THE LEGAL DYNAMICS OF A STATE-OWNED FOOTBALL CLUB: A CASE STUDY OF PLATEAU UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

State-owned football clubs occupy a unique position at the intersection of public administration, sports governance, and legal regulation. Unlike privately owned football clubs, they operate within government administrative systems that significantly influence governance structures, financial management, contractual relationships, and institutional accountability. This study examined the legal and governance dynamics of Plateau United Football Club, a state-owned football club competing in the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL). Guided by Institutional Theory, Principal Agent Theory, and the Sports Governance Framework, the study adopted a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two purposively selected key informants comprising the club's longest-serving administrative staff member and the Club Secretary. The interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis.

Four major themes emerged from the analysis: governance and political interference; contractual management and legal compliance; financial dependence and resource constraints; and regulatory compliance and institutional accountability. The findings revealed that political influence in leadership appointments, dependence on government funding, weak contractual management systems, and the absence of an independent legal identity constrain the club's administrative effectiveness and legal accountability. Although the club generally complies with major NPFL and FIFA regulatory requirements, institutional weaknesses continue to expose it to contractual disputes, financial liabilities, and governance challenges.

The study concludes that the governance challenges confronting Plateau United Football Club reflect broader institutional realities affecting many state-owned football clubs in Nigeria. It recommends legal incorporation of state-owned clubs, strengthened corporate governance structures, transparent leadership appointments, improved contractual management, financial diversification, and the establishment of internal legal and compliance units to enhance accountability and organisational sustainability.

Keywords: State-owned football clubs, sport governance, legal liability, corporate governance, political interference, Nigerian football, sports law.

INTRODUCTION

Football has evolved from a recreational activity into one of the world's most influential social, cultural, and economic institutions (Pifer, Wang, Scremin, Pitts, & Zhang, 2018). Contemporary football clubs are no longer viewed merely as sporting organisations but also as complex corporate entities that require sound governance systems, legal compliance, financial accountability, and professional management (Adam, 2025). Consequently, issues relating to governance, transparency, accountability, and institutional effectiveness have become central concerns in football administration worldwide.

Globally, reforms in sports governance have increasingly emphasised transparency, accountability, organisational autonomy, and financial sustainability as essential principles for effective management of professional football clubs (Gammelsæter, 2023). These reforms have been driven by the growing commercialisation of football, increasing stakeholder expectations, and the need to comply with international governance standards established by organisations such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Effective governance has therefore become fundamental to ensuring legal compliance, organisational stability, and long-term sustainability within professional football (Adam, 2025).

Despite these developments, football governance differs considerably across countries because ownership structures significantly influence organisational administration, decision-making, financial management, and legal accountability (Nnona, 2025). Whereas privately owned clubs generally operate under corporate governance systems characterised by managerial autonomy and commercial decision-making, state-owned football clubs frequently operate within public administrative structures in which political oversight and government bureaucracy influence organisational operations (Ross, Sullivan, & Lai, 2023).

In many African countries, governments continue to own and finance professional football clubs (Onwumechili, 2019). Although public ownership has contributed to the survival of many clubs, scholars have argued that excessive governmental involvement often weakens institutional autonomy, limits financial flexibility, and increases political influence in administrative decision-making (Luguterah, 2026). These conditions frequently contribute to leadership instability, contractual disputes, bureaucratic delays, and governance challenges that undermine organisational effectiveness.

Nigeria presents a particularly important context for examining these issues because the majority of clubs competing in the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) remain wholly or substantially owned by state governments. Most of these clubs depend almost entirely on public funding, while major administrative decisions, including leadership appointments and financial approvals, are influenced by government structures (Yusuf, 2026). Consequently, questions concerning legal liability, contractual administration, regulatory compliance, and institutional accountability have become increasingly important in Nigerian professional football.

Plateau United Football Club is one of the leading state-owned football clubs in Nigeria. Since its establishment, the club has remained under the ownership of the Plateau State Government and has consistently participated in elite domestic football competitions. Administrative oversight has evolved, with responsibility currently residing within the Office of the Governor. While government ownership has provided financial support and institutional continuity, it has also created governance complexities associated with political influence, contractual management, financial dependence, and legal accountability (Jacobsen, 2026).

Although previous studies have examined sport governance, football administration, and corporate governance, relatively little empirical research has specifically explored the legal implications of government ownership within Nigerian professional football clubs from the perspectives of those directly involved in club administration. Existing studies have largely focused on governance structures in European football or broader issues of sports administration, leaving limited qualitative evidence on how state ownership shapes governance practices, contractual management, and institutional accountability in Nigerian football clubs. Addressing this gap is important for informing governance reforms and improving administrative effectiveness within publicly owned football organisations.

Despite the growing body of literature on sport governance, football administration, and corporate governance, empirical evidence on the legal and governance implications of state ownership in Nigerian professional football clubs remains limited, particularly from the perspectives of those directly involved in club administration. Addressing this gap is essential for informing governance reforms and strengthening institutional effectiveness within publicly owned football organisations. Against this background, the present study aimed to examine the legal and governance dynamics of Plateau United Football Club as a state-owned football club in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the club's legal status and corporate governance structure; explore the influence of government ownership on governance and administrative decision-making; investigate the contractual management practices and legal compliance mechanisms adopted by the club; examine the implications of state ownership for financial management, regulatory compliance, and institutional accountability; and recommend governance and legal reforms capable of strengthening the management and long-term sustainability of state-owned football clubs in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in three complementary theoretical frameworks: institutional theory, principal-agent theory, and the sports governance framework, which together provide a coherent analytical structure for examining the legal, administrative, and operational dynamics of Plateau United Football Club.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory, as developed by DiMaggio & Powell (1983) and elaborated by Meyer, Greenwood, & Oliver (2017), holds that organizations are shaped not only by efficiency pressures but by the normative, regulatory, and cognitive environments in which they are embedded. In the Nigerian context, club governance is profoundly influenced by the institutional logics of public administration, including political patronage and bureaucratic procedure, rather than the commercial logics governing privately owned clubs.

Alm&Storm (2019) identify three isomorphic mechanisms shaping organizations: coercive isomorphism from regulatory bodies (NFF and FIFA), mimetic isomorphism from imitation of successful models, and normative isomorphism from professional standards. Plateau United Football Club experiences coercive isomorphism most acutely, creating tension between external regulatory requirements and internal political-administrative logics, a tension that is a central source of the governance deficiencies documented in this study. Mohamad, Yusoff, Rashid,&Adi (2024) institutional pillars, regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive, further explain why these tensions produce persistent institutional ambiguity and dysfunction.

Recent scholarship confirms the continued relevance of this framework. Dowling, Robertson, Washington, Leopkey, & Ellis (2024) argue that agency and institutional pressures remain central to explaining how sport organizations respond to competing external demands, reinforcing the applicability of an institutional lens to a club navigating simultaneous state and federation oversight.

Principal-Agent Theory

Principal-agent theory, developed by Jensen & Meckling (1976) and extended to public sector governance by Waterman & Meier (1998), addresses governance problems arising when a principal delegates authority to an agent whose interests may diverge. At Plateau United Football Club, this relationship is unusually complex.

The Plateau State Government is the ultimate principal; the Sporting Director and the management team are agents, yet the club simultaneously serves as an agent of the NFF and FIFA, three principals with competing logics and enforcement mechanisms. This multi-principal configuration is particularly prone to accountability failures (Araral, 2026). Moreover, because the club lacks independent legal personality, management bears limited personal accountability for mismanagement, creating the moral hazard that Adams, Morrow,&Thomson (2024) identify as central to publicly funded sports organizations.

Sports Governance Framework

Kamenecka-Usova et al. (2025) define sports governance as the exercise of power and authority in sports organizations to determine organizational mission, membership, eligibility, and regulatory powers, identifying six dimensions of good governance: board performance, organizational performance, accountability, transparency, democracy, and external relationships. Applying this framework to Plateau United Football Club reveals systematic deficiencies across all six dimensions: political appointments compromise board performance, the conflation of club and state liability weakens accountability, and recurrent sanctions strain external relationships. This framework provides both a diagnostic tool for identifying deficiencies and a normative benchmark for reform.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study research design following Yin (2018). A single case embedded design was selected because Plateau United Football Club represents a critical case (Westmoreland, 2025): typical enough of state-owned Nigerian football clubs to yield broadly applicable insights, yet distinctive enough, through its documented arbitration cases and direct gubernatorial oversight, to illuminate the legal dynamics of such institutions. Case study methodology is appropriate when, as here, 'how' and 'why' questions are posed about contemporary phenomena in real life contexts over which the researcher has no control (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection

Data were collected through a single joint interview session in which both key informants participated together, on the instructions of the club's Managing Director, who assigned the two of them as the appropriate representatives for the study. The joint, or dyadic, interview format allowed either informant to respond to any question, with one occasionally corroborating or supplementing the other's account in real time (Morgan, 2024).

The key informant approach is a well established qualitative strategy, particularly suited to organizations where broader access is restricted. Carefully selected individuals with deep institutional knowledge can provide rich, detailed accounts of organizational practices and history that a larger but less strategically chosen sample would not necessarily yield (Dahal et al, 2024).

The first key informant was the club's longest serving staff member. Longevity within an organization is among the strongest criteria for key informant selection, as such persons possess accumulated institutional knowledge, including awareness of informal governance practices, historical patterns, and changes across multiple administrations, unavailable to newer or external observers (Dahal et al, 2024).

The second key informant was the club's Secretary, a more recently appointed member of staff. In practice, the longest-serving staff member answered the majority of the substantive questions during the joint session, as the Secretary's shorter tenure meant comparatively limited firsthand knowledge of the club's history and internal operations. This asymmetry in the informants' contributions is itself consistent with the study's broader finding, discussed under Theme One below, that frequent turnover in politically appointed positions erodes institutional memory within the club.

The joint session was conducted in a semi structured format guided by a thematic interview schedule developed from the study's research questions and theoretical frameworks. The semi-structured approach, as Bryman (2016) notes, is particularly valuable with key informants whose knowledge may extend into areas not anticipated in advance. The session was conducted in English, audio-recorded with informed consent from both participants, and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Member checking, returning a summary of findings to participants for verification, was conducted to enhance credibility (Eftekhari, 2024).

Justification of Sample Size and Data Saturation

The use of two key informants may appear numerically limited when judged against conventions drawn from studies of large, heterogeneous populations. However, sample adequacy in qualitative research is not a simple function of participant count; it depends on the depth, relevance, and specificity of the information each participant can provide relative to the study's aim (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016).

Malterud et al. (2016) propose the concept of "information power" to guide sample size decisions: studies with a narrow, well-defined aim, a highly specific sample, a strong theoretical framework, high-quality dialogue with participants, and a case-based analytic strategy require fewer participants, because each interview yields a greater concentration of relevant information. This study satisfies each of these conditions. Its aim is narrowly focused on a single organization's legal and governance dynamics rather than a broad population; its sample is highly specific, comprising the two staff members designated by the Managing Director as best positioned within the entire organization to speak to that aim; its analysis is anchored in three established theoretical frameworks; and its design is a bounded single case study rather than a cross-case comparison.

Because both informants were interviewed together rather than sequentially, saturation in this study was assessed at the level of the dyadic session rather than across separate interviews. No new codes or themes emerged as the joint session progressed beyond the point at which the longest-serving informant's core account had been given; the Secretary's contributions largely corroborated rather than contradicted or extended that account, indicating convergence within the session itself.

This convergence was further corroborated through triangulation against non-interview sources available to the researchers, including NFF arbitration outcomes, NPFL rules and regulations, and Plateau State Government administrative records, each of which independently confirmed the substance of the informants' account rather than contradicting it. This convergence within the joint session and against independent documentary sources is treated in this study as a practical, though partial, indicator of saturation, consistent with the view that saturation in small, purposively sampled qualitative studies is demonstrated through redundancy and corroboration rather than through a predetermined interview count (Malterud et al., 2016). This indicator should be read as a constraint of the study design rather than evidence that saturation was fully achieved in the conventional sense.

Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

Interview transcripts were analyzed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Coding was conducted manually, with the initial scheme developed inductively from the data and refined deductively against the three theoretical frameworks outlined above.

Four primary themes emerged: governance and political interference; contractual management and legal compliance; financial management and resource dependency; and regulatory compliance and disciplinary processes. These four themes structure the presentation of findings below.

Both informants were fully informed of the purpose of the study before participation and gave voluntary consent to be interviewed. To protect confidentiality, both participants are identified by role only throughout this study, and the legal cases are anonymized as Mr. A and Mr. B, consistent with NFF arbitration practice.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is the small number of informants. While the two participants offered complementary perspectives, historical institutional depth and current administrative experience, respectively, the views of players, technical staff, and other administrative personnel are not directly represented.

A further limitation follows directly from the joint interview format. Because both informants were present simultaneously and were assigned to the study together by the Managing Director, the Secretary's responses may have been shaped by the presence of a more senior, more knowledgeable colleague, a deference dynamic documented as a recognized risk of dyadic interviewing among participants from the same organizational hierarchy (Dahal et al, 2024). This may have suppressed independent or dissenting perspectives the Secretary might have offered in a separate individual interview. In practice, therefore, the study's substantive findings rest predominantly on the account of a single informant, with the Secretary's contribution serving mainly a corroborating rather than an independent evidentiary role.

As a single case study, findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable (Westmoreland, 2025), though the structural conditions identified speak to challenges shared across Nigerian state-owned clubs. The possibility that the longest-serving informant's account is shaped by institutional loyalty cannot be eliminated, though member checking was employed to surface and address potential inaccuracies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of the interview data generated four primary themes, consistent with the coding process described above: governance and political interference; contractual management and legal compliance; financial management and resource dependency; and regulatory compliance and disciplinary processes. Findings are presented and discussed theme by theme below, drawing directly on both informants' accounts and situating each theme within the theoretical frameworks introduced earlier.

Theme One: Governance and Political Interference

Plateau United Football Club is not registered as a limited liability company under the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 2020. It operates under the Office of the Governor as a state-owned parastatal, meaning any legal action must be filed through the Plateau State Government. Exner, Weatherill, & Zglinski (2025) identified corporate personality as a fundamental prerequisite for professional sports governance, enabling clubs to enter contracts, own assets, and litigate in their own name; its absence exposes the Plateau State Government to residual legal liability for all club-related disputes, a persistent governance problem in African state-owned clubs (Manoli & Hodgkinson, 2017).

The club's governance blends public administration principles with sports management practice. The Governor appoints the Sporting Director (formally, General Manager), who in turn selects the management team, while the key financial roles of Secretary and Cashier are assigned from the Plateau State Sports Council to guarantee government financial oversight. This dual accountability structure, simultaneously answerable to the state and to the NPFL, reflects the fundamental tension that Chelladurai & Kerwin (2018) describe between democratic accountability and managerial efficiency.

Nwosu (2016) specifically notes that politically appointed leadership in Nigerian state clubs prioritizes loyalty over technical competence. Both informants corroborated this, confirming that recruitment decisions were frequently shaped by gubernatorial preferences rather than sporting merit, consistent with Jacobsen's (2026) observation that political permeation is the key differentiator between state-dependent and commercially autonomous clubs.

As the longest-serving informant explained, appointments to club leadership positions are tied directly to political patronage rather than professional criteria:

"*When the governor wins, he compensates political supporters by appointing them to positions like managing United FC. Even if someone doesn't have club management experience, as long as they are a party member who suffered during campaigns, they get appointed*."

The Plateau State Football Association nominally oversees NFF rules compliance, but interview data from both informants confirmed that this function is often nominal, with limited independent monitoring capacity, consistent with Transparency International Nigeria's (2022) documentation of broader governance weaknesses in Nigerian state parastatals.

Politically driven appointments and changes in government administration frequently disrupt leadership continuity. Hoye, Smith, Nicholson, & Stewart (2018) identify leadership stability as among the strongest predictors of organizational performance in sports clubs; where tenure depends on political rather than performance factors, institutional knowledge is lost, and strategic planning is undermined.

Theme Two: Contractual Management and Legal Compliance

Because the club lacks independent legal personality, and contracts are technically executed on behalf of the government, ambiguity arises regarding the identity of the contracting party, a deficiency that Cheng (2025) identifies as a principal cause of disputes in government-affiliated sports institutions. Without a clearly defined legal entity, enforcement of contractual obligations becomes procedurally complex, disadvantaging both the club and its employees.

This ambiguity produced two significant disputes during the period under study. The first concerned Mr. A, a former Team Manager who had a three-year contract worth NGN 450,000 per month, abruptly terminated in June 2024. The NFF Players' Status Arbitration

Committee awarded NGN 6,000,000 in compensation (NFF Players' Status Arbitration Committee, 2024–2025), illustrating the contractual formalization inadequacies that Cheng (2025) traces to the absence of standardized employment frameworks in public sector sports administration.

The second involved Mr. B, whose contract was terminated electronically. The NFF arbitration panel found the contract valid and ordered payment of NGN 2,600,000 in residual salary and clearance fees (NFF Players' Status Arbitration Committee, 2024–2025). Both cases were detailed directly by the longest-serving informant.

The longest-serving informant described this dispute pathway directly:

"*The only issue that arises is when you want to terminate the contract... This kind of issue can make the NFF step in. You cannot take your matter to regular court; you take it to the Court of Arbitration, an arbitration panel set up by the Nigerian Football Federation*."

Players and technical staff are employed as contract staff, subject to Nigerian labor law and FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (FIFA, 2023; NFF Statutes and Code of Conduct, 2024/2025). Contracts specify duration, salary, bonuses, sign-on fees, termination clauses, confidentiality provisions, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Despite this framework aligning with FIFA's (2023) best practice, implementation is frequently inconsistent: contracts were sometimes executed informally, without proper witnessing or registration, creating evidentiary challenges, a pattern Manoli et al. (2017) attribute to the absence of dedicated legal personnel in club management. Scafarto & Dimitropoulos (2018) argue that informality in employment termination is characteristic of an organization lacking dedicated human resources capacity, a characterization confirmed here through interview data on both the Mr. A and Mr. B cases.

Theme Three: Financial Management and Resource Dependency

The club's heavy reliance on state funding restricts commercial flexibility. Budget allocation is subject to the annual state appropriation process, making financial planning inherently reactive rather than strategic, consistent with Ekici's (2026) finding that budgetary uncertainty is a primary driver of player contract disputes and talent migration in state-owned clubs. Andreff (2022) similarly found that state-funded African clubs consistently lack the capacity to develop alternative revenue streams, creating cycles of dependence that leave clubs vulnerable to fiscal shocks.

Interview data confirmed that the club has experienced severe salary delays linked directly to the timing of state budget disbursement. The longest-serving informant recalled a period, roughly five to six years before the study, in which players and coaches went unpaid for approximately eight months, and reported that as of the time of interview, a backlog of two months' salary remained outstanding to various players and coaches.

The longest-serving informant recounted the severity of past delays directly:

"*About 5 or 6 years ago, we went about 8 months without payment. Up until now, there are still 2 months of backlogs unpaid to various players and coaches*."

Ekici (2026) identifies salary arrears as one of the most significant drivers of player unrest and talent migration in African state-owned clubs. Adams, Morrow, & Thomson (2024) similarly show, in the context of English football finance disputes, that the accounting relationship between a club and its funding body is frequently where governance failures first surface, a pattern mirrored in Plateau United's recurrent salary delays.

Theme Four: Regulatory Compliance and Disciplinary Processes

Plateau United Football Club complies with annual NPFL licensing requirements, maintains financial transparency, adheres to the minimum wage standard of NGN 150,000, and follows disciplinary codes covering match manipulation, betting, and misconduct (NPFL Rules and Regulations, 2024/2025; FIFA, 2023). A Code of Conduct for staff and players specifies behavioral standards aligned with NPFL regulations, though interview data revealed that enforcement is inconsistent, particularly where politically connected personnel are involved, consistent with Nwosu's (2016) findings on Nigerian state sports institutions.

The club's disciplinary history includes a match-fixing scandal resulting in indefinite suspensions for score manipulation (NFF Disciplinary Committee Report, 2013), a vulnerability that Adams et al. (2025) link to weak institutional governance. Crowd disturbances subsequently led to NPFL sanctions, including fines and closed-door matches.

However, in a significant 2024 appeal, the club successfully challenged NPFL fines and point deductions arising from a post-game fan incident (Plateau United Football Club, 2024), suggesting an emerging institutional awareness of formal legal processes that Bilić Brenner (2025) identifies as a crucial step in governance professionalization.

Implications for Legal Liability

Taken together, the four themes converge on a single structural problem: the club's liabilities manifest in three forms: contractual liability from employment disputes (evidenced by the Mr. A and Mr. B cases), regulatory liability from NPFL and NFF breaches, and vicarious liability from the actions of fans, staff, or players. Given the absence of corporate personality, the Plateau State Government bears ultimate legal responsibility for all settlements, fines, and compliance enforcement.

Scafarto et al. (2018) argue that this arrangement creates perverse incentive structures: the financial consequences of mismanagement are socialized rather than borne by club management, weakening accountability and institutional discipline. Both informants confirmed that the government's legal exposure from club-related disputes has increased in recent years, reinforcing the case for urgent structural reform consistent with Manoli et al. (2017) recommendations for African football governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Legal Incorporation:** Plateau United Football Club should be incorporated as an independent corporate entity under the Companies and Allied Matters Act (2020). This would strengthen its legal capacity, improve accountability, and reduce direct legal liability on the Plateau State Government.

2. **Strengthening Corporate Governance:** The club should establish a professionally constituted Board of Directors with expertise in sport management, law, finance, and business administration. Board appointments should be based on competence, integrity, and professional experience rather than political considerations.

3. **Merit-Based Leadership Appointments:** Senior management positions should be filled through transparent and competitive recruitment processes to promote professionalism, continuity, and effective organisational leadership.

4. **Strengthening Legal and Contractual Management:** The club should establish an internal legal and compliance unit responsible for contract administration, legal advisory services, regulatory compliance, and dispute resolution. Standardised employment contracts consistent with FIFA, NFF, and NPFL regulations should be adopted for all categories of staff.

5. Financial Diversification: The club should reduce its dependence on government funding by expanding alternative revenue sources through corporate sponsorships, merchandising, broadcasting partnerships, football academies, commercial investments, and community engagement programmes. Diversified funding will enhance financial sustainability and managerial autonomy.

6. Capacity Building: Regular training programmes should be organised for board members, administrators, coaches, and technical staff on sports governance, sports law, financial management, ethical leadership, and contemporary administrative practices to strengthen institutional performance.

7. Policy Reform: The National Sports Commission, the Nigeria Football Federation, and relevant government agencies should develop comprehensive governance guidelines for state-owned football clubs that promote transparency, accountability, institutional independence, and financial sustainability while aligning with international best practices.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the legal and governance dynamics of Plateau United Football Club as a state-owned football club in Nigeria. Guided by Institutional Theory, Principal Agent Theory, and the Sports Governance Framework, the study explored how government ownership influences governance structures, contractual management, financial administration, regulatory compliance, and institutional accountability.

The findings revealed that while government ownership provides financial support and institutional stability, it also presents significant governance challenges. Political influence in leadership appointments, dependence on government funding, limited managerial autonomy, and weaknesses in contractual management were identified as major factors affecting the club's administrative effectiveness. Although the club generally complies with the regulatory requirements of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), institutional weaknesses continue to expose it to contractual disputes and governance inefficiencies.

The study demonstrates that effective governance of state-owned football clubs extends beyond regulatory compliance and requires institutional reforms that strengthen accountability, transparency, professionalism, and organisational autonomy. By providing empirical evidence from Plateau United Football Club, this study contributes to the growing literature on sport governance and sports law in Nigeria and offers practical insights for policymakers, football administrators, and government authorities seeking to improve the management and sustainability of publicly owned football clubs.

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