

## Examining the Effect of Physical Attacks on Referees in Football from Public Aspect; MKE Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. Match Example

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### Abstract

This research determines how physical attacks on football officials affect public perception, using the MKE Ankaragücü - Çaykur Rizespor Inc. match as an example. Within the scope of the research, a 90-minute analysis of the match in which the incident took place was made by the researchers. Within the framework of the study, several technical data were computed on the coverage rates of the match in which the physical attack was the subject, in both national and international media, as well as the number of fouls, objections, cards, passing, and ball winning rates. Data were collected from national and international online football databases in the collection of research data. The frequency and percentage values of the obtained data were analyzed by the SPSS 22.0 package program. As a result of the research, it was specified that the yellow and red cards received by the teams in the match where the incident took place, the number of fouls, the objections of the players and the technical staff on the benches to the referee after the decisions made, the average card analysis of the MKE Ankaragücü team throughout the season was lower than the average card analysis of all teams, and there was no significant difference between the number of cards shown by the referees based on the last five seasons. Furthermore, it was determined that the incident was interpreted as “shameful” in the national and international sports media. Such incidents in Turkish football create a negative image for the country's football in Europe and around the world. Furthermore, any form of violence is believed to hinder the development of the country's sport.

**Keywords:** Referee, Football, Aggressiveness, Violence

## Introduction

Football, which is gaining popularity and is followed by a large number of people all over the world, not only causes its fans to feel numerous happy emotional states, but it also involves violence and hostility. When the concept of aggression is examined, it is stated that it is a phenomenon as old as human history, whether it occurs between individuals in action or verbally, whether it is manifested in wars between countries, or whether it is close or distant (Çemç et al., 2025: 1). Aggression is an action that is not accepted by society and that sees the other party as an enemy without any reason (Kerr, 2008: 722). When another definition is examined, aggression is the behaviors that occur in situations such as anger and fear, and that are displayed physically or verbally in order to harm other people or to protect oneself (Gürbüz et al., 2019: 209). Another concept encompassed by the concept of aggression is violence. Cantez and Yıldız (2021) define violence as the use of human power and force in violation of rules (Cantez and Yıldız, 2021: 321). The fact that football is associated with violence casts a shadow over the concept of sports. Since violence is not a problem that can only be associated with football, it is thought that it should also be addressed in terms of its social and economic aspects, as it can have many different causes (Talimciler, 2006). For example, while one group of football fan groups expresses their love for their team in a conventional way, another group, especially spectators who are highly sensitive to rejection, is thought to be more prone to resort to violence. Individuals' concerns about being rejected or excluded from a certain group may make them eager to resort to violence against the rival team (Knapton et al., 2018:4).

Football and violent situations can occasionally be referenced simultaneously. Fans, club presidents, managers, coaches, and referees are all potential sources of football violence and aggressiveness (Dinani et al., 2023: 2). Kaplan (2016) notes that the problems that trigger violent incidents in football are similar in the literature. He identifies four main dimensions of the problems that trigger violence in football:

1. Football administrators
2. Football followers
3. Football practitioners
4. External groups that interfere with football (Kaplan, 2016: 2). It might be stated that the current environment's cultural elements have an essential role in football violence and aggressiveness. Players, spectators, and other football stakeholders anticipate the risk of violence and aggressiveness and react accordingly. From this perspective, it can be said that the cultural environment has an effect on the atmosphere of violence and aggression in football (Finn, 2004). Violence and aggression in football can be associated with both the individual himself and the relationship between the individual and his environment. Besides, it is thought that individuals who resort to aggression and violence in football exhibit this behavior under the influence of environmental factors (Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016). This experience can be reflected in football fields in different ways. The most usual unsporting attitudes on the fields can be listed as psychological pressure, protest, complaint about the opponent, complaint about the referee, objection, not helping the referee, disruption of concentration, provocation, disrespect, insult, lack of appreciation, violation of sporting virtue, threat, damage to equipment, physical attack attempt and physical reaction (Devis-Devis et al., 2021).

## Examples of Physical Attacks Against Football Referees

On April 28, 2023, during a football match between the Greenacre Eagles and Padstow Hornets in Sydney, Australia, a fan stormed the pitch and brutally assaulted the referee, fracturing his jaw. Following the event, which occurred in Australia's lower league, the attacker was arrested and a lawsuit was brought against him for willfully causing significant damage. The attacker, a Greenacre Eagles fan, had offered \$250,000 in bond, but the judge refused it. Following the event, the Greenacre Eagles football club denounced the attack on the referee and announced its withdrawal from the league for the 2023 season (9news, 2023).

In El Salvador in 2022, after showing a red card in an amateur football match, the referee suffered internal hemorrhage after being beaten by players and supporters and died. The assailant was detained following the event. El Salvador Football Federation issued a statement criticizing the incident (Amaya, 2022).

In the Netherlands in 2012, during a football match between lower league youth teams, the assistant referee was physically attacked by young players at the end of the game. Following the event, the assistant referee died. The young players, ages 15 to 16, who were involved in the event were detained. The Dutch Football Federation has denounced the event (BBC, 2012).

In the USA, in football matches in Utah in 2013 and in Michigan in 2014, two separate football referees lost their lives after being physically attacked by players after an argument between the referee and the player (BBC, 2014).

In Turkey, during a third-league match between Batman Petrolspor and Aksaray sports teams in 2008, the head of the Aksaray sports club attacked and knocked the assistant referee to the ground. Following the event, the referee who was attacked received a 10-day report, but the head of the club that perpetrated the crime was freed after giving his account (Arslan, 2008).

Prior to this event, the PFDK imposed a three-year suspension and punishment on the chairman of the Aksarayspor club for assaulting officials in an Aksarayspor-Kilis Belediyespor match (Sporhaber7, 2008). Although the chairman of Aksaray Sports had been suspended and barred from visiting the pitch, he managed to reach the field during the Batman Petrolspor-Aksarayspor match and violently attacked the assistant referee (Sporx, 2008).

### **Summary of the Attack on the Referee of the MKE Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. Match**

The Ankaragücü club president violently attacked the referee during a match between MKE Ankaragücü and Çaykur Rizespor Inc. in Ankara during the 15th week of the 2023-2024 Turkish Super League season. Following the event, the match's referee was rushed to the hospital, while the president who carried out the attack was first detained and arrested before being released on probation.

Just after the physical attack by the Ankaragücü club chairman on the referee of the match, the Professional Football Disciplinary Board (PFDK) imposed a permanent deprivation of rights on the president, and MKE Ankaragücü was ordered to play 5 official matches without spectators and fined ₺2.000.000 (Eroğul, 2023). Following the incident, foreign media organizations covered this incident in Turkey in their headlines and reported the attack globally (Theguardian, 2023). While various managers and bureaucrats made statements of condemnation regarding the incident, the TFF condemned the attack and announced that it postponed the leagues indefinitely (Sharma, 2023). In the match between İstanbulspor and Trabzonspor, played one week after the leagues' decision to postpone, the İstanbulspor

president pulled his team off the field in the 73rd minute to protest the referee's choices (Nbcnewyork, 2023). Given the fact that two incidents of varying degrees of reactionary violence occurred against referees in Turkish football within a week, as well as the international news coverage of these incidents, it is believed that the events may have a negative impact on Turkish football's brand value.

The physical violence attack on the referee that took place in the MKE Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. match has become a hot topic in Turkish football history. It is thought that the violation of the immunity of football referees may pave the way for the possibility of other incidents. In this frame, it is thought that assessing the events through the public and the media constitutes an important issue worth inspecting.

## Material and Method

**Ethics committee permission:** This research does not involve human participants, surveys, interviews, or experimental procedures requiring ethical approval. The study is based solely on secondary data obtained from published academic articles, reports, and publicly available sources. Therefore, ethics committee permission was not required.

## Research Model

This research was carried out using document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. Documents are a vital data source in qualitative research. It encapsulates the analysis of written materials containing information about the phenomenon or phenomena targeted for research. In qualitative research, document analysis can be a data collection method on its own or can be used together with other data collection methods (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

## Research Group

In collecting research data, data were gathered from national and international online football databases.

## Analysis of Data

In the analysis of the data, content analysis, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques, was utilized. The basic process in content analysis is to bring together data that are similar to each other around certain codes and created themes, and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). A content analysis table was prepared by the researchers to test the matches included in this study. Since the findings obtained from national and international online football databases will be examined, the themes benefited in the content table were determined as; 90 minutes of Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. football teams match general analysis. Analysis, disciplinary penalty averages and the way it came to the agenda in national and international newspapers. The studies were coded by two different coders in the created content analysis form. The formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) ( $\text{reliability} = \frac{\text{consensus}}{\text{consensus} + \text{difference of opinion}}$ ) was used to calculate the agreement score between the coders. The agreement between the calculated scores was found to be 85%, indicating that the agreement was high. It is expected that the agreement between coders should be in the range of 90% (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Besides, frequency and percentage distributions are presented in the SPSS package program.

## Findings

**Table 1.** MKE Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. Match General Analysis Table

MKE ANKARAGÜCÜ	VS	ÇAYKUR RİZESPOR A.Ş.
%32.4	Ball Possession (%)	%67.6
%58.3	Winning a Double Challenge (%)	%41.7
%51.4	Air Ball (%)	%48.6
6	Through ball	7
0	Offside	0
2	Corner	1
11	Faul	19
2	Yellow Card	4
1	Red Card	1
251	Pass	518
%70.90	Placed Pass(%)	%85.90
%66.70	Passing Accuracy in Opponent Half (%)	%72.20
15	Shot	12
7	Placed Shot	3
21	Ball Grabbing in Defense	9
%57.10	Ball Grabbing Success (%)	%77.80
23	Defense Clearance	8
9	Number of Players' Objections to the Referee	7
2	Number of Objections from the Clubs to the Referee	0

These data are taken from Mackolik.com (2024).

Table 1 presents the general analysis data of the MKE Ankaragücü-Çaykur Rizespor Inc. match belonging to the research. When Table 1 is scrutinized, it is determined that the number of fouls of the MKE Ankaragücü team is 11, and the Çaykur Rizespor Inc. team is 19. It was determined that the MKE Ankaragücü team was penalized with a total of 2 yellow cards in the match, while the Çaykur Rizespor Inc. team was penalized with 4 yellow cards. It is seen that the MKE Ankaragücü team was penalized with a total of 1 red card in the match, and the Çaykur Rizespor Inc. team was penalized with 1 red card. It was determined that the number of objections of the MKE Ankaragücü team players to the referee throughout the match was 9, while the Çaykur Rizespor Inc. team players objected 7 times. The number of objections of those on the MKE Ankaragücü team bench to the referee's decisions was 2, while the Çaykur

Rizespor Inc. It is monitored that the players on the team bench did not reject any decision made by the referee throughout the match (See Table 1).

**Table 2.** Data on the Total Disciplinary Penalty Shown in the 2023-2024 Super League Season and the Average Disciplinary Penalty Received by the MKE Ankaragücü Team in the Match in Which the Incident Occurred

	NYCMIO	NRCMIO	NYCRTTS	NRCSTTS
MKE Ankaragücü	2	1	65	3
Super League Averages	4.7	0.4	79.5	3.8

**NYCMIO:** Number of Yellow Cards in the Match in Which the Incident Occurred, **NRCMIO:** Number of Red Cards in the Match in Which the Incident Occurred, **NYCRTTS:** Number of Yellow Cards Received by the Team Throughout the Season, **NRCSTTS:** Number of Red Cards Received by the Team Throughout the Season

These data are taken from Transfermarkt.com (2024).

Table 2 indicates the total number and average of disciplinary penalties received by MKE Ankaragücü team in the 2023-2024 football season of the research and given in the Turkish Super League in the relevant season, as well as data on the number of disciplinary penalties given by MKE Ankaragücü team in the match where the incident occurred. When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that MKE Ankaragücü team received 2 yellow cards and 1 red card in the match where the incident occurred, the number of yellow cards received by MKE Ankaragücü team throughout the season was 65, and the number of red cards was 3. It was determined that the average number of yellow cards shown to all teams in the Turkish Super League in the same season was 4.7, the average number of red cards was 0.4, the average number of yellow cards received by all teams throughout the season was 79.5, and the average number of red cards was 3.8 (See Table 2).

**Table 3.** Average Data of Disciplinary Penalties Per Match of the Top League (Super League) and Turkish FIFA Referees for the Last 5 Seasons, Analysis and Average Table of Disciplinary Penalties They Have Given (Yellow Card, Red Card for a Second Yellow Card, Red Card)

SEASON	CLASSIFICATION	TNMP	NCSR	SLR	FR
2019-2020	Super League	182	Yellow Card	849	590
			From Yellow Card to Red	31	22
	FIFA	124	Direct Red Card	26	19
2020-2021	Super League	281	Yellow Card	1219	554
			From Yellow Card to Red	50	21
	FIFA	139	Direct Red Card	35	16
2021-2022	Super League	258	Yellow Card	1094	471
	FIFA	122	From Yellow Card to Red	32	16
			Direct Red Card	35	10
2022-2023	Super League	219	Yellow Card	952	421



<b>2023-2024</b>	FIFA	94	From Yellow Card to Red	24	13
			Direct Red Card	34	13
	Super League	250	Yellow Card	1028	599
			From Yellow Card to Red	19	21
	FIFA	130	Direct Red Card	21	15

**TNMP:** Total Number of Matches Played, **NCSR:** Number of Cards Shown by Referees, **SLR:** Super League Referee, **FR:** Fifa Referee

These data are taken from Transfermarkt.com (2024).

In the Table 3 the total number of matches refereed by upper division (super league) referees and Turkish FIFA referees in the last 5 super league seasons, along with the yellow cards, red cards from second yellow cards and direct red cards they have shown. When Table 3 is assessed, it is determined that in the 2019-2020 super league season, upper division (super league) referees applied 849 yellow cards, 31 red cards from second yellow cards and 26 direct red cards in a total of 182 matches. It is seen that Turkish FIFA referees applied 590 yellow cards, 22 red cards from second yellow cards and 19 direct red cards in a total of 124 matches they have refereed in the super league. In the 2020-2021 season, super league referees applied 1219 yellow cards, 50 red cards from second yellow cards and 35 direct red cards in a total of 281 matches they have refereed. On the other hand, it is seen that Turkish FIFA referees have applied 554 yellow cards, 21 second yellow cards to red cards and 16 direct red cards in a total of 139 matches they have officiated in the Super League. In the 2021-2022 season, it is seen that Super League referees have applied 1094 yellow cards, 32 second yellow cards to red cards and 35 direct red cards in a total of 258 matches they have officiated; Turkish FIFA referees have applied 471 yellow cards, 16 second yellow cards to red cards and 10 direct red cards in a total of 122 matches. In the 2022-2023 season, it is seen that Super League referees have applied 952 yellow cards, 24 second yellow cards to red cards and 34 direct red cards in a total of 219 matches they have officiated; Turkish FIFA referees have applied 421 yellow cards, 13 second yellow cards to red cards and 13 direct red cards in a total of 94 matches. In the 2023-2024 season, it is observed that the Super League referees have applied 1028 yellow cards, 19 second yellow card to red card and 21 direct red cards in a total of 250 matches they have officiated, while the Turkish FIFA referees have applied 599 yellow cards, 21 second yellow card to red card and 15 direct red cards in a total of 130 matches (Tansfermarkt, 2024) (See Table 5).

**Table 4.** How This National Incident Came to Forward in National and International Newspapers

Media	Sports Newspapers	How the Incident Came to the Agenda
<b>National Press</b>	A Newspaper	The European press is talking about the attack on Halil Umut MELER; Unusual, shameful and sad.
	B Newspaper	The punch thrown at Halil Umut MELER caused a huge backlash in the foreign press! 'It's shameful, he was seriously injured'.
	C Newspaper	Attack on referee Halil Umut MELER after Ankaragücü - Çaykur Rizespor match!

<b>International Press</b>	A Newspaper	The president came onto the field and threw a punch.
	B Newspaper	Ankaragücü chairman punched referee in the face after draw with Rizespor in Turkish Super League, others kicked referee's head in embarrassing scenes.
	C Newspaper	Ankaragücü president hits MELER.

These data were taken from Milliyet.com (2023), Fanatik.com (2023) and Fotomaç.com (2023).

The way this case, which happened on a national scale, was brought to the agenda in some national and international newspapers given in Table 4. When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the incident was brought to the agenda in national newspaper A as “European press is talking about the attack on Halil Umut MELER; Unusual, shameful and sad”, in national newspaper B as “The punch thrown at Halil Umut MELER caused a great repercussion in the foreign press! ‘Shameful, he was seriously injured’”, and in national newspaper C as “Attack on referee Halil Umut MELER after the Ankaragücü - Çaykur Rizespor match!” The incident was reported in the international newspaper A as "The president came down to the field and threw a punch", in the international newspaper B as "The Ankaragücü president punched the referee in the face after the draw with Rizespor in the Turkish Super League, and in embarrassing scenes, the others kicked the referee's head" and in the international newspaper C as "The Ankaragücü chairman hit MELER" (Milliyet, 2023) (See Table 6).

## Discussion and Result

In this part, the findings acquired in the research are criticized theoretically. According to the findings of the research presented in Table 1 regarding the analysis of the MKE Ankaragücü – Çaykur Rizespor Inc. match, after a deep analysis of the 90 minutes of the match, it is seen that Çaykur Rizespor Inc. team had more fouls and yellow cards, and the number of red cards was equal for both teams. When Table 1 is examined, when the number of objections is examined, it can be said that MKE Ankaragücü players, who are exposed to fewer fouls, objected to the referee decisions more, and when the number of objections of the benches is examined, it can be said that they showed a reasonable amount of reaction due to the nature of a normal football game. Referees might consider the amount of objections to represent a typical level of match stress. Refereeing cannot be considered a professional career since referees have other major vocations in addition to refereeing. It is true that referees find it difficult to manage with all of the bad and good emotional states that arise from their primary vocation, in addition to the stress and challenges that come with the job.

Hence, it can be suggested that turning refereeing into a more professional occupation, that is, turning it into a primary profession, will positively affect referee performance and success (Kargün et al., 2012:38). In some incidents in the world of football, the deliberate use of force to physically put an opponent under pressure during a match can be seen as a positive situation approved by coaches and clubs. The theory advocated situation is the idea that “if you physically intimidate the opponent, they will not be able to get too close to you on the field” (Grange and Kerr, 2010:40). That is why, it can be stated that the match is in its normal course from the point of view of the referee, player and coach, and the referee does not make a decision that will directly affect the game. Moreover, the number of objections made by the players and the officials on the team benches to the decisions made by the referee is at an acceptable level. Polat and Sönmezoglu (2016: 486) found that sports media, social media, sports commentators' discourse and behavior, sports club managers' discourse and behavior, TFF decisions and politicians' violent behavior in football are among the factors that



significantly affect violence in sports (Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016: 486). Gürpınar and Güven (2011: 12) state in their research that referees' unfair card-giving, unfavorable decisions, protecting opposing players, and biased behavior in previous matches are "very effective" in spectator aggression. They also point out that referees who officiate more matches than other referees in a season are not forgotten by fans for their past wrong decisions, and this, in turn, leads to aggression (Gürpınar and Güven, 2011: 12). In the light of this data obtained, it can be stated that the number of fouls committed by teams, the cards seen by players, and the number of objections made by players and club management to referee decisions are at a normal level. In order for football referees to do their job more easily in football organizations; It can be said that it is crucial for professional psychologists, managers and other football institutions to work with the responsibility of educating their fans, club managers, coaches and other club officials, focusing on the quality of football, as their actions and policies are have a purpose on this situation (Devís-Devís et al., 2021: 10).

When Table 2 is scrutinized, when the average yellow card that MKE Ankaragücü sports club has seen throughout the season and the average yellow and red cards in the relevant match are examined, when the card average of the relevant match is compared with the end-of-season card average, it is determined that it is below the average card that the team has seen both in the match played and throughout the season. Therefore, when we examine the incident specifically for the relevant match, it can be stated that there is no abnormal situation in terms of the cards shown. In addition, when the end-of-season averages of other super league teams are examined, it is observed that the average of MKE Ankaragücü team is lower. Based on this, it can be stated that the number of cards shown by the referee does not cause the tension of the game to rise and that there is no abnormal situation. Due to the fact that football is a sports branch that is open to contact due to its nature and that there are many controversial positions, it is thought that the responsibility of the referees is quite high in managing football in accordance with its rules. In addition, in return for the material and moral values that the fans, athletes, coaches, managers and clubs who are involved in football spend in order to be successful in an ever-continuing competitive environment; It can be stated that the expectation of referees to manage matches fairly, equally, impartially and in accordance with the rules is the most natural right of all stakeholders in football. However, when these findings are evaluated together, it cannot be said that the referee has an intervention that will directly affect the game. İlhan and Çimen (2011) determined as a result of their research that the sports media paves the way for acts of violence in football and that club managers incite acts of violence and aggression in football (İlhan and Çimen, 2011: 231). As a result of their research, Cantez and Yıldız (2021) determined that spectators were at the forefront among those exhibiting aggressive behavior toward football referees. They stated that the football federation, players, the media, club managers, and football coaches then followed suit (Cantez and Yıldız, 2021: 327).

When the findings of the average data of disciplinary penalties per match of the upper division (super league) and Turkish FIFA referees in the last 5 seasons given in Table 3 are examined, it can be said that the number of disciplinary penalties is close to each other in the last 5 seasons, considering the number of matches played in each season. When the examination of the number of cards shown by referees in previous seasons is taken into consideration, it can be said that the number of cards shown in the 2023-2024 season is at a normal level (See Table 3). In light of these results, it was concluded that the number of cards shown by the referees in the 2020-2021 season was above the other seasons considered. It is thought that the reason for this is that more matches were played in the 2020-2021 season compared to other seasons. This data shows that it is unlikely that the attack against the

referee had any effect on the incident experienced in the relevant season. As a result of their research, Polat and Sönmezoğlu (2016) determined that the factors that lead individuals to violence in football matches are personality, education level, economic status, psychological status, cultural characteristics and the fact that stadiums are seen as places to relieve stress (Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016: 485). According to the results of the research conducted by Özcan and his colleagues (2024), they found that the important factors that lead fans to violence are the provocative behavior of the clubs' cheerleaders, the wrong decisions made by the referees, the tension-inducing news on various social media platforms, the fans provoking each other in the streets and other places where the match will be watched, the inadequacy of the law on violence in sports, the deficiencies in security, the way the security forces intervene in the events and the quarrels between the clubs before the match (Özcan et al., 2024: 426). When the results of the research conducted by Dal and her colleagues (2014) were examined, they found that fans tended to be more aggressive and violent when their favorite team was defeated (Dal et al., 2014: 47). In order to eliminate violence and disorder, which are completely undesirable situations in sports, it is of great importance to provide regular, effective and consistent training especially to athletes and coaches on this subject. Sports competitions are not divisive and create an environment of conflict; The fact that the structure of the sport, which provides unity and solidarity, instills sharing, relaxes, and highlights values that are important for humanity such as friendship, brotherhood and peace, is demonstrated by the athletes to the fans will also have a positive effect on the fans. In addition, the private security personnel working in the competitions should receive effective training and the law enforcement personnel should receive training in a way that they will specialize in the internal and external security of the stadium, which will play an important role in preventing violent incidents (Üstünel and Alkurt, 2015: 166).

According to the findings of the study presented in Table 4 regarding the analysis of how this incident, which occurred at a national level, was brought to the agenda in national and international newspapers, it is concluded that when the incident was reflected in the media in general, it was brought to the agenda with the expressions of shameful, saddening and unusual (See Table 4). Demirel (2013: 65), in his study on the investigation of football factors that lead football spectators to aggression and violence according to police officers, found that police officers affected the aggression levels of spectators as a result of excessive exaggeration of a match in the sports media before it was played. At the same time, he stated that with the constantly developing technology, exaggerated comments, exaggerated criticisms and high expectations made before the match to be played on the internet, television and various social media platforms trigger and increase the violence and aggression incidents that may occur before and after the match (Demirel, 2013: 65). As a result of their research, Gültekin and Soyer (2010) stated that acts of violence taking place on football fields can be partially prevented due to the insufficient number of police personnel in the competitions and that more effective and deterrent sanctions are needed, thus preventing acts of violence (Gültekin and Soyer, 2010: 1236).

### **Suggestions**

Nobody wants such violent or criminal things to happen on football pitches. In the event of such an occurrence, it is believed that adopting further measures to enforce more severe punishments instead of fines under the "Law No. 6222 on the Prevention of Violence and Disorder in Sports" may deter persons from engaging in violent activities in sports events.

For the reason that football is so popular in our country and around the world, it can be argued that making advertisements and information in the form of "public service announcements"

that will keep people away from violent acts, particularly through mass media and social media platforms, can help to prevent violence.

It can be suggested that organizing trainings to avoid violent acts by experts in the field, assigned by the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) before each football season, during the mid-season break and at the end of the season, by stating that the participation of sports clubs is obligatory, can prevent potential violent acts.

The guidelines of the TFF's Central Referee Committee (CRC) specify the methods and punishments that will be imposed in response to incorrect decisions made by football referees during matches. All physical and psychological attacks on referees that occur outside of the Central Executive Board's orders are regarded illegal and constitute an attack on public authority.

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