

Abstract

Title: Public relations within the context of a selected case in the football environment

Objectives: The main objective of this thesis is to analyse and understand the role of public relations in dealing with and managing controversial situations in the football environment in the context of different perceptions of a particular issue and to evaluate the effect of public relations of the club in the selected case.

Methods: qualitative methods were used in this study – analysis of texts, documents, websites, social networks, press releases or statements of clubs and stakeholders. The triangulation method was also used to ensure greater objectivity and credibility of the findings.

Results: the chosen case for this thesis was the Europa League return leg between Rangers FC and SK Slavia Prague and the subsequent accusation of racism against the Slavic defender Ondřej Kúděl. The case sparked a worldwide response. In the research carried out, it can be concluded that Slavia successfully coped with the public relations challenges in this situation. In terms of public relations strategies, the club first stood up for its player and rejected any association of the club and the player with racism, thereby gaining credibility with the Czech public. It then focused on reducing tensions with the general public through messages that confirmed its firm stance against racism and discrimination. The next step was to issue a statement demanding that the club stop the mounting pressure on the UEFA investigating body and end the unjustified attacks on their players and Czech society, thus calming the situation. Following the sentencing of Ondrej Kudel, the club respected the decision of the Disciplinary Committee, and once again expressed their regret for the whole situation. This analysis shows that through effective public relations strategies it was possible to respond adequately to the situation and achieve positive results. Thus, the official position of Slavia contributed to calming down the situation and successfully managing the whole case.

Keywords: Communication in sport, football, racism, xenophobia, cultural context, SK Slavia Praha, Rangers FC