



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

18 April 2017 - 1 May 2017



Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

South Africa

Net closing in on suspected South African football match-fixing officials

CAPE TOWN - The South African Football Association (SAFA) are determined to bring to book corrupt officials who have allegedly been involved in match fixing in the lower divisions. According to a report, SAFA have shown they mean business by suspending the six match officials accused of match-fixing, misconduct and corruption during last season's ABC Motsepe (Second Division/ third tier) play-offs. It has also not been ruled out that the six have been involved in shady dealings during the current season, while several of them have reportedly also officiated in Absa Premiership matches in the 2016/ 17 campaign. The matter is said to have been taken up with the police crime investigation unit, the Hawks, with the accused to face both internal and criminal charges. "We have sufficient information to send them to jail right now," an unnamed 'source close to the investigation' told the City Press newspaper. "We believe we have a strong case and we are ready to prosecute now. What delayed us was that some of them were not consistent in their submissions to us and the police. "We needed to corroborate some of the information gathered so far. But we are confident that we have a tight case, and this should send a clear message that we mean business. "Fortunately, we did not have to force confessions as these officials volunteered the information. On top of verbal and written confessions, the officials also submitted affidavits, so we believe we have a strong case," the source added. SAFA appear deadly serious about prosecuting the latest alleged perpetrators after a previous clampdown on corruption – 2004's Operation Dribble, was brushed under the carpet for the most part. And it's not only officials who are under the spotlight – clubs could also find themselves being investigated, said SAFA CEO Dennis Mumble, who also confirmed that the six officials have been suspended. "We told the selection panel to no longer fixture them. If we are to find that clubs got promoted through corruption, we will deal with them," Mumble was quoted saying.

Source: 19 April 2017, ENCA Sport

Football

<http://www.enca.com/sport/soccer/net-closing-in-on-suspected-south-african-football-match-fixing-officials>

South Korea

Police investigating alleged fight fixing from UFC event in Korea

According to multiple reports in the country, the Korean National Police Agency are investigating a claim that one of their fellow countrymen agreed to throw a fight during the nation's first UFC card, which was headlined by a welterweight bout between Benson Henderson and Jorge Masvidal. It has been alleged that said fighter, whose identity hasn't been revealed, agreed to throw the fight but ended up winning the contest, which was against an American fighter, via split decision. It's been said the fighter in question, who the reports name as 'Fighter A', agreed to throw the contest for 100 million Won (£68.373) and bet half that sum on his opponent to win. In the weeks building up to the fight, the American participant went into the contest as the slight underdog. But that changed hours before the fight, with several betting companies reversing the line and making him the overwhelming favourite. The UFC brass quizzed 'Fighter A' about the drastic change in odds. He insisted he had no knowledge of the sudden shift in betting patterns. While 'Fighter A's' name has not been revealed, many have speculated that athlete in question is Tae Hyun Bang, who locked horns with American Leo Kuntz. Multiple outlets have pointed out that of all the Korean fighters to compete on the card, Bang was the only male fighter to have won via decision. That coupled with the fact that the odds on Kuntz winning drastically changed hours before the fight have led many to conclude that Bang is the fighter at the centre of the investigation. Neither the UFC nor Bang have publicly commented on the ongoing investigation, which is currently the talk of the mixed martial arts world.

Source: Chisanga Malata, 19 April 2017, Daily Star

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/sport/ufc/606990/UFC-Seoul-fight-fixing-Tae-Hyun-Bang-UFC-News>

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Malaysia

Ex-national footballer charged over match-fixing

SEREMBAN: Two former footballers were charged in the Sessions Court here yesterday with two counts of offering bribes to two Malaysian Indian Sports Council-Malaysian Indian Football Association (MISC-MIFA) players involving RM20,000. National player Khairul Anuar Baharum, 43, and Public Bank player S G Prem Kumar, 49, claimed trial to both charges. On the first charge, they are accused of offering RM10, 000 to MIFA goalkeeper Mohd Khairul Izzuwan Shaari to fix the outcome of the match, 0-2, between MISC-MIFA and the Perak State Development Corporation on April 7, this year. On the second charge, they are accused of offering RM10, 000 to MIFA player S Harivarman for the same purpose. They allegedly committed the offences at Jalan Andalas 1, Senawang Light Industry Area in Seremban between 9pm and 10pm on March 27. Deputy public prosecutor Nurdiyana Mohd Nawawi represented the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) while Khairul Anuar, who is more popularly known as "Ah Chong", was represented by counsel Ridha Abdah Subri, and Prem Kumar, by Datuk Geethan Ram Vincent. Judge Fathiyah Idris set RM10, 000 as bail with one surety for each of the accused, and May 31 for remission. The judge also ordered the duo to surrender their passports to the court and to report to the MACC office in Negeri Sembilan on the first Monday of every month pending disposal of their case.

Source: 29 April 2017, Free Malaysia Today

Football

<http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/04/29/ex-national-footballer-charged-over-match-fixing/>

BETTING

United Kingdom

Joey Barton banned for 18 months over betting

MANCHESTER - Burnley midfielder Joey Barton has been suspended from the game for 18 months with immediate effect after admitting to an FA misconduct charge over betting on matches. Barton, who said he will appeal the length of his ban, was charged with placing 1,260 bets on football matches or competitions from 26 March 2006, to 13 May 2016, in breach of FA rules which outlaw gambling on games. The FA said in a statement that the 34-year-old was suspended from "all football activity" with immediate effect, fined 30,000 pounds and warned as to his future conduct. There was no suggestion that Barton was involved in match-fixing. In a statement, Barton, who says he has struggled with an addiction to gambling, noted that in a "handful" of cases he had bet on his own club to lose games but only when he was not selected to play for the team. He said that since 2004 he had made over 15,000 bets across a whole range of sports with about 1,200 placed on football and that his betting account did not attempt to hide his identity. "I am very disappointed at the harshness of the sanction. The decision effectively forces me into an early retirement from playing football. To be clear from the outset here this is not match fixing and at no point in any of this is my integrity in question," he said in a statement. "I accept that I broke the rules governing professional footballers, but I do feel the penalty is heavier than it might be for other less controversial players," said the midfielder, who was involved in violent incidents earlier in his career. "I have fought addiction to gambling and provided the FA with a medical report about my problem. I'm disappointed it wasn't taken into proper consideration," he said. In his lengthy statement Barton also pointed out the heavy involvement of the gambling industry in British football where bookmakers act as sponsors at several levels. "That all means this is not an easy environment in which to try to stop gambling, or even to encourage people within the sport that betting is wrong," he said. The former Manchester City and Newcastle United midfielder, who made one appearance for England in 2007, helped Burnley win promotion to the Premier League last season and returned to the club in January after a brief spell with Glasgow Rangers. Burnley are 16th in the league standings, five points above the relegation zone with four games left to play.

Source: 27 April 2017, Eyewitness news

Football

<http://ewn.co.za/2017/04/26/joey-barton-banned-for-18-months-over-betting>

ODDS AND ENDS

Georgia

Match Fixing Plagues Georgian Football

In the past three years, investigators say at least 10 matches in the Republic of Georgia's football league have either been fixed or have shown extremely suspicious betting patterns. Thousands of dollars have been wagered online in both Georgia and worldwide on sleepy Second Division matches often attended by fewer than 50 people. Francesko Baranca, the general secretary for the non-profit sports gambling watchdog FederBet in Brussels, doesn't mince words. "To be honest, Georgian football is considered very bad," he told OCCRP partner iFact.ge while in Tbilisi for the Georgia Gaming Congress. "Not many bookmakers offer odds for them, and when they do, you can see very strange (betting) movements. "According to the numbers, I can say Georgia is near the bottom for betting safety. It means there are many opportunities for cheating, for fixing matches." The money can be significant. In the middle of one important Second Division match, someone placed a US\$95,000 bet that more than 2.5 goals would be scored. When that huge bet lowered the odds, a second group of gamblers raised the bribe amount while the game was underway, betting that fewer than 2.5 goals would be scored. The second group won when the final score was 2-0.

According to betting fraud detection data compiled by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), five Georgian matches were allegedly manipulated in a five-week period near the end of the 2016 season. One fixing case has been inching its way through the Georgian court system for the past two years. Key testimony comes from Giorgi Ghelaghutashvili, a Georgian Anti-Corruption Agency operative who went undercover in search of match fixers. In his testimony, Ghelaghutashvili describes one meeting with footballers from a tiny rural club: "We met several players in a flat. They assured us that if we could agree on payment, they were ready to create any result we wanted. They said that to achieve the desired result, they were even ready to score goals against themselves," meaning they would kick the ball into their own net. The undercover agent said he began his investigation by meeting up with a former football coach he knew. The agent told the coach he had a friend who was playing football abroad who wanted to come home. The coach arranged for a former Georgian player, David Gendzekhadze, to set up a tryout for the overseas player. "During a conversation, Gendzekhadze asked me if I had made a bet on a recent match between the national teams of Georgia and Poland. I said that a friend bet approximately \$9,000 on Poland. Gendzekhadze said that if my friend and I were interested, he could fix matches in the Georgian league," the agent testified. The agent said Gendzekhadze introduced him to several men who were later charged with gambling crimes. According to the Anti-Corruption Agency, "the investigation established that the arrested persons, in exchange for money which varied from 10,000 to 20,000 lari (about \$4,400 to \$8,800) made pre-agreements with different teams to achieve the desired results. Then, based on the information received in advance, they made bets via online bookmaking websites and shared the money they won."

Source: Giorgi Chaduneli, 19 April 2017, OCCRP

Football

<https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/6349-match-fixing-plagues-georgian-football>

South Korea

Two booked without detention in South Korea over Overwatch match fixing

The player manager and coach of Luminous Solar have been booked without detention in South Korea by the Gyeonggi Bukbu Provincial Police Agency Cyber Bureau after Luminous had attempted to qualify for the OGN Overwatch APEX Challenger Season 2 via match fixing, Inven reported on Sunday. The criminal charge specified in the article was interference with business; lifetime bans from OGN had been handed out last February. OGN had released an announcement last February detailing the results of its internal investigation into the wildcard qualifier finals between Luminous Solar and UnLimited, which Luminous Solar had won. In the report, OGN revealed that a large amount of circumstantial evidence pointed to Luminous Solar's player-manager Jin Seok-hoon and Coach Baek Min-jeh offering sponsorship for UnLimited in return for forfeiting the match. It was also discovered that the two individuals had used a fraudulent doctor's certificate in order to field a last-minute substitute in place of one of Luminous Solar's players. On the basis of such findings, OGN issued a lifetime ban from all OGN events against the Luminous Solar organization, as well as both Jin Seok-hoon and Baek Min-jeh. UnLimited player Choi Yoon-soo, who colluded with Jin and Baek, was also banned from participating in the next season of OGN Overwatch APEX Challenger. Corruption has been a recurring problem in South Korean esports ever since a wide match-fixing ring in StarCraft: Brood War involving star players such as Ma "sAviOr" Jae-yoon was brought to light in 2010. Many fans are expressing surprise and concern at how quickly such an event occurred in Overwatch's still-budding scene.

Source: Young Jae Jeon, 23 April 2017, ESPN

http://www.espn.com/esports/story/_/id/19222514/two-booked-detention-south-korea-overwatch-match-fixing

World

Tennis Dominates Ninth ESSA Suspicious Betting Report

Tennis dominated suspicious betting reports once again, according to a quarterly study by the European Sports Security Association (ESSA), the non-profit organization charged with the task to monitor betting activity and to report any suspicious betting patterns. ESSA notified about 27 instances of suspicious betting activity during the three months ended March 31, 2017. Tennis represented 45% of those cases. There were 12 tennis alerts filed to the organization. Football, volleyball, basketball, snooker, ice hockey, boxing, and handball accounted for the other 55%. As pointed out by ESSA, this has been the ninth consecutive quarter when tennis has headed its three-month report on suspicious betting activity. ESSA revealed that a number of initiatives related to the growing problem of match-fixing will be unveiled over the course of 2017 and the organization itself will participate in these. Most of the activities are led by the European Commission. The EC has commissioned a number of match-fixing studies and has made it known that it would craft a recommendation on match-fixing. Although suspicious betting activity in tennis has long been a topic broadly discussed within the international sports and gambling communities, more attention was drawn last January, when the results from a joint investigation by the BBC and BuzzFeed News were made known to the public.

According to the information released at the time, there were 16 top tennis athletes to have been reported over match-fixing suspicions to the Tennis Integrity Unit within the course of the past decade. All of the players, some of whom winners of Grand Slam titles, were later on cleared of suspicion. However, the mere fact that such suspicions were thrown is indicative of the fact that the integrity of tennis may be marred. The TIU compiled and published its first annual report in January 2017 as a response to the growing concerns. According to its results, the number of patterns that could be defined as suspicious betting activity has been growing rapidly. The report also showed that nine players and other tennis-related individuals were sanctioned in one way or another last year, following TIU investigations into their activity. The unit received 292 filings for suspicious betting activity in 2016, eight of which for Grand Slam, ATP, and WTA tournaments. The TIU had to look into 246 such notifications in 2015. Concerned about the upward trend, the anti-corruption tennis body promised to invest even more effort into monitoring and keeping the sport's integrity. The beginning of last year's Australian Open was marred by the publication of the BBC/BuzzFeed News investigation. This year's edition of the Grand Slam tournament was overshadowed by news that lower-tier Australian players had been charged with match-fixing.

Source: 26 April 2017, Casino News Daily

Tennis

<http://www.casinonewsdaily.com/2017/04/26/tennis-dominates-ninth-essa-suspicious-betting-report/>

INTEGRITY IN SPORT EVENTS

Côte d'Ivoire

INTERPOL-IOC Integrity in Sport Regional Workshop and Partnership Development Meeting

INTERPOL-IOC Integrity in Sport Regional Workshop and Partnership Development Meetings

10 - 11 May 2017, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

The INTERPOL Integrity in Sports Unit and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will host a Regional Workshop addressed to Law Enforcement, Sport Federations, Betting, and relevant ministries. High level representatives from various stakeholders will meet to discuss and prepare a strategy to combat match-fixing. Five countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo, will be taking part in the two events.