation. The newspaper actually remunerated the federation's secretary Henri Delaunay, an influential leader at the European level, 'with a small monthly payment aimed at maintaining good work relations'.⁷¹ However, FFF did not back the journalists either.⁷²

During the same month, François Albaret, a football columnist, met with Gustav Sebes and Leo Schidrowitz, presidents of the Hungarian and

Austrian federations respectively. During these meetings, both were particularly favourable to the competition, the latter even adding that ‘if the European Cup becomes a part of the international calendar – which is desirable – the OFB will renounce holding the old Mitropa Cup.’⁷³ This statement would later be contradicted, since the Mitropa Cup was reinstated in June.⁷⁴ Furthermore, as the minutes of UEFA’s executive committee meetings dealing with the European Cup show, while Gustav Sebes was keen on the project, he didn’t defend it forcefully during discussions within the committee. In fact, at the time, the Spanish federation was the only one to respond favourably to the journalists’ call for support. Franco’s regime was seeking to use football to overcome its international isolation.⁷⁵ Consequently, this competition presented a unique opportunity. Thus, the ‘regime’s club’, Real Madrid,⁷⁶ headed by Don Santiago Bernabeu, declared itself ready to take part in the contest. Beyond the club president’s political ties with the regime, the sporting and financial aspects of the competition were also of great interest to him.⁷⁷

The Vienna congress: UEFA’s indifference

Following FIFA’s recommendations, the journalists then turned to UEFA. Jacques Ferran and Gabriel Hanot attended its first official congress, which was held in early March 1955 in Vienna. The two journalists first had an informal meeting with Stanley Rous, the influential secretary of the English Football Association.⁷⁸ The outcome of their discussion was rather negative, as Rous corroborated FIFA’s stance and explained that UEFA was not meant to organize competitions.⁷⁹ The next day, Ferran and Hanot presented their project to the executive committee, chaired by Ebbe Schwartz of Denmark, it also included José Crahay of Belgium, Sir George Graham of Scotland, Pierre Delaunay (who was replacing his father due to a severe illness) and Gustav Sebes. Jacques Ferran observed:

Gabriel Hanot talked first, in English, then in French. He restated what a long way the idea of an inter-club competition had come during that last few months in the whole of Europe and summarized our project, underlining its enthusiastic reception from the clubs. I, on the other hand insisted on our disinterest. We weren’t claiming we could organize, but only sponsor the upcoming competition, along with other journals. Our only objective was for it to exist. We were in Vienna to hear UEFA’s opinion regarding this project as well as its advice on how best to help it prosper.⁸⁰

The minutes of the meeting do not provide any more information:

The Committee, after having heard the representatives of this French sports journal talk about their project to create a European Cup involving the best clubs of Europe, proceeded to exchange views on the subject; it was finally decided to bring the desire expressed by the journal to the attention of the General Assembly.⁸¹

According to Ferran, Gustav Sebes and José Crahay were not opposed to the project. However, the Belgian representative already had to defend Henri Delaunay's idea of a European Championship of Nations in front of the assembly on the next day, which limited his freedom to manoeuvre. Pierre Delaunay did not express any opinion, which corresponded to the position of the French federation, but also reflected his delicate personal situation. Conversely, Ebbe Schwartz and Sir George Graham were much more sceptical.⁸² In fact, the journalists' project was clearly relegated to the background of the discussions at the congress. It was noted that 'Dr. Schwartz would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the desire expressed by the French journal *L'Équipe* for a European inter-club contest to be organized. The Assembly does not currently consider itself competent to take interest in this project, which concerns the clubs directly'.⁸³

The minutes of the general assembly show that the primary concerns revolved around the organization of UEFA, the potential development of a European Championship as well as the television broadcast of the games. In addition to certain of its members' conservatism, and even to the potential threat the project might become to the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, UEFA's stance on the subject must be understood in light of its short existence and above all of its responsibilities. At the time, UEFA was still an organization designed to regulate and solve the organizational issues of European football. That is why the project of statutes for the organization discussed in Vienna only deals with one competition, the potential European Championship.⁸⁴ This project had the advantage of being directly defended in Vienna by José Crahay, one of European football's influential leaders who participated directly in UEFA's foundation.⁸⁵ Yet, in spite of its promoter's reputation, this project was also rejected by a majority of representatives.⁸⁶

Upon their return from the Austrian capital, in answer to the European officials' hostility, the Parisian journalists increased the pressure. From 8 to 13 March, Jacques Ferran produced a summary of the different stages of the project in a column titled 'Une Coupe européenne de football inter-clubs: rêve et réalité'. On 8 March, filled with optimism, he wrote:

A European Clubs Cup will soon be born; it is now a certainty. The idea is in the air in Europe, from London to Budapest and from Lisbon to Amsterdam. It is imposing itself, clear for all to see. But it is looking for a place to land. It would seem that despite certain more or less acknowledged and more or less acknowledgeable obstructions, it will not look around much further.⁸⁷

Despite UEFA's refusal, the journalists seemed convinced of the possibility of realizing their project. Two days later, Jacques de Ryswick followed the lead of his colleague: 'It is sad, at a time where all is progress and evolution, to see the great universal sport of football, which should set an example of the way forward, conversely persist in standing still.'⁸⁸

Then, between 15 and 20 March, the two pioneers undertook concrete action to win over the clubs. Invitations to a discussion on the subject were sent to the pre-selected teams. Most of them answered positively. The only exceptions were the Scottish team Hibernian, who signalled their agreement but didn't send a representative, and Dynamo Moscow, who declined the invitation. A letter from the Soviet Federation's president highlighted 'the impossibility of hosting international matches on Russian soil during winter and because of an overloaded schedule'.⁸⁹ Was there a political reason behind this failure to participate? In any case, the situation endured for a few years, as Soviet clubs would only enter European cups in the second half of the 1960s. However, the Soviet Union took part in and won the first edition of the European Championship in 1960. At the end of the month, *L'Équipe* gained an important supporter: the *Groupe-ment des Clubs Autorisés* (GCA), the governing entity of professional football in France, finally agreed to back the project.⁹⁰ The GCA's participation conferred a more official quality on the discussions.

The Ambassador Hotel meeting

The meeting was held on 3 and 4 April 1955 at the Ambassador Hotel in Paris. The following clubs were represented: Anderlecht, Partizan Belgrade, Chelsea, KB Copenhagen, Djurgarden, Rot-Weiss Essen, Holland Sport, AC Milan, Rapid Vienna, Real Madrid, Stade de Reims, Saarbrücken, Servette Geneva and Sporting Portugal.⁹¹ Furthermore, Gustav Sebes represented Hungarian interests. The four representatives of the GCA and the journalists of *L'Équipe* made up the remainder of the assembly. On the morning of 3 April, Jacques Goddet opened the debate. In order to establish the official nature of the meeting, he rapidly handed over to Ernest Bredignans, vice-president of the GCA, effectively making him chair of the sessions. Jacques Ferran remarked on the event's

pleasantness and the speedy progression of the discussions. He also noted that they were marked by the personality of the two representatives of Real: '[They] did a lot for the swift and unopposed adoption of the rules: as if they had noticed right from the start all that their club was going to be able to gain from what we were setting up.'⁹²

On the eve of the debates, Santiago Bernabeu had also given an interview in *L'Équipe*, in which he committed himself firmly to the cause:

[I will do] everything within [my] power to carry out the project of a European inter-clubs cup and [my] club will do its best [to contribute] with its facilities and its players to the success of this contest, which should enable a strengthening of the ties that unite European clubs.⁹³

The discussions reached their conclusion on Saturday afternoon with the unanimous adoption of 'rules nearly entirely similar to those that [the journalists had prepared] a few months earlier'.⁹⁴ The sports-related aspects did not change compared to the initial version. However, the rules were augmented with a section dealing with the financial aspect of the competition, which mentioned that each club 'retains the entirety of its profits and supports all organizational fees, including the refereeing fees (travel, accommodation, and compensation of referees)'.⁹⁵ In addition, all teams were required to pay 70,000 French francs before the beginning of the tournament in order to guarantee the competition committee's organizational costs. At the end of the competition, 40% of the total receipts would be shared among the clubs, and 20% would go to the organizing committee. This section confirmed that one of the factors in the creation of this contest was its financial appeal.⁹⁶

In one day, the Parisian newspaper's project became a reality. The rules were ratified and an organizing committee was set up. Its members assembled for the first time on Sunday morning, under Ernest Bredignans' chairmanship, assisted by Santiago Bernabeu and Gustav Sebes. This vice-presidential duo had the twofold advantage of representing eastern and western Europe and both were revered and influential figures in the small world of football at that time. It should be noted that not one of *L'Équipe*'s journalists was a part of this body. It settled for committing to handing out the trophy to the winning team.⁹⁷ Thus *L'Équipe* kept its distance, protecting itself in this way from any financial risks should the contest fail, yet standing by to reap the positive publicity if it succeeded. The committee decided that the teams had to confirm their participation by 15 April and then defined the match dates. The first round games of the competition were not drawn by lot, but decided by the committee, so as to avoid any high-risk confrontations from a diplomatic standpoint. At the

time, Spain and Yugoslavia did not maintain any diplomatic relations.⁹⁸ The following matches were scheduled for the beginning of the upcoming season: Chelsea–Djurgarden; Real–Servette; Milan–Saarbrücken; Essen–Hibernian; Voros Lobogós–Anderlecht; Reims–Copenhagen; Rapid–Holland Sport; Partizan–Sporting Lisbon.⁹⁹ The next meeting was scheduled for 17 and 18 May in Madrid, at the same time as a friendly game between Spain and England. The newspaper won its gamble and in its 4 April issue, a headline proclaimed: ‘The European Clubs’ Cup is born in jubilation.’¹⁰⁰

When discussing the Paris meeting, Jacques Ferran speaks of a ‘bluff’.¹⁰¹ I would argue, all the while highlighting the French journalists’ audacity, that this success most of all demonstrated that *L’Équipe* had the capacity to carry the project through. This was the case, firstly, due to its financial input. Jacques Ferran noted: ‘*L’Équipe* bore all the costs, including travel and accommodation expenses. The guests stayed at the Ambassador Hotel, on Boulevard Haussmann.’¹⁰²

Secondly, the newspaper succeeded in convincing the GCA and most clubs to participate in the meeting – a sign that *L’Équipe* had ties with European football authorities, or at least enough influence to push certain ideas through to foreign football officials. However, the journalists were no fools and imagined that, given the project’s rapid advance, it would not be long before the international federations took action. In this regard, Jacques Ferran commented:

We were nearly certain that the formal football officials, justly imbued with their authority, would not suffer the risk of seeing the major European clubs organize a competition of this calibre. What a disaster it would be in the event of failure! And what a blow it would be in the event of success! In a way, we had cornered them, these sports authorities, and had literally forced them to adopt the child they had so coldly rejected a few weeks earlier.¹⁰³

UEFA and FIFA did indeed react at the beginning of May, showing their fear of losing their legitimacy, as can be seen in a letter from UEFA general secretary Henri Delaunay to FIFA president Rodolphe Seeldrayers:

If clubs, journals, and possibly national or professional leagues can thus evade the control and authority of national associations, FIFA and even statutory groups (Europe) that it set up, the very life of national associations could be threatened, especially regarding such a title and contest.¹⁰⁴

UEFA's takeover of the competition

On 5 May 1955, Jacques de Ryswick wrote in his weekly column:

Tomorrow, Friday, an emergency committee of the union will meet in London to examine the rules of inter-club competitions currently being reorganized or organized, such as the Mitropa Cup and the European Clubs' Cup. On Sunday, in London as well, FIFA's executive committee will also study these issues. ... It would appear that the existence of the latter competition, created in Paris on 3 April this year and involving 16 of Europe's major clubs, could be challenged in the course of these meetings, on the pretext that it is a private organization that evades the control of national federations.¹⁰⁵

UEFA's emergency committee, which held a meeting on 6 May, did indeed discuss the project. During the meeting, the members decided to submit a motion to FIFA, in which they asked that its executive committee adjudicate on *L'Équipe's* scheme. The minutes state:

The UEFA Emergency Committee, informed about the various projects of European tournaments, noting that 16 clubs from different national associations showed their intention of creating among themselves a European Cup, inspired by Article 9 of FIFA Regulations, requests that it examine the conditions for the organization of such a contest, in order for it to take place in accordance with international rules establishing the responsibilities of national associations. Additionally, the Emergency Committee asks that the title 'Europe' be reserved for UEFA.¹⁰⁶

Two days later, the executive committee decided to tolerate the competition, but imposed UEFA's management on it and demanded that the term 'European' be withdrawn, as it was not a contest that concerned the national teams.¹⁰⁷ *L'Équipe's* journalists therefore won their bet, since the two governing bodies did not ban the competition. On the contrary, the continental club contest seemed well on track to realization. On 21 June, following the request by FIFA, UEFA's emergency committee agreed to take charge of its organization. The minutes of the session mention that: 'The Committee conducted a broad discussion on the issue. It was firstly accepted that this Cup would indeed be organized by the Union itself. Draft rules were examined one article at a time beforehand and were adopted in their entirety.'¹⁰⁸

The members chose to maintain *L'Équipe's* selection of clubs and sent out a letter to all concerned associations, who had 'until 15 July to indicate if a team from their country would or would not participate in the contest'.¹⁰⁹ However, the members decided that from the next season on,

the competition would only be open to champions. This was a critical change, as a precise criterion for participation in the competition was set. Moreover, the competition received a name: the European Champion Clubs' Cup. On the subject, the administrative report of the secretariat of UEFA for 1954–5 stated:

We also thought that it was in the interest of this cup to seek the participation of the champions of each country. We therefore changed its title to 'European Champion Clubs' Cup'. Incidentally, the name 'European Cup' is reserved for inter-nations contests.¹¹⁰

During this meeting, the committee also met Ernest Bredignans to inform him of its decision. UEFA's takeover of the competition therefore did not distort it, as it was still in line with the journalists' project. On the contrary, having UEFA organize the contest consolidated and legitimized it. The setting of an entry criterion from the 1956–7 season onwards removed the arbitrariness of the team selection process and firmly anchored the competition as a permanent fixture. Other elements indicating the lasting nature of the contest were added during an executive committee meeting on 17 July. The members set up an appeals committee made up of European members of FIFA's executive committee.¹¹¹ UEFA's takeover of the contest also sparked the interest of federations that had not been selected by the journalists in the initial project. The Bulgarian team CDNA, Dinamo Bucarest, the Luxembourgian club Dudelange, Galatasaray, Gwardia Warsaw and Spartak Sokolovo Prague also expressed their wish to participate in the contest.¹¹² However, for organizational reasons, UEFA declined new applications it received in the meantime.

At this moment, most clubs had confirmed their involvement. During the weeks preceding the initial match, apart from England's representatives Chelsea, who were forced to withdraw by their football league,¹¹³ there were no other major changes. The English team was eventually replaced by Gwardia Warsaw, due to their geographical proximity to their adversaries, the Swedish team Djurgarden.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

On 4 September 1955, in front of more than 30,000 spectators, the match between Sporting Portugal and Partizan Belgrade marked the official start of the competition. The first final was concluded with Real Madrid's victory over Stade de Reims by a score of 4 to 3. This was to be the first of a series of five consecutive victories for the Spanish team. Rapidly gaining

popularity,¹¹⁵ the Champion Clubs' Cup would not witness any major changes until its transformation during the 1991–2 season.¹¹⁶

As I have argued, the creation of the competition was mainly the result of the initiatives of one important actor – *L'Équipe* – which used its financial capacity, its contacts with its foreign counterparts and the journalists it employed, to capitalize on a particularly favourable context for setting up an international contest. The major factors explaining the emergence of the Champion Clubs' Cup are therefore chiefly football-related, and at this stage of research, it would probably be premature to draw links with the creation, around the same time, of other major European organizations such as the Council of Europe, Eurovision or the European Coal and Steel Community and the actors involved with these processes. However, it was the takeover of the contest by UEFA that truly marked its Europeanization,¹¹⁷ as several national federations which had not initially received the journalists' invitation instantly expressed their interest in taking part in the competition. In this regard, a more detailed exploration of UEFA's role in the development of the competition would probably provide new insights into the connections between football and European consolidation at the political level.

Nevertheless, we can definitely consider the creation of the Champions' Cup as the foundation stone for the other European cups. During the 1960–1 season, UEFA launched the Cup Winners' Cup. Later, the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, which underwent major development in the 1960s,¹¹⁸ was taken over by UEFA in 1971 and renamed the UEFA Cup.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jérôme Berthoud and Grégory Quin for their helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. John Motson and John Rowlinson, *The European Cup, 1955–1980* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1980).
2. Jacques Ferran, *Les Coupes d'Europe* (Genève: Famot, 1978); Jacques Ferran, 'La création', in *50 ans de Coupe d'Europe*, eds P.-M. Descamps and J. Hennaux (Paris: *L'Équipe*, 2005), 10–26.
3. Gilles Montréal, 'L'Équipe: médiateur et producteur de spectacle sportif (1946–1967)', *Le Temps des médias* 9, no. 2 (2007), 107–20.
4. Jürgen Mittag, 'Europa und der Fussball. Die europäische dimension des vereinsfussballs vom Mitropa-Cup bis zur Champion League', in *Das Spiel mit dem Fussball. Interessen, Projektionen und Vereinnahmungen*, eds Jürgen Mittag and Jörg-Uwe Nieland (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 155–76.
5. Paul Dietschy, *Histoire du football* (Paris: Perrin, 2010). See chapter 8.

6. Jacques Defrance, 'Histoires de vie et socio-histoire du champ sportif. La trajectoire sportive et politique d'Henry Pathé (entre 1918 et 1942)', in *L'histoire du sport, l'histoire des sportifs: le sportif, l'entraîneur le dirigeant: XIXème et XXème siècle*, ed. Jean-Michel Delaplace (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 77–88.
7. Gregory Quin, 'La Coupe de l'Europe central (1927–1938). Une compétition oubliée?', *Stadion. Revue Internationale d'Histoire du Sport* 37, no. 2 (2013), 285–304.
8. Jacques Goddet, *L'Équipée belle* (Paris: Robert Laffont/Stock, 1991), 237.
9. England and Scotland had led the way in 1885 and 1893 respectively. Then Austria in 1924, soon followed by Hungary and Czechoslovakia followed the process. With the Viareggio Convention in 1926, Italy's fascist regime made a distinction between amateur and non-amateur players. The Spanish federation in 1929, the French in 1932 and the Swiss one year later also legalized this practice.
10. Alfred Wahl and Pierre Lanfranchi, *Les footballeurs professionnels des années trente à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1995).
11. Andrew McFarland, 'Ricardo Zamora: the first Spanish idol', *Soccer and Society* 7, no. 1 (2006), 1–13.
12. Steven Wagg, 'On the Continent: Football in the societies of North West Europe', in *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics and Culture on Five Continents*, ed. Steven Wagg (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 103–24.
13. Philippe Vonnard and Gregory Quin, 'Éléments pour une histoire de la mise en place du professionnalisme dans le football Suisse durant l'Entre-Deux-Guerres', *Revue Suisse d'Histoire* 62, no. 1 (2012), 70–85.
14. Philip Guggisberg, *75 ans Ligue nationale ASF* (Muri bei Berne: ASF, 2009).
15. Christiane Eisenberg, 'Histoire du football professionnel en Allemagne', in *Football: Jeu et Société*, eds Henri Héral and Patrick Mignon (Paris: Institut national du sport et de l'éducation physique, 1999), 163–83.
16. Dietschy, *Histoire du football*.
17. Eduardo Gonzalez Calleja, 'Le Real Madrid, "équipe du régime"? Football et enjeux politiques pendant la dictature de Franco', in *Le football dans nos sociétés. Une culture populaire 1914–1998*, eds Ivan Gastaud and Stéphane Mourlane (Paris: Editions Autement, 2006), 66–82.
18. Wahl and Lanfranchi, *Les footballeurs professionnels*.
19. Vic Duke, 'Going to market: Football in the societies of Eastern Europe', in *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics and Culture on Five Continents*, ed. Steven Wagg (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 88–102.
20. Wagg, 'On the Continent'.
21. Dietschy, *Histoire du football*.
22. Matthew Taylor, 'Work and play: The professional footballer in England c.1900 – c.1950', *Sport in History* 22, no. 1 (2002), 37.
23. Mittag, 'Europa und der Fussball', 159.
24. This contest was organized between 1927 and 1939 among clubs from Austria, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and, for a short time, Romania and Switzerland. The Mitropa Cup was brought to a halt by the Second World War, but was revived in 1955.

25. Christiane Eisenberg, Tony Mason, Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *La FIFA, 1904–2004. Le siècle du football* (Paris: Le Cherche-Midi, 2004).
26. Statutes of FIFA, 1953 edition, FIFA archives: Statuts, 1904–1981.
27. During a preparatory meeting held in April 1954 in Paris on the creation of the grouping, the Czech official J. Vogl even questioned the need to create a grouping.
28. Minutes of 12 April 1954 European Associations Groupement session, East German Football Federation archives (2.081): *Zusammenarbeit mit der FIFA*.
29. In alphabetical order: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, East Germany, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Saarland, Scotland, the Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Yugoslavia. Romania was represented by Czechoslovakia and Wales by England. Minutes of 15 June 1954 UEFA Foundation session. UEFA archives (RM00005986): Founding Congress, 1954. I–III Ordinary Congress, 1955–1957.
30. Minutes of 29–30 October 1954 UEFA executive committee sessions: UEFA archives (RM00000749): ExCo meetings, 1954–1959.
31. Statutes project of the UEFA, FIFA Archives: *Correspondence with Confederation, UEFA 55–58*.
32. For further information, see: Philippe Vonnard, *La Genèse de la Coupe des clubs champions: Une histoire du football européen (1920–1960)* (Neuchâtel: CIES, 2012).
33. Georg Kreis, 'Les débuts des transports aériens internationaux', *Relations internationales* 95 (1998), 349–60.
34. The 1949 Superga plane crash which decimated the Torino team, four-time winners of the Italian championship, illustrates this tendency. See Paul Dietschy, 'The Superga disaster and the death of the "great Torino"', *Soccer and Society* 5, no. 2 (2004), 298–310.
35. Gabriel Hanot, 'Non, Wolverhampton n'est pas encore le "champion du monde des clubs"!', *L'Équipe*, 15 December 1954.
36. At the time, the Hungarian national team was considered the best team in Europe. See Miklos Hadas, 'Stratégie Politique et Tactique Sportive: Esquisse d'une Analyse Socio-Historique du Style de Jeu de "L'Équipe d'Or" Hongroise des Années Cinquante', in *Football: Jeu et Société*, eds Henri Héral and Patrick Mignon (Paris: Institut national du sport et de l'éducation physique, 1999), 85–99.
37. Ronald Kowalski and Dilwyn Porter, 'England's world turned upside down? Magical Magyars and British football', *Sport in History* 23, no. 2 (2003), 27–46.
38. Richard Haynes, 'A pageant of sound and vision: Football's relationship with television, 1936–1960', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 15, no. 1 (2007), 211–26.
39. Jacques Ferran, 'La creation', 12.
40. Hanot, 'Non, Wolverhampton n'est pas encore'.
41. Alfred Wahl, 'Un professionnalisme de résignation en France', *Sociétés et Représentations* 7 (1998), 67–75.
42. Laurent Grün, 'La difficile émergence de la profession d'entraîneur de football en France', *STAPS. Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives* 63, no. 1 (2003), 45.

43. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
44. Paul Dietschy, 'French Sport: Caught between Universalism and Exceptionalism', *European Review* 19, no. 4 (2011), 509–25.
45. Jacques de Ryswick, *100,000 heures de football* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1962).
46. Jacques de Ryswick, 'L'Équipe présente son projet d'un Championnat d'Europe des clubs', *L'Équipe*, 16 December 1954.
47. Ibid. (freely translated from French).
48. Hans Schaeffer, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Chaleureux accueil en Allemagne. "Problèmes majeur à résoudre: la question des dates"', *L'Équipe*, 23 December 1954.
49. Fernand Wimer, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Gros intérêt en Autriche où l'on préférerait pourtant le "système Coupe"', *L'Équipe*, 23 December 1954.
50. Gunnar Hanners, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Le leader suédois Djurgarden se met sur les rangs', *L'Équipe*, 24 December 1954.
51. George Chandler, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Les Anglais, ni pour ni contre restent sur une prudence réserve', *L'Équipe*, 24 December 1954.
52. Montéréal, 'L'Équipe: médiateur et producteur'.
53. Jacques de Ryswick, 'Les A-propos de la balle. Non, le Championnat d'Europe n'est pas une chimère! Il est en marche vers la "Formule idéale"', *L'Équipe*, 30 December 1954.
54. Ibid.
55. Fernand Sautes, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Pour l'Espagne il ne peut être question que d'un Championnat d'été', *L'Équipe*, 5 January 1955.
56. Ibid.
57. Jacques Legros, 'Un projet de L'Équipe: un Championnat d'Europe inter-clubs. Anderlecht, le champion de Belgique préférerait une Coupe d'Europe', *L'Équipe*, 6 January 1955.
58. Jacques de Ryswick, 'Les A-propos de la balle. Assaut de formules pour les (deux) futurs Championnat d'Europe', *L'Équipe*, 13 January 1955.
59. In alphabetical order, according to the terminology used in the document. Drafts of European Cup proposed by *L'Équipe*, FIFA archives, file: Correspondence with confederation. UEFA 1955–1958.
60. Gilles Montéréal, 'Jacques Goddet: entre journalisme sportif et organization de spectacles sportif', in *Sports et médias: du XIXe siècle à nos jours*, ed. Michaël Attali (Biarritz: Atlantica, 2010).
61. Goddet, *L'Équipée belle*, 238 (freely translated from French).
62. Ibid., 240 (freely translated from French).
63. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
64. See Fabien Wille, *Le Tour de France: un modèle médiatique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2003).
65. Montéréal, 'L'Équipe: médiateur et producteur'. 116.
66. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
67. Ibid.

68. Like other public figures from the French sporting world, he had contributed to the intricate setting up of *L'Équipe* in the aftermath of the war. The ties between the journal and Jules Rimet were then strengthened with the takeover of *France Football*, which was in a way the journal of the federation. In addition, for a time Jules Rimet owned shares in SOPUSI, the journal's publishing company. See Monterémal, '*L'Équipe: médiateur et producteur*'.
69. Rodolphe Seeldrayers succeeded Jules Rimet in 1954.
70. UEFA, *Les 25 ans de l'UEFA* (Berne: UEFA, 1979), 17 (freely translated from French).
71. Goddet, *L'Équipée belle*, 239 (freely translated from French).
72. Notably because the FFF had already given its approval to the organization of a European championship between national associations. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
73. Leo Schidrowitz, interviewed by François Albaret, *L'Équipe*, 24 February 1955.
74. 'Après seize années d'interruption, "la Mitropacup" repart de bon pied', *France Football*, 21 June 1955.
75. Stéphane Mourlane, 'La Coupe latine: aspects sportifs, culturels et politiques (1949-1957)', in *Football en Méditerranée Occidentale de 1900 à 1975*, ed. Didier Rey (Ajaccio: Ed. Alain Piazzola, 2010).
76. Calleja, 'Le Real Madrid'.
77. Very ambitious, he rapidly understood the symbolic and financial benefits his club could earn by participating in such a competition. At the beginning of the decade, he had had a 100,000-seat stadium built, enabling the Madrid club to increase its income from ticket sales.
78. Stanley Rous later became vice-president of UEFA from 1958 to 1962, then president of FIFA from 1962 to 1974.
79. Ferran, 'La création', 22.
80. Ibid. (freely translated from French).
81. Minutes of 1 March 1955 UEFA executive committee session. UEFA archives (RM00000749): ExCo meetings, 1954-1959 (freely translated from French).
82. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
83. Minutes of 2-3 March 1955 1st General Assembly. UEFA archives (RM00005986): Founding Congress, 1954. I-III Ordinary Congress, 1955-1957.
84. UEFA: Project of Statutes. FIFA archives : FIFA-UEFA correspondence 1955-1958.
85. UEFA, *Les 25 ans de l'UEFA*.
86. Following a number of discussions, the contest was finally launched during the 1958 General Assembly. Minutes of 4 June 1958 IVth General Assembly. UEFA archives (RM00005987): IV Ordinary Congress, 1958. I Extraordinary Congress, 1959.
87. Jacques Ferran, 'Une Coupe européenne de football inter-clubs: rêve et réalité. I.- Vienne a marqué l'échec de l'Union européenne dans son projet d'un Championnat des équipes nationales', *L'Équipe*, 8 March 1955 (freely translated from French).
88. Jacques de Ryswick, 'Les A-propos de la balle. Un encouragement qui nous vient... du Brésil', *L'Équipe*, 10 March 1955 (freely translated from French).

89. Jacques Ferran, *Football, aventure des hommes* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1965), 226.
90. According to Jacques Ferran, the president of GCA Paul Nicolas, an important figure in French football, who at first was sceptical, understood 'the great importance the project represented for French teams [and sensed] that a unique opportunity was presenting itself for the *Groupement* to advance a piece on the international board': *ibid.*, 231.
91. Ferran, 'La creation', 23–4.
92. Ferran, *Football, aventure des hommes*, 231 (freely translated from French).
93. 'Coupe européenne inter-clubs: réunion demain. Le Hongrois Gustav Sebes et l'Espagnol Santiago Bernabeu ont précédé les autres représentants des grands clubs européens', *L'Équipe*, 1 April 1955.
94. Ferran, 'La creation', 24.
95. Regulations of the European Cup. Enclosure no. 11, Comments on Agenda 25 April 1955 FIFA Emergency Committee session. FIFA Archives: Emergency Committee Meeting, Agenda Minutes, 1951–1957.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Interview with Jacques Ferran.
98. The two teams nevertheless played each other later in the competition.
99. Ferran, *Football, aventure des hommes*, 231.
100. 'La Coupe d'Europe des clubs est née dans l'allégresse, son président est le Français Ernest Bredignans, vice-président du *Groupement*', *L'Équipe*, 4 April 1955.
101. Ferran, *Football, aventure des hommes*, 230.
102. Ferran, 'La creation', 24–5.
103. *Ibid.*, 25 (freely translated from French).
104. Letter from Henri Delaunay to Rodolphe Seeldrayers. FFF archives: Euro 1960, vol. II (freely translated from French).
105. Jacques de Ryswick, 'Les A-propos de la balle. La masse (FFF) et l'élite (*Groupement*) doivent collaborer et non guerroyer', *L'Équipe*, 5 May 1955 (freely translated from French).
106. Minutes of 6–7 May 1955 UEFA Emergency Committee session. UEFA archives (RM00000749): *ExCo meetings, 1954–1959* (freely translated from French).
107. Minutes of 9 May 1955 FIFA Emergency Committee session. FIFA archives: Emergency Committee Meeting, Agenda Minutes, 1951–1957.
108. Minutes of 21 June 1955 UEFA Executive Committee session. UEFA archives (RM00000749): *ExCo meetings, 1954–1959* (freely translated from French).
109. *Ibid.*
110. Administrative and Financial Report of the Secretariat 1954–1955. UEFA archives (RM00000917): Publications: General Secretary's reports, 1954–1985 (freely translated from French).
111. Minutes of 17 July 1955 UEFA Executive Committee session. UEFA archives (RM00000749): *ExCo meetings, 1954–1959*.
112. *Ibid.*
113. Motson and Rowlinson, *The European Cup, 1955–1980*, 18–19.
114. Minutes of 14 August 1955 UEFA Executive Committee session. UEFA archives (RM00000749): *ExCo meetings, 1954–1959*.

115. The UEFA Administrative Report revealed an average turnout of 28,000 spectators per match during the first round. Administrative and Financial Report of the Secretariat 1954–1955. UEFA archives (RM00000917): Publications: General Secretary's reports, 1954–1985.
116. Matthew Holt, 'Global Success in Sport: The Effective Marketing and Branding of the UEFA Champions League', *International Journal of Sport Marketing & Sponsorship* 9, no. 1 (2007), 51–61.
117. Jürgen Mittag and Benjamin Legrand, 'Towards a Europeanization of football? Historical phases in the evolution of the UEFA football championship', *Soccer and Society* 11, no. 6 (2010), 709–22.
118. By the middle of the decade, it numbered more than 60 participants.