

# ***The International EFAL-IT BLOG***

**Information Technology *innovations in Economics, Finance, Accounting, and Law***  
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## **Innovating in sport management: The impact of COVID-19 on technological advancements in the sports industry**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Every aspect of the sports industry, ranging from match preparation to fan experience, has been ravaged by the ongoing pandemic. COVID-19 has led to acceleration in the development of innovative solutions to reduce the overall expenditure in an industry unreceptive to changes. Before the discovery of the novel coronavirus, the soccer industry had introduced technological solutions to aid the referees such as the Goal-Line Technology and Video Assistant Referee (VAR). During the coronavirus crisis, FIFA planned to introduce 'Robot Referees' for offside decisions at 2022 Men's World Cup. The aim of the deployed technology is to not replace the human element of refereeing, but to complement the decision-making process of the on-pitch referee keeping in line with the spirit of the beautiful game. Financial implications can be investigated in future researches comparing the impact and cost of technological innovations in the refereeing process. Sports technology has its own caveats; Hawkeye malfunctioned and failed to detect the football in an English Premier League match between Aston Villa and Sheffield United. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be followed to curb the spread of COVID-19 have led to the proposal of concepts such as 'Virtual Referees' in which the role of the human referee is limited to on-pitch player behaviour management while Artificial Intelligence (AI) is utilised for critical decision making such as foul calls. The worst pandemic in the history of mankind may lead to a revolutionary overhaul in years to come. Nonetheless, Technologies in Sport Management (TSM) must be at the forefront of innovation as we usher in a new area for research and development promoting values for all in the society. This research discusses the impact of technology in the sport management field from the perspective of key stakeholders in leisure, education, talent identification, journalism, tourism, economy of sport, performance analysis and high-performance sports.

### **KEYWORDS**

Technology in sport; innovation; Artificial Intelligence; Sport Management.

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