INTRODUCTION

professional football or soccer has for decades been and continues to be conditioned by the law in countless ways. As such, an understanding of the evolution and operation of the game is not complete without an understanding of certain landmark court decisions and fundamental legal principles. Your favorite European club’s transfer market dealings? They can be traced directly back to Bosman. Are you a fan of Major League Soccer? It might be a completely different league if not for Fraser. And the list goes on.

On Level Terms sets out to explain and put into context a selection of key cases and concepts, and to do so in an accessible style. Altogether, this book explores several aspects of the game—including the organization and regulations of leagues and governing bodies; the finances of clubs; the market for players; racism; violence; concussions; and broadcasting—and several areas of law—including antitrust or competition law; labor law; contract law; bankruptcy law; tort law; and media and intellectual property law.

On Level Terms opens in the United States (Chapters 1–5) and then shifts over to Europe (Chapters 6–10). This division was made because of important differences between American law and European law and between American soccer and European football. Having said that, skipping around is encouraged, if it suits your interest.

In Chapter 1, Fraser establishes the foundation of Major League Soccer, which is now entering its 20th season. Chapters 2 and 3 delve into the tumultuous history of Major League Soccer’s predecessor, the North American Soccer League, which existed from 1968 to 1984. Chapters 4 and 5 examine two recent cases. ChampionsWorld, which arose out of the staging of international exhibitions in the United States, posed a challenge to the scope of
the United States Soccer Federation's authority over professional soccer and its relationship with Major League Soccer. Namoff is an ongoing concussion lawsuit that has the attention of all of American soccer.

Chapters 6 and 7 are based in English football. R v. Terry is the well-publicized racial abuse case against former England captain John Terry. HMRC v. The Football League deals with the alarming rise in club insolvencies and their significant public cost. Chapter 8 is dedicated to Bosman, Europe's most famous sports law case, which ultimately secured players' freedom of movement and completely revolutionized the game. In Chapter 9, UEFA regulations that provide for the punishment of clubs for the conduct of their supporters are challenged before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland. Finally, UEFA and FIFA v. Commission tested the public's access to the World Cup and European Championship on free television.

My hope is that On Level Terms proves to be an enlightening and entertaining read for everyone from industry professionals and attorneys to law students to fans around the world with an interest in the history and inner workings of the game.

Comments? Tweet them to me: @tphilipakos.