# Mbappe-owned Caen relegated after turbulent season revealing risks of player-led club ownership



In a significant development for French football, Caen FC, a club recently acquired by standout player Kylian Mbappe, has faced an unexpectedly challenging season, culminating in relegation to the third tier of French football for the first time in 41 years. The announcement reflects a sharp decline, with Caen concluding the season ten points adrift of safety, a stark contrast to their aspirations for success under Mbappe’s ownership.

Initially, the investment appeared promising, with Mbappe reportedly purchasing 80 per cent of the club for between 15 and 20 million euros, while clearing existing debts. Enthusiasts like Georges, a dedicated supporter, expressed optimism, recalling the club's notable past performances, such as their legendary encounter against Real Zaragoza in the 1992 UEFA Cup. Following the acquisition, local media, including Le Monde, echoed a sense of hope, predicting that Mbappe's brand would attract superior players and sponsors to the relatively modest club.

However, the season deteriorated sharply, with the club cycling through three managers, including revered former player Nicolas Seube. Amidst this turmoil, Mbappe has only appeared at the club once this season, largely due to commitments at Real Madrid, where he has also encountered a rocky start. The management responsibility was entrusted to his mother, Fayza Lamari, who has since suggested doubts about the project, stating, “On the night of the matches, I wanted to leave,” revealing her growing concerns about the club's trajectory.

The Caen fanbase reacted with disillusionment, with poignant graffiti at the stadium reading, “Humbly, you do not deserve us.” Prominent supporters share sentiment with Georges, who remarked, “It wasn’t what we were told. We didn’t get Mbappe or his benefits at all.” This frustration extends to several other athletes, including Luka Modric and N'Golo Kante, who have made investments in various clubs but have faced similar challenges regarding managerial acumen and club operations.

Critics argue that the influx of player-investors is often not accompanied by the necessary operational expertise, European clubs may find themselves vulnerable to mismanagement. An unnamed agent suggested that some player-investors might be driven by potential tax benefits rather than a genuine commitment to club development, stating, “Everyone wants their piece of the pie.”

This trend stands in stark contrast to American ownership in European football, which has notably led to substantial success attributed to disciplined management and strategic planning. Such observations resonate within the context of Mbappe's efforts at Caen.

Meanwhile, in the world of ice hockey, the sport is experiencing a moment of relief following a coroner's decision not to pursue manslaughter charges against the Sheffield player involved in the death of Nottingham Panthers' Adam Johnson, following an incident where Johnson was fatally injured by a skate. The coroner has called for the mandatory use of neck guards to prevent future incidents, raising questions about the responsibilities of the Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL) in ensuring player safety.

Despite these recommendations, the EIHL has not yet made neck guards compulsory, raising concerns among safety advocates. A former senior detective expressed that failure to address these recommendations could lead to serious legal repercussions should another fatal incident occur, highlighting the ongoing discourse about player safety in contact sports.

Additionally, Aston Villa fans are expressing frustration over a recent decision to reschedule their home match against Tottenham, moving it forward by two days with little notice. The changes affect travel arrangements for numerous supporters, who had already booked flights and accommodations. This situation mirrors a previous instance where Villa's request to alter a fixture due to their Champions League commitments was denied, leading to broader discontent among the fanbase.

In another sporting arena, the recent triumph of Zhao Xintong in snooker has been marred by allegations of past wrongdoings. Zhao was previously suspended for 20 months following revelations of his involvement in match-fixing and illegal betting. This tarnished legacy looms over his recent victory, leading to mixed feelings among fans who recall the integrity associated with the sport’s illustrious past, particularly marking the 40th anniversary of the celebrated Black Ball final.

As these narratives unfold across different sports, they underscore a period of significant change, grappling with the complexities of ownership, player safety, and integrity in the face of emerging challenges.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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