

## Manchester City Football Club under UEFA investigation

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English Soccer authorities and officials at the Union of European Football Association (“UEFA”) have been investigating accusations that Manchester City Football Club (“Manchester City” or the “Club”) misled European soccer’s financial regulators. The allegations of financial impropriety and rule-breaking came to light from so-called “Football Leaks” files. Documents in the Football Leaks files allege to show that Manchester City attempted to mask improper payments from a United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) state-backed investment company through inflated sponsorship agreements, including one with the U.A.E.’s national airline, Etihad. Notably, the Club is owned by Sheik Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the brother of the ruler of the United Arab Emirates, and Etihad is the club’s primary sponsor. The Club responded by saying, “The accusation of financial irregularities are entirely false,” and that “The club’s published accounts are full and complete and a matter of legal and regulatory record.” The UEFA is contemplating banning Manchester City from playing in the Champions League, arguably Europe’s most prestigious and profit-rich competition for one full season. Currently, it is unclear whether a Champions League ban would be enforced next season or in the 2020-21 campaign. All of this comes on the heels of Manchester City winning the Premier League title on Sunday, March 12, 2019, its fourth title in the last eight years.

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