



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Cyprus

Minister dismisses claims of football match fixing cover up

Justice Minister George Savvides on Tuesday appealed to the public to come forward with information on corrupt practices in football, vowing that authorities will investigate thoroughly and dismissed the notion of any cover-up.

He was speaking to the press after a meeting with a visiting delegation of Uefa – European football’s governing body – the chief of police, and the head of the Cyprus Football Association (CFA) George Koumas.

The Uefa team are in Cyprus at the invitation of the CFA after the former recently sent the latter five ‘red notices’ on suspicious betting activity.

Savvides stressed the importance of the public coming forth with specific information to assist law enforcement in investigating.

“For those who love the sport, it is not enough for them to say they have information – they must provide it to the police.”

Describing the meeting with Uefa officials as “highly constructive,” Savvides said it was agreed the two sides would establish a direct line of communication, rather than wait for Uefa to dispatch its ‘red notices’.

The procedure until now was that Uefa would send a dossier to the CFA, who would then forward it to the police.

Savvides reiterated that phone surveillance is a powerful tool in solving crime.

Asked whether the police can guarantee confidentiality for prospective whistleblowers, the minister said yes.

A day earlier, the president of Omonia football club said the club had completed a report on the state of Cypriot football and were ready to hand it over to the Uefa representatives.

Stavros Papastavrou also said his club is offering up to €25,000 to whoever comes forward with useful information about corruption in football.

Asked whether the Omonia president has since filed a formal complaint to police, Savvides said he had not.

Although Papastavrou did meet with senior police officials, he did not provide a deposition.

For his part head of the Uefa mission to Cyprus Joseph Clement said he had “a good feeling” that Cypriot authorities are serious about tackling corruption in football.

During their meeting with Cypriot officials, they discussed devising an ‘action plan’.

Clement said he was convinced that through tighter cooperation positive results can be achieved, but they would not come overnight.

Chiming in, main opposition Akel on Tuesday panned the government over its inaction.

“The complaints made by the president of Omonia about corruption in Cypriot football are very serious,” a statement by the party read.

“This is not the first time such complaints have been made. Even President Anastasiades spoke about the rotten state of Cypriot football when he said that criminal elements are preying on football, the need for the CFA to be subjected to checks, and about television broadcasting rights.”

The party added: “The president had vowed that his government would take action to deal with the situation. However, not only he did not do anything, but former referee, turned whistleblower Marios Panayi was forced to leave the country.”

Akel said it was high time the law was amended to enable the Cyprus Sports Organisation to exercise effective control over the CFA, which is not the case currently.

The party also referred to the auditor-general’s findings pointing to a conflict of interest between the management of football broadcasting rights and the private business activities of the CFA head.

Akel went on to ask what has become of the ‘red notices’ sent by UEFA regarding suspicious betting activity, especially on

betting platforms based in Asia.

“How many of these notices were actually investigated?”

Responding, spokesman for ruling Disy Demetris Demetriou said “the government is doing its utmost to eradicate corruption from football once and for all.”

Demetriou suggested the problem lay in that no one is willing to go on the record.

“That is why we urge whoever claims to possess information, be it on fixed matches or attempted bribery, to get in touch with authorities immediately.

“It is the only way that complaints can have an impact. Otherwise they are merely sensationalist stunts.”

Source: 28 January 2020, Cyprus Mail

Football

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2020/01/28/minister-dismisses-claims-of-football-match-fixing-cover-up/>

Cyprus

UEFA DELEGATION IN CYPRUS TO ADDRESS MATCH-FIXING

A delegation of UEFA experts is in Cyprus to discuss with the authorities how to combat match-fixing and corruption in local football.

The visit comes after UEFA notified the Cyprus Football Association (CFA) of five games in which it is believed that match-fixing took place through suspicious betting activities.

The officials of the governing body of Europe are on the island at the invitation of the CFA and will meet with Justice Minister George Savvides and representatives of football clubs.

Savvides will hold talks with UEFA officials, the chief of police and the CFA on Tuesday.

On Monday morning a meeting was held at the headquarters of the Cyprus police in which the delegations of UEFA and the CFA participated.

The main focus of the meeting is the “red notices” that UEFA sent about suspicious betting activities that could mean match-fixing.

UEFA will inform the authorities and clubs about the procedures they must follow to inform possible fixed matches by betting.

The delegation is made up of the head of Mission, a UEFA researcher and a representative of Sport Radar, a company that is responsible for collecting data for the UEFA betting fraud detection system.

The visit comes after all Cyprus soccer matches were suspended in early January due to a bomb attack on a referee and the police are investigating the accusation of match-fixing based on UEFA’s evidence.

Source: 27 January 2020, Daily Gaming World

<https://dailygamingworld.com/uefa-delegation-in-cyprus-to-address-match-fixing/>

Ireland

Cash, electronic devices seized in garda probe into alleged match fixing

Thousands of euro in cash and a number of electronic devices have been seized following a search in connection with a garda investigation into alleged match fixing in the League of Ireland.

Members of the Garda Anti-Corruption Unit and the National Economic Crime Bureau, as well as local detectives, carried out a number of searches in the Limerick City area this morning.

Documentary evidence of betting was seized, as was over €20,000 in cash, a number of mobile phones and other electronic devices, and a stun gun.

Gardaí say no arrests have yet been made, and that their investigation is ongoing.

Source: 30 January 2020, RTE

Football

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0130/1112063-garda-search-league-of-ireland/>

Malaysia**MACC releases Abu Samah**

Malaysia National Cycling Federation (MNCF) president Datuk Abu Samah Wahab was released from Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) custody yesterday.

Abu Samah, who was picked up by MACC at his home in Malacca earlier this week and supposed to be detained for four days until tomorrow, is being investigated for alleged abuse of power.

MNCF vice-president Datuk Amarjit Singh confirmed that Abu Samah had been released.

“Yes, he has (been released),” said Amarjit, when contacted in Zurich yesterday.

“I have just spoken to him. He is doing fine and is in good spirits. I am sure it will be okay.”

Amarjit, who is a member of the UCI executive management committee, is in Switzerland for a UCI meeting.

Abu Samah could not be reached for comments.

Source: 31 January 2020, New Straits Times

<https://www.nst.com.my/sports/cycling/2020/02/561643/macc-releases-abu-samah>



Uganda

Fufa invite Onduparaka to help in investigations

Match-fixing whistleblowers, Onduparaka FC, will appear before Fufa's investigatory chamber of ethics committee today to help with a probe into the much publicised vice.

This comes after Daily Monitor's Wednesday probe into the matter, which was first brought to light by Onduparaka in the club's public statement on social media last week.

In their statement, Onduparaka expressed concern about "the growing invasion of the Uganda Premier League (UPL) by persons whose sole agenda is to manipulate league games with promises of huge sums of money to those willing to adhere to their demands."

It went ahead to highlight how Onduparaka had been approached by several individuals asking them to sell matches, and called upon all stakeholders to "protect the league from such self-seeking individuals."

Daily Monitor can now confirm that Fufa have henceforth invited the West Nile club to appear before the said committee with "all the evidence they might have gathered during their interactions with the said individuals (match fixers)."

Protect the game

Fufa spokesperson Ahmed Hussein assured this newspaper their "football bodies will follow up in this serious matter as we need to protect the game."

Onduparaka have welcomed Fufa's latest move.

"We are delighted that they have picked interest in the matter," said Mercy Grace Manduru, the club marketing, communications and PR head.

"We shall provide them with the evidence we have to help them delve into the issue and bring it to a logical end for the good of the game."

In our Wednesday publications, Manduru revealed how Onduparaka had been approached by some unscrupulous characters offering them \$10,000 (Shs37m) to lose to Tooro United by 3-0 and an unspecified amount to lose to Wakiso Giants.

Tooro and Wakiso Giants distanced themselves from any of these characters.

It should be noted, however, that a host of several other clubs have been cited in the vice, and it will be interesting to see how many more will come through during investigations.

However, it is not clear whether clubs are institutionally involved or gamblers using international chains are preying on individual people to infiltrate clubs and influence games.

Banned in Kenya

Match fixing cases were also ripe in the Kenyan Premier League (KPL) last year, with several officials banned.

Fufa have previously instituted probes into match fixing, banning several individuals including referees, coaches and club officials.

The federation's undoing has, however, been failure to come out clean and straight by making public full findings of the probes.

That police have not been conclusive in most of the investigations into match fixing cases has also not helped matters, thus making it difficult for courts to convict and apprehend culprits.

CASE STUDY

*Police also investigated cases involving local clubs, plus a Uganda Cranes match away to Guinea (in Morocco) which had a Nigerian at the centre of an alleged match fixing storm.

*Clubs such as URA, Police and Express among others have previously terminated contracts of players accused of match fixing. However, some of those players continue to play in the league.

Source: 22 January 2020, Daily Monitor

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/Sports/Soccer/Fufa-invite-Onduparaka-to-help-in-investigations/690266-5428186-fqle8yz/index.html>

austria**Basketball Superleague: Five Graz players arrested**

Five professional basketball players from UBSC Graz were arrested on Monday on suspicion of betting fraud. The players are said to have pushed their own games, said HansjOrg Bacher, spokesman for the public prosecutor's office in Graz, to the APA. The suspects are not Austrians, but two Americans and three men from ex-Yugoslavia.

According to Bacher, the suspects were arrested on Monday for the risk of escaping and darkening. According to the spokesman for the public prosecutor's office in Graz, the first surveys have already taken place, so far nothing has been announced about the content of the interrogations. For the time being, games could have been postponed, too. Further information would be announced on Tuesday at the earliest.

Michael Fuchs, the general manager of UBSC Graz, who plays in the basketball superleague (BSL), gave a button on Monday evening. He could not say more about the case at the moment, the official said on APA request and referred to a press conference of the association Tuesday morning in Graz. According to Fuchs, his knowledge was also that there were five arrests. The invitation to the press conference can be found in: "UBSC Raiffeisen Graz replaces 5 players for alleged game manipulation."

League statement

The league commented on Monday evening through Managing Director Tomas Kanovsky: "After we only found out about the facts ourselves today, we can currently say nothing about this cause. We will do everything in our power and support the authorities in clearing everything up completely," Kanovsky was quoted in a press release.

(APA)

Source: 27 January 2020, EN24

Basketball

<https://www.en24.news/2020/01/basketball-superleague-five-graz-players-arrested.html>



SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Brazil

Lifetime ban and \$200,000 fine for Joao Olavo Soares de Souza after conviction on match-fixing charges

Brazilian tennis player Joao Olavo Soares de Souza has received a lifetime ban together with a fine of \$200,000 after being convicted of multiple match-fixing and associated corruption offences.

A Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) investigation established that between 2015 and 2019 the player committed numerous breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program (TACP). These included repeated incidents of match-fixing at ATP Challenger and ITF Futures tournaments held in Brazil, Mexico, the United States and Czech Republic.

In addition to match-fixing offences, the player was also found to have:

- failed to report corrupt approaches
- failed to fully co-operate with the TIU, including destroying evidence
- solicited other players to not use best efforts

The case against Mr Souza was considered by independent Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer Prof Richard H. McLaren at a disciplinary Hearing held in London on 14 January 2020.

Prof McLaren's decision to impose a lifetime ban means that with effect from 24 January 2020 the player is permanently ineligible to compete in or attend any sanctioned event organised or recognised by the governing bodies of the sport.

In March 2019, and prior to being charged with corruption offences, Mr Souza had been Provisionally Suspended from professional tennis, pending completion of the TIU investigation and case against him.

The 31-year old is currently ranked 742 in ATP singles, with a career-high of 69 reached in April 2015. As a doubles player his highest ranking was 70, achieved in January 2013.

The breaches of the TACP he has been found guilty of are as follows:

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

Section D.1.e. No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or facilitate any Player to not use his or her best efforts in any Event.

Section D.1.f. 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.

Section D.2.a.i. In the event any Player is approached by any person who offers or provides any type of money, benefit or Consideration to a Player to (i) influence the outcome or any other aspect of any Event, or (ii) provide Inside Information, it shall be the Player's obligation to report such incident to the TIU as soon as possible.

Section F.2.b. All Covered Persons must co-operate fully with investigations conducted by the TIU including giving evidence at hearings, if requested. No Covered Person shall (i) tamper with, damage, disable, destroy or otherwise alter any evidence or other information related to any Corruption Offense or (ii) solicit or facilitate any other person to tamper with, damage, disable, destroy or otherwise alter any evidence or other information related to any Corruption Offense.

The Tennis Integrity Unit is an initiative of the ATP, WTA, ITF and Grand Slam Board, who are jointly committed to a zero tolerance approach to betting-related corruption in professional tennis.

Source: 25 January 2020, Tennis Integrity Unit

Tennis

<https://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84431288/p1-b20025-b907f6cc77a048829981f2c637044c9c/1/50/97acb1db-38b1-4e0f-9cfc-ca815ba8ab54>

Cyprus

CFA docks funding for five clubs over match fixing claims

The Cyprus Football Association (CFA) on Wednesday announced it would cut all funding to five second division clubs in connection with the Uefa notices on suspicious betting activity concerning some of their fixtures.

Following a decision by CFA's sports judge Aristotelis Vryonides, clubs Ermis Aradippou, Digenis Morphou, Onisilos Sotiras, Othellos Athienou and PO Xylymbou will lose their funding from the CFA.

Vryonides also fined Karmiotissa Polemidion €50,000 while Digenis Morphou was fined with €5,000 and docked three points.

The CFA said last week it had received notifications concerning possible match-fixing in five fixtures, three for the second division league, and two for the cup.

Suspicious betting activity had been recorded in three second division games – Ermis vs Digenis, Onisilos vs Digenis, and Othellos vs Xylymbou and two cup fixtures.

The first cup fixture was played between first division side AEK and Karmiotissa with the report assigning blame on the latter.

The other game was between Pafos FC and Ayia Napa, but no responsibility was assigned.

*Source: 23 January 2020, Cyprus Mail
Football*

Oman

Oman cricketer charged with match-fixing

Oman cricketer Yousef Abdulrahim Al Balushi has been provisionally suspended, after being charged with match-fixing.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has accused the 29-year-old of breaching four articles of its anti-corruption code, relating to the 2019 Men's T20 World Cup Qualifiers in the United Arab Emirates.

He has been charged with "being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive in any way the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of matches".

He is also accused of "attempting to solicit, induce, entice, persuade, encourage or intentionally facilitate a participant" to breach the rules and of failing to report match-fixing approaches from three people.

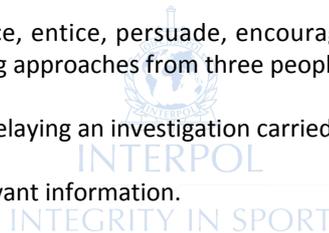
Al Balushi is further charged with obstructing and delaying an investigation carried out by the ICC Anti-Corruption Unit.

This may include concealing or tampering with relevant information.

Source: 22 January 2020, Inside the Games

Cricket

<https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1089537/oman-cricketer-match-fixing-charge>



Slovakia**DK SFZ – Tresty za korupciu v stredoslovenskom regióne**

BRATISLAVA (SFZ) - V júli 2018 zaal Senát Disciplinárnej komisie SFZ pre ochranu integrity súaže disciplinárne konanie voči 20-tim ľuďom SFZ a 6-tim klubom vo veci narušenia integrity futbalových stretnutí regionálnych a oblastných súaží, a to na základe podnetu Oddelenia Integrity futbalu SFZ a informácií poskytnutých Národnou protikorupčnou jednotkou (NAKA) - expozitúra Bratislava. Tej sa podarilo odhaliť prípad manipulácie futbalových stretnutí v súažiach, riadených Stredoslovenským futbalovým zväzom (SsFZ).

Manipulácie futbalových stretnutí boli organizované najmä za účelom výhry zo športových dôvodov a nie v súvislosti so stávkovaním. Iniciatíva manipulovať stretnutia vychádzala predovšetkým zo strany funkcionárov domácich klubov, ktorí boli počas policajnej akcie zadržaní a rovnako ako rozhodcovia a delegáti predmetných stretnutí boli obvinení z trestného inu športovej korupcie.

Výšetrovanie orgánov iných v trestnom konaní prebiehalo paralelne s disciplinárnym konaním, pričom vo veci konal na tento prípad osobitne vytvorený Senát DK pre ochranu integrity súaže. Poas trvania disciplinárneho konania dostali všetci obvinení, tak funkcionári ako aj jednotlivé kluby, možnosť predstúpiť pred Senát DK pre ochranu integrity súaže, podať v ich veci vysvetlenie, prípadne sa vyjadriť písomne. Vzhľadom na výsledky jednotlivých konaní, vo všetkých rozhodnutých veciach bolo konkrétnym obvineným ich konanie v rozpore s predpismi SFZ v plnom rozsahu preukázané.

V lete 2019 Senát DK pre ochranu integrity súaže vydal rozhodnutia voči piatim klubom, ktoré sa podieali na manipulácii stretnutí, a to uložením disciplinárnej sankcie - odobratie 6 bodov a finančnej pokuty vo výške 3000,- EUR.

Následne v septembri 2019 vydal Senát DK pre ochranu integrity súaže rozhodnutia v prípade p. Baníka (Poltár) a p. Bálinta (Tisovec), ktorým zhodne uložil disciplinárnu sankciu - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 7 rokov. Po ukončení trestného konania rozsudkom Špecializovaného trestného súdu v Pezinku dňa 27.11.2019 bolo rozhodnuté o osude ďalších 14 ľuďov SFZ, a to najmä delegovaných osôb. Pri výške disciplinárnych sankcií uložených jednotlivým previnielcom bral senát do úvahy najmä výpovede jednotlivých osôb, ich postoj k veci, outovanie ich konania, prípadne mieru ich spolupráce pri vyšetrovaní manipulovania jednotlivých stretnutí. Do úvahy bol vzatý aj záujem niektorých osôb o participáciu pri preventívnych aktivitách spojených s predchádzaním narušovania regulárnosti v oblastných a regionálnych súažiach SsFZ.

Vo všetkých prípadoch zohľadnil Senát DK pre ochranu integrity súaže aj skonenie trestného stíhania a to dohodou o vine a treste za spáchanie trestného inu športovej korupcie. Páchatelom bol súdom uložený trest zákazu inosti a to výkonu funkcie rozhodcu a delegáta, respektíve funkcionára klubu.

Sankcie uložené jednotlivým ľuďom SFZ za narušenie regulárnosti a integrity súaží riadených SsFZ podľa l. 52/2a DP:

Stanislav Kuera - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 8 rokov

Milan Dolník, Ján Greník, ubomír Konečný, Vladimír Kosec a Dávid Šimovi - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 7 rokov

Vladimír Upták - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 7 rokov (s prihliadnutím na l. 36/a,d DP)

František Bán, Ladislav Pásztor, ubomír Bulla, Ján Majšniar - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 6 rokov (s prihliadnutím na l. 36/d DP)

Oliver Doval, Rastislav Gonda, Michal Chudý - pozastavenie výkonu akejkoľvek funkcie na 4 roky (s prihliadnutím na l. 36/a,d DP)

V zmysle Disciplinárneho poriadku uložené sankcie v prípadoch narušenia integrity súaží majú plniť nie len represívny, ale najmä preventívny charakter. SFZ presadzuje princíp nulovej tolerancie v prípadoch športovej korupcie, čím zároveň reflektuje predpisy FIFA, UEFA a rovnako bude postupovať v prípade ďalších pokusov o manipuláciu futbalových stretnutí na všetkých úrovniach futbalu.

Source: 24 January 2020, Slovak Football Federation
Football

<https://www.futbalsfz.sk/dk-sfz-tresty-za-korupciu-v-stredoslovenskom-regione>

GOOD PRACTICES

IBIA

183 betting integrity alerts reported by IBIA in 2019

The International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) reported 183 cases of suspicious betting to the relevant authorities during 2019, with 45 of those cases reported in the last quarter (Q4). The annual total represents a 31% fall in alerts from 2018, with tennis accounting for the vast majority of that decline. Tennis (101) and football (49) constituted 82% of all alerts reported during 2019, with Europe (48%) and Asia (28%) maintaining their positions as the primary locations of the sports events on which alerts were generated during that period.

Khalid Ali, CEO of IBIA, said: “The decline in alerts is very welcome, especially as this is primarily a result of an improved level of integrity in ITF tennis, which has been the subject of particular scrutiny in recent years. However, there remains a clear threat from criminals intent on manipulating sport to defraud operators. Such illicit organised and targeted action has an impact on the reputation and financial well-being of sports and reputable betting operators alike.”

He added: “We continue to work closely with sports and our members to reduce that threat and to identify and punish such corruption, utilising the world’s largest operator-run and customer data led integrity system. Our rebranding and global repositioning in 2019 has aided our expansion with operators increasingly recognising the value and business necessity of engaging in collective action to protect their products against the loss of revenue resulting from betting corruption.”

Other key data for 2019:

- 5 - new betting operators joined IBIA
- 12 - number of sports on which alerts were reported
- 43 - per cent fall in tennis alerts from 2018 to 2019
- 52 - per cent of alerts raised on sports outside of Europe

The International Betting Integrity Association is the leading global voice on integrity for the licensed betting industry. It is run by operators for operators, protecting its members from corruption through collective action. Its monitoring and alert platform is a highly effective anti-corruption tool that detects and reports suspicious activity on its members’ betting markets. The association has longstanding information sharing partnerships with leading sports and gambling regulators to utilise its data and prosecute corruption. It represents the sector at high-level policy discussion forums such as the IOC, UN, Council of Europe and European Commission.

The association publishes quarterly and annual reports covering the integrity alerts reported through its monitoring and alert platform. The 2019 report can be viewed on the IBIA website here along with previous reports. The association can be contacted via info@ibia.bet.

Source: 29 January 2020, IBIA

<https://ibia.bet/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-ANNUAL-REPORT.pdf>



CORRUPTION

International Weightlifting Federation

IWF EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTS RICHARD H. MCLAREN TO LEAD INVESTIGATION INTO ARD ALLEGATIONS

The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Executive Board today voted decisively to appoint Professor Richard H. McLaren to independently investigate allegations of impropriety surrounding President Dr. Tamas Ajan and the IWF.

“I wish to thank the IWF for their trust in me and my team. As independent investigators we intend to follow every lead with the ultimate objective of uncovering the truth,” said Professor McLaren.

Professor McLaren, CEO of McLaren Global Sport Solutions Inc., will be Investigation Chair. Under his direction, Martin Dubbey will be Chief Investigator and Steven Berryman will be lead Financial Investigator.

Professor McLaren and his team have extensive experience in investigating misconduct in sport, including the 2016 investigation into allegations of state-sponsored doping by the Russian Federation. They will now look into the claims made by the Der Herr de Heber documentary on Germany’s ARD network on 5 January 2020.

The documentary claimed leadership of the IWF, including President Ajan, participated in and/or had knowledge of financial irregularities, corruption, doping control distribution, doping sample manipulation, doping payment irregularities, doping activities in specific nations and nepotism.

In announcing the appointment of McLaren, IWF Acting President Ursula Garza Papandrea said, “As I have said in the past, we need someone who is not a friend of weightlifting to look into these serious and historic allegations. But if we are to get to the bottom of this, we required an investigator whose findings will be trusted and undeniable. That is why we selected Professor McLaren. I thank my fellow Executive Board members for their courage in taking this extraordinary, but necessary action.”

Professor McLaren will be free to follow the evidence wherever that may lead. A whistleblower line will be set up and a separate announcement will be made when that is operational. The Investigation, led by Professor McLaren, is entirely independent. Professor McLaren will use the newly established IWF Oversight and Integrity Commission as his liaison to the IWF Executive Board. Professor McLaren is empowered to take whatever measures he sees fit to ensure each and every allegation is fully investigated and reported.

*Source: 31 January 2020, International Weightlifting Federation
Weightlifting*

<https://www.iwf.net/2020/01/31/iwf-executive-board-appoints-richard-h-mclaren-lead-investigation-ard-allegations/>



International Weightlifting Federation

IWF President Stands Aside During Corruption Investigation

LONDON — Tamas Ajan will stand aside as president of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) for 90 days pending investigations into allegations of corruption, the governing body said in a statement on Wednesday.

American Ursula Papandrea, president of USA Weightlifting, becomes the IWF's acting president until April, when Ajan hopes to return.

Ajan, 81, has been at the sport's governing body since 1976, serving 24 years as general secretary and 20 as president.

The decision for Ajan to stand aside was made at an extraordinary meeting of the IWF executive board in Doha, Qatar that lasted 13 hours.

Hungary's Ajan had been criticised by members of the board after a recent documentary, made by the German state broadcaster ARD, included allegations of corruption in the sport over many years.

The IWF denied the allegations and Ajan said the documentary, which focused on him and was titled Secret Doping – The Lord of the Lifters, had "ruined my life and 50 years of my work".

The IWF said it has set up a new commission to recommend independent experts who will investigate claims of financial impropriety, and corruption in anti-doping procedures, which were raised in the documentary.

Ajan said in an IWF statement released on Wednesday that the ARD allegations were unfounded.

"They are not supported by the relevant documentation or by people involved in the relevant decisions," he said.

"Consequently, I have no doubt that external experts will vindicate my commitment of nearly 50 years to develop the sport of weightlifting.

10 Years Later, an Oscar Experiment That Actually Worked

"Weightlifting has always been bigger than one man, and I am happy to have Ursula acting by my side in a presidential capacity."

Papandrea was one of the board members who suggested in the days before the meeting that the IWF needed new leadership.

SWEEPING CHANGES

Weightlifting has had problems with doping for decades, and recently overhauled its anti-doping programme.

Its place in the Olympic Games was questioned when Bulgaria's weightlifting team was sent home from the Seoul 1988 Games because of doping. Bulgaria was also sent home in disgrace from Sydney 2000 and was banned from Rio de Janeiro 2016, as was Russia.

The IOC's retests of stored samples from the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Games have so far produced 60 positives by weightlifters, by far the most of all Olympic sports.

In the latest World Anti-Doping Agency figures, for 2018, weightlifting had 205 doping violations, which amounted to 1.5% of all samples taken -- the joint highest detection rate, with boxing, of all Olympic sports.

Ajan pointed out after the ARD documentary was broadcast that the IWF had made sweeping changes since 2017 -- it put anti-doping procedures into the hands of the International Testing Agency, and compelled lifters to undergo far more testing than before during Olympic qualifying.

It also applied tougher sanctions, banning nine nations for a year in 2017 and excluding Thailand and Egypt from the Tokyo 2020 Games because of multiple doping violations.

The IOC restored weightlifting's permanent status on the Games schedule last May, when International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said his organisation would continue to monitor developments within the IWF.

The IOC said in a statement on Jan. 6, the day after the broadcast, that allegations in the TV documentary were "very serious and worrying".

Source: 22 January 2020, New York Times

Weightlifting

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/01/22/sports/olympics/22reuters-weightlifting-ajan.html>

Thailand**Thai weightlifting federation board resigns en masse**

LONDON (Reuters) - The entire board of Thailand's weightlifting federation has resigned less than a month after allegations of doping by child weightlifters were made in a German TV documentary.

The mass resignation was announced by president of the Thai Amateur Weightlifting Association, Boossaba Yodbangtoey, in a Jan. 30 statement seen by Reuters.

German broadcaster ARD's recent documentary about doping in weightlifting 'Secret Doping – the Lord of the Lifters' had forced longtime International Weightlifting Federation president Tamas Ajan to stand aside temporarily for 90 days as the IWF launched an investigation into allegations of corruption.

The International Olympic Committee expressed concerns over the doping and corruption allegations. Ajan has denied any wrongdoing.

The German broadcaster also secretly recorded Thai weightlifter Siripuch Gulnoi, who admitted to taking banned substances before winning a bronze medal at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

"The journalist neither identified his real name nor shown his real profession," Boossaba Yodbangtoey wrote in the resignation letter. "Ms Gulnoi was not aware of being filmed by the TV journalist at all."

Investigative reporter Hajo Seppelt, who co-authored the ARD documentary said reporters had indeed gone undercover in order to get the information.

"In order to reveal the truth about massive doping in Thai weightlifting we had to act as undercover reporters otherwise the athlete would have never admitted what she did on camera," Seppelt told Reuters.

"Everything is in full length, unedited and in original voice. We have been asked by anti-doping entities for the material."

Source: 30 January 2020, Times of India

Weightlifting

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-weightlifting-thailand/weightlifting-thai-federation-board-resigns-en-masse-idUKKBN1ZT28G>



United States of America

Key informant is cooperating with NCAA's probe into college basketball corruption

A key informant in the federal investigation into college basketball corruption that ensnared USC, Arizona and several other schools is cooperating with the NCAA's probe of the matter.

Marty Blazer, a former financial advisor from Pittsburgh, made the disclosure in a sentencing memorandum filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan late Thursday.

"There are pending actions alleging NCAA violations against a number of colleges and universities and Mr. Blazer continues to cooperate with the NCAA's investigation into corruption," the filing said.

At least five schools — USC, Kansas, North Carolina State, Oklahoma State and Texas Christian — have received notices of allegation from the NCAA in connection with the investigation.

The federal probe became public in September 2017 when FBI agents arrested four college basketball assistant coaches — Tony Bland (USC), Book Richardson (Arizona), Chuck Person (Auburn) and Lamont Evans (Oklahoma State) — as part of a wide-ranging look into coaches accepting bribes to direct players to use a specific sports management company when they turned professional.

All of the coaches were fired by their schools and later accepted plea bargains. Bland and Person avoided serving prison time, while Evans and Richardson received three months each. Six other people charged in the investigation, including a former Adidas executive, were convicted or pleaded guilty.

Blazer started to work for the government in an "undercover capacity" in October 2014, the government said, traveling the country to meet with college basketball and football coaches and recording the meetings. That cooperation expanded to include meeting with FBI agents 25 times between November 2016 and August 2017, wearing cameras and recording devices during meetings with college basketball coaches, runners, players and others, and providing evidence for authorities to obtain at least 10 wiretap orders.

Blazer introduced an undercover FBI agent posing as an investor to Christian Dawkins, the chief executive of a fledgling sports management company, who was later found guilty at two trials related to the investigation. Blazer testified at the second trial held last year.

The filing said Blazer's "substantial cooperation" in prosecutions stemming from the investigation "has not yet been fully disclosed" and was "extraordinary."

"The end result of Blazer's cooperation was arguably the biggest and most significant federal investigation and prosecution of corruption in college athletics," federal prosecutors wrote in a letter to U.S. District Judge Edgardo Ramos also filed Thursday.

The cooperation stemmed from Blazer's own legal troubles. He pleaded guilty in September 2017 to two counts of wire fraud, securities fraud, lying to the Securities and Exchange Commission and aggravated identity theft in connection with misappropriating more than \$1.5 million from clients.

The memorandum Thursday asked that Blazer be sentenced to probation. He is scheduled to be sentenced by Ramos next week.

Source: 31 January 2020, Los Angeles Times

Basketball

<https://www.latimes.com/sports/usc/story/2020-01-31/key-informant-cooperating-ncaas-probe-into-college-basketball-corruption>