



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Recording Rights:** Who Owns the Game in Nigerian Football?

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**10th November**  
**2025**

# Introduction

In Nigerian football, questions often arise about who owns the right to record or broadcast a match and what laws apply. Broadcast rights refer to the legal authority granted to a league, club, or licensed broadcaster to film, transmit, and commercially exploit sports events. These rights are a major source of revenue and are protected under Nigerian copyright and broadcasting laws.

Recording sports matches in Nigeria requires authorization. Under section 13 of the Copyright Act 2022 (the “Act”), broadcast rights holders, usually the league or an assigned broadcaster, have the exclusive right to record

and distribute audiovisual content of matches. Unauthorized commercial recording, even by clubs or third parties, amounts to copyright infringement.

This FAQ highlights the key legal issues surrounding the recording and broadcasting of football matches in Nigeria, the implications of unauthorized recordings, and the best practices for ensuring compliance.





# What Nigerian laws govern the recording and broadcasting of games during sports events?

The legal framework for recording and broadcasting games includes:

- a. The Copyright Act, 2022
- b. The Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023
- c. The National Broadcasting Commission Act 1992
- d. The 6th Edition of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (as Amended), 2020
- e. Framework and Rules of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL)



# Can a club legally film an opponent's training session for tactical advantage?

No. While Nigeria does not have an explicit “spygate law” akin to jurisdictions like the United States where, for example, Rule 17 of the NFL Rules 2024 prohibits certain unfair acts, including the videotaping of another team’s training sessions as seen in the infamous Spygate scandal, such conduct remains problematic under Nigerian law. In the Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL), filming an opponent’s training session is inconsistent with principles of fair play and sportsmanship.

Furthermore, such actions may not qualify as fair use under the Copyright Act, 2022, particularly if the footage is broadcast or distributed. If the training occurs on private property, unauthorized recording could also give rise to a claim for trespass, compounding the legal and ethical violations.



# Are spectators allowed to film games with their phones?

Yes, under the Act<sup>1</sup>, spectators may record brief clips of a match for personal use or non-commercial sharing (such as on social media), as this falls under the fair dealing exception. However, full match recordings or any form of commercial distribution would violate the exclusive broadcast rights of the event holder.

Additionally, leagues and event organizers may impose stricter rules through ticket terms and conditions, which can expressly prohibit any form of recording during the event.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 20 of the Copyright Act 2022





# What are the penalties for unauthorized recording or use of footage?

If found liable for recording unauthorized footage, offenders may face civil damages for copyright infringement under the Copyright Act, fines or imprisonment for privacy breaches under

the NDPA 2023, sanctions by leagues or federations, and reputational harm for lack of sportsmanship.





# What remedies exist for unlawful videotaping in Nigerian sports?

When broadcasting rights are breached, the broadcast right holder can make takedown requests for unauthorized use if the recording is broadcast. For this to be effective, it is important for such to have an efficient monitoring mechanism to detect the online distribution of

footage and notify the platforms being used. They can also sue for damages for copyright infringement or get an injunction against the infringing party.

# What are the best practices that clubs and content creators can adopt?

To avoid being liable for copyright infringement, it is best for content creators or others to obtain written permission from rights holders before filming matches, distributing footage, or doing anything else that might infringe on the exclusive rights of the broadcast right holder. Having a contract that clearly spells out ownership and licensing

and the rights and obligations of all parties is crucial to ensure respect for data protection and broadcast rights and compliance with intellectual property and privacy laws.



# Why should sports organizations seek legal guidance before recording or broadcasting content?

Recording and distributing sports content intersect copyright, broadcasting, data protection, and contract law. Without legal guidance, clubs risk infringement claims and reputational harm.

Engaging counsel ensures rights are secured and commercial opportunities pursued without legal uncertainty.



# About Stren & Blan Partners

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