



# DUE DILIGENCE IN SPORT

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# DUE DILIGENCE WITHIN SPORT

The trust displayed in Silverseal by the Football Association has been testament to the skills and experience of our team. This engagement has allowed for increased awareness surrounding due diligence within some of the biggest football clubs in the world.

## **What is Due Diligence?**

Due diligence is the term used when carrying out a series of investigative actions prior to an investment or acquisition. The investor may look at past performance, valuations, revenues or compile former employer references. In some industries it is a legal obligation, however more commonly businesses or individuals would undertake due diligence voluntarily or as best practice. It is widely accepted that conducting due diligence greatly enhances the decision-making process, and by increasing the amount of quality information the decision maker receives, a more informed outcome will occur. Ultimately, it's about reducing the risk that is associated with any investment and protects an organisation either financially, legally, reputationally or a combination of all three.

When organisations don't carry out the correct levels of due diligence, they leave themselves exposed. The higher profile the organisation or the acquisition the greater potential for longer lasting damage. The world of sport is acutely susceptible to these PR disasters and often teams or clubs suffer due to the actions of their players, coaching staff or members. Due to the vast annual revenues, global influence and the levels of outside investment, these organisations should be following these best practices and remaining in line with other industries.





# DUE DILIGENCE IN SPORT

Leading sports organisations invest in skill and talent. Analysis is readily available to support scouting departments as they rank the prospective athlete's recent performance and how they would benefit their club. The on-field due diligence to confirm whether a new sports star is worth the multi-million price tag is well resourced and will always take priority. What is less resourced and understood are the factors that will impact the player and subsequently the club off the field.

With the exposure that society now faces through social media and other platforms, the lives of sports people is very accessible. Every organisation must be aware that a significant proportion of their team will be actively engaged with social media and their connection to your organisation is very apparent. Athletes now face extreme scrutiny as to how they conduct themselves in the public arena as every post is subject to instant media interest by a worldwide audience.

Sporting teams recruit from a diverse section of society and from across a global recruitment pool. The influences and pressures endured by these athletes prior to joining their new club is not always known. These experiences during their formative years will invariably impact their adult personality and ideologies. It is possible therefore that their character and choices may be at odds with the club and the communities that it publicly aligns itself with. These incompatibilities can cause embarrassment and irreversible reputational damage to the organisation.



# AREAS OF INTEREST

Some of the factors that have affected athletes before and would be of interest to the signing organisation are as follows:

- Players' social behavioural factors
- Familial, social and associate's make-up and backgrounds/ behaviours
- Advisors, agents, intermediary's, inc. third-party ownership
- Places of residence and areas/locations frequented (family, associates, social) with related security/threat issues, areas of high-risk criminal activity/violence or high-profile venues susceptible to social media exposure
- Sexual harassment, abuse or illegal sexual activity, attitudes/behaviour towards women, domestic violence, child pornography/prostitution
- Links to serious & organised crime i.e., gang affiliation, County lines drug supply, money laundering, modern slavery/human trafficking, extortion, blackmail
- Exposure to corrupt practices, bribery, corruption, illegal gambling/betting scams, fraud, or other financial crime
- Social/political/deference comments and influences, discrimination on grounds of race, gender, or sexual orientation, i.e., BLM, LGBTQ+, #metoo, Anti-Semitism, extreme political or religious views
- Social media footprint; activity and over exposure presenting risk, cyber bullying/stalking
- Negative social media aspects; inadequacy, depression, anxiety, self-absorption, dependence/addiction, physical/mental/psychological impact
- Safeguarding aspects
- Any other identifiable off-field or background issues/distractions, activities





# THE FINANCIAL RISKS YOU FACE

Those areas of interest are risk areas that sports teams could view as potential red flags. They could negatively impact on the players ability to perform and have an adverse impression on social standing and reputational image. In a financial assessment, uncovering these issues post acquisition may subsequently:

- Reduce the athlete's return-on-investment value
- Reduce overall commercial value through the withdrawal of sponsorship and investment
- Impact the global fanbase and reduce related merchandising sales revenues
- Negative public perceptions of these events will increase reputational risk to corporate image and reduce further investment
- Reduce overall value of a club through fall in share price.

If the decision maker was pre-armed with this information, then a more balanced assessment of the acquisition could be made. The risk could be simply tolerated, or treated through contract renegotiation or proactive public relations. Ceasing all negotiations completely would of course terminate the risk.





# HOW AN INVESTIGATIVE ORGANIZATION CONDUCTS DUE DILIGENCE

Only trained professionals would have the skill set to assemble, analyse and present the information required to the decision maker. An experienced team of investigators and analysts would rely on the following areas to ensure the quality of the final assessment.

- A focused and in-depth investigative approach.
- Combining technological and investigative capability.
- Enhanced research into a players' background, family, friends, social media, combined with deep internet mining to obtain key intelligence and identify risk issues.
- Capability to deploy highly trained assets globally 'on the ground', to carry out 'live' research, covert lifestyle surveillance and intelligence gathering.
- Interviews with third parties and the individual of interest.
- Utilising key intelligence tools, skills, and experience, conducted by professional former Police investigators and Analysts.
- Present an unbiased and tailored intelligence and risk mitigation package. Providing a bespoke product that adds value and allows the purchasing club to make an informed decision with all the facts.





# WHO IS SILVERSEAL

Silverseal is a leading provider of consulting services, investigation solutions, threat assessments and global security, based in London and New York City. Our experienced investigators and intelligence researchers are drawn from the world of international law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Silverseal has recruited from New Scotland Yard, NYPD, FBI, military intelligence and other security services. We have the unique industry expertise to conduct research and in-depth data analysis, using a range of covert and overt tactics, technical options and assets.

## SILVERSEAL'S SPORTS DUE DILIGENCE TEAM

Silverseal's sports due diligence team is based in London, UK and is led by former New Scotland Yard Detectives, John Reynolds and Neil Whitbread. Both John and Neil spent their careers working at the forefront of investigating serious and organised crime at both national and international levels and have a deep demonstrable knowledge of managing complex operations and handling critical intelligence.

Working alongside them is Neil Sillett, who brings a wealth of experience from over two decades working alongside some of the most renowned names in English professional football, such as Steve Bruce, Steve McClaren, Harry Redknapp and Terry Venables. He has recently held key roles at Premier League clubs and scouting roles in the Americas. Neil provides an in-depth knowledge of the challenges facing player recruitment in the professional game.

To date the team has supported a number of individual English Premier League sides and performs a regular educational function on senior Football Association courses. As invited guests the team have presented on both the FA Level 3 in Advanced Principles of Talent Identification and the FA Level 5 (UEFA Pro) in Coaching Football courses. The trust displayed in the Silverseal team by the Football Association has been testament to the skills and experience of our team. This engagement has allowed for increasing the dialogue surrounding due diligence within sport and across some of the biggest football clubs in the world.





# SILVERSEAL EXECUTIVES



## John Silverman - Chairman & Founder

John founded Silverman Associates in New York City in 1988 conducting complex investigations. In 1995, the business expanded to include global security and risk management services as Silverseal. Today, Silverseal stands at the top of the industry with John Silverman's mandate for trust, professionalism, honesty and transparency to always guide our service principles.



## Patrick Timlin - CEO

Patrick oversees the management and long term growth of all divisions of Silverseal. Patrick is a member of the New York State Bar and a retired Deputy Commissioner of the NYPD. Drawing from his experiences in corporate security program development, organizational management, complex investigations, business continuity and law enforcement, Patrick specializes in high consequence threat prevention.



## Howard Berry - Director, EMEA Operations

Howard oversees Silverseal UK & SIS Operations for EMEA, he is former Warrant Officer Class 1 with the British Army. Since retiring from the Military in 2010 Howard worked for almost a decade in Corporate security extensively in the Middle East. He has a Master's Degree in Strategic Management and Leadership (2018). He has recently taken Silverseal UK through the SIA's Approved Contractors Scheme (ACS) and the ISO 9001 Accreditation process.



## John Reynolds - Senior Investigator

John leads the operational and investigative functions of the UK business ensuring compliance and risks are successfully managed. John is a former career detective with the Metropolitan Police where he specialised in the investigation of serious crime. Prior to joining Silverseal, John was the Head of Security & Investigations for a casino group in the UK. John is a member of the City of London Crime Prevention Association, TINYg and the Security Institute.



## Neil Whitbread - Principle Investigator

Neil is a former New Scotland Yard Detective, who has worked on specialist units targeting national organised crime groups, and is vastly experienced in managing complex investigations and covert surveillance operations, where handling confidential intelligence is a key element. Since leaving policing, Neil has maintained and developed a global network of contacts, both in law enforcement and corporate business settings.



## Neil Sillet - Football Consultant

Neil has held key roles at a number of Premier League clubs, including both Aston Villa and Brighton and Hove Albion. During his career he has served in international scouting roles and as a Technical Director. Neil's in depth understanding of the challenges that are faced in today's player recruitment allow for a knowledgeable and tailored approach.



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