

## **Dispute in sport negotiations: How to handle it?<sup>1, 2</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the different dispute resolution in negotiation in Sport Industry. After a concise portrayal of each alternative to dispute resolution those alternatives dispute resolutions (ADR) can be used to resolve a dispute between two parties such as the agent and the sport director. These alternatives are compared to each other regarding chosen criteria. Those eight criteria are weighted according to their level of importance for dispute resolution. The goal of this paper is to discover which type of alternative is the preferred one when managing a dispute in sport negotiation.

The paper is based on a Multi-attribute decision analysis, an additive weighting calculation, a fishbone diagram and articles. These analyses show that Active listening is the preferred solution for speed saving, time saving, and so on.

Regardless of whether Active listening has disadvantages, it is the favored arrangement. To be sure, you can't generally make certain that one alternative will be a success. In any case, Active listening is the one that will more meet every one of the objectives expecting by both gathering in sport negotiation.

**Keywords:** Sports negotiations, Sport contract, Agents, Project Management, Dispute

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sport occupies a preponderant place in our society. It allows people to escape from everyday life and can be a religion for the most seasoned fans. While sports such as football, soccer and basketball are famous around the world, the business generated in these environments are equally breathtaking. Professional sports represent a financial bubble totally disconnected from reality with clubs as main actors, powerful institutions weighing several hundred million dollars,

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players who see their merchant value explode and get disconcerting salaries and brands that come to show on the jerseys, in the stadiums and also associated with big players with international influences. The issue of negotiation in the sporting environment is as important as the amount of money that is involved. Negotiations, especially when transferring players from one club to another, are complex and represent a large-scale project in which several stakeholders have a role. Many lessons are to be learned from the negotiation in sport and can be applied to project management. Therefore, players contracts are really hard to negotiate.

Concerning the project, it is defined as an investment which requires a set of logically linked and coordinated activities performed over a finite period in order to accomplish a unique result in support of a desired outcome<sup>3</sup>. For the domain of sport, an example of a project can be a single game or the transfer of a player from one club to another. This investment requires a big commitment of financial resources, but also a strong project team to work on the transfer project. For example, Paris St-Germain have signed in 2017, the Brazilian forward Neymar for a world record fee of 222m euros from Barcelona<sup>4</sup>. The constraint of the transfer is the negotiation as it can take months to find a consensus between the player, the club, the agent and the last club owner of the player. As the transfer window is open from July to August, time is a big factor of success. The desired outcome is expected to benefit the club who have invested in the player, generally the club expect their new player to have a positive impact on the results of the team. As an individual game represent a project, a season would be compared to a Multi- Project Program.

What is a program? 4 different definitions regroup the program:<sup>5</sup>

- ⇒ **Strategic program** which deliver assets and benefits that are directly linked to attaining the sponsoring organization's future state, for example the transfer of a player would attract new sponsorships with brands and make more profits.
- ⇒ **Operational program** which deliver assets and benefits that are critical to the sponsoring organization's day to day operations, for example making sure that the transfer fee of the player does not impact negatively the financial health of the club and does not generate a fine from the institutions for disrespecting the rules.
- ⇒ **Multi-Project Program** that achieve synergies from projects with common traits such as shared resources, similar clients or product technology, for example a big club who works

<sup>3</sup> Harris, P., Kriel, J., LeServe, M., Riaz, Y., Giammalvo, D. P. D., Illingworth, S., ... Weaver, P. (n.d.). 01.1.2. In *Guild of project controls compendium and reference (car)*. Retrieved from

<http://www.planningplanet.com/guild/gpccar/introduction-to-managing-project-controls?fbclid=IwAR28qfz7FcD6qA60EI1dtZs03w9m7QRPXKd5q1b1dTVNm98qRvAE-0tf0HA>

<sup>4</sup> BBC Sport. (2017, August 3). Neymar: Paris St-Germain sign Barcelona forward for world record 222m euros - BBC Sport. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/40762417>

<sup>5</sup> Harris, P., Kriel, J., LeServe, M., Riaz, Y., Giammalvo, D. P. D., Illingworth, S., ... Weaver, P. (n.d.). 01.1.2.1.05 In *Guild of project controls compendium and reference (car)*. Retrieved from

<http://www.planningplanet.com/guild/gpccar/introduction-to-managing-project-controls?fbclid=IwAR28qfz7FcD6qA60EI1dtZs03w9m7QRPXKd5q1b1dTVNm98qRvAE-0tf0HA>

in partnership with a club in a smaller division in order to get their young talent more easily.

- ⇒ **Mega-Project** that deliver a specific asset to the sponsoring organization, for example a sponsorship between the club and a worldwide known brand making exclusive equipment.

A sport negotiation program always represents a long-term vision, for example : When a club is negotiating a contract with a new player they are looking for the duration of the contract, what will be the marketing impact of the transfer during the years and what are the goals objectives with the player.

About the asset which can be a tangible or intangible resource with economic value that an individual, corporation or country owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide future benefit<sup>6</sup>.

We can notice there is 5 assets classes:

**Human assets:** Human resources control this section, HR in a club manage a lot of recruitments and relations with partners. The key human assets for a club are the manager of the team and his crew.

**Intangible assets:** Difference between a company's book value and market capitalization value. The key intangible assets for a club are the revenues from tickets and derived product (shirts, scarf etc), the profit of the club, revenues from sponsorship.

**Physical assets:** Functional entities such as "heavy equipment shop".

**Information assets:** Controlled by functional groups like IT, engineering. Dedicated for the research and innovation of new ways to sell game ticket

**Financial assets:** Financial and accounting aspects which will be used to finance new players, infrastructures...

The portfolio of projects represents the minimize of the risk and maximize the return. "Any organization, be it owner or contractor has a portfolio of assets available to dedicate to projects, with the objective being to develop the best "mix" of projects which will generate the most favorable return on those assets."<sup>7</sup>

The project portfolio of a club manager would be "Top Line" Projects or Revenue Generating Projects, because they sell a product (game tickets, shirts, derived products) and reinvest into

<sup>6</sup> Harris, P., Kriel, J., LeServe, M., Riaz, Y., Giammalvo, D. P. D., Illingworth, S., ... Weaver, P. (n.d.). 01.1.2.1 In *Guild of project controls compendium and reference (car)*. Retrieved from

<http://www.planningplanet.com/guild/gpccar/introduction-to-managing-project-controls?fbclid=IwAR28qfz7FcD6qA60EI1dtZs03w9m7QRPXKd5q1b1dTVNm98qRvAE-0tf0HA>

<sup>7</sup> Harris, P., Kriel, J., LeServe, M., Riaz, Y., Giammalvo, D. P. D., Illingworth, S., ... Weaver, P. (n.d.). 01.1.2.1 In *Guild of project controls compendium and reference (car)*. Retrieved from

<http://www.planningplanet.com/guild/gpccar/introduction-to-managing-project-controls?fbclid=IwAR28qfz7FcD6qA60EI1dtZs03w9m7QRPXKd5q1b1dTVNm98qRvAE-0tf0HA>

marketing initiatives after each ending of a project, a new capital investment is always considered (by investing on new players, new infrastructures, new shops).

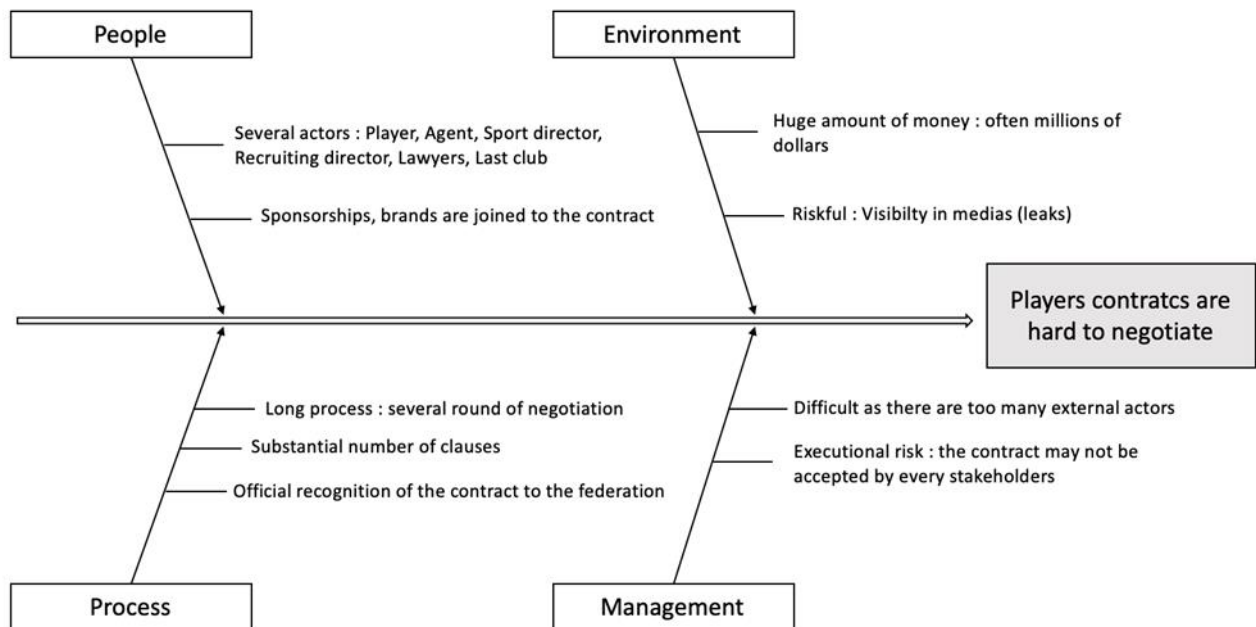


Figure 1: Fishbone diagram<sup>8</sup>

Sport negotiation leads to project management. As long as negotiation involves several stakeholders such as the player, the agent, the lawyer, the recruitment staff, the sport director, the sponsors and the previous club, it does represent a project in which the goal of negotiation must be achieved. Negotiating players contracts is facing issues as shown in Figure 1. For project managers, these problems result in a very long process of negotiation with several actors and the risk that the player may move to another club. The transfer is not secured until every actor has signed the contract. The purpose of the project manager is to succeed the negotiation in the less amount of time. Negotiating skills are the key success factor in order to build the contract and meet every stakeholder's expectations. Negotiation in sport is no different than the art of negotiating in any other environment, it is a bargaining process between two or more parties seeking to reach a mutually satisfying agreement.<sup>9</sup> Any good, experienced negotiator will agree that negotiation is an art. It is a craft developed over time and always modified, depending on the characters and circumstance of the occasion. No one method of negotiating is proper for all occasions; the best negotiators are those who put in the time and effort to conduct ample research on the underlying issues surrounding the negotiation and the positions of those at the

<sup>8</sup> By Author

<sup>9</sup> Negotiation definition: (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG\\_N00.htm](http://www.maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG_N00.htm)

bargaining table. Sport agents dedicate a large amount of time to negotiating their clients' team and endorsement contracts.

Since olden days, the art of negotiation is part of our society; however, negotiation is not an easy process. For many managers it is not a skill that comes naturally – it has to be learned and tailored over time.<sup>10</sup> A reluctance to enter into what is seen as a confrontational situation means that many managers avoid negotiation and are therefore missing out on potential gains to be made. Being a good negotiator is a long process in which it is important to understand the strategies of sport negotiation. This paper will now determine how the project manager should handle disputes in sport contract negotiation in order to meet the player and his team's expectations in an efficient and effective way.

To summarize, the purpose of this research will lead us to ask these questions:

- What are the leading causes of dispute in sports negotiation that can be applied to project management?
- What are the best options to resolve these disputes?

## **METHODOLOGY**

As described in the first part of this paper, the idea is to find to best method/s to resolve, or even avoid, conflicts between the actors of sports contract negotiations. To do so, and upstream analysis of the prevalent causes of disputes in negotiation is needed, leading to a greater understanding of their consequences or how to handle them. The objective here is to consider the different feasible alternatives that could be put in place to answer the big question of the conflict resolution in the sport sector.

### **Step 1 – Problem definition**

The primary objective of this paper is to identify which problems can represent a threat in the industry, the paper is going to answer the following questions:

- What strategies have to be employed to manage sport negotiations successfully?
- What is the impact of the player's agent on negotiations?

It exists tons of strategies to succeed in negotiation, but sports negotiations may be a bit more tricky. Like top athletes, smart negotiators confront the cognitive and psychological errors that could keep them from performing at their best. When you are trying to pull your team together, you'll need to carefully navigate group negotiations by managing team dynamics. To triumph in

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<sup>10</sup> O'Toole, D. (2016, January). Negotiating Techniques for the Modern Sports Organisation. Retrieved from <https://tseconsulting.com/commentator/4-negotiating-techniques-for-the-modern-sports-organisation/>

cutthroat situations, such as negotiations where agents are present, you'll need to tap new sources of strength by gaining a competitive advantage.<sup>11</sup>

The role of the agent is fundamental in sport negotiations during the transfer window as he represents the interests of the player. Negotiating with a player is easy because their skills are on the pitch and not on negotiating that is why they hire agent to protect their interest and get the best of the negotiations with a club. As the agent is gaining a lot of profits by getting a contract for the player, he's paid by receiving a commission. The bigger the contract is, the harsher the agent will be.

## **Step 2 – Feasible alternatives**

To answer the questions above, a comparison of project management using negotiation in sport contracts need to be conducted. The comparison is crucial in determining :

- How to avoid conflict in negotiation
- How to handle conflict when it has occurred in the negotiation

We will build up a Multi-Attribute decision analysis to demonstrate which alternatives are more efficient. The main essential thing is to have a reasonable meaning of every option. It is necessary before beginning the Multi-Attribute Decision Analysis. This examination will measure each objective and goals for the choices.

**Cooperative strategy:** This is also called the "soft bargaining" approach. It minimizes the degree of conflict by generating trust and kindness. You are looking for common ground and joint interests, and you want everyone to benefit. You compromise, and you expect other people to do the same.<sup>12</sup> The approach is at its best when other individuals similarly cooperate. But it does not work when others regard your "soft" approach as a weakness that they can exploit.

**Competitive strategy:** This is "hard bargaining" in which you give nothing and demand everything. You apply pressure to get your way<sup>13</sup>. This approach is important when you absolutely must win, even if other persons will lose. The approach works well when you face weak or confused negotiators. It is less appropriate when a long-term relationship has to be maintained, or when your opponents are well prepared.

**Analytical strategy:** In this approach, negotiation is a problem-solving exercise to create options that benefit everyone<sup>14</sup>. This is sometimes called "interest-based bargaining," or

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<sup>11</sup> H. (2017, May 26). Win-Win or Hardball: Learn Top Strategies from Sports Contract Negotiations. Retrieved from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/freemium/win-win-or-hardball-learn-top-strategies-from-sports-contract-negotiations/>

<sup>12</sup> CHAPTER 6: NEGOTIATING CONFLICTS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3210e/w3210e0b.htm>

<sup>13</sup> (CHAPTER 6: NEGOTIATING CONFLICTS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3210e/w3210e0b.htm>

<sup>14</sup> CHAPTER 6: NEGOTIATING CONFLICTS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3210e/w3210e0b.htm>

"principled negotiation." You try to: separate the people from the problem; focus on interests, not positions; generate options for mutual gain; and use objective criteria to make decisions.

**Consider interests and values separately:** "Separate the person from the problem and engage issues individually at the negotiation table"<sup>15</sup>. Determine what worth your counterpart attaches to her positions and bargain accordingly.

**Engage in relationship-building dialogue:** Build relationships through establishing rapport or common cause, bringing your counterpart to your side while helping yourself to understand her interests and values at the negotiation table.<sup>16</sup>

**Appeal to overarching values:** Appealing to common or shared values can help bridge the gap at the bargaining table by bringing you and your counterpart closer together in terms of bargaining interests. By establishing a common negotiating ground, you can begin to create value (and claim more value) using integrative negotiation strategies.<sup>17</sup>

**Confront value differences directly:** The areas where you and your counterpart do not see eye-to-eye are areas of growth and opportunities for value creation. Understanding your differences, you can best work to reconcile them in order to achieve bargaining success.<sup>18</sup>

#### **We identify the main criteria to discern which criteria affect the choice of the alternative:**

- **Cost:** As one of the principal resources of all projects, the budget is something to consider in every taken decision. Going through negotiation conflict resolution can be money consuming.<sup>19</sup> The cost of the chosen solution to resolve a dispute is something to take into consideration and that matters for the persons involved.
- **Speed:** Conflicts and in particular their resolution can be time consuming. As time is another precious resource, this attribute has to be considered regarding the fact that the less longer a conflict is lasting, the better. On top of that, when a conflict is happening, people tend

<sup>15</sup> Staff, P. (2018, September 21). Four Conflict Negotiation Strategies for Resolving Value-Based Disputes. Retrieved from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dispute-resolution/four-negotiation-strategies-for-resolving-values-based-disputes/>

<sup>16</sup> Staff, P. (2018, September 21). Four Conflict Negotiation Strategies for Resolving Value-Based Disputes. Retrieved from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dispute-resolution/four-negotiation-strategies-for-resolving-values-based-disputes/>

<sup>17</sup> Staff, P. (2018, September 21). Four Conflict Negotiation Strategies for Resolving Value-Based Disputes. Retrieved from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dispute-resolution/four-negotiation-strategies-for-resolving-values-based-disputes/>

<sup>18</sup> Staff, P. (2018, September 21). Four Conflict Negotiation Strategies for Resolving Value-Based Disputes. Retrieved from <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dispute-resolution/four-negotiation-strategies-for-resolving-values-based-disputes/>

<sup>19</sup> Stewart Levine – Mediate.com – *The Many Costs of Conflict*. Retrieved from : <https://www.mediate.com/articles/levine1.cfm>

to be more focused on what is going on than on their job, this inevitably affects their productivity.<sup>20</sup>

- **Active listening:** Negotiation often find its conflict in a lack of listening between the parties. Lack of listening then engage lack of understanding and increase the chance of failure in the negotiation.<sup>21</sup>

- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality can weight in the choice of the method to resolve a negotiation conflict. Some conflicts can have negative consequences and are better kept secret between the persons involved.

- **Flexibility of process:** The way to resolve a dispute can range from very informal to very formal. It depends on the context and persons involved. Sometimes, dealing with a negotiation conflict informally can lead to a quicker resolution and can help handle the situation if the involved parties show good faith. On other occasions, resolving a dispute based on rules and regulation can lead to better outcomes. This attribute is important because there is not just one universal method to resolve a negotiation conflict so the flexibility of the chosen process matters.

- **Absence of appeal:** When one – or all of the parties are not happy with the final solution of the conflict resolution process adopted, it is sometimes possible to appeal this decision, and sometimes not. Both have pros and cons.

- **Potential need for Court Intervention**

- **Controlling:** Controlling consists of verifying whether everything occurs with the plans adopted, instructions issued and principles established. Controlling ensures that there is effective and efficient utilization of organizational resources so as to achieve the planned goals.<sup>22</sup> In the case of sport negotiations, controlling means making sure the negotiation is a success with every resources needed such as money, time, number of people engaged in the negotiation etc...

### **Step 3 – Development of the outcomes**

Among the different existing devices and method permitting to rank the conceivable arrangements created above, we will center here around a non-compensatory demonstrate utilizing disjunctive thinking.

Through this approach, we take a look at all the attributes and conduct a Pair-Wise comparison to determine which attributes are the most important.

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<sup>20</sup> Sandy Smith – EHS Today (Oct-2008) – *New Study Details Effects of Workplace Conflict on Businesses*.

Retrieved from : [https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/management/NewStudy\\_WorkplaceConflictonBusinesses](https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/management/NewStudy_WorkplaceConflictonBusinesses)

<sup>21</sup> Shapiro, M. (2013, April). The Cleveland Indians, Sports Agents and the Art of Negotiation. Retrieved from <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/the-cleveland-indians-sports-agents-and-the-art-of-negotiation/>

<sup>22</sup> Definition of controlling. (2018, November 21). Retrieved from [https://www.managementstudyguide.com/controlling\\_function.htm](https://www.managementstudyguide.com/controlling_function.htm)



The most essential quality, or the "best" one is active listening, trailed by the flexibility of process. The "worst" attributes are separately the confidentiality and the absence of appeal.

As said in the characteristic description, active listening and flexibility are important because all contentions are different, therefore, they should be managed in an unexpected way. The time spent for conflict resolution are everybody's issue, it is constantly attractive for all gatherings included that the debate is explained the quickest conceivable. Regarding confidentiality, it is also an important point, but not for all conflicts. It can be crucial that the conflict stay private, but this is not always the case, as well as the concern of "absence of appeal" that doesn't apply for all conflicts as appeal is not always wanted/needed.

This approach is based on subjective criteria as the attributes are ranked from the best one to the worst one but we cannot compare them relatively to one another in terms of score. We defined that active listening is more important to consider but we cannot estimate how much better it is to consider an alternative based on its listening than based on its cost for example.

**Step 4 – Selection of criteria**

Now, that the alternatives are selected, the point is to identify the goals and objectives to have a beginning of clarification about these dispute resolution solutions. With the end goal to assign those options, we will now consider a compensatory demonstrate, utilizing a non-dimensional scaling procedure. Every elective arrangement will be assessed from "excellent" to "poor" – considering "good" and "fair" – as respect to the past picked qualities:

	Cost	Speed	Active listening	Confidentiality	Flexibility of process	Absence of appeal	Court intervention	Controlling
Cooperative strategy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Fair	Good	Poor	Poor	Good
Competitive strategy	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Fair
Analytical strategy	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Excellent
Interest / Values	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Poor	Fair
Relationship-building	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Poor	Poor	Excellent
Overarching values	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Fair	Fair	Good
Value differences	Good	Poor	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good	Poor	Excellent

Table 1: Analyze of the alternative solutions<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> By Author

	Cost	Speed	Active listening	Confidentiality	Flexibility of process	Absence of appeal	Court intervention	Controlling	Total
Cooperative strategy	1	4	4	1	3	0	0	3	16
Competitive strategy	3	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	12
Analytical strategy	4	3	4	1	3	3	1	4	23
Interest / Values	3	3	4	4	4	0	0	1	19
Relationship-building	1	4	4	3	4	0	0	4	20
Overarching values	3	3	4	3	4	1	1	3	22
Value differences	3	0	3	1	4	3	0	4	18

Table 2: Analyze of the alternative solutions<sup>24</sup>

According to the results delivered while applying the Multi-Attribute Decision Making (MADM) strategy to our case, we can see that our recently decided doable choices rank from a base score of 12 to a greatest score of 23.

We will set the base worthy dimension to continue breaking down these choices at 20: any elective that has scored under 20 won't be considered any longer. Considering the table over, the three after choices: **Analytical Strategy**, **Relationship-building dialogue**, **Appeal to overarching values** will be developed in further details in the next steps.

## FINDINGS

### Step 5 – Analysis and comparison of the alternatives

Analytical strategy	
High	3
Medium	2
Low	1

Relationship-building dialogue	
High	3
Medium	2
Low	1

Appeal to overarching	
High	3
Medium	2
Low	1

<sup>24</sup> By Author

	Cost	Speed	Active listening	Confidentiality	Flexibility of process	Absence of appeal	Court intervention	Controlling
Analytical strategy	2,5	1	3	0,5	2	1	1	2
Relationship-building dialogue	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	2
Appeal to overarching values	1	1	3	1	2	1,5	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

Figure 3: Compensatory model – Relative weighting<sup>25</sup>

	Step 1	Step 2		Cost		Speed		Active listening		Confidentiality	
Attribute	Relative rank	Normalized Weight (A)	(B)	(A)x(B)	(C)	(A)x(C)	(D)	(A)x(D)	(E)	(A) x (E)	
Analytical strategy	1	0,17	2,5	0,425	1	0,17	3	0,51	0,5	0,085	
Relationship-building dialogue	3	0,5	1	0,5	2	1	3	1,5	1	0,5	
Appeal to overarching values	2	0,33	1	0,33	1	0,33	3	0,99	1	0,33	
<b>SUM</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1,255</b>		<b>1,5</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>0,915</b>	
	Step 1	Flexibility of process		Absence of appeal		Court intervention		Controlling			
Attribute	Relative rank	(F)	(A)x(F)	(G)	(A)x(G)	(H)	(A)x(H)	(I)	(A)x(I)		
Analytical strategy	1	2	0,34	1	0,17	1	0,17	2	0,33		
Relationship-building dialogue	3	3	1,5	1	0,5	1	0,55	2	1		
Appeal to overarching values	2	2	0,66	1,5	0,495	1	0,33	1	0,33		
<b>SUM</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>2,5</b>		<b>1,165</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1,67</b>		

Figure 4: Compensatory model – Additive Weighting Technique<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> By Author

<sup>26</sup> By Author

### **Step 6 – Selection of the preferred alternative**

After using the compensatory model approach of the Multi-Attribute Decision Making (MADM) method, the preferred alternative seems to be 'Active listening' since it has the highest score: 2,0.

The ranking from the best to the worst alternative is the following:

- #1 Active listening
- #2 Flexibility of process
- #3 Controlling
- #4 Speed
- #5 Cost
- #6 Confidentiality / Absence of appeal / Court intervention

### **Step 7 – Performance monitoring and post-evaluation of results**

The author's advice is to firstly use Active listening as an alternative to resolve the dispute in negotiation in the Sport industry. Indeed, this alternative does not involve too much time and cost and it enables the disputants to keep private about their contention. Moreover, it will enhance the good relationship between every stakeholders of the negotiation such as the player, the agent, or the sport director. If Active listening does not enable to achieve the desired goal, then the author suggests using Flexibility of process which is a better choice and which would have a better chance of resolving the dispute. The author recommend that these dispute transformation options are written in the underlying contract by shared understanding with the end goal to encourage forms.

In order to monitor that this recommendation is a good one, we can firstly investigate if projects which use Active listening, have great success in resolving disputes compared to other alternatives proposed.

Moreover, it would be interesting to measure if the use of Active listening in negotiation in the Sport industry has increased after this recommendation was made, compared to other dispute resolution alternatives.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

It is now important to answer the different questions this paper asked:

- What are the leading causes of dispute in sports negotiation that can be applied to project management?

The Sport industry is a sector where things need to go fast and where a good reputation is important because of the high level of competition. It exists tons of strategies to succeed in negotiation, but sports negotiations may be a bit trickier. Smart negotiators confront the cognitive and psychological errors that could keep them from performing at their best. To triumph in cutthroat situations, such as negotiations where agents are present, you'll need to tap new sources of strength by gaining a competitive advantage. The role of the agent is fundamental in sport negotiations during the transfer window as he represents the interests of the player. Negotiating with a player is easy because their skills are on the pitch and not on negotiating that is why they hire agent to protect their interest and get the best of the negotiations with a club. As the agent is gaining a lot of profits by getting a contract for the player, he's paid by receiving a commission. The bigger the contract is, the harsher the agent will be.

- What are the best options to resolve these disputes?

According to the author's analysis of different alternatives using the MADM model and taking into account that all criteria do not have the same weight, the recommendation is that Active listening is the most effective dispute resolution method in negotiation in Sport Industry. Active listening in negotiation often finds its conflict in a lack of listening between the parties. Lack of listening then engages lack of understanding and increases the chance of failure in the negotiation. A Chinese proverb said "To listen well is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well, and is as essential to all true conversation."<sup>27</sup> Basically, in any conversation or discussion or negotiation, listening is just as important, or even more important, than talking. It is about having an exchange. It is about understanding what the other person is saying.

### **Follow on research**

More research on these questions could be very interesting for the sports industry.

For instance, a more top to bottom examination could be driven by breaking down at a more exact dimension the best options for settling the question. Studies can be made in order to exam the dispute situations in sport negotiations to see if Active listening is the most effective solution and also to improve our knowledges on the art of negotiations in sport management. These results then can be taught in sport management school and get verified during real further negotiations.

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<sup>27</sup> Active Listening -- A negotiator's best tool. (2010, June 23). Retrieved from <https://www.karrass.com/en/blog/active-listening-a-negotiators-best-tool/>

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## About the Author



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**Alexandre Desno** is a 22 year old French student, currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Project and Programme Management and Business Development at SKEMA Business School. Since his youngest age, he has a strong entrepreneur mindset and a powerful passion about sport and especially football (soccer). After gaining significant experience from different positions in different industries, he will be graduated from his Master's degree in June 2019 and will be looking for a job in sport field as an account manager or in the consulting field where he has a strong experience as he worked for the French cabinet, WAVESTONE. With a huge competitive and team spirit, he is playing football and tennis. His numerous international experiences (internships, exchange semester) gave him the opportunity to develop his adaptability and to become a confident problem solver. Being open-minded and world oriented increased his innovative skills. Highly interested in project management and his main upcoming challenges, he is getting certified for Prince2, AgilePM, CAPM.

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