



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

24 November 2020 - 7 December 2020



Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Sri Lanka

ICC probes Sri Lanka T20 league over alleged match-fixing

The International Cricket Council is investigating an alleged attempt to fix Sri Lankan Premier League matches due to start Thursday, a media report said.

The complaint alleges a former national cricketer approached a Lanka Premier League player, and is being looked at by the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), the mass-circulating Lankadeepa said. "The former national player who allegedly made the approach is currently overseas," the newspaper said, adding that he had once been accused, but later cleared, of match-fixing charges by the ICC.

The ICC said it would not discuss any ongoing investigation. The Sri Lanka board's anti-corruption unit too declined comment.

The Twenty20 tournament opens Thursday without spectators, but under the close scrutiny of the ICC anti-corruption officials, the national board and the sports ministry.

Last week, Sri Lanka's former fast bowling coach Nuwan Zoysa said he would appeal a decision of an ICC-appointed tribunal which found him guilty of three offences relating to match-fixing after a two-year investigation.

Cricket-crazy Sri Lanka introduced a law against corruption in sport last year after then-sports minister Harin Fernando declared that the ICC considered the Indian Ocean island the world's most corrupt cricket nation.

The Sri Lankan board and the ICC has conducted anti-corruption programmes for players and officials and set up a 24-hour hotline to report any "suspicious or corrupt activity."

The tournament will be Sri Lanka's first top cricket since England abruptly pulled out of a two-match Test series in March as the coronavirus pandemic spread.

The start was delayed three times because of coronavirus restrictions imposed by authorities to contain the virus which has claimed 94 lives and infected nearly 21,000 people

Source: 25 November 2020, DH

Cricket

<https://www.deccanherald.com/sports/cricket/icc-probes-sri-lanka-t20-league-over-alleged-match-fixing-919864.html>

Sweden

Swedish prosecutors charge player with match fixing

Sweden's prosecutor on Wednesday said that they had charged a player over match-fixing in country's top football league.

The Prosecution Authority has not named the player. However, they revealed that he committed the crime while he played for IF Elfsborg, a club in Sweden's top league Allsvenskan.

The case is based on a game that was played in May 2019 when the player was handed a yellow card.

"Shortly after the game, the player was given a loan for a large sum of money from people who had placed a bet on him receiving a warning in that game," prosecutor Staffan Edlund said in a statement.

The player is no more a part of the club and was charged with taking a bribe and two other people were charged with paying a bribe, and both were charged with breaking Sweden's gambling law.

The Prosecution Authority also said it was charging a player in one of the country's lower leagues over taking bribes for six games that the player's team had lost.

Source: 2 December 2020, WION

Football

<https://www.wionews.com/sports/swedish-prosecutors-charge-player-with-match-fixing-347013>

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Belarus

International Ice Hockey Federation bans seven players for match-fixing

Seven players have been banned from playing in International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) tournaments for nearly two years after they were found guilty of match-fixing.

The players - five from Belarus and two from Russia - have been handed suspensions by the IIHF Disciplinary Board.

Russia's Stanislav Kuchkin and Alexei Ivanov, and Belarusians Pavel Boyarchuk, Vyacheslav Lisichkin, Nikita Ustinenko, who represented Belarus at the 2015, 2016 and 2018 World Championships, Sergei Sheleg and Alexander Syrei have all been banned until June 30 2022.

It comes after the IIHF Disciplinary Board annulled a decision by the Belarus Ice Hockey Association (BIHA) to reduce the suspensions given to five of the seven players last month.

The bans will keep the players out of the 2021 Ice Hockey World Championship, due to be held in Belarus and Latvia but thrown into doubt because of the crisis in the former country, and the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing.

All seven players were involved in Mogilyov's 6-5 victory against Dynamo Molodechno in the Belarus Extraliga Championship on November 12 2019.

They admitted that they had agreed to exert an unlawful influence on the outcome of the game in exchange for illegal remuneration.

The BIHA had last month reduced by five months the suspensions given to Boyarchuk, Kuchkin, Lisichkin, Ustinenko and Sheleg after claiming they had shown remorse and had tried to repair the damage they had done to the sport in the country through actions including organising training sessions for young players and giving anti-doping information at a club's hockey school.

But the IIHF Disciplinary Board ruled these were "not exceptional expressions of the players' remorse about their offences, but as usual and necessary attempts to regain confidence and trust in their integrity and loyalty as persons and ice hockey players, in an effort that these activities would allow them to continue their career as professional ice hockey players".

It said the BIHA had "failed to recognise that the manipulation of a competition with the intention to obtain financial benefits from it requires a severe sanction" by attempting to reduce the bans.

Source: 29 November 2020, *Inside the Games*

Ice Hockey

<https://www.insidethegames.biz/index.php/articles/1101380/iihf-bans-seven-players-match-fixing>



Spain**Spanish tennis player banned for eight years**

Spanish tennis player, Enrique López Pérez has been banned for eight years after an investigation by the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) found that he had partaken in three separate instances of match fixing activity in 2017. Additionally, he has been fined \$25,000 (US).

The disciplinary case was heard by Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer Richard McLaren on 5 November 2020. He found that Enrique López Pérez breached the rules of the Tennis Anti-corruption Programme (TACP) three times at tournaments in 2017, with two further charges unproven.

The subsequent sanction means that from today, 1 December 2020, the player is prohibited from playing in or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by the governing bodies of tennis for eight years.

Mr López Pérez who had a highest ATP singles ranking of 154 (13/08/2018) and a highest ATP doubles ranking of 135 (22/04/2019), had been provisionally suspended on 19 December 2019 prior to the hearing.

The breach of the Tennis Anti-corruption Programme (TACP) that Enrique López Pérez has been found guilty of is:

Section D.1.d. of the 2017 TACP:

“No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly contrive or attempt to contrive the outcome or any other aspect of any Event.”

The Tennis Integrity Unit is an initiative of the Grand Slam Board, the International Tennis Federation, the ATP and the WTA and established to promote, encourage, enhance and safeguard the integrity of professional tennis worldwide. From 1 January 2021, the TIU will become a new, independent body - the International Tennis Integrity Agency.

Source: 1 December 2020, Tennis Integrity Unit

<https://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84431288/p1-b20336-da7cf2bbbe3346b48c2e35f896e1c7d0/2/138/736f4194-113f-46b7-8e0d-c901890b5e06>



Ukraine

Stanislav Poplavskyy receives lifetime ban from tennis

Ukrainian tennis player Stanislav Poplavskyy has been issued with a lifetime ban from the sport after an investigation by the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) found that he had partaken in match fixing and courtsiding activities on multiple occasions between 2015 and 2019.

Mr Poplavskyy who had a highest ATP ranking of 440, was also charged with and found guilty of facilitating courtsiding and a failure to report multiple approaches asking him to contrive matches.

Courtsiding is a prohibited practice which involves transmission of live scoring data from a match to a third party for betting purposes.

Mr Poplavskyy accepted all charges and Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer Richard McLaren issued a lifetime ban and a fine of \$10,000 meaning that as from 1 December 2020, the player is permanently prohibited from playing in or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by the governing bodies of tennis.

The breaches of the Tennis Anti-corruption Programme (TACP) that Mr Poplavskyy has been found guilty of are:

D.1.b: "No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or facilitate any other person to wager on the outcome or any other aspect of any Event or any other tennis competition. For the avoidance of doubt, to solicit or facilitate to wager shall include, but not be limited to: display of live tennis betting odds on a Covered Person website; writing articles for a tennis betting publication or website; conducting personal appearances for a tennis betting company or any other company or entity directly affiliated with a tennis betting company; and appearing in commercials encouraging others to bet on tennis."

D.1.c: "No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any money, benefit or Consideration for the provision of an accreditation to an Event (i) for the purpose of facilitating a commission of a Corruption Offense; or (ii) which leads, directly or indirectly, to the commission of a Corruption Offense."

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

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."

D.2.a.ii. "In the event any Player knows or suspects that any other Covered Person or other individual has committed a Corruption Offense, it shall be the Player's obligation to report such knowledge or suspicion to the TIU as soon as possible."

The Tennis Integrity Unit is an initiative of the Grand Slam Board, the International Tennis Federation, the ATP and the WTA and established to promote, encourage, enhance and safeguard the integrity of professional tennis worldwide. From 1 January 2021, the TIU will become a new, independent body - the International Tennis Integrity Agency.

Source: 4 December 2020, Tennis Integrity Unit

Tennis

<https://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84431288/p1-b20339-b16a9aedef774680b8b6fcb540745f2b/2/166/333757e2-5111-4dcf-ad16-06070a019a06>

United Kingdom

Kyle McKinstry: NI darts player given eight-year ban for match-fixing and failing to produce phone bill

Northern Ireland's Kyle McKinstry has been given an eight-year ban by the Darts Regulation Authority (DRA) for match-fixing and failing to produce his itemised phone billing as required.

The former BDO World Championship quarter-finalist received a six-and-a-half-year ban for fixing two matches.

A further 18-month ban was in respect of a failure to provide the phone bill.

The matches were part of the 'A Night at the Darts' series, regulated by the DRA, in late April and early May.

McKinstry, from Tandragee, was initially suspended by the DRA in August after it was alerted by the International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) to "suspicious betting" in games in which he had played.

In the two matches in question, McKinstry lost 5-0 to England's David Evans on 30 April, and 5-1 to the Netherlands' Wessel Nijman on 2 May.

Nijman was banned for five years in October for breaching betting and anti-corruption rules; there is no suggestion that Evans was involved in any rule breaches.

At a DRA disciplinary committee hearing on 17 October, McKinstry admitted fixing his match with Evans. He denied fixing an aspect of his match with Nijman and failing to cooperate with the DRA by not producing his itemised phone billing as required.

The committee, however, found all three charges proven.

McKinstry's ban, backdated to his initial suspension date of 18 August, will run until 17 August 2028.

The 34-year-old, posting on his Facebook account on Wednesday, said: "I made a bad error of judgement at a bad time in my life.

"This is something I will regret for the rest of my life and I hope this is a catalyst for anyone else in a bad position.

"I am going to work hard and keep my head down and hopefully put this behind me and come back bigger and stronger."

The events in question, played online, were unconnected with the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC).

McKinstry, ranked 116 in the PDC Order of Merit, played on the PDC's Challenge Tour early in 2020 before the coronavirus pandemic severely affected the calendar.

Nigel Mawer the DRA chairman, said: "This shows that any player found guilty of match fixing at any level of the sport will be caught and will face a lengthy ban.

"The specific suspension for failing to produce itemised phone billing is welcomed, as the requirement for co-operation from players is an important part of any DRA investigation."

Source: 26 November 2020, BBC

Darts

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/darts/55090827>

United Kingdom

Unranked British tennis player banned for betting offences

The Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) has today confirmed that unranked British player George Kennedy has been banned from tennis for a total of seven months (three suspended) and fined after admitting to two gambling-related charges.

The disciplinary case was ruled on by Anti-Corruption Officer Jane Mulcahy, QC on 1 December 2020 and found that Mr Kennedy breached two sections of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Programme (TACP) by placing bets on tennis matches from accounts in his own name and also on behalf of another individual. She ruled that he should be banned for six months (with three suspended) for one offence and seven months (with three suspended) for the second. The bans will run concurrently.

In addition, he was fined \$10,000 with \$9,000 suspended for the period of the ban.

The subsequent sanction means that from 1 December 2020, the player is prohibited from playing in or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by the governing bodies for seven months (with three suspended).

The breaches of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Programme (TACP) that Mr Kennedy has been found guilty of are:

Section D.1.a: “No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, wager, conspire to wager or attempt to wager on the outcome or any other aspect of any Event or any other tennis competition.”

And Section D.1.b: “No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, solicit, facilitate, or conspire to solicit or facilitate any other person to wager on the outcome or any other aspect of any Event or any other tennis competition.”

The Tennis Integrity Unit is an initiative of the Grand Slam Board, the International Tennis Federation, the ATP and the WTA and established to promote, encourage, enhance and safeguard the integrity of professional tennis worldwide. From 1 January 2021, the TIU will become a new, independent body - the International Tennis Integrity Agency.

Source: 4 December 2020, Tennis Integrity Unit

Tennis

<https://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84431288/p1-b20339-a2db9f8e5a254f7ead62c6cf30d8fcbe/1/124/77d1851c-7682-4928-a8b8-7eb6ac8a3fbd>



Zwift

Zwift bans two eRacers for data fabrication

Zwift has issued an eRacing suspension to two riders after data discrepancies suggested 'fabrication or modification of data'.

The virtual riding platform, which has seen a surge in popularity during 2020, is attempting to enact protocols that discourage data manipulation for gain.

Zwift's latest communication on the matter of digital cheating concerns Lizi Duncombe and Shanni Berger. In both cases, Zwift made a decision to sanction riders from competing on its platform for six months, backdated to the date of the alleged offences.

With digital racing now becoming a meaningful competitive outlet, with prize money, the possibility of file manipulation was perhaps inevitable. The first UCI eSports World Championships is scheduled for December and Zwift is signalling that it will have a zero-tolerance policy.

Dual-recording

Certain eSports race organisers stipulate that power data from a rider's smart turbo trainer needs to be validated by a secondary power source, ie a power meter. The comparison of the two files is what helps the platform - and organisers - identify poorly calibrated trainers and power meters.

Lizi Duncombe

The Duncombe investigation was triggered by a fourth-place she received for a Zwift Racing League Women's Qualifier event, on 17 September. Zwift requires reference files from riders, and, upon closer interrogation of the data, a series of inconsistencies were revealed.

According to the Board Decision released by Zwift, Duncombe originally failed to fully dual-record her race, after she submitted a 90-second recording of her warm-up as the verification data, and despite judging this as a mistake, made the decision to annul her result from the race based on a lack of a viable dual-recording.

Duncombe subsequently supplied a different dual recording, which came from Favero Assioma power meter pedals paired to a Garmin Edge 820. Zwift contacted Duncombe, to which she responded:

"The first [dual-recording file] was the warmup file which saved before I started the Garmin again. When I charged my Garmin after the race, it then uploaded the race file which I sent a couple of hours later, which managed to get the whole race before the battery died."

On initial inspection, the data looked to be legitimate, but further examination highlighted anomalies.

The dual-reference file sent to ZADA (Zwift Accuracy and Data Analysis) by Duncombe, contained a .FIT file tagged with a Version ID of '562'. 562 is the Version ID found in a FIT file created by Zwift, whereas Garmin Edge 820 computers use a Version ID value of '1250'. This suggested to ZADA that the file had been manipulated.

There was also significant timing discrepancy with her support data file, as well as GPS data that a Garmin device wouldn't be able to read. Finally, the data was perfectly correlated (there was a Correlation Co-efficient of $R=1.00$) with the in-game Zwift recording, in that every time the original file read 297 watts, the Garmin read 294.

Duncombe's subsequent responses included a claim that the Garmin had in fact paired with the turbo trainer, not the pedals, as well as suggestion of corrupted data. Both claims were disproven by ZADA.

Shanni Berger

The Berger case arose after a second place in an Off the MAAP women's race. According to the Zwift release, the original annulment came due to Berger's use of a power meter as the primary power source for the race, despite the event stipulation that riders use a turbo trainer. In addition, there was a variance of 0% for the dual recordings, suggesting the second file was, in fact, a duplicate of the original.

This suggested that Berger had connected her power meter to both the Zwift device and her Garmin computer. An easy error to make, but without a viable dual recording, Berger's result was annulled.

In response to the annulment, Berger's team manager and team owner provided a Zwift log.txt file claiming the power source was, in fact, a Saris smart trainer.

However, the same log.txt file is also stored on Zwift's servers, upon cross-referencing, ZADA found that, alongside 26 other discrepancies, the power source was a Stages power meter, suggesting that the log.txt file from Berger had been edited.

Berger repeatedly denied wrongdoing, with both herself and family members contacting Zwift stating that she was innocent and didn't have the technical capability to manipulate the files. However, according to Zwift, Berger later sent an email expressing her "apologies for any misunderstanding," and that it's "very possible that I [Berger] made mistakes with the software due to human error."

Both riders can still use the Zwift platform, but are suspended until March 19th and February 17th 2021 respectively.

Source: 24 November 2020, *Cycling News*
eSports

LEGISLATION

Colombia

Colombian National Committee on Match-fixing calls for integrity legislation

Colombia's National Committee for the Prevention of Manipulation of Sports Competitions has met to build its agenda for 2020-21, calling for integrity legislation to be introduced to protect the sports and gaming industries from the threat of match-fixing.

The committee consists of national gaming associations Fecoljuegos and Asojuegos, together with online gaming operators and Dimayor, the organisation behind the country's professional football leagues and tournaments.

The committee agreed to focus its efforts on several actions for the remainder of 2020 and early 2021, with its main goal to uphold the integrity and transparency of Colombian football.

It agreed it would lobby for legislation which seeks to criminalise the manipulation of sports, as well as the creation of a protocol for the exchange of information between unions, public authorities, sports organisations and sports betting operators.

It also recommended a cooperation agreement with the public prosecutor's office and the national police.

Committee members will also continue to promote awareness, education, training and research to combat the manipulation of sports competitions. This will be supported by a public education campaign, backed by the sports governing bodies and the gaming industry.

Fecoljuegos and Asojuegos have already been collaborating on the fight against match-fixing, the committee said.

Dimayor, meanwhile, has an existing contract with Genius Sports, through which a constant monitoring programme creates alerts against any possible activity related to match-fixing. Similarly, the nation's online sports betting operators have services for monitoring and controlling the bets on their platforms, it said.

Results published in November by Colombian regulator Coljuegos showed that the government has collected over COP2.8tn (£559.8m/€621.2m/\$723.4m) in gaming taxes since 2015. The revenue collected by government is used to fund the nation's healthcare system.

Source: 24 November 2020, *iGB*
All Sports

<https://igamingbusiness.com/colombian-national-committee-on-match-fixing-calls-for-integrity-legislation/>

Council of Europe**Macolin Follow Up Committee**

The Macolin Committee has been set up to monitor the implementation of the Convention by its States Parties. After its first meeting on 24 and 25 November 2020, its main tasks will be the following:

- a. Assess the compliance of States Parties legislation, policies and practices with the Convention;
- b. Make recommendations to the Parties on measures to ensure efficient co-operation between the relevant public authorities, sports organisations and betting operators;
- c. Prepare opinions to the attention of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
- d. Promote the Convention and inform relevant stakeholders and the public about the activities undertaken within the framework of the Convention.

The Committee is composed of representatives of States Parties as well as Observers.

First meeting of the Follow-up Committee

The Macolin Committee met for the first time on 24 and 25 November 2020. The delegates from the seven states parties (Italy, Greece, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland and Ukraine) adopted the Committee's Rules of Procedure and had a first exchange of views on working methods, cooperation with key stakeholders and approaches to monitoring. The list of decisions includes the granting of observer status to the International Olympic Committee, INTERPOL and GLMS (Global Lotteries Monitoring System). The Committee also agreed on the importance of integrating the Network of National Platforms (Group of Copenhagen). In its work as an advisory group and decided to discuss a possible mandate at its next meeting.

Source: 25 November 2020, Council of Europe

https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/follow_up_committee



POLICY

Malta

Malta and Colombia are stepping up anti-match-fixing efforts

Concern over sports integrity is one of the main reasons it took so long for sports gambling to come to the U.S. However, there are integrity issues seen in every aspect of everyday life. This is why regulatory bodies exist to try to reduce potential fraud, scams and thievery. There are methods that can be utilized to cut down on illegal activity, or at least to punish those found to have broken the rules, and anti-match-fixing operations are becoming SOP for sports. Colombia and Malta are doing their part to help control sports integrity with new initiatives that they hope will have a major impact.

Colombia, through the Colombian National Committee for the Prevention of Manipulation of Sports Competitions, is determined to be a leader in sports integrity. It is dedicated much of its efforts through the end of next year to campaign for better integrity measures and to increase transparency in sports. Members of the committee are required to promote awareness and to develop training programs that will help prevent match-fixing, and will also have to launch public awareness campaigns that will educate the general public on the problems associated with the illegal activity.

Gaming operators in the country, and even the government, are leading the way to ensure integrity. Companies like BetCris and Dimayor have been proactive in fighting match-fixing in Colombia, as well as across Latin America, and their efforts are likely to increase going forward. It's in their best interest, as match-fixing not only derails respect for sports, but can cost companies, and governments, millions in lost revenue.

Last month, the Malta Gaming Authority (MGA) introduced new regulations that require entities to report suspicious gambling activity. The regulatory body is now turning up the heat and has launched the beta version of a new website that will allow B2C licensed sports gambling operators to report that activity more easily to the country's newly-created sports integrity monitoring unit.

The platform, following successful beta testing, is expected to be introduced to all licensed operators before the end of January, and should go a long way to diminishing match-fixing in sports. The creation of the Sports Betting Reporting Mechanism (SRBM) follows almost constant development of sports integrity measures in Malta this year, including through collaborative efforts with soccer, cricket and snooker groups. The MGA is actively working to expand its sports integrity solutions and compliance measures, which will go a long way, coupled with efforts led by other entities, to clean up sports.

The MGA's response wasn't altogether an active response to sports integrity concerns. The International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) had called out the regulator previously for not doing enough, and MGA is working to ensure it meets the IBIA's requirements. Notably, the IBIA wants Malta's gaming regulator to focus more attention on "customer disputes relating to suspicious betting," "operator engagements with global monitoring bodies" and "betting integrity policy engagement with operators."

Source: 25 November 2020, CalvinAyre.com

All Sports

<https://calvinayre-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/calvinayre.com/2020/11/24/business/malta-and-colombia-are-stepping-up-anti-match-fixing-efforts/amp/>



Sweden

Sweden commences inquiry into unlicensed play and match fixing

The Swedish government has outlined its intention to strengthen its work against unlicensed play, as well as combatting match fixing, after a new inquiry was appointed.

Officially detailed in a press conference by Ardalan Shekarabi, minister of social insurance, the aim is that of “identifying obstacles and proposing solutions to enable more effective supervision of illegal gambling”.

Gunnar Larsson, director general of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, is tasked with leading an investigation to delve into issues raised by the Spelinspektionen regarding application difficulties with payment blocking.

Furthermore, the inquiry is also charged with taking a comprehensive approach and analysing questions about the work, methods, assignments and conditions of the relevant authorities.

This move follows numerous negative statements made in recent times regarding the Swedish market, with Kindred the latest to hit out at a potential extension of extra restrictions, highlighting a lack of facts and worry that the government’s policy is opposite to that of the country’s Parliament.

“We have a responsibility to protect, above all, vulnerable consumers from illegal gambling, but also to protect the serious players in the gambling market from unfair competition,” said Shekarabi.

“Increased efforts are needed to exclude illegal gambling from the Swedish gambling market. We are now also intensifying the work against match-fixing and organised crime.”

Moreover, the inquiry will also be commissioned to investigate how the work against match-fixing can be strengthened. This includes protecting the integrity of sports, but also preventing gambling from being misused for criminal activities and maintaining strong consumer protection in the market.

Larsson is tasked with proposing measures to remove preventative obstacles when it comes to information sharing between all relevant actors, as well as reviewing current work being undertaken in the fight against match fixing.

“We are very positive that the government has appointed an investigation to strengthen the work towards two important areas, unlicensed play and match-fixing,” added Camilla Rosenberg, director general of the Spelinspektionen.

“The tools the authority has today to counter illegal gambling are not sufficient, which we previously reported to the government in the reports ‘Developments in the gambling market and measures taken due to the new coronavirus.’”

Source: 1 December 2020, Casino Beats

<https://casinobeats.com/2020/11/30/sweden-commences-inquiry-into-unlicensed-play-and-match-fixing/>



CORRUPTION

FIFA; CAF

FIFA hands African football chief Ahmad Ahmad five-year ban for corruption

Ahmad Ahmad's reign as the head of African football looked to be over on Monday after FIFA hit him with a five-year suspension for corruption.

Ahmad, from Madagascar, has been president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) since March 2017 but his announced bid for re-election in 2021 is now in doubt after FIFA banned him for "governance issues".

In their statement, FIFA said Ahmad had "breached his duty of loyalty, offered gifts and other benefits, mismanaged funds and abused his position as the CAF President".

Ahmad was also fined 200,000 Swiss francs (\$220,000) by FIFA for the misdeeds, which related to "the organisation and financing of an Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca" and his involvement in CAF's dealings with a sports equipment company.

The 60-year-old, who last week stood down from his post for 20 days after testing positive for coronavirus, can appeal the ban "from all football-related activity" at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Ahmad, who was made a FIFA vice-president after being elected the head of CAF, had denied the accusations.

In response to his ban, CAF announced on Monday that Constant Omari's position as interim head of the body would be extended, without specifying for how long.

CAF said in a statement that the decision was made following FIFA's ruling, "which puts Mr. Ahmad Ahmad in a position of no longer being able to exercise his responsibilities".

Congolese official Omari became Ahmad's number two in July 2019 following the sacking of Amaju Pinnick, also head of the Nigerian Football Federation.

Omari is president of the Congolese Football Federation and a member of the FIFA Council.

- CAF scandals -

In April 2019, Ahmad was accused of a series of offences by former CAF official Amr Fahmy, who informed FIFA in a letter that Ahmad had paid bribes to directors, made personal use of CAF funds and sexually harassed a number of employees.

Two months later he was arrested in Paris while at the FIFA Congress ahead of that year's women's World Cup as part of a probe into corruption, but was released a day later without charge.

Ahmad's bid to remain head of CAF was being challenged by Augustin Senghor, the president of the Senegalese Football Federation.

Mauritania's Ahmed Yahya, Ivory Coast's Jacques Anouma and South African billionaire Patrice Motsepe have also thrown their hats in the ring.

Last month, former CAF senior vice-president Kwesi Nyantakyi had his lifetime ban from football for breaking FIFA bribery and corruption rules reduced to 15 years.

Nyantakyi quit his positions as Ahmad's number two and president of Ghana's football association two years ago after being secretly filmed accepting a \$65,000 bribe from journalists posing as businessmen who wanted to invest in Ghanaian football.

The official also agreed to a fictional sponsorship deal created by the reporters, which they told Nyantakyi would have funnelled millions of dollars designed for Ghanaian football to a company he runs.

Source: 24 November 2020, RFI

Football

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/sports/20201123-fifa-hands-african-football-chief-ahmad-ahmad-five-year-ban-for-corruption>

International Weightlifting Federation (IWF)

FBI and Swiss police dig into weightlifting scandal, while IOC is undecided

U.S. authorities are now taking a deep look into the widespread corruption and doping fraud at the IWF. Letters reveal how the weightlifting president protected dopers, and Swiss investigators may find answers to why the IOC for ten years pushed critical information on weightlifting corruption aside.

"Up to loud yelling".

This is how the dismissed interim head of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Ursula Papandrea from the U.S., describes the negative reaction from the organisation's Executive Board when she had invited an athlete representative to listen in on a board meeting without voting rights.

As part of her reform programme, Papandrea had set up a new Athletes' Commission with the British weightlifter Sarah Davies as chair. Davies and her colleagues are among those calling for the resignation of the whole IWF Executive Board following the revelations of massive corruption and doping fraud.

For the weightlifters, it all comes down to doping and the unfair state of play that the IWF officials forced them to participate in – and continue to do, when they work to change the Olympic Qualifying System and to get suspended nations back in the game.

Athletes had already lost trust in IWF before its president Tamás Aján was forced to resign. Nothing has changed for them. More than 13,000 signatures have been collected in a petition initiated by Davies to "push for a vote of no confidence of the IWF Executive Board".

But the old guard is not listening.

Not even the doping past from the Aján era has been cleaned up. Recently, the International Testing Agency, an institution set up by the IOC to carry out doping testing in sport, reported 72 pending potential doping cases from 2009 to 2019. They were discovered during an IWF investigation made by the Canadian lawyer Richard H. McLaren who suggested the cases were never followed up by Aján's IWF.

These open files are now being investigated by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). They could correct the medal tables and provide information about who Aján was protecting. Despite mind-boggling findings in the McLaren report, the former IWF President still claims his innocence.

Doping protection for Azerbaijan

But recently, we found a fresh glimpse of how Aján personally protected dopers against the rules. Kindly tolerated by WADA, where Aján was member of the Foundation Board.

It concerns a case that we have already been on the trail of for the film "The Lord of the Lifters". It leads to Azerbaijan, to the oil-rich realm of Ilham Aliyev, president of his country and president of its National Olympic Committee, a valued partner in the Olympic world as a generous organiser of big events.

The weightlifting federation there is headed by one of the country's most important oligarchs: Jahangir Askerov, in his day job chairman of the state airline AZAL. In 2013 his lifters were caught with 23 positive samples. But the Azerbaijani dopers were not immediately suspended. Instead, they were allowed to continue to compete and win medals.

One year ago, when we wanted to know how such a thing was possible, the answers left a lot to be desired. No response from IWF President Aján. WADA told us succinctly that they had sent the IWF several reminders.

Now two illuminating letters from 2013 have been discovered in the depths of the reconstructed IWF servers. The first is from October 2013. Shortly before that, and after the first cases in March, eight more Azeris had delivered positive samples.

Aján writes that it was "a terrible mistake" that he did not take "stricter" action against Azerbaijani dopers in the spring. And he is indignant: "This is clearly a moral massacre regarding the athletes". He calls on his partner Askerov "to ensure that none of these athletes will take part in the upcoming World Championships".

It turned out quite differently. The athletes, who had been caught months ago, took part in the IWF World Championships. At the IWF Grand Prix in Baku in early December 2013, Aján even posed with some of the dopers in front of the camera.

What had happened? Investigators will have to solve this mystery, but a second letter that Aján wrote to his Azeri friends two days after the Grand Prix leaves no questions behind regarding Aján's own role:

"What we have done for your athletes and Federation is something the IWF has never done before and not willing or able to do in the future. The knot tightens around my neck and my 45 years work could go down in a blink. ... At the moment, my biggest concern is when and what the IWF shall report to WADA related to the 23 cases and what names will be listed behind the cases." The athletes were eventually suspended, some of them more than a year after their positive test.

This intentional delay of doping bans by the President of an international federation is a real scandal. Seldom has there been clearer proof that results management should not belong in the hands of sports federations. Moreover, the proceedings reveal considerable shortcomings in the work of WADA: They were supposed to act as a monitoring institution, but clearly failed.

Country suspensions delayed

And Aján did more for Azerbaijan. The McLaren report quotes a thank you letter from Minister of Sport Azad Rahimov to Aján. This has nothing to do with 2013, but with the Islamic Solidarity Games 2017 in Baku. Rahimov was concerned about the participation of his lifters.

By mid-2016, progressive officials at the IWF had secured that nations with many dopers were to be completely suspended. But Rahimov writes by the end of 2016 to Aján: "We are grateful for your intention ... to put aside the decision about suspension of the Azerbaijan weightlifting team".

Only in autumn 2017, after the Islamic Games, did the IWF impose a ban on nine nations, including Azerbaijan.

Another favour by Aján for his rich friends? The German Weightlifting Federation's President Christian Baumgartner, who has long fought for more consistent anti-doping policies, is shocked and says: "You are certainly not wrong about that".

It remains to be seen if investigators will reveal quid pro quo for Aján. The fact is: His son got a job from an Azerbaijani company in 2016 - a commercial register entry identifies him as director of SilkWay Italia.

SilkWay's mother company is owned by private owners from Azerbaijan's elite. According to corruption experts, the holding company emerged from a highly dubious privatisation of parts of the state-owned airline AZAL. The airline whose boss is Jahangir Askerov, the Azerbaijani weightlifting president.

Just a coincidence? Aján did not respond to questions about this.

The Azeri affair may give a hint about why other potential doping cases were not followed up during Aján's empire.

Investigations across three countries

Investigations in Hungary – led by the National Bureau of Investigation, Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Department – are ongoing. Already in April, during a raid of the IWF headquarters, the investigators seized all accounting books.

In the meantime, they have also gained access to Aján's private accounts and assets. The investigators are currently preparing a forensic report. The most important question: How much of the \$10.4 million USD that the McLaren report regarded as "unaccounted for" from IWF's bank accounts, is actually missing? In other words: How much may have ended up in Aján's private pockets?

The Hungarians have found a partner whose interest in the weightlifting czar has not yet been made public: the FBI.

In the weightlifting family, it was no secret that Aján regularly spent holidays on Florida's Gulf coast, in a luxury real estate belonging to his family. But to the surprise of the FBI, Aján even had a social security number in the USA for decades. Such number is a prerequisite for opening bank accounts, and it also opens a direct route for investigators to trace money flows.

The FBI is about to look into some interesting questions: Where, for example, did the money vanish that Aján is said to have collected personally in cash during the 2015 World Championships in Houston? Fees for participation, referee licences and other things? Allegedly around \$100,000 USD which, according to sources close to the investigation, did not end up in the IWF accounts in Hungary, not even in the one named "Vilag Kupa" (World Championship).

Why did the IWF for many years transfer a monthly amount to an account of the Wells Fargo Bank in Colorado Springs, calling the transfer purpose "Panam coaching"? And that's not all: Strange deals between the IWF headquarters and South American national weightlifting federations have also attracted the interest of the FBI.

In the canton of Vaud, in Switzerland, where the IWF has its legal headquarters alongside over 60 other international sports federations, investigations are still ongoing, too.

When asked, the chief prosecutor states that the case concerns "wrongdoing that may have been committed in the context of the management of the IWF", including "alleged breaches of trust, disloyal management and forgery of documents". Other elements "are covered by the secrecy of the investigation".

Uncomfortable for the IOC

The Swiss investigations could be explosive because they could lead to the IOC. The IOC's Ethics Commission already received a complaint from weightlifting officials in 2011 about millions of US dollars unaccounted for in the IWF's books.

Up until 2009, IOC payments were not fully declared in the annual balance sheets provided by Aján to the IWF congress; the IWF's Swiss bank accounts were completely missing from the balance sheets. The IOC did not even accept the complaint. The Secretary of the Ethics Committee (then and now Pâquerette Girard Zappelli) "analysed" the complaint, it reads in a newly found letter. Result: "the IOC is satisfied, that in this case the Olympic resources were used for Olympic purposes".

This sounded strange then and today seems absurd. The documents that Aján handed over to the IOC ethics officials as proof of his innocence are said to be a simple spreadsheet with IWF revenues and expenditures. According to an insider, the expenditures were heavily overinflated. Moreover, according to Swiss law, falsified balance sheets were a criminal offence even then.

Should the IOC have intervened with an investigation against its honorary member Aján? Could another ten years of mismanagement have been prevented?

The Swiss investigations will possibly provide the answers.

Even an official like the Italian Antonio Urso, who in 2011 fought in vain to mobilise the IOC, now sees only one way forward for the IWF:

"With this Executive Board there is no solution for the sport of weightlifting," he believes. "Independent persons should come in to run the IWF until the next elections, preferably under the supervision of the IOC".

But he warns: The same people "will run again in the election and win, they know how to get there". Ursula Papandrea, who was forced to leave her position as interim president in October, is also sceptical:

"A good governance framework is paramount but can still be manipulated if those elected choose to put themselves above the rules."

But will the IOC assume responsibility and help reform weightlifting? The internal discussion is not over.

At a press conference 11 November, the IOC President Thomas Bach called the IWF's route towards reform "pretty ambiguous", with "many, many questions" left. By Bach's standards, these were clear words, but without commitment to take action.

The IOC keeps all options open, including the easiest way for themselves: Throwing weightlifting out of the Olympic Games.

This would, however, mostly harm those who deserve it the least and whom the IOC always claim to protect: The athletes.

Source: 24 November 2020, *Play the Game*

Weightlifting

https://www.playthegame.org/news/news-articles/2020/0652_fbi-and-swiss-police-dig-into-weightlifting-scandal-while-ioc-is-undecided/