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“DFL for Equity”: DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga builds portfolio of equity investments

The DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga is taking the next step forward in its corporate story and acquiring shareholdings in start-ups and SMEs. Since 2006, the DFL has been working to cover the entire media value chain of German professional football – from the production of the base signal for media partners and the capture and processing of match data through to the marketing of broadcasting rights. The new approach to equity investments, which goes by the name of “DFL for Equity”, is the next logical step in this strategy.

“DFL’s ability to systematically cover the media value chain is what sets it apart in the arena of international football,” says Christian Seifert, CEO of the DFL. “In the interests of both the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs, we want to draw much greater benefit in the future from the positive growth of companies that are closely allied with DFL.”

With this strategic approach to equity investments, the DFL wants to be the first football league to create a portfolio of investments in innovative and promising companies in the media, technology and sports industries. It will acquire shares in companies primarily through intangible assets, but also through collaborations with further partners.

Israeli start-up Track160 represents the DFL’s first equity investment under its “DFL for Equity” program. The DFL’s stake of around 10 percent in Track160 secures it a variable deferred profit share. In return, Track160 will gain access to the DFL’s match database and digital football archive, enabling it to develop its artificial-intelligence-based analytics system faster and, with the aid of the DFL network, to grow rapidly both at home and abroad. The new partnership can make a substantial contribution to Track160’s promising future as a “DFL invested company.”

“Track160’s system will find application in future-oriented fields such as match analytics, coaching, sports medicine, media offerings, and gaming,” says Seifert. The start-up is developing a system based on artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning that will capture in 3D form the motions of the players and the trajectory of the ball. Unlike the systems currently in use around the world, the Track160 system uses only the match video and does not need GPS or other wearable sensors, expensive hardware or human operators, making it an interesting proposition not only for elite teams, but also for amateur clubs of all divisions. In August 2018, Track160 was honored with the European SportsTech Award at the Spielmacher Conference in Hamburg. Prior to acquiring a stake in the start-up, the DFL conducted a thorough due diligence process.

“We are excited about the new opportunities our partnership with DFL will open up for us. The sportstech industry is transitioning to a new era, one in which data and AI-based technologies will make fascinating new applications possible. We want to revolutionize the world of sports with disruptive new coaching, media, scouting and gaming applications,” says Dr. Miky Tamir, co-founder and chairman of Track160.

[Click here to gain access to the website of Track160](#)

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17 | 2018

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