

# An attack on football, tension in Ukraine and farewell to Philip

No one with an attachment to the top end of professional football over the past few decades could have been shocked by this week's news that 12 clubs are planning to create their own European Super League. But, for fans of the beautiful game, the announcement was heartbreaking. Does this near-closed shop of a league - if it goes ahead - signal the breaking point of a sport already bastardised by money? The furious reaction from governing bodies, politicians, other clubs and, most importantly, the fans suggests so.

This week, chief sportswriter Barney Ronay tries to make sense of the greed that brought the world's favourite sport to this point, while Sean Ingle looks at the behind-the-scenes mechanisms that led to the announcement. Then, Jonathan Liew suggests that the Super League could only be the brainchild of people who hate the game.

**The big story** [Page 10](#) →

**Elsewhere this week, seven years after the annexation of Crimea, tension is growing on the Ukraine-Russia border with reports of a mass build-up of Russian troops.**

Could Putin's army make a new move on their western neighbour? Oksana Grytsenko reports from Marinka in Ukraine, a border town filled with fear and despair, while Andrew Roth analyses the state of the two countries' militaries as the threat of conflict grows.

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**Last Saturday saw the funeral of Prince Philip at Windsor Castle.**

It was, by the standards of the royals at least, a muted affair marked for many by the sad sight of the Queen sat alone in St George's Chapel due to Covid rules. As Jonathan Freedland writes, it felt like we were witnessing the end of an era in British life and gaining a glimpse of the next one. **Spotlight** [Page 20](#) →



## On the cover

In his insightful piece on the decision to form a European Super League, Sean Ingle reports one of the breakaway football clubs' executives describing the move as a "nuclear" option. They got that right, at least: the fallout from across the entire sport has been more toxic than anyone could have imagined.

*Photograph: Getty/GNM Imaging*



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