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INTEGRITY IN SPORT

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SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Afghanistan

Afghanistan cricketer Shafiqullah Shafaq handed six-year match-fixing ban

Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batsman Shafiqullah Shafaq was banned from all forms of cricket for six years on Sunday after accepting charges relating to match-fixing.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said the 30-year-old had fixed or tried to fix matches in inaugural Afghanistan Premier League T20 in 2018 and in the 2019 Bangladesh Premier League. "Shafaq has been charged for breaches of the anti-corruption code which relates to fixing or contriving in any way or otherwise influencing improperly, or being a party to any agreement," the ACB announced in a statement.

It added: "Shafaq was also charged for seeking, accepting, offering or agreeing to accept any bribe or other reward to fix or to contrive in any way or otherwise to influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of any domestic match."

Match fixing has rocked international cricket in the last two decades with life bans for the late South African skipper Hansie Cronje, Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin and Pakistan's Salim Malik. But this is the first case involving a player from Afghanistan since the country had a fairytale rise in international cricket in 2009.

ACB's senior anti-corruption manager, Sayed Anwar Shah Qurai said: "This is a very serious offence where a senior national player is involved in the corruption of a high-profile domestic game. The player had also attempted but failed to get one of his teammates to engage in corruption in another high-profile game during the BPL 2019," said Qureshi.

The ACB said Shafaq is willing to contribute to future integrity education programs to help younger players learn from his mistakes. Shafaq played the last of his 46 Twenty20 internationals for Afghanistan in September last year. He has also played 24 one-day internationals for his country.

Source: 10 May 2020, Deccan Herald

Cricket

<https://www.deccanherald.com/sports/cricket/afghanistan-cricketer-shafiqullah-shafaq-handed-six-year-match-fixing-ban-835995.html>



ODDS AND ENDS

Germany

Tennis pros take 1st swings at coronavirus-era exhibitions

DÜSSELDORF, Germany — (AP) — There were no spectators, no line judges, no ballkids -- and no post-match handshake at the net -- as an exhibition tennis event got underway in Germany on Friday with professional players, a rare instance of live, televised sports held during the coronavirus pandemic.

Just three men were involved in each contest for what will be a four-day event at an academy near the small town of Höhr-Grenzhausen: two players, who sat on opposite sides of the indoor clay court, and a chair umpire.

"I like working with the crowd. I like having the energy on the court. There's people watching, they get pumped, so that gives me a lot of energy and makes the thing more fun. ... It's kind of hard that it's gone completely," Florian Broska, who plays college tennis at Mississippi State, told The Associated Press after his opening match Friday. "So I'm trying to get my own energy, but obviously it's not the same."

With the men's and women's pro tennis tours suspended at least until mid-July because of the COVID-19 outbreak, there is not much of a chance for players to play the sport or for fans to watch it. But this mini-tournament with a round-robin format and an eight-man field -- Dustin Brown, who upset Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2015, is the biggest name -- is among a growing number of unsanctioned competitions dotting the tennis calendar.

Two more events are planned for the same venue in Germany later this month.

Friday's matches were shown in the United States on Tennis Channel, which also will air a round-robin event from West Palm Beach, Florida, on May 8-10. That will involve four men vying for prize money: 2019 U.S. Open semifinalist Matteo Berrettini of Italy and top-60 Americans Reilly Opelka, Tennys Sandgren and Tommy Paul.

A similar event in the same place is scheduled for May 22-24 with four female pros in the top 60: Alison Riske, Amanda Anisimova, Danielle Collins and Ajla Tomljanovic.

Serena Williams' coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, is setting up exhibitions at his tennis academy in Nice, France, with 10th-ranked David Goffin of Belgium slated to face 103rd-ranked Alexei Popyrin of Australia on May 16.

The Tennis Integrity Unit, which oversees anti-corruption efforts in the sport, issued a statement Friday to point out that while "a number of new tennis events" have not been "authorized or sanctioned by the governing bodies of tennis," players, officials and support staff are still covered by the TIU's rules.

"The TIU has, upon request, provided integrity-related information to some event organizers," the statement read. "This does not constitute advice and can in no way be seen as an endorsement or approval for any event that does not come under its jurisdiction."

These attempts to return to tennis in some form offer some insight into what sports might look like whenever they resume on a larger scale.

Germany has started to ease its lockdown measures in a cautious way. Major events are not going to be allowed any time soon; soccer at closed stadiums is being considered for later in May.

At the tennis exhibition, players wear masks when they aren't on court, minimize contact with others and, as Broska noted, there is "hand sanitizer everywhere."

While waiting to play, they watch matches through a window in the venue's bar area while sitting in what Broska called "boxes," individual areas separated by dividers.

Unmanned TV cameras stand in fixed positions.

"On the court, it doesn't really change anything. At least, that's what I should tell myself. When you're on the court and you see the cameras at the beginning, you're like: 'Oh, shoot. Something is happening,'" said Broska, who lives near the venue.

U.S. college tennis doesn't offer ranking points, making it hard for players to make their mark internationally. Broska said he isn't being paid for the tournament, unlike his opponents, so he can retain his college eligibility.

"This is to show people that I can play tennis at that level," Broska said, "even if I don't have the ranking or the results that these guys have."

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Source: JAMES ELLINGWORTH, 1 May 2020, Fox13

Tennis

<https://www.fox13memphis.com/sports/tennis-pros-take-1st/UMA6RY3GI5HG6BOJPK7LGZNOYI/>

MATCH FIXING

Australia

Five Australians charged following CS:GO match-fixing investigation

Charges have been laid against five Australians following a police investigation into Counter-Strike: Global Offensive match fixing. This follows an initial arrest of six players back in August, when it was alleged they had thrown matches to gain winnings from bets they placed on them.

According to the Victoria Police statement, four 20-year-olds and a 27-year-old have been charged with "use of corrupt conduct information for betting purposes". This offence can result in up to ten years imprisonment in Australia. The five will face court on September 15.

One of the alleged offenders has also been charged with engaging in "conduct that corrupts or would corrupt a betting outcome of an event or event contingency," as well as cannabis possession.

The charges relate to at least five matches in an unnamed CS:GO tournament, after an investigation was prompted by a tip-off from an Australian betting company. Last year, Assistant Commissioner Neil Paterson told the ABC that up to AU\$30,000 had been won via the fixed bets.

The ABC also reported last year that Australia's Sporting Integrity Intelligence Unit had been investigating links between organised crime and an unnamed Australian-based Overwatch team.

Source: Shaun Prescott, 4 May 2020, PC GAMER

eSports

<https://www.pcgamer.com/five-australians-charged-following-csgo-match-fixing-investigation/>

Egypt

Tennis match-fixing: Egyptian Youssef Hossam banned for match-fixing

Youssef Hossam has been banned for life by the Tennis Integrity Unit after being found guilty of multiple match-fixing and other corruption offences.

The TIU found that the Egyptian, 21, had committed 21 breaches of anti-corruption rules between 2015 and 2019.

It also ruled he conspired with others to carry out betting-related corruption at the lower levels of the sport.

Hossam reached a career-high singles ranking of 291 in December 2017 and is currently ranked 820.

He was provisionally suspended from tennis in May last year and was found to have committed eight cases of match-fixing, six cases of facilitating gambling and two cases of soliciting other players not to use their best efforts.

He was also found guilty of three failures to report corrupt approaches and two failures to co-operate with a TIU investigation.

"As a result of his conviction, Mr Hossam is now permanently excluded from competing in or attending any sanctioned tennis event organised or recognised by the governing bodies of the sport," said a TIU statement.

His elder brother, Karim Hossam, was banned from tennis for life for multiple match-fixing offences in 2018.

Source: 4 May 2020, BBC News

Tennis

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/tennis/52539384>

Global

UN EQUIPO DE DOTA 2 ES SUSPENDIDO DE WEPLAY! PUSHKA LEAGUE POR MATCH FIXING

El Match Fixing parece no cesar, un equipo profesional de Dota 2 acaba de ser suspendido por presuntos arreglos de partidos en la WePlay! Pushka League Division 2.

No es nuevo el caso de los arreglos de partidos en los esports, League Of Legends y Dota 2 son los que más sufrieron estas situaciones.

El partido entre Cyber Legacy y CyberTRAKTOR se celebró en la liga el 26 de abril por la segunda división de la WePlay! Pushka League. Tres días después, el 29 de abril, WePlay! ha publicado oficialmente una declaración a través de su sitio web que dice que el partido podría no haberse jugado de manera justa.

La serie BO3 entre los dos equipos vio a Cyber Legacy ganarlo 2-0. Sin embargo, cuando WePlay! decidió investigar las partidas, llegaron a la conclusión de que los miembros de CyberTRAKTOR podrían haber estado involucrados en el método de Match fixing.

El Match fixing fue realizado por CyberTRAKTOR, al apostar dinero en su contra y posteriormente perder su partido a propósito. Aquí está la resolución de la organizadora de eventos WePlay!

Llegaron a la decisión de que CyberTRAKTOR tendrá prohibido participar en otros juegos hasta que se aclaren las circunstancias. El equipo está integrado tres rusos, un ucraniano y un bielorruso. Este equipo había triunfado en el clasificatorio de CIS para llegar al WePlay! Pushka League Division 2.

Como reiteramos anteriormente, no es el primer caso de Match fixing dentro de Dota 2, con solo recordar el arreglo de partidos por parte del equipo peruano de Elite Wolves por el 2016.

Source: Facundo Cáceres, 30 April 2020, HERO Network

eSports

<https://www.beahero.gg/un-equipo-de-dota-2-es-suspendido-de-weplay-pushka-league-por-match-fixing/>

India

India is the den of match-fixing mafia in cricket, alleges former Pakistan pacer Aaqib Javed

Former Pakistan pacer Aaqib Javed has alleged that India is the den of match-fixing mafia in cricket. In an interview to a Pakistan-based news channel, Javed also claimed that fixing questions have been raised over the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the past but no one has the courage to do anything against the mafia, who runs the business while remaining in the background.

“Questions have been raised over IPL in the past. Match-fixing mafia is linked to India,” Javed told Geo News.

“There is no way out once you decide to get yourself into it (fixing). Nobody has the courage to take any sort of action against the mafia yet,” he added.

Javed had earlier accused Wasim Akram of keeping him out of Pakistan’s cricket team due to declining offers to fix matches. He also said that he received death threats if he spoke on the issue when there were allegations against former Pakistan captain Saleem Malik, he told another news channel, as quoted by Dawn.

The 47-year-old also alleged that he was being threatened to be ‘ripped into pieces’ if he continued to speak regarding the issue.

“My career ended prematurely because I spoke against fixing. I was being threatened that I would be ripped to pieces,” he said.

According to him, the reason why he could never become the head coach of the national team is that he spoke out in open.

“If you are vocal against fixing then you can only go to a certain extent in your career. This is why I was not able to become the head coach (of Pakistan).”

The right-arm pacer featured in 22 Tests and 163 One-Day Internationals for Pakistan, claiming 54 and 182 wickets respectively.

Source: 8 May 2020, THE CRICKET TIMES

Cricket

<https://crickettimes.com/2020/05/india-is-the-den-of-match-fixing-mafia-in-cricket-alleges-former-pakistan-pacer-aaqib-javed/>

India

Match Fixing: Delhi HC Reserves Order On Police Plea Challenging Bail To Sanjeev Chawla

Delhi High Court Saturday reserved its order on a plea by Delhi Police challenging the bail granted to Sanjeev Chawla, an alleged bookie and a key accused in one of cricket's biggest match-fixing scandals that involved former South African captain Hansie Cronje. Justice Asha Menon, who conducted the hearing through video conferencing, heard the arguments of the counsel for Delhi Police and Chawla and reserved the order on the plea.

Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, representing Chawla, said while reserving the order, the high court has asked the magistrate concerned to accept the bail bond and sureties furnished by the accused and direct his release subject to the outcome of the high court proceedings. The counsel said the high court has asked Chawla to give an undertaking that he will abide by the outcome of its order and he along with the sureties is bound by the undertaking. Chawla, who was extradited from London in February, was granted bail by a trial court here on April 30 on furnishing of a personal bond of Rs 2 lakh and two sureties of the like amount.

He had sought bail saying in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a risk of getting infected with the virus in jail where it is difficult to maintain social distancing. Challenging the trial court's bail order, the police sought its cancellation on the ground that Chawla is a British national and it took 20 years to bring him back to India and there is likelihood of the accused fleeing from justice. The police, in the plea filed through prosecutor Kewal Singh Ahuja, said the guidelines with respect to COVID-19 and release of undertrial prisoners are not applicable to Chawla in light of his alleged role in the match fixing as he has played as the main conduit in the match fixing.

Pahwa opposed the police's plea saying Chawla never applied for bail in 60 days which showed he was cooperating with the prosecuting agency and the trial is pending for seven years and charges have not been framed and it will take considerable time to complete the trial. He said the plea to cancel the bail was not maintainable and while the Supreme Court and high court are de-congesting jails to contain the spread of coronavirus, police is keeping the accused in prison. The high court has asked both the sides to give their written submissions by May 4. The trial court, while granting bail to Chawla, said the accused was in custody for the last 76 days and the probe was already complete in the case.

It, however, directed him to give his voice sample and handwriting specimen to the investigating officer in the case. According to police, Chawla was allegedly involved in fixing of five matches. Cronje, who died in a plane crash in 2002, was also involved, police had told the court. Chawla was alleged to have played a central role in conspiring with Cronje to fix a South African tour to India in February-March, 2000.

The British court documents say that Chawla is a Delhi-born businessman who moved to the United Kingdom on a business visa in 1996 but continued to make trips to India.

Source: Press Trust Of India, 2 May 2020, Republic World

Cricket

<https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/cricket-news/match-fixing-delhi-hc-reserves-order-on-police-plea-challenging-bail-to-sanjeev-chawla.html>



Pakistan

Pakistan's Umar Akmal gets three-year ban for match-fixing approach

Lahore (Pakistan) (AFP) - Controversial Pakistani batsman Umar Akmal was banned Monday from all forms of cricket for three years after pleading guilty to failing to report match-fixing approaches, the country's cricket board announced.

Umar, who turns 30 in May, last month withdrew a challenge to the charges.

The batsman's ban is effective from February 20, when he was provisionally suspended by the board under its anti-corruption code, which states a player must report being approached to fix games.

The decision was announced by a disciplinary committee after a brief hearing of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which charged the player with two breaches.

"The PCB referred the matter to the chairman of the disciplinary committee after determining that the batsman had not requested a hearing," said the board.

Asif Mahmood -- the PCB's anti-corruption and security director -- said authorities took no "pleasure in seeing a promising international cricketer being declared ineligible" for three years on corruption charges, but defended the ban as necessary.

"I request all professional cricketers to stay away from the menace of corruption and immediately inform relevant authorities as soon as they are approached," Mahmood added.

Umar was whisked away by his driver without speaking to the media after the sentence was delivered.

The batsman burst onto the scene with a century in his first Test in 2009, but his career has been marred by disciplinary problems, resulting in various bans and fines.

He was arrested in February 2014 after a scuffle with a traffic warden who stopped him for a signal violation.

Umar last represented Pakistan in two Twenty20 internationals against Sri Lanka in Lahore last year, falling to first ball ducks on both occasions.

He has so far played 16 Tests, 121 one-day games and 84 Twenty20s for Pakistan.

Umar's ban is the latest in a series of match- or spot-fixing punishments meted out to Pakistani players.

In 2000, former captain Salim Malik was banned for life and six other players -- including greats such as Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis -- were fined after a judicial inquiry on fixing.

A decade later then-Test captain Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Amir were banned for five years in a spot-fixing case over an incident during the team's tour of England.

The Pakistan Super League's second edition in 2017 was also marred by a fixing scandal, resulting in a five-year ban on Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif

Source: 27 April 2020, Yahoo sports

Cricket

<https://sports.yahoo.com/pakistans-umar-akmal-banned-three-years-pcb-115711517--spt.html>

POLICY

Australia

David Sharpe appointed as chief executive of new Sports Integrity Australia unit

David Sharpe says he is "honoured" to be appointed as the chief executive of the new Sports Integrity Australia (SIA) unit which opens later this year.

The SIA, which is being established by the Australian Government following its Review of Australia's Sports Integrity Arrangements, launches on July 1, and will bring together national sports organisations, athletes and agencies, with the aim of protecting the integrity of the country's sport.

Sharpe, a former chief Assistant Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, is currently chair of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA).

SIA will combine the current functions of ASADA, the National Integrity of Sport Unit (NISU), and the nationally focused integrity functions of Sport Australia.

Sharpe said he was "honoured" to be appointed to the newly-created post by the country's Minister for Sport Richard Colbeck.

"I would like to thank the Government and Minister Colbeck for having faith in me to do the job," said Sharpe.

"Together, as a team, we are powerful.

"We can put a protective, ethical ring around sport to protect it from those seeking to corrupt or exploit the vulnerable for their own gain.

"This is an opportunity to share and learn from each other because, after all, we are all here to protect sport.

"In these unsettled times as sport collectively deals with the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever, sport requires certainty, fairness and leadership."

Among the areas of focus for the new unit when it opens will be tackling any threats posed by state sponsored doping, the infiltration of sport by organised crime or corruption within sport.

The setup of the unit has been made possible by cooperation from ASADA, NISU, Sport Australia and the Department of Health.

Sharpe added: "I would also like to put on the record the Government's commitment to ensuring SIA has the resources to not only be operational but has the capabilities to collaborate with others to get the job done."

Source: Neil Shefferd, 3 May 2020, *Inside the Games*

All Sports

<https://www.insidethegames.biz/index.php/articles/1093860/sharpe-appointed-new-sia-chief-executive>



INTEGRITY IN SPORT

CORRUPTION

FIFA

Swiss politicians call for FIFA investigation-bungler Lauber to be fired

More Swiss parliamentarians have joined calls for the nation's attorney general Michael Lauber to resign after the five-year statute of limitations in the 2006 World Cup fraud investigation expired last week with no verdicts.

After the Conservative MP Lorenz Hess filed a request for a dismissal procedure to be initiated last week, saying Lauber's position was no longer tenable, other political groups are now also demanding he steps down.

Following a meeting on Saturday, the socialist group indicated it could no longer support the state prosecutor who has come under severe pressure, particularly over his controversial undocumented meetings with FIFA boss Gianni Infantino.

The group's leader Roger Nordmann was quoted as saying: "Michael Lauber must now suffer the consequences and resign. Otherwise, the socialist group will support the motion opening an indictment procedure."

All Switzerland's federal parties, with the exception of the Liberal-radical Party (PLR), one of whose leaders, Christian Lüscher, is reported to be a long-time friend of Lauber, are now reported to be opposed to him continuing.

The vice-president of the Judicial Commission and social democratic deputy Matthias Aebischer was quoted as saying: "The damage caused to the institutions is immense. If the federal prosecutor does not resign on his own initiative now, I will support the impeachment procedure, because things cannot continue like this."

Source: 4 May 2020, INSIDE World Futbol

Football

<http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2020/05/04/swiss-politicians-call-fifa-investigation-bungler-lauber-fired/>

Germany

Franz Beckenbauer: Trial of German football legend on corruption charges ends without verdict

The trial of German football legend Franz Beckenbauer on corruption charges has been ended without a verdict.

The five-year long trial, held in Switzerland, had been suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic and the statute of limitations has now expired.

Beckenbauer was one of four men investigated over suspected corruption linked to the 2006 World Cup.

The 74-year-old, who won the World Cup as a player in 1974, and manager in 1990, had denied the allegations.

World football's governing body Fifa said it was "deeply disappointed" that the trial would not go ahead.

Fifa's statement added: "The fact that the case has now ended without a result of any kind is very worrying, not only for football, but for the administration of justice in Switzerland."

In Switzerland, the maximum time in which criminal proceedings can be carried out on a fraud allegation is 15 years.

The courts no longer have jurisdiction over Beckenbauer's case as it relates to an incident in 2005.

Beckenbauer was the head of the World Cup organising committee when Germany were named hosts for the 2006 World Cup.

He was accused of making two payments totalling £8.4m to former Fifa executive Mohamed bin Hammam in 2005.

In October 2015, Beckenbauer said he did not give "money to anyone in order to buy votes".

Germany beat South Africa 12-11 in the World Cup vote, which took place in July 2000.

Source: 28 April 2020, BBC

Football

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/52463703>

India

ICC hands two-year ban to Deepak Agarwal for breaching Anti-Corruption code

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday banned Deepak Agarwal, an Indian businessman who owned a franchise in the 2018 T10 League held in the UAE after he admitted to obstructing an ongoing anti-corruption investigation.

Six months of this two-year ban is a suspended sentence due to the cooperation he has offered since admitting his violation of the anti-corruption code.

Source: 29 April 2020, *The Times of India*

Cricket

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/news/icc-hands-two-year-ban-to-deepak-agarwal-for-breaching-anti-corruption-code/articleshow/75451615.cms>

Switzerland

Swiss set trial date for PSG chief, ex-FIFA no.2

Lausanne (AFP) - A Swiss court on Tuesday scheduled a September trial date for Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi and FIFA's former secretary general Jerome Valcke, in an alleged corruption case.

The case, involving the pair and a third, unnamed man, relates to alleged criminal mismanagement, incitement to criminal mismanagement, falsifying documents and corruption, the Federal Criminal Court said on its website.

The court is based in the southeastern Swiss city of Bellinzona.

When filing the indictment in February, the office of Switzerland's attorney general (OAG) said the men faced charges linked "with the award of media rights to various World Cup and FIFA Confederations Cup tournaments."

After the date was set on Tuesday, Al-Khelaifi's lawyers issued a statement insisting the case was "completely unfounded", and said the allegation against their client was "manifestly artificial."

They also indicated that they had requested the recusal of the prosecutors in the case and had filed a criminal complaint related to leaks, "making it uncertain whether the case will proceed at all."

Al-Khelaifi, who is also the boss of Qatari television channel BeIN Sports, had been suspected of giving inappropriate gifts to Valcke, formerly ex-FIFA boss Sepp Blatter's right-hand man, in order to secure broadcast rights to prestigious events, including the World Cup.

But in February, the OAG said it dropped "a criminal complaint of bribery" against Al-Khelaifi linked to the award of media rights for World Cup tournaments in 2026 and 2030 and other events, after FIFA withdrew the complaint it was based on, following an "amicable agreement" with Al-Khelaifi.

Prosecutors however accused him of inciting the non-reporting of a gift.

The indictment in February also accused the third man, described as "a businessman in the sports rights sector", of bribery over a 1.25-million-euro (\$1.35 million) payment to Valcke's company Sportunited LLC.

Valcke meanwhile stands accused of exploiting his position at FIFA between 2013 and 2015 to influence the award of media rights for Italy and Greece for various World Cup and other tournaments scheduled between 2018 and 2030 "in order to favour media partners that he preferred," in exchange for the payments from the unnamed businessman, according to that indictment.

He has also been charged with falsifying documents, after Sportsunited's balance sheet listed those payments as loans.

Switzerland's judiciary last week rejected a request from Al-Khelaifi for three federal prosecutors in the case to be recused, over claims that during a hearing on December 6, 2019, he had not been given enough time to address all of the aspects of the case he deemed were necessary.

Valcke, who worked with Blatter from 2003 to 2015, has already been banned from football for 10 years for failing to cooperate with investigators over the resale of World Cup tickets and inflated expenses.

Source: 29 April 2020, *Yahoo sports*

Football

<https://sports.yahoo.com/swiss-try-psg-chief-al-khelaifi-ex-fifa-170220606--sow.html>

United States

Israeli bank agrees to pay \$30m over role in Fifa scandal

Israel-based Bank Hapoalim B.M. (BHBM) and its Swiss subsidiary, Hapoalim Ltd, have agreed to forfeit \$20.7m (€18.9m) and pay a fine of \$9.3m to resolve an investigation into their involvement in a money laundering conspiracy involving Fifa, football's global governing body.

In a statement released yesterday (Thursday), the US Department of Justice announced that BHBM and Hapoalim Ltd, also known as BHS, admitted that they, through certain employees, conspired to launder over \$20m in bribes and kickbacks to officials from Fifa and other football federations.

From approximately December 10, 2010 to February 20, 2015, BHBM and BHS personnel were found to have conspired with sports marketing executives, including executives associated with Full Play, a sports and media and marketing business based in Argentina, among others, to launder at least \$20.7m in bribes and kickbacks.

The US DOJ said that in exchange for these bribes and kickbacks, football officials awarded or steered broadcasting rights for matches and tournaments to these sports marketing executives and their companies. Full Play is alleged to have executed the illegal payments from accounts at BHS and BHBM's branch in Miami, Florida.

On March 18, Full Play, among others, was charged with racketeering conspiracy, wire fraud, wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy. BHBM and BHS have also admitted to conspiring to launder money for Luis Bedoya, the former president of the Colombian Football Federation who also served as vice-president of the South American Football Confederation (Conmebol) and was a member of Fifa's executive committee.

According to the US DOJ, BHBM's Miami branch and BHS allowed accounts controlled by Bedoya to receive illicit bribe and kickback payments. Bedoya pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy and wire fraud conspiracy on November 12, 2015.

Eugenio Figueredo, former president of Conmebol was also among those accused of receiving the bribes, the Associated Press reported. Sergio Jadue and Rafael Esquivel, the respective presidents of the Chilean and Venezuelan federations, were also implicated, along with Jose Luis Chiriboga, the son of the president of the Ecuadorian federation.

The US DOJ said that BHS failed to take action despite repeated concerns raised by compliance personnel about certain payments made to football officials from accounts associated with Full Play. The banks' relationship managers continued executing illicit bribe and kickback payments on behalf of Full Play, the US DOJ added.

Brian Benczkowski, assistant attorney general of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, said: "For nearly five years, Bank Hapoalim employees used the US financial system to launder tens of millions of dollars in bribe payments to corrupt soccer officials in multiple countries. Today's announcement demonstrates the department's commitment to holding financial institutions to account when they knowingly facilitate corruption and other criminal conduct."

William Sweeney, of the FBI's New York Field Office and the assistant director in charge of the investigation, added: "This announcement illustrates another aspect in the spider web of bribery, corruption and backroom deals going on behind the scenes as soccer games were played on the field.

"Bank Hapoalim admits executives looked the other way, and allowed illicit activity to continue even when employees discovered the scheme and reported it. The New York FBI Eurasian Organised Crime Task Force and our law enforcement partners have doggedly pursued every strand uncovered in this criminal investigation, and will keep at it until they root out all of the bad actors."

The US government's decision to enter into a non-prosecution agreement with BHBM and BHS will result in the closure of BHBM's Miami branch and Bank Hapoalim (Latin America). BHS is also in the process of closing its operations.

Source: 1 May 2020, Sports business

Football

<https://www.sportbusiness.com/news/israeli-bank-agrees-to-pay-30m-over-role-in-fifa-scandal/>