



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Colombia

Colombia Ends Match-fixing Probe into Second Tier Match, Union Magdalena Promoted

The Colombian football league has ended the first part of an investigation into a possible case of match fixing and ratified promotion to the top tier for one of the clubs involved. Second tier club Llaneros played Union Magdalena at home on Dec. 4 and were leading 1-0 until the 95th minute, when the visitors scored twice in succession.

Video of the winning goal appeared to show the Llaneros players backing off their opponents and allowing them to score.

The result meant that Union Magdalena were promoted to the top tier, the Dimayor league, although the promotion was suspended pending the league investigation.

"The Magdalena players... showed loyalty, mutual respect and dignity towards their rivals on the field of play," said the league's resolution, which was released late on New Year's Eve.

Evidence examined showed the players or staff "had not participated in any reproachable conduct," it added.

"As a consequence, the actions during the game under investigation do not constitute an infraction" and Union Magdalena deserve their place in the top division.

The investigation into Llaneros will continue, a Dimayor source told Reuters. The result of a separate investigation by judicial authorities is still to be made public.

Colombian president Ivan Duque was one of many prominent figures who commented on the suspicious winning goal that went viral.

Duque called it "a national embarrassment" and national team players came to the same conclusion, with Juan Cuadrado, captain of Italian side Juventus, and his Colombian team mate, Matheus Uribe, both expressing their disgust at the events.

Both clubs denied any wrongdoing.

Source: 2 January 2022, News 18

<https://www.news18.com/news/football/colombia-ends-match-fixing-probe-into-second-tier-match-union-magdalena-promoted-4615541.html>



United Kingdom

Bookies Flag Possible Game Rigging in Scottish Soccer Match

Match-fixing seems to be an inevitable part of the nature of sports competitions, and while the sports betting industry may share some of the blame – after all, why rig a game unless you stand to benefit from a bet you have made – the industry is precisely why match-fixing attempts are often caught.

This is precisely what is happening in the case of the Dundee versus Hearts derby, which took place at Dens Park the Saturday before last. The Scottish Football Association (SFA) has already received signals from betting agencies that certain elements of the match may have been fixed, with the Hearts winning the game with 1-0, thanks to a shot from Jamie Walker.

However, the issue seems to lie in the fact that unusual amounts of bets were placed on individual players to get booked. That is when a referee issues a yellow card to a player for breaking the rules during play.

Referee Willie Collum issued yellow cards to Max Anderson, Leigh Griffiths, Paul McGowan, and Danny Mullen, coinciding apparently with an unusual number of bets that to happen.

Why the Match-Fixing Hubbub?

Thanks to a partnership between the SFA and betting agencies, detecting irregularities in betting behaviors relevant to actual sporting events has become easier, although proving fault from any party remains a highly complicated and sensitive process.

However, SFA's betting partners are confident they have enough to go on to raise the issue at the highest level. The issue has to do with the betting amounts placed on selections that should have otherwise remained fairly under the radar, the report says.

The first step in identifying potential fault is for the SFA Security and Integrity Unit to investigate whether there has been any foul play, to begin with. If that turns out to be the case, then the SFA's compliance officers will get involved.

Taking Time to Look into the Matter

One of the people to investigate the matter should there be enough evidence to mandate a fully-fledged probe would be the Security and Integrity officer Martin Stolarek who is engaged with raising awareness about match-fixing but also takes an active part in solving match-fixing investigations.

Neither of the teams has made a comment on the situation, and the Hearts were not aware that any investigation was ongoing, the Daily Mail wrote. Anti-match-fixing efforts have proven successful over the past years, with many athletes getting suspended by international bodies.

One drawback of such investigations has been the fact that most of those match-fixing cases are caught much later than they occur. Sportradar, a global sports data and tech giant, which pays particular attention to the integrity of sporting competitions, has warned about the increasingly sophisticated nature of how sports frauds occur.

Source: 27 December 2021, Gambling News

Football

<https://www.gamblingnews.com/news/bookies-flag-possible-game-rigging-in-scottish-soccer-match/>

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Argentina

Argentine Arreche handed four-year ban for match-fixing

Jan 6 (Reuters) - Argentine player Nicolas Arreche has been banned for four years and fined \$8,000 after being found guilty of match-fixing charges, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) said on Thursday.

It said Arreche "contrived or attempted to contrive the outcome of tennis matches", and failed to report corrupt approaches to the ITIA, between 2017-19.

The 27-year-old, who had a career high ATP singles ranking of 567, was suspended provisionally in April last year. The ban runs to April 23, 2025.

Several other lowly-ranked Argentine players have been banned for match-fixing in recent years.

Franco Feitt was banned for life last April after admitting nine breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program rules.

Source: 6 January 2022, Reuters

Tennis

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/argentine-arreche-handed-four-year-ban-match-fixing-2022-01-06/>

Peru

Peruvian tennis player banned for match fixing offences

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) has today confirmed that Peruvian tennis player Mauricio Echazu has been banned from tennis for two years and three months. The player was found to have breached the rules of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program (TACP).

Mr Echazu, who had a career high ATP singles ranking of 379 admitted to having contrived or attempted to contrive the outcome of a tennis match and receiving money to impact the result of a match.

The case was ruled on by independent Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer Raj Parker and the sanction means that the player is prohibited from playing in or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by any international tennis governing body or national association for the length of his ban.

The ban runs from the date of the player's provisional suspension which began on 6 August 2021 until 5 November 2023. In addition, the player was fined \$10,000 with \$8,000 suspended providing there are no further breaches of the TACP.

The breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program rules that Echazu was found guilty of were:

Section D.1.d of the 2018 TACP: "No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, contrive or attempt to contrive the outcome of any other aspect of any Event."

Section D.1.f of the 2018 TACP: "No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any money, benefit or Consideration with the intention of negatively influencing a Player's best efforts in any Event."

The ITIA is an independent body established by the International Governing Bodies of Tennis to promote, encourage, enhance and safeguard the integrity of professional tennis worldwide.

Source: 7 January 2022, ITIA

Tennis

<https://itia.tennis/news/sanctions/mauricio-echazu-banned/>

BETTING

China

China investigated more than 17,000 cross-border gambling cases in 2021

China's Ministry of Public Security handled more than 17,000 cross-border gambling cases in 2021.

The ministry's investigations led to more than 80,000 arrests, shut down over 2,200 online gambling platforms, over 1,600 illegal payment platforms and underground banks and prompted more than 1,100 domestic and foreign suspects to voluntarily surrender themselves.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Moreover, China's cross-border gambling tip line, which operates 24/7, reportedly received more than 60,000 clues throughout 2021.

This continues China's nationwide crackdown on cross-border gambling, led by the country's Ministry of Public Security, working alongside the departments of foreign affairs, culture and tourism, immigration management, commerce, internet information, finance and the People's Bank of China, among other parties.

Together, these departments "will keep tightening crackdown on cross-border gambling, especially overseas gambling groups targeting Chinese citizens".

"Over the past year, the Ministry of Public Security partnered with the relevant ministries to put the crackdown and governance of cross-border gambling in full swing by multiple means, successfully wiping out the gambling recruitment and attraction networks, money laundering and other illegal monetary channels of many large, overseas gambling groups in China," said the ministry in a statement.

Moreover, it claimed to have "effectively curbed" the promotion of cross-border gambling via "special governance campaigns" that shut down various online gambling websites and apps. A "blacklist mechanism" was also used to flag "key areas" targeting Chinese citizens, though it did not specify which jurisdictions were covered by this.

The ministry added: "All endeavours will be made to resolutely deter cross-border gambling and eradicate the breeding ground for cross-border gambling."

Source: 10 January 2022, Gambling Insider

<https://www.gamblinginsider.com/news/14517/china-investigated-more-than-17000-cross-border-gambling-cases-in-2021>

Macau (China)

Raising the stakes

Macau is the only territory in the People's Republic of China where casino gambling is legal. Casino operators often reach out to people from the mainland and lure them to the city with offers of luxury travel and accommodation. These packages are known as junkets and are ultimately funded by the profits of the huge gaudy casinos, packed with slot machines and table games which are popular with Chinese gamblers. Public records suggest that Macau casino revenue is around six times the amount taken by casinos in Las Vegas.

This region of Asia is familiar to me through my many years of working to combat illegal betting and related financial crime in Hong Kong – a short boat ride away from the city of Macau, which is a Special Administrative region of China. In the 1990s, I worked as an officer in the Royal Hong Kong Police Criminal Intelligence Bureau, collaborating with the Portuguese police officers seconded to Macau who tried to maintain order.

At that time, triad societies in the city were engaged in violent conflict that led to dozens of murders and assaults. The gangs sought control of both the lucrative casino VIP rooms and the prostitutes who offered sex to male players.

Gangster culture

One of the most notorious gangsters was Wan Kuo Kui, known as 'Broken Tooth Wai'. He was the former leader of the Macau branch of the 14K triad.

Wan was arrested after an assassination attempt on the last director of the Macau Judiciary Police under Portuguese administration, Antonio Baptista, who found a bomb under his car. The attempt failed and Wan was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1999. He is now out of jail and reported to be involved in trading cryptocurrency and security services relating to Chinese 'Belt and Road' projects.

To those of us investigating organised crime in the region, it has been clear for some time that the junket operators have been engaged in illegal business, so it is not surprising that the authorities in China have at last decided to enforce their laws. Junket operators try to disguise illicit funds as legitimate casino winnings.

In November 2021, police in Macau arrested Alvin Chau Cheok-wa, the chairman and controlling shareholder of Suncity Gaming Promotion Company, on charges relating to money laundering. Many people in Macau and Hong Kong believe that this arrest signals the end of the glory days of Macau's gambling. It has certainly led to a huge sell-off of shares in gambling companies, costing investors many billions of dollars.

Suncity has been under scrutiny since 2019, when a Chinese state-owned news agency denounced the company for facilitating online gambling, which is not legally allowed either in Macau, nor in mainland China. The official line is that online betting causes 'great harm to China's social-economic order'.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Disapproving attitude

In fact, when the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949, it tried to outlaw all gambling. Almost immediately, though, people found ways around the laws and betting has continued amongst Chinese people, both on a legal and illegal basis.

Legal lotteries are an important source of government revenue. People in the PRC are able to gamble on both the Welfare Lottery and the Sports Lottery, which are operated by agencies administered by the government. More than US\$60 billion worth of tickets were sold last year.

In Macau, the gambling culture goes back hundreds of years. In 1810, the city introduced a charitable lottery and in 1846 the government legalised fan tan – a game involving bets placed on counters hidden under a bowl.

In 1930, the government launched a monopoly system for gambling houses and by 1961 the governor declared that Macau was a 'permanent gambling region'. This led to a public tender for the monopoly casino operating licence, which was won by Stanley Ho and his Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau (STDM) company. Ho operated eight casinos in Macau, as well as a horseracing track, greyhound racing and the only ferry service between Hong Kong and Macau. This monopoly made Stanley Ho and his associates astoundingly rich.

The monopoly of STDM on the casinos of Macau ended in 2002, and since then many international operators have moved in, especially from America, including Galaxy Entertainment Group, Wynn Resorts and MGM, which is run in partnership with Pansy Ho, daughter of the late Stanley Ho.

Betting on Trump

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Sheldon Adelson, the founder of another big casino operator, Las Vegas Sands, was a major donor in support of Israel, the Republican Party in the US and Donald Trump. Sheldon died in January 2021, leaving a massive fortune to his widow, Miriam. She is said to remain an influential player within the Republican party, which over the past decade has received more than half a billion dollars of the family's fortune. The PRC leaders in their Zhongnanhai compound in Beijing cannot have failed to notice that a significant slice of the revenue from Macau casinos taken from Chinese customers is supporting the party of President Trump.

Despite the inevitable disruption linked to the arrest of Alvin Chau Cheok-wa from Suncity, the future for Macau looks brighter than recent news reports may suggest.

Macau has an established infrastructure of huge casino-hotels that cater for Chinese tourists, who, as they grow richer, gamble more money on the slots and at the tables. Even if the casino operators in Macau lose out on some of the huge profits brought in by VIP gamblers lured in by junkets, they can still reap substantial revenues from the masses of Chinese tourists.

Centuries ago, Chinese rulers tried to restrict gambling to a privileged elite and betting was regarded as a noble pastime for the wealthy classes. However, it wasn't long before common people also wanted to try to win money and often ended up losing their bets. Many Chinese emperors have passed harsh laws against gambling, whilst indulging in the habit themselves. Whatever the official position, for the VIPs, there always seems to be a table available somewhere in China.

Source: 1 January 2022, Asian Affairs

<https://www.asianaffairs.co.uk/blog/2021/12/27/raising-the-stakes/>



MATCH FIXING

European Handball Federation

EHF on suspected matches: "No legal proceedings have been initiated"

Handbollskanalen has revealed, via several independent sources, that at least four matches in the European club team tournaments have been subjected to match-fixing. The European Handball Federation confirms that they have received a report regarding the game in which the Swedish team was involved.

"As for the matches you ask about, they have all been monitored by Sportradar's system for detecting fraud," the EHF writes in a statement to Handbollskanalen.

A match in the men's Champions League, a match in the men's European League, a match in the women's Champions League, and a match in the women's European League – these are the matches suspected of having been subjected to match-fixing.

Handbollskanalen has been in contact with the EHF to comment on the matches, all of which have been played in their competitions. In one of the matches suspected to have been fixed, a Swedish team participated, which later reported the match to WhistleB, an organization set up to help whistleblowers.

"Regarding the matches as they are mentioned in your enquiry, they have all been monitored by Sportradar's fraud detection system. The EHF can confirm that it has received a report via its independent reporting platform regarding the match with the Swedish team. A detailed investigation took place which was inconclusive. There are no additional reports, neither externally nor internally (i.e. from the delegate at the match). Subsequently, there are currently no legal proceedings initiated for any of the four matches you mention. Furthermore, the legal system within the EHF is independent. Therefore, the EHF is not in the position to comment on any potential case on a legal level."

Handbollskanalen asked the EHF what they mean when they write that the investigation was inconclusive but the EHF claims that they are not allowed to comment on specific matches.

We have evidence and confirmations from several different sources that these four matches have been fixed, but according to the EHF, have they not been subjected to match-fixing?

"If there is 'proof', as you say, we ask for these proofs to be forwarded so that all necessary investigations, including police measures, can be initiated immediately."

In other words, it does not appear that EHF will investigate the cheating further without additional evidence regarding the four matches that Handbollskanalen has reported on. But the EHF believes it is nonsense that they do not take the threat of match-fixing seriously.



"The EHF has a zero-tolerance approach when it comes to match-fixing. Any conclusion that this topic may not be taken seriously from the side of the EHF is wrong."

"It goes without saying that fraud is fraud. Match-fixing is not acceptable in any sport, and on the level of the EHF competitions, it is a substantial violation of core values of the European Handball Federation, its statutes and regulations. If there is evidence, penalties and sanctions for the persons responsible for obtaining or retaining in any way undue advantages in connection with a match or a match result shall be imposed accordingly. In this regard, the EHF can analyze matches from a sportive point but is obliged to forward any potential findings to the respective authorities for further investigation and can only operate based on the investigation's results."

Handbollskanalen has requested an interview with EHF President Michael Wiederer, where we want to hear more about the EHF's general view on match-fixing and the information that exists that matches within the EHF's highest competitions have been fixed, despite the EHF's own investigation not reaching these conclusions.

Source: 3 January 2022, handbollskanalen

Handball

<https://handbollskanalen.se/nyheter/ehf-on-suspected-matches-no-legal-proceedings-have-been-initiated/>

Serbia

Serbia Tapped by UEFA to Investigate Suspected Match Fixing

The Serbian Football Association has been asked by UEFA to investigate potential match fixing in the country's second tier league, an official said Wednesday.

Serbian sports broadcaster Sportklub first reported that UEFA officials had reached out to the country's football association, raising questions over suspicious betting patterns in September ahead of Zeleznicar's 3-2 win against Timok 1919.

"It is true that we received a complaint from UEFA over the match in question," the football association's spokesman Milan Vukovic told AFP.

According to Sportklub, UEFA identified an unusual number of bets ahead of Zeleznicar's win.

They added that four Timok 1919 footballers were also being investigated for "helping their opponents".

The Serbian football governing body declined to comment on the details of the case but acknowledged that "an investigation is underway", saying that the public would be informed of any findings once the inquiry had been completed.

In April, two Serbian second-tier football clubs were fined and had points deducted for match fixing.

Source: 22 December 2021, News 18

Football

<https://www.news18.com/news/football/serbia-tapped-by-uefa-to-investigate-suspected-match-fixing-4583171.html>



POLICY

ITIA

"Tennis you can trust," world governing bodies confirm integrated approach to integrity for tennis from 2022

The sport's governing bodies approve the transfer of Tennis Anti-Doping Programme to International Tennis Integrity Agency from 1 January 2022

Move means tennis has created the first fully independent and integrated global anti-doping and anti-corruption integrity organisation in sport

2022 anti-corruption rules also agreed

Tennis commits to its highest-ever investment in integrity

The Tennis Integrity Supervisory Board, made up of independent directors and representatives from the governing bodies of tennis has unanimously confirmed that the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) will take on responsibility for the sport's anti-doping programme from 1 January 2022.

Previously the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme was overseen by the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

The move will see integrity matters in the sport concerning doping and corruption jointly come under the auspices of the ITIA, which is an independent body funded by the governing bodies of tennis. Nicole Sapstead was appointed in May 2021 as Senior Director, Anti-Doping and will oversee the programme for the sport. The move was presented as an option by the Independent Review Panel report of 2018 and confirmed in principle by the International Governing Bodies of the sport in 2019.

Jennie Price, Chair of the Tennis Integrity Supervisory Board said, "Having one fully integrated organisation working on both anti-doping and anti-corruption creates a major opportunity for the sport. Shared intelligence and shared resources will make us more efficient, and most importantly, more effective. This is the result of a great deal of planning in the last twelve months to ensure we are ready to hit the ground running on 1 January. The independence of the ITIA is crucial when it comes to integrity matters and tennis can be proud that it is leading the way."

David Haggerty, President of the ITF said, "This is a really important moment for tennis. As a sport, we committed to more transparency and complete independence for the way the doping and anti-corruption programmes are managed. We have worked closely with the ITIA to ensure a seamless handover of responsibilities and we look forward to supporting their efforts moving forward."

All professional players will be contacted jointly by the ITF and ITIA in the coming weeks to confirm the move and provide further details of the changes to the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme and updates to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) prohibited substances list. From 1 January 2022, the ITIA website will integrate all Tennis Anti-Doping Programme information.

In addition to finalising the integration of anti-doping, the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program rules for 2022 were also agreed by the Tennis Integrity Supervisory Board. The rules now include a "prohibited association" clause, mirroring the anti-doping regulations. This means that players, coaches or officials who have been sanctioned for anti-corruption offences can no longer have any sporting or professional association with participants in the sport whether inside or outside of sanctioned events. In addition, there is more scope for investigations to cross over between codes to allow evidence from Anti-Corruption cases to be used in Anti-Doping investigations and vice versa.

The Board also agreed a budget of \$15.8m for the ITIA's operations in 2022 to cover both anti-corruption and anti-doping efforts. This represents the sport's highest-ever investment into integrity.

Source: 29 December 2021, ITIA

<https://itia.tennis/news/itia-news/tennis-anti-doping-integration/>