



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

3-16 March 2020



Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Ghana

GHPL: GFA summons Ashanti Gold president over match-fixing allegations

The Ghana Football Association (GFA) has sent out an invitation to Ashanti Gold president Kwaku Frimpong in relation to his claims of match manipulation of the club's recent Premier League encounter with Wafa.

On Matchweek 12 of the top-flight earlier this month, the Miners suffered a humiliation at the hands of the Academy Boys who registered a 6-1 home win at Sogakope's Wafa Sports Complex.

Comments by Frimpong on radio after the game, however, alleged their heavy defeat may have been fixed.

"The Compliance and Integrity Unit of the Ghana Football Association has written to AshantiGold SC President Dr Kwaku Frimpong seeking clarification about a statement he purportedly made after their Ghana Premier League fixture against Wafa at Sogakope on 1st March 2020," the GFA announced on its official website on Friday night.

"Dr Frimpong is said to have alleged that the game was manipulated. He further stated in an interview on Kumasi-based Ash FM that he sensed elements of betting in the game.

"Dr Frimpong is being asked to confirm making the statement and if true assist the GFA with details of evidence available to him.

"The Code of Ethics 2019 of the Ghana Football Association requires participants of Ghana football including club executives (Dr Kwaku Frimpong) to cooperate with the Unit to investigate incidents in match manipulation.

"It must also be noted that the Code of Ethics and the Disciplinary Code prohibits the making of false allegations without proof."

Ashanti Gold, the third most successful club in the history of the Premier League with four titles, currently sit sixth on the table.

The Obuasi-based side is set to play as guests of Karela United in Matchweek 15 on Sunday.

Source: 14 March 2020, MyJoyOnline

Football

<https://www.myjoyonline.com/sports/football/ghpl-gfa-summons-ashanti-gold-president-over-match-fixing-allegations/>



Kenya

No end in sight as match-fixing menace gains ground in Kenyan football

Nation Sport recently uncovered how a group of foreigners came into the country disguised as representatives of two multinational companies eager to establish a footprint in Kenya.

Part of their strategy was to sponsor local clubs. Kenyan Premier League (KPL) teams Sofapaka and Sony Sugar jumped at the opportunity.

There was a catch though. In both instances, Quantdragon Limited and Living 3D Holdings, which Nation Sport has established were run by the same people, had a clause in the contracts that allowed them to bring in several foreign players and technical staff into the two teams.

In the case of 2009 KPL champions Sofapaka, Living 3D Holdings brought in Portuguese national Divaldo Alves as a coach, replacing John Baraza.

Nation Sport has now established the 41-year-old coach has a history of manipulating matches and was banned for three months by the Lithuanian Football Federation for the same vice while coaching top-tier league team Pakruojis.

It was not by coincidence that Living 3D Holdings brought on board Alves to Sofapaka. He was in Kenya to help the team fix matches. Sofapaka registered one of its worst ever performances during his reign as coach and some of the matches during this period were reported to have suspicious betting patterns by international gambling monitoring experts.

Nation Sport has also established that Living 3D Holdings wanted Sofapaka to reschedule most of its matches from weekends to week days. This is captured in clause 4.3 of the contract signed by the two parties that is now in possession of Nation Sport.

“The club hereby agrees that it shall endeavour to its level best to reschedule matches from the weekend to week days, depending on their ability to do so. This is to provide mileage for sponsors as weekday fixtures draw more viewers than weekends ...” the contract says in part.

KPL games have low viewership, especially on week days and this was a ploy by Living 3D Holdings and its representatives at Sofapaka to have safe play grounds to manipulate matches without attracting much attention that would raise eyebrows.

Clause 4.2 of the contract also indicates that Sofapaka, as part of its obligations to the sponsor, was to feature in two international friendly matches before the commencement of the league on August 2019, and also during the subsequent Fifa International match dates in the duration of the agreement. This never happened but it is clear that the contract was drawn to favour Living 3D Holdings' match manipulation plans.

Through a working partnership with Zaihan Mohamed Yusof, a senior sports correspondent working for "The Strait Times" in Singapore, I have reliably established that Paolo Michael Pereira, the man who represented Living 3D Holdings in the contract signing and unveiling ceremony with Sofapaka, has ties with three known convicted Singaporean match fixers -- through his social media. They are Wilson Raj Perumal, Chann Sankaran and Titani Periasamy.

Paolo had been to Hungary in 2018 where Wilson Raj Perumal is currently living. He has lived in Budapest, Hungary, since 2012 to act as a prosecution witness in a match-fixing trial.

Interestingly, Nation Sport has reliably learnt that the broker of the deal between Sofapaka and Living 3D Holdings is a former Hungarian footballer, Mark Danyi, who had previously been sanctioned and was involved in the same match-fixing trial with Perumal. While link is by no way proof of collusion or match-fixing, it raises eyebrows.

“I have covered match-fixing for over a decade and I can confirm that nothing much has changed. Wilson, Chann and Titani are still at it and they try to cover it up by using proxies,” Zaihan told Nation Sport.

Kericho-based KPL team Zoo has also been a victim of alleged match manipulation by some of its players at some stage this season. The club managers got wind of the happenings and this led to a mass clear-out of players during the mid-season transfer window in January.

Out went Sammy Sindani, Martin Elungat, Norman Werunga and Kelvin Oduor. Johnstone Ligare, Dominic Okoth and goalkeeper Daniel Kiptoo had been released earlier. Most of those axed are said to have manipulated league matches involving the club.

“Zoo doesn't pay the players much but we could see a sudden lifestyle change in the culprits. That raised suspicions and, after investigations within the club,, it was established they were fixing games,” a reliable source within the club, who requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, told Nation Sport.

The source also revealed that Living 3D Holdings had approached the club (Zoo) with the same offer they had tabled at Sofapaka -- a Sh36 million-a-season sponsorship -- that involved Living 3D Holdings coming on board with five foreign players and a coach, but it was turned down. Living 3D Holdings upped the offer to Sh100 million to take over the club but this, too, was turned down.

MANIPULATION

Wazito's 4-1 win over Zoo on Sunday also witnessed some school boy howlers by goalkeepers from both ends. The match was flagged for possible manipulation by a reliable betting analyst in Europe.

The match-fixing cancer is so widespread in the league that it even involves some sports journalists, Nation Sport has learnt.

"I was approached by a journalist who was offering mouth-watering perks to me on condition that I would convince Zoo players to fix several games. He even warned me that even if I refused to take it up then the players would definitely do. That was enough proof that some players were manipulating matches in the team," the source added.

"It came to my attention that some journalists purporting to be at work during local matches are actually helping match fixers. They have easy and direct access to the players and will, through signals as games proceed, instruct players, especially goalkeepers, when to let in a goal or defenders to commit fouls that would lead to situations that would influence the outcome of those particular matches," the source added.

From Zoo to Chemelil, the vice continues. Goalkeeper Daniel Kiptoo has since joined Chemelil Sugar. Multiple sources confided in Nation Sport that he is at the centre of a closely-knit match-fixing cartel at the club that also involves several other players and a member of the technical staff.

"A day before our matches, he would receive large amounts of money to influence games and he had recruited some players within the team to the cartel and he openly conceded funny goals while his recruits, mostly defenders, committed silly mistakes in dangerous positions," a former Chemelil Sugar player, who also sought anonymity, said.

"I raised the issue with the club management but, unfortunately, some officials were part of the scheme and therefore nothing much could be done. Despite the financial struggles at Chemelil Sugar, Kiptoo has become a man with deep pockets after a few months of playing for the team. He is now jokingly referred to by teammates as 'tajiri' (rich man)," the source added.

Several phone calls and a text message to Kiptoo to get his response on the allegations went unanswered.

Tusker goalkeeper Emery Mvuyekure also recently revealed how he was texted by a match fixer who promised him huge perks if he agreed to let in a specific number of goals during a league match. However, the Rwandan international turned down the offer.

Tusker FC coach Robert Matano says there is a need to have a clear legal framework to prosecute those trying to manipulate matches in Kenya.

"Fifa came all the way, did all the investigations and banned some Kenyan players. It is now up to the Kenyan authorities, and by that I mean the government, to take up the matter and convict them. Otherwise we will end up making match-fixing normal in Kenyan football since the culprits know nothing will happen in the long run even if their misdeeds are uncovered," he said.

BIGGEST LOSERS

Gaming company SportPesa, who were the title sponsors of the Kenyan Premier League (KPL) until mid-last year, stopped offering local matches up for betting in their portal, a move many thought was as a result of suspected match-fixing. The company's CEO Ronald Karauri says this was never the case.

"We were not aware nor did we suspect anything, but being the league title sponsor we decided it would be best for us not to offer the games on our website. The biggest misinformation that is usually spread is that betting companies can fix matches. The biggest loser when matches are fixed is the bookmaker, because it's usually people trying to steal from the bookmaker," Karauri told Nation Sport.

"For example, imagine Sofapaka playing Barcelona, the odds for Sofapaka to win could be 100 to 1. You can imagine what would happen if someone fixes the match. It means the odds are beaten and the bookmaker has to pay all the money. Bookmakers have business because of the unpredictability of games. If results can be predetermined, there is no betting business. That's why bookmakers are the biggest losers if there is match fixing," he added.

Karauri believes Football Kenya Federation (FKF) should take the lead in curbing the match-fixing menace.

“The federation should educate players on the risks. A player should understand that he risks losing his whole career over a single game. The federation is the first line of defence against match-fixing in football, and it should take that responsibility seriously. Betting companies can assist in providing information by looking at the trends and identifying suspect matches so that action can be taken,” he says.

FKF Chief Executive Officer Barry Otieno told Nation Sport that the federation is working closely with Fifa to prevent future incidents of match manipulation.

“We don’t have concrete leads of match-fixing as yet but after the media reports and the recent banning of several Kenyan players accused of manipulating games in the Kenyan Premier League (KPL), we are now working closely with Fifa to put in place measures to ensure we detect and prevent any match-fixing activities in Kenya. All this is intelligence-based. We, therefore, cannot reveal to the public the specifics of what we are doing,” Otieno said.

Reliable sources indicate that local players receive between Sh200,000 and Sh500,000 each just to manipulate the outcome of one game.

The targets are mainly defenders and goalkeepers, but some match officials are also linked to the vice. Most of the manipulated matches are normally offered for betting by gamblers with deep pockets, mostly in unregulated markets in Asia.

Global betting turnover is estimated to be around Sh90 million per KPL match.

Last month, world football governing body Fifa indicated that a number of matches in the 2019 Kenyan Premier League season were manipulated.

Consequently, Fifa banned Moses Chikati, Festus Okiring and Festo Omukoto, all Kenyans, from taking part in any kind of football-related activity at national and international level (administrative, sports or any other) for a period of four years.

Last year, former Kenyan international George Awino Audi was handed a 10-year ban by Fifa after he was found guilty of match-fixing.

The world football body also ordered the former Harambee Stars defender to pay a fine of CHF 15,000 (Sh1.5 million).

“Moreover, Kenyan player George Owino Audi has been banned from taking part in any kind of football-related activity at both national and international level (administrative, sports or any other) for a period of ten (10) years. In addition, a fine in the amount of CHF 15,000 has been imposed upon him,” the statement from Fifa read in part.

Owino is said to have been paid millions of shillings to throw away national team matches.

Source: 4 March 2020, Daily Nation

Football

<https://www.nation.co.ke/sports/football/How-match-fixing-is-gaining-ground-in-Kenyan-football/1102-5477146-15gb9l/index.html>

Nepal

ANFA officials football team in 'match fixing'

KATHMANDU: Himalayan Sherpa and Saraswoti Youth Club were competing to outsmart each other with their soccer trick in the third match of Martyrs Memorial 'A' Division League's 9th edition on Feb. 27. However, the match served an unbelievable result.

Saraswoti Youth Club which had witnessed 7 consecutive defeats in 8 matches played before, managed to score 4 goals against Himalayan Sherpa's 3 goals.

Most of the critics turned skeptic about the causes of unexpected result. The coaches of both teams were asked if it was unexpected. They seemed speechless in front of the reporters.

Both clubs alleged of match fixing are the clubs of the All Nepal Footballs Association (ANFA) officials. Himalayan Sherpa Club is run by ANFA President Karma Chhiring Sherpa. Similarly, ANFA's Vice President, Shixit Parajuli is the president of Saraswoti Club.

Himalayan Sherpa Club team

Many doubted that the alleged match fixing between the clubs run by ANFA President and Vice President could hardly come under investigation. However, ANFA, the national governing body of the soccer in Nepal launched the investigation.

A team consisting of ANFA's integrity officer former DIG Sudeep Acharya initiated the probe on the issue and found 'arbitration attempt' in the case. Based on the probe's conclusion, the Disciplinary Committee of ANFA took action against Deepesh Shrestha, then captain of Saraswati Club. Shrestha is alleged of arbitration attempt.

ANFA's disciplinary committee has sanctioned Shrestha for 2 years. In addition to it, he has to pay 50000 rupees as fine.

ANFA's probe had found that captain Shrestha had approached Himalayan Sherpa's goalkeeper Kishor Giri with 'match fixing proposal'.

According to the investigation, although team captain Shrestha had gone with the arbitration proposal, Himalaya's Giri defied it. Giri had gone with the proposal when his team was in relegation zone.

When both groups were anxious about the possibility of falling into relegation, on the 2nd day of the 9th edition of Division league Shrestha had tried arbitration. Defeating Sherpa at 4-3 goal difference, Saraswoti had managed to score 3 more point with that win.

The win against Sherpa, was the first and last victory for Saraswoti Youth Club. With one victory and one equalizer result, Saraswoti has got 4 points in the league.

Himalayan Sherpa had to satisfy itself at 10th position in the league. It had defeated Machhindra Club with 2-0 difference in the match.

When the news of the match fixing became public, the integrity officer initiated the probe and Shrestha and Giri were banned to continue their scheduled matches as well. Though they were sued and were banned from forthcoming matches for 2 years, the public is not informed about their where about.

Saraswoti's Captain Shrestha had approached Sherpa's goalkeeper Kishor through 'face book messenger'. After getting phone number via messenger, Shrestha proposed Giri for the arbitration assuring him that both of them would get lucrative financial reward through the deal.

Himalayan Sherpa Club's team involvement

According to integrity official Acharya, during the probe they found no proof of involvement of the team members of either of the team. "Although we kept some players under vigilance and inquired some more, we found no other players involved in the alleged case," Acharya said to Khabarhub.

The strong evidence related to the issue, however is believed to be the phone and messenger conversation between Saraswoti's Captain and Himalayan's goalkeeper.

Out of 91 matches of the league, the probe was centered only in one match played between Himalayan Sherpa and Saraswoti.

Integrity officer Acharya says that they did not find enough evidence to prove arbitration or match fixing. "Saraswoti's Captain put the proposal to the Sherpa's goalkeeper," Acharya said, "however, Sherpa's keeper Giri defied the proposal." He told

Khabarhub that they got no evidence of the influence of the proposal in the match played.

The investigation has not mentioned anything about the possibility of the involvement of the senior officials of the club. Though critics wonder how a player dared to talk about the financial promises without the instruction or promises from the senior officials. Acharya claims that they found no proof of senior officials.

Club manager faces action for withholding the info

Another person sued in the 'arbitration allegation' is Bijen Pudasaini, the Manager of Himalayan Sherpa. The report shows that Sherpa's goalkeeper Giri reported the proposal to his team coach Min Basnet on Feb. 25.

Coach Basnet informed manager Pudasaini on Feb. 26, but manager Pudasaini took it too lightly and responded to him asking him to focus on the match. Pudasaini assured Basnet he would look after the case.

Saraswoti Youth Club's team involvement

The regulations demand that provided someone proposes for match fixing, the group or individual should inform it to the manager and the manager has to inform it to the senior officials.

"In case of this match, Goalkeeper Giri reported his manager one day late," Integrity Officer Acharya reported to Khabarhub, "and the manager informed us only at the time of investigation; Pudasaini did not relay in time."

ANFA has taken action against him for taking such grave issue like match fixing too lightly. The disciplinary authority of ANFA has decided to fine 30 thousand rupees and 3 months restriction. Goalkeeper Giri has only got the warning.

When asked about the cause of the unbelievable performance in the match, Acharya said, "Though the result in the game seemed unusual, the goals are not unnatural."

Presidents also questioned!

Two persons involved in this incident were booked for punishment. The captain of Saraswoti Club has to bear 2 years ban and 50 thousand rupees as fine, whereas the manager of Himalayan Sherpa Club has to go through 3 months ban and 30 thousand rupees as fine. However, the questions arise what made the governing body ANFA shrink to investigate on and take action against the guilty clubs.

ANFA's former President Ganesh Thapa opines that the clubs also should be the subject for investigation in this issue.

Although clause 21 of competition regulations has the provision of stringent measures against the persons involved in match-fixing or playing for arbitration, no action is taken as per the regulation. Thapa, in his social media post, has mentioned sarcastically about the strange disciplinary action of the national governing body and has further added, "Himalayan Sherpa is ANFA president's club. Club officials might have been involved in it, so concerned authority should investigate it thoroughly."

However, Acharya while speaking to Khabarhub, defended the action reiterating that though the ANFA prez and vice prez. were also interrogated in person, their involvement could not be established.

Criminal offence made shallow

Nepal's legal provisions regard arbitration or match-fixing a criminal offence. Legal practitioners smell the 'conflict of interest' in the way the investigation procedure was executed. They opine that when the ANFA officials clubs are involved in the criminal offence, ANFA cannot form the probe committee unless the alleged club heads are suspended.

However, ANFA's Integrity Officer Acharya does not deem it a criminal offence citing the absence of financial transactions in the alleged issue.

Bel Bahadur Pandey, the spokesperson at the Central Investigation Bureau of Nepal Police tells that they need ANFA's complain to start investigation in the issue.

A team of ANFA had been to CIB to request it to investigate the offence, but it did not file a case, rather it returned talking with the officers there. "A team had come from ANFA. They said it looked like arbitration and returned," Pandey said, "the issue got confined to informal discussion alone."

"Perhaps they wanted to take administrative action alone," the spokesperson added, "otherwise, they would have come. They promised to come after discussion, but have not come since."

FIFA and AFC's zero tolerance!

ANFA's Disciplinary Committee has stated that it has taken action against Saraswoti's Captain Shrestha as per clause 21(7) of ANFA's Regulations. The clause states that provided the ANFA's investigation on the request of the concerned club finds the club and the players involved in arbitration or fixing, the player will be punished as per the rules of the nations and FIFA and ANFA's regulations."

FIFA and AFC the global body and the regional body to regulate football have been claiming that they hold zero tolerance policy in the instances of match fixing.

ANFA's Disciplinary Committee has also cited Rule 66 of AFC's Disciplinary and Ethics Code as the ground to take action against Shrestha. It provisions that provided the 'match-fixing' is verified, the player may face restriction on playing football and may require to pay 30 thousands to 50 thousand US dollar as fine.

Nepal's law also regards match fixing as a crime against state. Clause 51(3) of Nepal's Criminal Code Act (2017) provisions : Provided any player representing Nepal while competing in a tournament between the domestic players or players outside the country are found involved in some sorts of arbitration so as to influence the result such players the act shall be held as a crime against the state."

General Secretary of ANFA Indra Man Tuladhar says that the conditions apply both at domestic and international tournament.

Match-fixing was there in 2015

Match-fixing is not a completely new phenomenon to Nepal's foot ball. Earlier four national players including Captain Sagar Thapa, players Ritesh Thapa, Sandeep Rai, Bikash Singh Chhetri as well as their coach Anjan KC had faced fine and restrictions on match-fixing allegations. Nepal's law however, had given clean chit to citing their deed could not be regarded as the crime against the state. They had got clean chit on May 19, 2018.

Source: 16 March 2020, Khabarhub

Football

<https://english.khabarhub.com/2020/16/82166/>

Portugal

Portugal investigates football money laundering, house of Spain's Casillas targeted

LISBON (Reuters) - Portuguese authorities searched the house of Spain's 2010 World Cup winning captain Iker Casillas on Wednesday as part of an ongoing investigation into alleged money laundering and tax fraud in the world of football.

Public prosecutors said authorities, including nearly 200 police officers, carried out 76 searches across the country at houses, football clubs, lawyers and agents' offices.

In a statement shared on Twitter, Casillas said he is "absolutely calm" with respect to the investigations and has "full confidence" in the Portuguese justice system.

Casillas wishes that "transparency reaches everyone and every corner of football," the statement read.

The operation, named Out of Play, is investigating alleged tax avoidance in the football business from 2015 onwards. According to the prosecutors, those involved allegedly dodged payments of tax owed to the Portuguese state.

Casillas, who led Spain to win Euro 2008 and 2012 as well as the 2010 World Cup, suffered a heart attack in May while training with current club Porto, and has not played since. He returned to training in November.

Portugal's biggest football clubs, including Porto, have already reacted to the investigation. Porto confirmed the club has been the target of searches and will collaborate with the investigation.

Last month Casillas announced he would run for president of the Spanish Football Federation when elections are called later this year.

Source: 4 March 2020, Reuters

Football

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-portugal-football-casillas/portugal-investigates-football-money-laundering-house-of-spains-casillas-targeted-idUKKBN20R2XX>

Spain

In Spain, Soccer Transfers and 'Ghost Clubs' Collide in a Tax-Fraud Case

The Spanish authorities charged a powerful soccer agent and accused him of hiding millions of dollars in commissions as he worked in the player-transfer market.

The luxury homes on a Spanish island and the gleaming yachts moored in Mediterranean ports were all trappings of a life well-lived.

They were also, according to the Spanish authorities, the fruits of a multimillion-dollar money laundering and tax-evasion operation controlled by one of world soccer's most powerful soccer agents, which last month resulted in criminal indictments against the agent, Abdilgafar Fali Ramadani, and several of his associates.

According to the authorities, Ramadani was at the center of the scheme in which a group of agents connected to him were able to exploit lax regulations and hide millions of dollars in commissions by moving athletes through several so-called "ghost" clubs in Belgium, Serbia and Cyprus. By doing so, the authorities said, the agents avoided paying taxes on the payments they received for brokering the deals.

Reached by telephone, Ramadani declined to comment on the charges. His Berlin-based agency, Lian Sports, has grown to represent some of soccer's most sought-after players.

Like dozens of other investigations that have roiled European sports in recent years, leading to high-profile tax cases against players like Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo and financial examinations of clubs like Paris St.-Germain and Manchester City, the Ramadani case, named Operation Lanigan, stemmed from a leak of documents — the so-called Football Leaks files — that have shined a light on soccer's business, and on a murky player-trading industry that is worth more than \$7 billion annually.

When Football Leaks hacked documents related Ramadani and then leaked them to news media outlets or published them online, Spanish prosecutors got a window into the operation, and a road map to the agents who profited from it.

"They got information from Football Leaks and then decided to start the case with the special prosecutor's office responsible for organized crime and anti-corruption," Borja Pastor de la Morena, an official at Europol, an organization that coordinates Pan-European investigations, said in a telephone interview.

The investigation's main findings, Morena said, were the agents' use of intermediary clubs in second- and third-tier European leagues as waystations in player trades. One teenage player bought by a Cypriot team for just over \$2 million, for example, was sold six days later for more than triple the price. Another was on the same club's books for only eight days.

In many cases, Morena said, "the players who are involved in the transfers did not need to set foot in the intermediary club."

The indictments, and the details of the case, come at a delicate moment for the sport's biggest agents. In recent months, the agents — often professional rivals — have joined forces in efforts to reject plans by soccer's governing body, FIFA, to tame their industry by capping commissions and introducing stringent licensing regulations and compulsory examinations.

The investigation, according to Morena, also suggested close links between a handful of top agents.

Ramadani, for example, was not the only agent to profit from moving players through the Cypriot team Apollon Limassol. The team turned over documents related to player transfers to Cypriot authorities and to FIFA, according to a person familiar with the investigation. One of Ramadani's most important clients, Real Madrid's Serbian striker Luca Jovic, was among those whose transfer history includes a brief stopover with Apollon.

After the ghost transfers were made, the Spanish authorities said, the agents and their partners are accused of using a sophisticated network of companies to acquire assets while hiding their ownership. At least €10 million (about \$11.1 million) found its way into Spain through the purchase of assets including real estate on the island of Mallorca and several yachts.

Events in Portugal this week suggested the Football Leaks evidence could yet yield further charges, and implicate other significant figures in soccer. In Portugal, the authorities on Wednesday raided the offices and homes of some of country's biggest soccer teams, as well as some belonging to Gestifute, perhaps the most influential soccer agency in the world. Gestifute is run by Jorge Mendes, whose clients include the Juventus striker Cristiano Ronaldo and Tottenham Hotspur's manager, José Mourinho.

A statement by the Portuguese attorney general's office said nearly 300 tax inspectors and police personnel were involved in more than 70 raids linked to an operation nicknamed Offside. Portugal's two biggest teams, Porto and Benfica, confirmed they were cooperating with authorities.

Following the raids, Portuguese authorities said they had identified 47 suspects, a group, they said, that includes soccer players, agents, lawyers as well as sporting directors, officials at soccer clubs responsible for trading activities.

Until now, the authorities in Portugal have been reluctant to act on evidence from Football Leaks, a trove of data that had been illicitly secured by a 31-year-old Portuguese citizen, Rui Pinto. Pinto had evaded justice for years, hiding in Budapest until his capture on a Portuguese arrest warrant last year led to his extradition.

Pinto has been kept in preventive custody in a Lisbon jail for more than a year. He is expected to stand trial this summer on more than 90 counts, the most serious of which is tied to accusations that he made an extortion attempt on a soccer agency.

Source: 4 March 2020, The New York Times

Football

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/sports/soccer/spain-soccer-ramadani.html>

Switzerland

Swiss trial over German 2006 World Cup corruption opens

Three former German football officials and ex-FIFA Secretary General Urs Linsi will go on trial on Monday in Switzerland over suspicions that Germany bought votes to obtain the 2006 World Cup.

The three defendants have indicated that they will not be present at the hearing in Bellinzona for a variety of reasons, including fear of travelling because of coronavirus contagion.

Swiss Linsi, 70, former German Football Association (DFB) presidents Wolfgang Niersbach, 69, and Theo Zwanziger, 74, and 78-year-old former DFB General Secretary Horst R. Schmidt are being prosecuted for "fraud".

They are accused by the Swiss Federal Prosecutor's Office (BA) of concealing from the DFB the true destination of a transfer of 6.7 million euros (\$7.6 million today), paid in 2005 by the organising committee to former Adidas boss, the late Robert Louis-Dreyfus, via FIFA.

The case of former World Cup organising committee chairman Franz Beckenbauer is being heard separately because of the former Germany captain's poor health.

The investigation was prompted by a report in German publication Der Spiegel in 2015 that Germany had used a secret fund of 10 million Swiss francs (6.7 million euros at the time) to buy votes and obtain the rights to host the competition at the expense of South Africa.

Beckenbauer is suspected of having asked Louis-Dreyfus, to contribute to this fund shortly before the vote on the host in the summer of 2000.

Louis-Dreyfus was allegedly reimbursed by the German Football Association on the pretext of expenses related to a FIFA gala evening, which never took place.

Zwanziger, Niersbach and Schmidt have also been charged with tax fraud in Germany and the case is expected to come to trial in the coming months.

Source: 8 March 2020, Radio France International

<http://www.rfi.fr/en/wires/20200308-swiss-trial-over-german-2006-world-cup-corruption-opens>



United Kingdom

EX-Hamilton ace Dougie Imrie has been arrested by cops probing alleged match-fixing claims, we can reveal.

The former Accies skipper – who is now involved in coaching at the club – was quizzed by detectives investigating suspicious betting patterns. The former Accies skipper – who is now involved in coaching at the club – was quizzed by detectives investigating suspicious betting patterns.

Imrie, 36, was later released “pending further inquiries” by officers based at Scottish Crime Campus in Gartcosh, Lanarkshire. The probe is said to be focusing on bets placed on specific events, including players being booked during matches. Hamilton footie bosses last night said a senior youth coach was contacted by police in relation to a “yellow card incident” last season.

It is understood the specialist fraud investigators are probing claims up to eight players and staff members have placed bets involving a Premiership club. Accies veteran Imrie – who retired from playing at the end of last season – was nicked by officers last month.

He was given seven yellow cards and one red during his last season with the top-flight side. A Police Scotland spokesman said: “A 36-year-old man was arrested on February 28 in connection with a reported incident relating to gambling in sport. “He has been released pending further inquiries.”

Current rules ban players from placing bets on football. And cops could get involved if allegations of fraud – where a player may financially benefit – are made. A spokesman for the SPFL said: “Every SPFL club works with our partners at the SFA and PFA Scotland to educate players about the strict rules around the betting on matches.

“It is essential that the hard won and well justified reputation for integrity is preserved in our game.” Imrie was made a coach after hanging up his boots at the end of the 2018/19 season.

Hamilton fans unveiled a giant banner for Imrie hailing him as “Captain, Legend, Hero” during his final game last May.

The probe comes amid growing concerns surrounding the links between football and gambling.

We told how Hamilton boss Brian Rice, 56, plead guilty to five breaches of SFA gambling rules at a disciplinary hearing in January.

He turned himself in to the authorities and coughed to placing thousands of bets over the past five seasons.

Rice’s betting woes first emerged in 2013 when he borrowed £65,000 from the Qatari National Bank after landing a coaching job in the Middle East — then blew it playing online roulette. He sent letters to friends begging for help over fears he’d be jailed if he didn’t pay back the cash.

The ex-Hibs and Falkirk midfielder later kicked the habit and returned home before becoming Accies head coach in January last year.

Source: 8 March 2020, *The Scottish Sun*

Football

https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/5363234/hamilton-dougie-imrie-match-fixing-probe/amp/#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=Da%20%251%24s

United States

Horse racing trainers and veterinarians charged in international doping scandal

Defendants allegedly tainted races in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Ohio, Kentucky and the United Arab Emirates.

More than two dozen trainers, veterinarians and others in horse racing were charged in a widespread doping scheme that "amounted to nothing less than abuse," federal officials and court papers revealed Monday.

The defendants ran horses at tracks in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Ohio, Kentucky and the United Arab Emirates, federal prosecutors in New York City said.

"Over the course of the scheme, participants manufactured, purchased, sold, shipped, delivered, received and administered thousands of units" of performance-enhancing drugs, or PEDs, for use on racehorses, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman wrote in charging documents against 19 of 27 defendants.

The indicted included 11 trainers, seven veterinarians and nine drug suppliers and distributors, according to Berman.

"All involved in the cruel and systematic doping of racehorses across the United States and indeed around the world using misbranded, adulterated and dangerous performance-enhancing drugs," Berman told reporters in New York.

"This is the most far-reaching prosecution of racehorse doping in the history of the Department of Justice."

William F. Sweeney Jr., the FBI's assistant director in charge of the New York office, said this practice forced horses to run faster than they really could, putting them in grave danger.

"These substances stimulated endurance, deadened nerves, increased oxygen intake and reduced inflammation," Sweeney told reporters. "What actually happened to these horses amounted to nothing less than abuse."

He added: "They experienced cardiac issues, overexertion leading to leg fractures, increased risk of injury and in some cases death."

As of now, investigators said they have not found any evidence that defendants told anyone about their doping scheme so to make bets on juiced horses. But they allegedly profited on hefty prize money.

"Conversely, the human beings in the scheme continued to line their purses as they manipulated this multiple-billion-dollar horse racing industry across the globe," Sweeney said. "People are rightfully disturbed by the mistreatment of animals who have absolutely no means of defense."

Prosecutors said trainer Jorge Navarro "orchestrated" this scheme by "using PEDs designed to evade drug tests, physically concealing containers of PEDs and drug paraphernalia from state regulators and racing officials."

One of Navarro's most prized thoroughbreds, X Y Jet, died of an apparent heart attack this year after receiving a significant amount of PEDs, in one instance 50 injections, according to the indictment.

X Y Jet won the prestigious Dubai Golden Shaheen at Meydan Racecourse in Dubai in March 2019, which paid \$1.5 million to the winner, highlighting a career of 12 victories and more than \$3 million in earnings. The horse won that race and another contest in February of last year in Florida after receiving adulterated and misbranded PEDs before both races, according to the indictment.

While in the UAE for the Dubai race, Navarro "personally administered various adulterated and misbranded PEDs to X Y Jet, including a substance Navarro referred to as 'monkey,' " according to the indictment.

Source: 9 March 2020, NBC News

Horse Racing

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/horse-racing-trainers-veterinarians-charged-nationwide-doping-scandal-n1153126>

GOOD PRACTICES

Lithuania

Lithuanian authorities agree new sports integrity pact

Leading government bodies in Lithuania have signed a new cooperation agreement to help fight match-fixing and move towards ratification of the Macolin Convention.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Education, Science and Sport Algirdas Monkevicius, Minister of the Interior Rita Tamašunienė, Attorney General Evaldas Pašilis and Renatas Požla, Commissioner General of the Police Department. The organisations that each of the four represent have been cooperating to help prevent match-fixing since 2015.

In addition, Special Investigation Service (STT) director Žydrūnas Bartkus and director of the Ministry of the Interior's Financial Crime Investigation Unit (FNIT) Antoni Mikulski signed the agreement as new parties in Lithuania's anti manipulation efforts.

"We hope that the renewed agreement, joined by two new institutions, namely the Financial Crime Investigation Unit (FNIT) and the Special Investigation Service (STT), will help to protect gamblers from match-fixing and help licensed betting companies in Lithuania, ensuring fair competition in sports," Daukšys said.

The country's Gambling Supervisory Authority said that each organisation involved has agreed to take specific actions within its own scope to fight match-fixing.

The move is a step towards ratification of the Council of Europe's (CoE) Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions, better known as the Macolin Convention. Lithuania signed the Convention in September 2014.

"Today's agreement is a continuation of what we have been doing for many years," Monkevicius said. "Lithuania has already signed the International Convention against Manipulation of Sporting Events, but in order for it to come into force, we must cooperate more closely and closely, not be afraid to criminalize sporting manipulation and work together to ensure transparent organization of competitions.

"In the near future, we intend to develop a concrete plan of measures to combat the manipulation of sports competitions."

The Macolin Convention officially came into force in September 2019.

In October 2019, the Global Lottery Monitoring System (GLMS) urged more countries to ratify the convention, emphasising how it will help with education and prevention activities related to manipulation in sport.

In January, Lithuania's Gambling Supervisory Authority announced that 24 football matches in Lithuania were suspected of having been affected by match-fixing in 2019. The Gambling Supervisory Authority also reminded operators that under the country's Gambling Act, it is illegal - and punishable with up to four years' imprisonment - for individuals to place bets on events in which they participate.

Source: 5 March 2020, iGaming Business

<https://www.igamingbusiness.com/news/lithuanian-authorities-agree-new-sports-integrity-pact>

CORRUPTION

Ghana

Kwesi Nyantakyi charged with fraud, corruption

Ex-Ghana Football Association (GFA) President, Kwesi Nyantakyi, has been charged with corruption and fraud.

The disgraced football administrator appeared before the Accra High Court on Wednesday and was slapped with three charges.

Nyantakyi's charges include conspiracy to commit fraud, fraud and corruption by a public officer, the document filed the Attorney General's office listed.

Nyantakyi was captured in Anas Aremeyaw Anas' 'Number 12' exposé, allegedly taking cash gifts and peddling influence.

This led to him resigning as GFA President, as well as losing his positions as FIFA Council Member and 1st Vice President of CAF.

Anas and his Tiger Eye PI team subsequently petitioned FIFA and the Attorney General's Office to take action against Nyantakyi.

Joy News reports that, aside Nyantakyi, a former member of the GFA's Executive Committee, Abdulai Alhassan, also faces two charges, namely conspiracy to commit fraud and fraud.

Principal State Attorney Victoria Asiedua told the court that the two individuals executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on behalf of a non-existent company claiming to be attracting sponsorship for the Ghana Premier League.

The Prosecution said they also demanded \$12 million from the supposed investors promising to land them major contracts in Ghana.

Nyantakyi is alleged to have said that he would distribute the money as follows; \$5 million for the President, \$3 million for the Vice President, \$2 million for the Roads and Highway's Minister, \$1 million for his Deputy.

Despite the charges, the court granted Nyantakyi bail in the sum of ₵1 million, but he is required to report at the police CID every Friday.

Meanwhile, the case has been adjourned to March 25.

Source: 4 March 2020, Pulse

Football

<https://www.pulse.com.gh/sports/football/kwesi-nyantakyi-charged-with-fraud-corruption/nk34hgc>



INTERPOL
INTEGRITY IN SPORT