



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

15-28 September 2020



Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Cyprus

CSEC investigates possible match fixing for Match Day 4 of Cyprus League

The Cyprus Sports Ethics Committee (CSEC) is investigating a possible match fixing in the framework of the Match Day 4 of the Cyprus football league.

Specifically, the Chairman of the Committee told CNA that twenty-one persons involved in two football teams, among them coaches, club presidents and footballers, are under the microscope of the Committee for a possible match fixing case from last weekend.

The committee has proceeded to issue calls to sports agents in the context of an investigation for a possible manipulation of a football match, that took place last weekend, between two teams of the 1st Division of the Cyprus Football League.

Replying to a question, Papacharalambous said that the Commission had noticed increased betting activity in a specific match.

For that reason, members of the Committee carefully watched the game on TV to determine whether the suspicions were reasonable.

“After we noticed the betting activity, we paid attention to every move of each player”, he said.

Papacharalambous said that the Commission with the contribution of police will take testimonies from the persons under investigation and if necessary, it will also obtain arrest warrants.

The six games that took place in the Match Day 4 of the league are the following:

» Ermis–Olympiacos (0-1)

» Paphos–Ethnikos (2-2)

» AEL–Karmiotissa (3-1)

» Omonoia–AEK (2-1)

» Anorthosis–Apollon (1-3)

» ENP–APOEL (0-2)

Source: 21 September 2020, incyprus

Football

<https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/csec-investigates-possible-match-fixing-for-match-day-4-of-cyprus-league/>



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Cyprus

Cyprus is engaged in the fight against sports manipulations in line with the Macolin Convention objectives

The Cypriot National Platform to Combat the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Committee of Ethics and Safeguarding in Sports) has, in accordance with the law 180()/2017 launched a “preliminary investigation” on 21 September 2020 concerning suspicious behaviour detected during a Football match.

Considering the seriousness of the case and the data collected so far, the Network of National Platforms (the Group of Copenhagen), acting under the aegis of the Council of Europe, is mobilised to help the Cyprus National Platform in its duty and to support Cyprus political engagement against criminality in sport.

The Group of Copenhagen includes 33 member countries; it acts with the support of international partners such as Europol, FIFA, Interpol, IOC, or UEFA.

The manipulation of sports competitions is a complex phenomenon, which can take different forms and is often difficult to prove. All sports in all countries of the world are concerned. The Macolin Convention (CETS n°215) empowers public authorities to fight effectively this particularly harmful form of corruption, through National Platforms, in order to protect the integrity of sport and society as a whole.

The preliminary inquiry, which is a normal and positive step in the procedure defined by Cypriot law, will determine whether or not criminal or disciplinary proceedings should be launched. The Group of Copenhagen will remain mobilized alongside Cyprus during the process, in accordance with a procedure that respects the rights of the defence and conducted in compliance with the Law.

Source: 23 September 2020, Council of Europe
Football

https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/manipulation-of-sports-competitions/-/asset_publisher/YTlnOwRwizgk/content/cyprus-is-engaged-in-the-fight-against-sports-manipulations-in-line-with-the-macolin-convention-objectives?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.coe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fsport%2Fmanipulation-of-sports-competitions%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_YTlnOwRwizgk%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-6%26p_p_col_pos%3D1%26p_p_col_count%3D4

Pakistan

Karachi court indicts 13 for alleged collusion with Indian bookies during PSL 2020

A banking court in Karachi has indicted 13 suspects over the allegation of being a part of a match-fixing racket alongside several Dubai-based Indian bookies which, as per the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), had even approached a cricketer during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2020 earlier this year.

The accused pled not guilty to the charges, following which the court summoned witnesses in its next hearing.

As per The News, the group's existence and their overtures had first come to light when the FIA, in March and February, arrested four individuals namely Mahendar Kumar, Naresh Kumar alias KG and Naresh Kumar alias Jani on charges of running a spot-fixing and gambling racket in collusion with bookmakers from India during the PSL 2020.

According to the investigators, the accused were running web portals to manage and operate gambling accounts and ledgers and had opened 'benami' account in different banks to camouflage the nature of ill-gotten money in connivance of the bankers.

“The WhatsApp conversations, images, documents, deposit slips available in mobile phones of accused persons prove their illegal acts of gambling and money laundering,” according to the FIA.

“The accused were in liaison with UAE-based bookie Lal Chand, who facilitated them through web portals and Ravi Kumar (Mahendar’s brother) managed finances for money laundering through hawala hundi.”

Karachi court indicts 13 for colluding with Indian bookies during PSL 2020

Source: 25 September 2020, Geo Super TV
Cricket

<https://www.geosuper.tv/latest/6564-karachi-court-indicts-13-for-colluding-with-indian-bookies-during-psl-2020>

Singapore

Singapore police investigate firm linked to Newcastle bidders

Singapore police are investigating a company linked to two entrepreneurs trying to buy Newcastle United after an accounting firm lodged a police report over unauthorised signatures on the group's financial statements.

The two Singaporean entrepreneurs, cousins Terence and Nelson Loh, head the Bellagraph Nova Group along with a Chinese business partner.

The group's bid to buy the English Premier League football club hit a snag after reports emerged last month of manipulated photos purporting to show former US president Barack Obama in a meeting with its founders in Paris, among other inconsistent claims.

Ernst and Young said Saturday it did not sign off on the documents of Novena Global Healthcare Group, but served as the auditor of a Singapore subsidiary in 2017.

"Ernst & Young LLP were never the auditors of Novena Global Healthcare Group (incorporated in Cayman Islands)," a spokesperson said in a statement sent to AFP.

The police confirmed that a report was lodged and said they were looking into the matter.

The Novena Global Healthcare Group is owned by the Lohs, according to the Straits Times newspaper.

Terence Loh denied any wrongdoing through his lawyer, the newspaper reported.

AFP has reached out to Terence and Nelson Loh for comment.

BN Group's bid came after a Saudi-backed consortium withdrew its offer to buy Newcastle in late July, following a months-long wait for Premier League approval

The company has blamed "errant individuals" for the doctored Obama photographs.

It has made other questionable claims, including that it is headquartered at a prestigious Paris address.

A visit by an AFP reporter found that the Paris office address belongs to workspace provider Regus. AFP also found that no company named Bellagraph Nova Group or BN Group is registered in France.

The Lohs are also controlling shareholders in professional advisory services firm Axington, which saw a string of resignations from its board after the revelations about Bellagraph Nova surfaced, including of Kirk Wagar, the former US ambassador to Singapore.

Source: 19 September 2020, The Guardian

Football

<https://guardian.ng/sport/singapore-police-investigate-firm-linked-to-newcastle-bidders/>

United Kingdom

Former Hibs striker Marc McNulty arrested in police 'match fixing' investigation

Former Hibernian striker Marc McNulty has been arrested as part of a police probe into allegations of match fixing.

The 28-year-old, who has two caps for the Scottish national side, is back at parent club Reading after the end of his second loan spell at Easter Road last season.

Officers raided several properties in Edinburgh and the surrounding area and removed computer equipment for further analysis.

McNulty and a 21-year-old man from Bo'ness were arrested and later released by police, according to the Scottish Sun.

It is understood the allegations centre around bookings given to players during games.

McNulty initially joined Hibs on loan in 2019, scoring eight times in 17 games before linking up with Jack Ross at Sunderland. A Police Scotland spokesperson said: "We are investigating reported incidents relating to gambling in sport.

"As part of the ongoing inquiry, officers searched a number of properties in the Edinburgh and Forth Valley areas on Wednesday, 23 September 2020.

"Two men, aged 21 and 28 years of age, have been arrested and released pending further enquiries."

Source: 27 September 2020, Edinburgh Live

Football

<https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/sport/football/marc-mcnulty-hibs-arrested-matchfixing-19005415>

BETTING

Argentina

Argentina shutdown forces bettors to turn to illegal gambling sites

Following the temporary shutdown of all gaming, lottery and betting shops in Argentina, provincial regulators revealed this week that they have detected an exponential growth in illegal gambling activity.

Buenos Aires Deputy Ombudsman Walter Martello told Radio 99.9 that "...illegal gambling is expanding in all provinces", and that different authorities are considering a regulatory change to control gambling in the country.

Authorities in the Buenos Aires province are currently trying to identify the operators behind the illegal offering, which include online bingo with more than 100,000 players. However, Martello believes that this is a "very complex" issue, saying: "It's hard to identify and track them because once we find them, they remove their sites.

"The country that has made the biggest progress in online gambling is Colombia, which has regulated the industry a few years ago, but in Latin America in general this is not happening."

In addition, he warned of the importance for the state to get involved in the issue, as online gambling attracts younger generations.

The Deputy Ombudsman also revealed that regulatory authorities with advanced technology in Argentina have already asked Facebook to improve their filters to eliminate illegal online gambling from the platform. "In Buenos Aires, a specific site was set up so people can file complaints, but the problem is that they're difficult to follow," he added.

Racetracks in the province received the green light to reopen this month, while the jurisdiction is awaiting the implementation of the online gambling and sports betting regulation.

Source: 16 September 2020, SBC Americas

All Sports

<https://sbcameras.com/2020/09/16/argentina-shutdown-forces-bettors-to-turn-to-illegal-gambling-sites/>

India

BCCI signs up Sportradar to detect betting irregularities during IPL 2020

The BCCI has roped in UK-based company Sportradar to detect betting irregularities during IPL 2020.

"As part of the agreement, all matches in IPL 2020 will be monitored by Sportradar's Integrity Services to detect betting irregularities," a statement released by the company on Thursday said. "Sportradar will also provide a risk assessment to the BCCI, driven by intelligence and data-driven insights. Furthermore the BCCI will be able to call upon Sportradar's Intelligence and Investigation Services during the term of the partnership, if required."

An IPL source, who confirmed the development to PTI, said: "Sportradar has very recently red flagged at least half a dozen games in the Goa football league that came under a fixing cloud. They have also worked with FIFA, UEFA and various leagues across the globe."

The BCCI Anti-Corruption Unit has, in recent times, tracked unusual betting patterns during state T20 leagues, including the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL), as a major betting company stopped taking bets after unusual bets were being placed.

According to Sportradar, its Fraud Detection System (FDS) "is a unique service that identifies betting-related manipulation in sport. This is possible due to the FDS's sophisticated algorithms and constantly maintained database of odds, which are leveraged for the purpose of detecting match-fixing."

It is believed that the company tracks the odds and movements of at least 600 independent bookmakers to detect anomalies in betting patterns. It processes around 5 million data sets per day.

How Sportradar's fraud detection works

As part of Sportradar's fraud detection, a mathematical algorithm is used to study betting patterns. It is a "sophisticated model", which monitors live betting during an event.

"There are 25 live alerts, which instantly identify irregular betting in the marketplace," The Sportradar website says. "The mathematical model uses calculated odds, which runs alongside bookmakers' odds, in order to highlight if the odds during a specific minute or time is out of line, and therefore, potentially suspicious."

There are also "44 detailed pre-match alerts, which are based on odds movements observed at betting operators".

"An alert is generated in FDS when odds at a bookmaker changes greater than pre-defined parameters."

Source: 17 September 2020, ESPN

Cricket

https://www.espn.com/story/_/id/29903792/ipl-2020-bcci-signs-sportradar-detect-betting-irregularities



India

Google briefly removes India payments app for betting violations ahead of IPL 2020

MUMBAI: Google on Friday removed one of India's biggest digital payment apps for several hours from its online store for breaching gambling rules, a day before the start of the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) T20 cricket tournament.

Read more at:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/78198517.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Source: 19 September 2020, Times of India

Cricket

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/ipl/top-stories/google-briefly-removes-india-payments-app-for-betting-violations-ahead-of-ipl-2020/articleshow/78198517.cms>

Kosovo

Kosovo police officers arrested in crackdown on illegal casinos

At least 10 police officers have been arrested in Kosovo during a large-scale operation to close down illegal casinos.

Hundreds of officers took part in the raid in the village of Karachevo on the border with Serbia.

Police said it was the biggest operation of its kind ever carried out in Kosovo and followed a year-long investigation.

Kosovo banned all gambling last year in a bid to crack down on crime.

Jetish Maloku, chief prosecutor for the eastern district of Gjilan, told reporters that police had arrested at least 35 people on suspicion of illegal gambling, prostitution, and trafficking people, guns and drugs.

At least 10 of those were border police who were alleged to have facilitated illegal cross-border activity.

Kosovo profile

Twelve illegal casinos were demolished and gambling machines seized, police said.

In March last year the government banned all gambling for 10 years because of its links to organised crime.

The bill was passed followed the murders of two casino staff at different locations only a few days apart. A police officer was arrested in connection with one of the killings.

Kosovo's then prime minister Ramush Haradinaj said at the time that the measure was aimed at "strengthening public security".

"We will not allow these venues to be arenas of crime that claim people's lives," he said on Facebook.

Just before the ban came into force, police shut down nearly 500 gambling sites across Kosovo.

Betting, particular on sports, had become hugely popular in Kosovo in recent years.

Source: 20 September 2020, BBC News

All Sports

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54219185?fbclid=IwAR2yaorGwW-iViERNhYcHmacyA3xD3ZJmU_cchDlhvdWTIhiT4kyb92Rc9c



MATCH FIXING

Asian basketball league

Match-fixing: 'more than 10 suspicious basketball games' in restarted Asian league with Covid-19 crisis poised to cause rise in corrupt practices

More than 10 suspicious games have been detected in a restarted Asian basketball league with sports integrity professionals expecting an increase in match-fixing activity in a Covid-19-depressed environment.

Despite a significant decrease in sports competitions because of the pandemic, gamblers are still looking for ways to bet, with Asia leading the world, said Tan You Chen, Sportradar's senior manager, Integrity Partnerships Asia in Singapore.

He said many gamblers resorted to betting on lower-league and amateur games in Europe during the height of the coronavirus lockdown from March to May as the major sporting leagues, such as the English Premier League, and other competitions came to a halt.

"With Covid-19, there has been quite a few changes to the whole sporting landscape," Tan told the Post. "First thing is we are experiencing negative economic conditions and that has definitely played into the hands of match-fixers because players and officials have had their wages cut and they are now easier targets for corrupt approaches.

"Some players are still giving 100 per cent but not getting 100 per cent of wages and this is likely to contribute to the increase in match-fixing, simply because it's easier to corrupt them.

"As the majority of sports resume, match-fixing is likely to increase. We noticed that a basketball league in this region, since its restart, has seen more than 10 suspicious matches taking place. It is going along with our expectations," said Tan, who declined to identify the league.

Since the Covid-19 situation eased in Asia, three major regional leagues have restarted – the Chinese Basketball Association league, the South Korean league and Japan's B League, which was eventually cancelled in late March.

Sportradar played a role in catching three Laos players accused of manipulating the result of their 4-0 loss away to Hong Kong in October 2017, as well as helping in the successful conviction of Joseph Lamptey, a Ghanaian referee who deliberately awarded South Africa a penalty against Senegal in a Fifa World Cup qualifier in 2016.

The integrity firm, which has strong relationships with bookmakers and monitors up to 300,000 games a year, also helped nab five Nepalese players who were accused of match-fixing at the 2014 Asian Games in South Korea.

Sportradar, which has integrity partnerships with the Hong Kong Football Association, Asian Football Confederation, Football Association of Singapore and CBA League, among others, said 90 per cent of global sports was halted at the peak of the Covid-19 crisis, while betting turnover fell by around 75 per cent during the worst-hit weeks. Asia leads the way with 60 per cent of global betting.

Tan said bettors desperate to gamble on sport resorted to competitions such as the Swedish seventh and eighth divisions, and Central Asian football leagues in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that continued matches during the pandemic, and e-sports.

"These countries still had their leagues going," said Tan. "And it was interesting that bookmakers were offering these leagues for betting when previously they would not.

"One of the lowest levels was the Tajikistan youth under-21 competition, which was still going on and the betting amount on that competition was rather high."

Tan said punters flocked to the K-League, South Korea's elite competition that was one of the first professional football leagues to return after the global sporting lockdown.

Turnover per match for the K-League 1 top division increased by around 345 per cent compared to 2019, according to Sportradar, while K-League 2 betting increased by around 190 per cent

"Once again, betting attention on the K-League was tremendous," said Tan, whose company also works with law enforcement agencies such as Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption and its Singapore equivalent.

"If you're talking about betting, Asia is the biggest market in the world," added Tan, who said the region accounted for €1.12 trillion (US\$1.33 trillion, HK\$10.3 trillion) in betting turnover out of €1.76 trillion worldwide.

"It's not necessarily a problem but with that huge amount of interest in betting, inevitably there is some level of a threat to the integrity of Asian sport. It is something to take note of."

Source: 18 September 2020, South China Morning Post

Basketball

<https://www.scmp.com/sport/other-sport/article/3102052/match-fixing-more-10-suspicious-basketball-games-restarted-asian>

POLICY

Sweden

Spelinspektionen Launch Further Match-Fixing Crackdown

The Swedish gaming regulator Spelinspektionen has launched a further crackdown on match-fixing after announcing that it would suspend betting markets on breaches of laws, such as expulsions, suspensions and yellow cards in football.

The new laws, which take effect from 1 January 2021, will apply to games played in Sweden. According to the regulator, the rules would mean that ‘there is no reason to influence the outcome of gambling in the affected areas on the Swedish licenced market in the affected areas’.

The regulator said: “Football is a high-risk sport when it comes to match-fixing and there are special risks with low divisions. Surveillance is poorer and practitioners do not make money from their sport.

“The Swedish Gambling Authority has therefore chosen to place special emphasis on football and has taken into account views received from the consultative bodies.”

In addition, the regulator will also ban markets in all but the top four football divisions in Sweden (Allsvenskan, Superettan, Division 1 Norra and Södra) and the six regional Division 2 leagues as well as internationals under the 21.

Gustaf Hoffstedt, general secretary of the Branschföreningen för Onlinespel (BOS) online gaming operators’ association, criticised the new legislation, saying that it was a political manoeuvre to meet the needs of the National Athletics Association, the Swedish Football Association and politicians.

He said: “Spelinspektionen claims to have found a well-balanced point between different interests but there is no balanced point in this matter. Either you believe restrictions for licensed companies lead to reduced match-fixing [or not].

“In that case, I wonder why Spelinspektionen can be content with these relatively peripheral restrictions. In that case, the only responsibility would be to impose restrictions on almost everything if one is so convinced that they have a positive effect.

“The Swedish Gambling Authority is often blamed for a lot of things when in fact it is the government that is to be held accountable.

“This case is unique however in that it is the SGA itself that has chosen to impose the restrictions and this without any analysis of their effect. This, of course, damages SGA’s reputation.”

Speaking at last week’s SBC Summit Barcelona – Digital, Hoffstedt hit back on the temporary regulatory steps implemented by the Swedish government during the pandemic, arguing that such initiatives are prejudicial to channelling speeds.

He pointed out that in the decision to impose deposit limits, politics played a part, pointing out that verticals held – or affiliated with – by the government faced nothing in the way of deposit limits.

Source: 16 September 2020, Inkedin

Football

<https://inkedin.com/spelinspektionen-launch-further-match-fixing-crackdown/16491/>

CORRUPTION

France

French rugby chief Laporte questioned for second day over favouritism suspicions

French rugby federation (FFR) president Bernard Laporte was questioned for a second day in police custody Wednesday as part of an investigation into suspicions he favoured Top 14 club Montpellier.

Montpellier's billionaire owner Mohamed Altrad and the chief organiser of the 2023 Rugby World Cup to be held in France, Claude Atcher, are also in custody as well as two senior FFR officials.

Laporte, 56, a former coach of the France national team who is also vice-chairman of the game's global body World Rugby, is suspected of putting pressure on the appeals committee of the French league to reduce a disciplinary punishment against Montpellier in 2017.

A lawyer for one of the FFR officials, Serge Simon, who is close to Laporte, said the five men had been questioned about "everything", including the allocation of the 2023 World Cup.

Laporte, who is standing for re-election as FFR president with the result expected on October 3, has blasted the timing of the questioning, claiming he is the victim of a "coup" aimed at derailing his campaign.

Simon's lawyer, Pierre Blazy, said the questioning focused on events from two years ago.

"It's scandalous because they could have been questioned in (a different format) or in 10 days' time. It's just 10 days from the elections now. You have to ask what is behind it."

Laporte, who also served as sports minister, has always denied intervening in favour of Montpellier but admits he had a telephone conversation with the head of the appeals committee, Jean-Daniel Simonet, before the decision was changed.

Inspectors at the sports ministry established that the committee's decision was "modified" in June 2017.

Laporte said in an interview with newspaper Le Parisien he had merely wanted to "enlighten" Simonet about the tensions in French rugby at that time.

Three months before the alleged events, the Altrad group, specialised in construction materials, became the main shirt sponsor of the French national team and threw its financial muscle behind the successful bid to host the 2023 World Cup.

In France, suspects can be detained for up to 48 hours. After that period the Financial Prosecution Office can decide whether to continue the preliminary investigation, to open a judicial inquiry, or to end the investigation. In the latter case, it can choose to close the file without prosecution or to send the suspects to trial.

Source: 23 September 2020, RTL Today

Rugby

<https://today.rtl.lu/sport/international/a/1584405.html>



INTEGRITY IN SPORT

IAAF

Lamine Diack: Former IAAF head found guilty of corruption and jailed Lamine Diack, the ex-head of athletics' governing body, has been jailed after being found guilty of corruption.

The Senegalese, 87, faced corruption and money-laundering charges linked to the Russian doping scandal.

Diack was convicted of accepting bribes from athletes suspected of doping to cover up test results and letting them continue competing, including in the 2012 London Olympics.

He was sentenced to four years in prison, two of them suspended.

Diack's lawyers said he would be appealing against the judgement, which they called "unfair and inhumane".

Diack, who was also given a maximum fine of 500,000 euros (£456,928), was investigated by French authorities for four years over claims he took payments of more than 3m euros to cover up cheating.

The judge said his actions had "undermined the values of athletics and the fight against doping".

Diack has been under house arrest in Paris since November 2015.

Previously one of the most influential figures in world sport, Diack was president of the International Association of Athletics Federations - now World Athletics - for 16 years until he was replaced by Britain's Lord Coe in August 2015.

Diack's son Papa Massata Diack - who was banned for life from athletics in 2016 - was sentenced to five years in prison and a given a 1m euros fine (£913,850).

After the ruling, World Athletics released a statement in which it said it was "disappointed this happened in our sport" but "grateful for the strong and clear decisions that have been taken against the individuals involved".

Athletics' governing body added that it would like to "reassure everyone that the reforms our congress approved in 2016 will ensure that similar actions by individuals can never happen again in our sport".

"We are grateful for the damages awarded by the Paris Criminal Court totalling 16m euros for embezzled funds and for reputational damage suffered as a direct consequence of these crimes and the resulting media coverage," it added.

"As the court acknowledged, this damage has impacted World Athletics' finances and had a negative impact on World Athletics' image and reputation in a deep and lasting way. We will do everything we can to recover the monies awarded, and return them to the organisation for the development of athletics globally."

Source: 16 September 2020, BBC Sports

Athletics

<https://www-bbc-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.bbc.com/sport/amp/athletics/54176537>