



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

France

Arrests in France over Algeria match-fixing claims

The Algerian football match-fixing and bribery scandal which the BBC reported on last year is back in the spotlight after a new wave of arrests in France.

Four employees of online gambling company Winamax have been put in custody and interrogated by investigators from French gambling supervision unit, the SCCJ (the Service Central des Courses et Jeux).

The quartet were apprehended on 16 December in relation to suspect bets placed on an Algerian Ligue 1 match between DRB Tadjenanet and ES Setif, which took place on 12 May 2018, the penultimate day of the 2017-18 season.

The arrests were first reported by French sports daily L'Équipe.

Winamax has confirmed to the newspaper that their information was correct.

While four people have been detained so far - it is understood the SCCJ wishes to question up to 15 in total.

The game in question, in which three penalties were awarded, was among the matches flagged to BBC News Arabic by sources when the BBC conducted its two-year-long investigation into match-fixing and bribery of officials in Algerian football last year.

BBC News Arabic has been told that this match had been deemed "suspicious" by an international sports watchdog at the time, but that the evidence gathered then had been insufficient for this body to act.

DRB Tadjenanet, who were in danger of being relegated at the time, won 3-2 against then title holders Setif, who were in mid-table and had little to play for at that late stage of the season.

The victory enabled DRB Tadjenanet to survive.

Whistle-blowers tell the BBC how bribery impacts on all levels of football in Algeria

Seven people had already been arrested in eastern France in May, two of whom - both young men in their 20s - were charged with "criminal conspiracy" and "attempt to defraud" in relation to bets they had placed on this game.

The charges came after the regulatory body in charge of gambling in France, ARJEL (Autorité de Régulation des Jeux en Ligne), detected very unusual patterns of betting on the eve of the match.

Large sums had been wagered on a 3-2 win for DRB Tadjenanet, at odds of between 30 and 40 to 1. This means that if you had bet \$1, you would have received \$30-40 in return.

"What caught [our] attention was the number of bets, but also their amount," Nancy Deputy Prosecutor Vincent Légaut said at the time. "One French gambler had bet €1,000 (\$1,100; £850), which should have earned him €40,000."

A number of online betting sites had been used by the suspects, whose identity has not been made public and all of whom come from the Lorraine region.

The liability of the websites amounted to over €100,000 in total.

ARJEL, however, has the power to invalidate all bets on games they have reason to think have been targeted by match-fixers and acted accordingly in this case.

No money was paid out to the alleged conspirators.

It now appears that the "tip" had been leaked to Winamax employees before the match took place, some of whom are said by a source close to the investigation to have placed smaller bets on a 3-2 win for DRB Tadjenanet.

This development will be of particular concern to the authorities fighting match-fixing.

It is thought that it is the first time that employees of a gambling company are suspected of having taken part in a criminal scheme of that kind, either actively - by placing a bet - or passively, in failing to act on credible information passed on to them about a suspicious game.

The other major source of concern is that it appears to show that the Algerian match-fixing scandal which the BBC reported on

last year has an international dimension.

Until now, it had been thought that match-fixing in Algeria was predominantly a domestic problem primarily motivated by the desire to achieve political gain, win titles or prevent relegation, not to rig betting markets.

This no longer appears to be the case.

Source: 20 December 2019, BBC

Football

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/50871457>



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Italy

Spain anti-corruption investigation uncovers match fixing evidence in Italy's Serie A football league

A SPANISH inquiry into football corruption has spread to Italy with allegations of match fixing in Serie A. An unnamed man in Malaga is thought to be at the centre of the case, according to Spain's National Police.

In the second phase of Operation Oikos National Police officers, in a joint investigation with the central operational service in Rome of the Polizia Di Stato of Italy and coordinated by EUROPOL, have arrested a total of 14 people in Spain.

In addition, two searches have been carried out in Italy which show the alleged involvement of the detainees in crimes of corruption between individuals, money laundering and unfair administration. During the investigation, several attempts to rig matches in Italian Serie A were detected.

In addition, the relationship that the alleged leaders of the organisation had with an illegal gambling house in Italy whose clients were people with a high purchasing power, including Italian Serie A football players, was verified.

Operation Oikos, directed against an organisation of "sports fixers" in professional football, has been carried out in two phases. The first phase in May ended with the arrest of 11 people and the collection of numerous documents related to the illegal activity.

Specifically, the agents found several handwritten sheets containing an operation to collect, distribute, return and deliver funds for the 'conditioning' of a sporting result in Spain's second division.

During the course of the investigation, evidence appeared that the leaders of the organisation had a connection with an illegal bookmaker in Italy. In addition, several attempts to rig Serie A matches were detected after an investigation was launched by the Italian Polizia di Stato with the support of the Anti-Mafia Prosecutor's Office.

The investigation by the Italian authorities focused on an Italian individual who was directly linked to the principal under investigation in the Oikos operation.

The investigated person, who made many trips from Rome to Malaga to develop his criminal activity, managed a gambling hall in the Italian city of Tivoli that was closely related to an illegal gambling house. There, allegedly, top-level sportsmen and women made clandestine bets.

The joint operation carried out by the National Police and the central operational service in Rome of the Polizia di Stato, coordinated by EUROPOL, resulted in 14 people being arrested in Spain and two searches carried out in Italy. These searches demonstrate the alleged involvement of those arrested in crimes of corruption between individuals, money laundering and unfair administration.

One of the searches was carried out in the main office of the Italian being investigated, where various documents were found that directly linked him to the main person being investigated in the operation in Spain.

During the first phase of Operation OIKOS, he detained people were accused of "private corruption", unfair administration and money laundering linked to the payment of bribes linked to the promotion play-offs to the Spanish first division.

Police found several handwritten sheets that contained details of the collection, distribution, return and delivery of funds to fix a match in the second division.

Police said in a statement that "after analysing the documentation, investigators found that a football club handed over cash to the staff of another team after their victory in a game held in June 2017."

This is thought to be a reference to Catalan club Reus Deportiu who beat Real Valladolid 2-0 on the penultimate day of the 2016-2017 season.

It is alleged that players from the winning team were then paid a 'premium' by SD Huesca as it ensured the latter team a spot in the play offs.

This is the first time that so-called 'third party premiums' have been judicially investigated. Reus, who allegedly received it, did not have anything to play for in that game, while Real Valladolid and SAD Huesca both had a chance of the play offs.

Reus won 2-0 when the odds for that match were 5-1 against them. Huesca finished the league in sixth position on goal difference over Valladolid, so they played the promotion phase.

Huesca lost in the semifinals against Getafe.

One of the first to be arrested was Francisco Javier Pichu Atienza, who currently plays for Real Zaragoza and in 2017 was a player of Reus.

Iñigo López, former player of Deportivo de La Coruña, Huesca and Granada, among others, has also been arrested.

Source: 27 December 2019, Euro Weekly News

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2019/12/27/spain-anti-corruption-investigation-uncovers-match-fixing-evidence-in-italys-serie-a-football-league/#.XhL6iUdKiUk>

Kosovo

Kosovo Issues First Indictment For Football Match-Fixing

Four football officials have been indicted in Kosovo for allegedly fixing a match played in the northern city of Mitrovica in February, to secure a Belgian-based relative of one of those involved 10,000 euros in prize winnings, media reported on Thursday.

The Prosecutor's Office in Mitrovica indicted three officials from the city's Trepca football club on charges of abusing their positions, as well as a delegate from the Kosovo Football Federation, FFK, who is accused of plotting with the club officials in the match-fixing.

Those listed in the indictment, which BIRN has seen, are Trepca coach Fidaim Haxhiu, the club's vice-president, Besim Haxhiu, its secretary, Fisnik Haxhiu, and the FFK's Kemal Dumnica.

The match was played between the Trepca team and Fushe Kosova on February 25 as part of the 17th round in Kosovo's First League, the second-highest football division in the country.

According to the indictment, Trepca was supposed to lose the first half of the game and then make a comeback in the second half, to win in the end.

Bejadin Haxhiu, Fidaim's brother, who lives in Belgium, allegedly placed 40 bets on the outcome of the match that would earn him 10,000 euros. It is not known how much the other people involved expected to make from the scam, or their relation to each other.

The match ended 2-1, with the Trepca club claiming victory, though suspicions were voiced as soon as the whistle blew.

The Prosecutor's Office filed the indictment in the northern Kosovo city on December 3; it was obtained by BIRN on December 19.

The Prosecutor's office started investigating the match in March following accusations that it was deliberately lost. In another twist, the Trepca team deliberately fielded a player, with the initials V.A., who was not registered on its list of players, making it an illegal substitution, so enabling the rival team to appeal the result with the FFK.

Fushe Kosova did so, and was later declared the winner. However, Haxhiu's bets were still valid, based on the initial outcome.

Following the appeal, the FFK penalised Trepca by awarding their scored goals to Fushe Kosova, making the final outcome 0-3 to the rival team.

Source: 21 December 2019, Eurasia Review

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/21122019-kosovo-issues-first-indictment-for-football-match-fixing/>



Peru

Suspicion of Ethics cover-up as Peruvian ticket scheme goes unpunished

Hopes that the FBI investigations and US Justice Department indictments in 2015 had kick started a governance reform and an end to football corruption in South America are foundering after information that FIFA and Conmebol have failed to act on a World Cup ticket re-sale scandal by former Peruvian FA (FPF) officials.

A year of investigations, collection of evidence and testimonies made to an independent investigation agency, uncovered a ticket resale scheme that saw hundreds of tickets supplied to the Peruvian black market for national team games. It was a scheme that was in existence pre-2015.

The investigation, carried out at the request of the FPF integrity officials, was handed over to the FIFA Ethics Commission between July and September 2018, and then on to Conmebol in January 2019. To date neither bodies appear to have acted on the information.

The result is that a number of PFA leaders involved in the scheme have remained in high position within the Peruvian FA.

At the end of March 2019 the complaint and investigations were made public, generating a wave of public outrage.

In April 2019, the CONMEBOL Ethics Commission cited in Lima a series of interviews with investigators, witnesses, and FPF officials. But while it was expected that a series of ethics infractions and penalties would be issued, in fact what followed was a series of dismissals and resignations of FPF officials who had entered the federation following the 2015 FIFAgate crisis.

The driving force behind the clear out of federation officials has been president Agustín Lozano, a board member of the PFA between 2007 and 2010 but who came to power in 2018 after Edwin Picchottito was forced out over his alleged links with organised crime gangs.

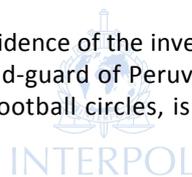
What is unclear is how clean a skin Lozano has, having been on the board of the PFA at the height of the ticketing resale scam and having himself been the subject of multiple match fixing allegations in the past.

What Lozano does have is the support of Conmebol president and FIFA vice president Alejandro Dominguez who has repeatedly praised his presidency and management of the PFA.

Meanwhile the corruption charges, on the face of the evidence of the investigations and the information in the public domain, seem to be covered up by FIFA and Conmebol as the old-guard of Peruvian football look to be working their way back into control. One reason for this, being discussed in local football circles, is that the alternatives are less palatable than what currently exists.

Source: 3 January 2020, Inside World Football Football

<http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2020/01/03/suspicion-ethics-cover-peruvian-ticket-scheme-goes-unpunished/>



Qatar

ICC opens probe after fixers intercepted at Qatar T10 league

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that it has intercepted a number of known corruptors at the Qatar T10 league and that it has opened several new investigations.

The event, which was sanctioned by the ICC 12 months ago, saw a raft of team changes in the days immediately before it started on December 7. The ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) was engaged by the league's organisers, with two officials deployed in the country.

Alex Marshall, the general manager of the ICC Integrity Unit said: "The ICC sanctioned this event 12 months ago based on the sound information provided by the organisers.

"However, substantial changes to both team ownership and the organisers just days prior to the event getting underway rang alarm bells for us, and we applied additional investigative resource on the ground to address our concerns. "As a result we have intercepted a number of known corruptors both in Qatar and globally and disrupted planned corrupt activity at the event."

Source: 18 December 2019, The News International Cricket

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/584813-icc-opens-probe-after-fixers-intercepted-at-qatar-t10-league>

Spain

La Fiscalía insiste en que hubo amaño del Levante-Zaragoza y pide la repetición del juicio

La Fiscalía Anticorrupción ha recurrido este lunes la decisión, tomada por el Juzgado de lo Penal número 7 de Valencia, de absolver a los futbolistas del Real Zaragoza y del Levante UD que habían sido acusados de un presunto amaño, ya que considera que hay una ausencia de explicación "lógica y conjunta" de los indicios que considera que sí quedaron acreditados durante el juicio.

Los jugadores se habían visto implicados en esta acusación a raíz del partido que se disputó entre ambos equipos el 21 de mayo de 2011, en el estadio Ciutat de València, durante la última jornada de LaLiga y en el que los aragoneses ganaron por 1-2 y evitaron el descenso de categoría.

Por ello, la Fiscalía pide que se condene por la existencia de corrupción deportiva --junto con el que ya se ha condenado por falsedad-- o que, de forma subsidiaria, al haberse producido una "desconexión probatoria e ilógica" entre indicios y sentencia, que se anule este fallo para que se dé una nueva motivación o la realización de una vista con otro magistrado "a los efectos de realizar una valoración probatoria ajustada y que comprenda toda la documentación aportada".

Así consta en el recurso, al que ha tenido acceso Europa Press, contra la sentencia del magistrado de lo Penal número 7 de Valencia que no encontró pruebas de que el dinero salido de las cuentas del Zaragoza fuera destinado a los jugadores del Levante por dejarse perder en ese partido y, por tanto, rechazó que ese encuentro fuese amañado.

CONCLUSIONES "INCOHERENTES"

Sin embargo, para Fiscalía, la conclusión que obtuvo el magistrado en la sentencia no resulta razonable en la lógica "ni en la experiencia humana" ya que los indicios acreditados y valorados, en conjunto, "son los que permiten concluir una condena" por corrupción deportiva. Para el fiscal Anticorrupción, el magistrado alcanza unas conclusiones fácticas "incoherentes" con los indicios que él mismo da por probados y que están apoyados en datos objetivos, informes, documentos bancarios y libros contables.

El magistrado de lo Penal absolvió a los 42 acusados del delito de corrupción deportiva por el que fueron procesados y condenó a dos directivos del club aragonés por falsedad en documento privado: el ex propietario, Agapito Iglesias, y el ex director financiero Francisco Javier Porquera. A cada uno de ellos les impuso un año y tres meses de prisión.

Para el magistrado, ambos directivos justificaron fraudulentamente la salida de 1.730.000 euros de las cuentas del Zaragoza con el pago de primas especiales a sus jugadores por lograr la permanencia en Primera División. El pago de esas primas no era real y se fingió "para ocultar la salida del dinero ante la inminente declaración de concurso de acreedores de la entidad".

Iglesias y Porquera acordaron que se contabilizaran "mendazmente" esas disposiciones de efectivo "como si se tratara del pago a los jugadores del Zaragoza de una prima especial por permanencia en Primera División", según la sentencia. Ambos decidieron que luego se confeccionaran "nóminas y un recibí colectivo, firmado por el capitán del equipo, que las justificaran documentalmentemente, tanto externamente frente a la Agencia Tributaria, como internamente, dentro del concurso, frente a los administradores concursales y acreedores".

"SUPUESTO ABONO DE PRIMAS"

El juez exculpó de esta maniobra a un tercer acusado, el ex consejero del Zaragoza Francisco José Checa, porque entendía que no constaba que actuara realmente como consejero desde su nombramiento.

El fiscal subraya que, en este caso, ha quedado acreditado que se retiró una importante cantidad de dinero del Zaragoza "sin ninguna justificación, utilizando a los jugadores y bajo el supuesto abono de primas"; que Iglesias y Porquera contabilizaron "mendazmente" esas disposiciones como si fuera el pago de una prima especial por permanencia.

Igualmente ha quedado demostrado que los jugadores del Levante sufrieron una "importante disminución" de disposiciones en efectivo y por tarjeta tras el partido, en especial para gastos diarios, y que la actual directiva maña "descarta por completo la tesis del desvío de los fondos para otro fin que no fuese la compra, amaño o arreglo del partido". Además, destaca que ninguno de los jugadores del Zaragoza ha manifestado que cobrase prima por permanencia o especialísima.

Source: 30 December 2019, El Mundo

Football

<https://www.elmundo.es/deportes/futbol/2019/12/30/5e0a3fe3fc6c83487d8b4684.html>

Switzerland

FIFA goes after former president Sepp Blatter, vice-president Michel Platini in bid to recover \$2 million

World football body FIFA on Monday filed claims in Swiss court seeking to recover 2 million Swiss francs (\$2.01 million) that it said were paid inappropriately by ex-FIFA President Joseph "Sepp" Blatter to former French football star Michel Platini.

'FIFA has today filed claims in the relevant Swiss courts against former FIFA President Joseph Blatter and former FIFA Vice-President Michel Platini, seeking restitution of the 2 million francs unduly paid to Mr. Platini back in February 2011," FIFA said, adding it was "duty-bound to try to recover the funds illicitly paid by one former official to another."

Blatter and Platini, who could not immediately be reached for comment, have maintained they did nothing wrong amid what became part of the biggest corruption scandal to shake the world football body, resulting in numerous prosecutions and convictions in the United States.

Blatter and Platini were both banned from football in late 2015 over a payment of 2 million Swiss francs made to the Frenchman by FIFA with Blatter's approval in 2011 for work he had done a decade earlier.

Platini, the head of European football body UEFA from 2007 to 2015, was originally banned from all football-related activities for eight years, though the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) later reduced the suspension to four years. His ban ended this year.

Blatter's ban was reduced from eight years to six, a period later upheld by CAS in a decision that concluded the now-83-year-old had "breached the FIFA Code of Ethics since the payment amounted to an undue gift as it had no contractual basis."

Source: 17 December 2019, First Post

<https://www.firstpost.com/sports/fifa-goes-after-former-president-sepp-blatter-vice-president-michel-platini-in-bid-to-recover-2-million-7791461.html>

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Russia

Russian Second Division team expelled, charged with illegal betting

A weird case of betting resulted in the expel of Arsenal Tula from the Russian Second Division.

A game in the Russian Second Division this past weekend between Arsenal Tula and Stavropol Dynamo resulted in the expel of the first from the league with charges of illegal betting, as reported by sports.ru.

The game ended with an 82-65 victory for Arsenal Tula, but the noteworthy part is that none of the teams scored for nearly 7 minutes. Deliberately so.

As mentioned on sports.ru, Arsenal scored the last points 6:57 before the final buzzer (the score was 82-56). And in the end, both teams tried not to score on their opponent's basket. Over the last seven minutes, Arsenal players made 5 inaccurate shots, while Dynamo players only attempted one that they managed to miss out from under the basket.

The following video shows exactly what happened in the last minutes of the game, including a ridiculous execution of free throws and many more suspicious plays:

The Executive Committee of the Russian Basketball Federation reacted immediately to this result. On Monday, they announced that Tula Arsenal is expelled from the second division of the Super League. Notably, according to the report, the team has violated the fair play again in the past, during the 2017-18 season.

Source: 18 December 2019, Eurohoops

Basketball

<https://www.eurohoops.net/en/others/984024/russian-second-division-team-expelled-charged-with-illegal-betting/>

United Kingdom

Rob Howley: Ex-Wales backs coach banned for betting breach

Former Wales backs coach Rob Howley has been banned from rugby for 18 months, with nine suspended, for betting on matches, including Wales games.

The suspension is backdated to his withdrawal from Wales' World Cup campaign, on 16 September 2019.

The panel who judged Howley found that from 14 November, 2015 to 7 September, 2019 he put "363 bets on rugby union, featuring 1,163 matches in total".

Howley, 49, used his Welsh Rugby Union phone and email account to place bets.

The former Wales and British and Irish Lions scrum-half was sent home from Japan six days before Wales' opening win against Pool D opponents Georgia and replaced by Stephen Jones.

Warren Gatland went on to guide Wales to the tournament semi-finals before Jones joined new boss Wayne Pivac's staff.

Howley was part of Warren Gatland's backroom from the beginning of 2008 and he was scheduled to leave that role after the 2019 World Cup.

Instead his active role ended when he left the camp in Japan.

Howley lost £4,000

While the investigation was under way, Gatland said Howley had "been through hell" and WRU chairman Gareth Davies said they had been in regular contact with the former Wales captain.

Howley accepted the charges and can return to the sport on 16 June, 2020. The former Wales scrum-half has lost the opportunity to be the new Italy head coach.

World Rugby's regulation 6.3.1 reads: "No connected person shall, directly or indirectly, bet and/or attempt to bet on the outcome or any aspect of any connected event and/or receive and/or attempt to receive part or all of the proceeds of any such bet and/or any other benefit in relation to a bet."

Howley admitted to placing bets on 24 "connected events", which were games involving Wales or Wales players.

Howley's bets involved two on players, including one on who would be the first Wales try-scorer in the Grand Slam win over Ireland in Cardiff in March 2019.

The other occasion was betting that a named Wales player would be a try scorer in a particular international match.

Howley said neither player had any knowledge of the bets and the duo also said they had no knowledge of the events when interviewed by investigators. The stakes in each case were no more than a few pounds.

Over the five-year period investigated, the independent panel was satisfied he made no financial gains and lost £4,000.

Gatland, former British and Irish Lions coach Sir Ian McGeechan and Wales centre Jonathan Davies also provided character witness letters for Howley.

Family tragedy

The report stated Howley's betting was triggered by a family tragedy.

The report also said: "It is clear that Mr Howley's betting on rugby was part of a hobby of betting on sporting events.

"We use the word 'hobby' with some caution because it seems that a trigger for Mr Howley's betting activity was a family tragedy involving the death of his sister.

"While we are prepared to accept the trigger for Mr Howley's betting on sporting events has its seeds in personal family tragedy, it is much more difficult to understand why he chose to bet on rugby which he knew was prohibited rather than other sport exclusively, which of course was perfectly permissible."

The issue emerged after WRU policy and integrity manager Jeremy Rogers received information on 10 September from an employee of a gambling company Howley had placed bets on matches involving Welsh national teams.

Following a WRU investigation, Howley's case was heard in Cardiff by an independent panel, chaired by Sir Wyn Williams.

Mitigating factors for part of the ban being suspended included Howley's early acceptance of responsibility, making no gain from his betting, no suggestion of dishonesty or misuse of confidential information involved and the press intrusion upon the family which had occurred immediately after.

Howley also stated he has not placed any bets since September 2019 and was confident the help of a consultant psychologist would stop him from betting in the future.

The Sports Betting Intelligence Unit of the Gambling Commission has provided advice throughout the investigation.

Howley has 14 days to appeal against the decision from 11 December, 2019, the date of the judgement.

World Rugby will not comment on the case until the appeal process has finished but it is understood the WRU has kept the global governing body informed during the process and have acted in line with their obligations under Regulation 6.

Source: 17 December 2019, BBC Sport

Rugby

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/rugby-union/50629124>



BETTING

Malta

Yorgen Fenech listed in Italian charge sheet on illegal betting

Suspected mastermind in Daphne Caruana Galizia murder was charged by a Catania court in 2014 with profiting from illegal bets

Yorgen Fenech, the man accused of masterminding Daphne Caruana Galizia's assassination, stands charged in a Sicilian court of having profited from illegal betting.

A charge sheet seen by this newspaper, issued by the Catania district prosecutor's office, accused Fenech of two crimes relating to winning bets on football matches while having known what the outcome of said matches would be.

In the first case, Fenech and three other men – Giovanni Luca Impellizzeri, Fabrizio Crimi and Antonio Ricci – stand charged of having in May 2014 collectively bet €6,000 on football games involving Catania vs Atlanta, Parma vs Livorno, Napoli vs Hellas Verona and Udinese vs Sampdoria, and having subsequently won €26,580.

The bets were wagered when Fenech and the three other accused knew what the outcomes of the fixed matches would be.

The accusation is not that Fenech fixed the matches himself, but that he knew the outcome, wagered money on it, and consequently made an unjust profit.

The second case is similar, involving Fenech, Impellizzeri and Crimi and the betting of €6,000 and subsequent winning of €26,580 on matches involving Avellino vs Reggina, Crotone vs Trapani and Brescia vs Juve Stabia, also in May 2014.

Fenech's name appears within the context of a wider case concerning match fixing and betting illegalities and involving 11 other parties.

In May 2019, Ricci, a company secretary to the Malta company Harvey Gaming, who had been arrested in late April through a European arrest warrant issued by a court in Calabria, was extradited on suspicion of laundering 'Ndrangheta mafia funds.

In a decision by Magistrate Donatella Frendo Dimech, who conducted an exhaustive examination of the requirements and procedures required in extradition cases, Ricci was extradited to Italy where he faced a maximum of seven years in prison for participation in a criminal organisation. Lawyers Arthur Azzopardi and Stephen Tonna Lowell were defence counsel.

But in October, one of Ricci's associated companies, OIA Services, said that an Italian review tribunal had dropped allegations of mafia association against him. Both the court of review and the Court of Cassation said there was not enough proof of the ties between criminal organisations and Malta-based gaming company, OIA Services, which operates under an Italian licence.

The allegations against OIA Services, holder of the brands 'Betaland' and 'Enjoybet', refer to tax-related matters over a supposed permanent establishment in Italy and illegal gaming offer. The company was placed under investigation in November 2018 and its websites placed offline in accordance with orders from the Prosecutor's Office of Reggio Calabria. However, after three weeks, the Maltese enterprise was allowed to restart both its digital and retail betting network by the same prosecutor's office.

Last month, La Sicilia reported on Fenech's connection to the case after he was arrested in Malta.

Italian prosecutors had not been able to track him down at the time he was charged with the illegal betting crimes, but he was now in the custody of Maltese police on suspicion of involvement in Caruana Galizia's murder.

Fenech was the CEO of the Tumas Group, one of Malta's biggest business empires which operates a gaming division through its ownership of the Oracle Casino, the Portomaso Casino, an online platform, PortomasoLive.com, and a number of BestPlay outlets.

He resigned all his directorships in his family's companies shortly before his arrest.

Fenech has since been charged in court with having masterminded the murder.

He has alleged that the Prime Minister's former chief-of-staff, Keith Schembri, whom he enjoyed a fraternal relationship with, had kept him continuously informed on the progress of the murder investigations, leaking key information to him.

Source: 20 December 2019, Malta Today

Football

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/court_and_police/99263/yorgen_fenech_listed_in_italian_charge_sheet_on_illegal_betting#.XgB74BR7las

DOPING

Global

'Corruption, doping cover-up' at International Weightlifting Federation: report

The International Weightlifting Federation and its long-time chief Tamas Ajan have been accused of establishing a "culture of corruption" and doping cover-ups over decades in a German documentary to be aired Sunday.

Prominent weightlifters were rarely subject to tests, while some doping controllers were allegedly taking cash to accept manipulated urine samples, claimed the report by journalists at German broadcaster ARD including Hajo Seppelt, who broke the story on Russia's state doping scandal.

Dorin Balmus, doctor of the Moldovan national weightlifting team, was caught on hidden camera explaining how urine samples could be manipulated -- including by getting lookalikes of athletes to provide the samples.

The undercover team also filmed Thailand's Olympic bronze medallist Rattikan Gulnoi admitting to using steroids when she was 18 years old -- something that could see her stripped of her prize.

Christian Baumgartner, who heads the German federation, told ARD the IWF's chief was to blame.

"Ajan stands for a system that has established doping in weightlifting over decades and that has gone off the rails for decades," Baumgartner charged, adding that "a culture of corruption has spread".

Beyond doping, the ARD report also cited documents allegedly showing at least \$5 million in funding flowing from the International Olympic Committee to the IWF were transferred into two Swiss accounts of which only Ajan had oversight.

Hungarian national Ajan, 80, has been in the IWF's management since 1970, taking over as president of the federation in 2000.

In a statement to AFP later Sunday, the IWF said it was examining the allegations made in the broadcast.

"Amid a number of apparent falsehoods, unsubstantiated allegations and disproven rumours dating back to as far as 2008, there does seem to be some fresh information included in the programme which may be of use to the IWF's efforts to promote clean weightlifting and protect clean sport," said the statement.

"The IWF will move very quickly to investigate the issues raised in the show as quickly as possible, and has requested the transcripts and research materials.

"The IWF takes these allegations very seriously and, where appropriate, will consider independent third-party assistance in investigating these matters."



INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Seppelt and the ARD team was behind a documentary film in 2014 that sparked an official investigation into state doping in Russia that saw it banned from key international sports events.

Anti-doping organisation WADA decided on December 9 to ban Russia from participating in major international events for four years, including the 2020 and 2022 Olympic Games and the 2022 World Cup.

Source: 6 January 2020, RFI

Weightlifting

<http://www.rfi.fr/en/wires/20200105-corruption-doping-cover-international-weightlifting-federation-report-0>

POLICY

Global

ITF announces anti-corruption measures

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has said that it will gradually eliminate the collection of live score data at smaller events as part of its fight against corruption.

Information will not be available for all World Tennis Tour (WTT) events that offer cash prizes of up to \$ 15,000 (£ 11,500).

The tennis governing body has also announced an investment of \$ 8 million (£ 6.1 million) "to create a comprehensive integrity infrastructure."

The measure follows a recommendation in December last year from an International Review Panel (IRP) responsible for addressing issues related to gambling and other integrity issues.

"Our commitment to protect the integrity of the World Tennis Tour is paramount," ITF President David Haggerty said in a statement.

"The scale of this project is unprecedented. We are confident that it will provide real benefits to all participants and contribute to the tendency to reduce the risk of corruption seen in 2019."

The ITF also announced several other measures, including the introduction of accreditation for WTT events, video recording, increased security and better channels to report integrity issues.

Jenny Price, president of the Tennis Integrity Supervisory Board, said the IRP's recommendation to delete live score data had been a priority over the past year.

"The detailed work on the implementation of the recommendation has made it clear how important it will be to ensure that official data is not simply replaced by unofficial data," he said.

"Improved security and accreditation processes ... are essential to ensure that the gaming environment is properly protected and that opportunities for the collection of unofficial data are minimized."

The ITF said it had been reducing the provision of live score data for low-level WTT events since the IRP report.

"Up to 3,500 fewer games will have been made available for the betting markets in 2019 compared to 2018," he said.

"The reductions will continue during 2020 and 2021, which will lead to the complete interruption of live score data at WTT \$ 15k events, when all integrity protection measures are in place."

Source: 18 December 2019, Up News Info

Tennis

<https://upnewsinfo.com/2019/12/19/itf-announces-anti-corruption-measures-tennis-news/>

