



INTERPOL

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

China

CFA launches probe over club's match-fixing claims

The Chinese Football Association launched a probe on Sunday into allegations of match-fixing made by a second-tier club after a controversial penalty decision. In response to a claim by Meng Yongli, chairman of Baoding Rongda FC, that his club's 2-2 draw with Wuhan Zall on Saturday was manipulated in their opponent's favor, the CFA said it has called on the professional league council and the referees' committee to investigate, adding that it will severely punish anyone found involved in match-fixing. CFA launches probe over club's match-fixing claims. "We will handle the case seriously and respect the club's concerns. But we urge the club and the fans to remain calm. The result of the investigation will be released in a timely manner," the CFA said in a statement on Sunday. In a post-match news conference, Meng questioned the officiating of the game, in particular a controversial decision by the referee to award Wuhan Zall a penalty during eight minutes of injury time, which resulted in the game ending in a draw. "We can't afford for the game to be played like this any longer. If it continues, eventually no one will play," Meng said before bursting into tears, bringing the news conference to an abrupt end. He later assembled media on the stadium's pitch and announced the withdrawal of the club from the second-tier league in protest. "We want to present a strong reminder to the governing body that we need a clean and transparent environment to play the game," he said later on Sina Weibo. People within the soccer world urged the club to hold back from making any rash decisions and to cooperate with the CFA probe. "The penalty was a 50-50 call. There was contact between the two players. It was also scored in the third minute of stoppage time, so it is unreasonable to question the eight minutes of added time," said Zhao Zhen, a commentator with goalchina.net. Li Yi, a former China national team striker, said on Weibo: "Controversial calls are part of the game. If the club quits the league, it is the players and fans of the team that will suffer."

Source: 3 July 2017, China Daily

Football

<http://www.ecns.cn/2017/07-03/263777.shtml>

Hong Kong

Five former Hong Kong footballers charged with match-fixing as city graft-buster probes irregularities in local league reserve matches

Hong Kong (China) - Five former players of a Hong Kong soccer club were charged by the ICAC on Wednesday with offering and accepting bribes totalling HK\$60,000 while trying to fix three reserve league matches. They included Lee Wai-lim, 36, winner of the Footballer of the Year award in 2009 when he played for Tai Po. The others were Kwok Kin-pong, 30, Michael Cheng Lai-hin, 31, Chan Pak-hang, 24, and Lee Ka-ho, 24, who all played for -Premier League side Pegasus. They face a total of seven charges. The men were arrested by the Independent Commission Against Corruption last October in an operation codenamed "Flower Field" and were suspended by the club shortly afterwards. Kwok and Cheng face a joint charge of conspiracy to defraud, while the others face similar charges. Cheng and Chan also each face one charge of offering an -advantage to an agent, while Lee Wai-lim and Lee Ka-ho each face one charge of accepting an advantage. The defendants will appear in West Kowloon Court on Friday for transfer of the case to the -District Court for plea. The charges relate to the 2015/2016 season when nine teams, including Pegasus, competed in the Hong Kong Premier League. Each side was also -required to maintain a team in the Reserve Division League. At the time, Kwok, Cheng, Chan, Lee Wai-lim and Lee Ka-ho were registered with Pegasus, while Lee Wai-lim was a Pegasus reserve team coach.

The ICAC alleges that between February 24 and 29, 2016, Kwok and Cheng conspired together and with other unknown people to defraud Pegasus and the Hong Kong Football Association by dishonestly contriving or -attempting to contrive the result of an RDL game between Pegasus and Yuen Long on February 24, 2016. Another charge alleges that on February 29, 2016, Cheng offered HK\$10,000 to a then football player of Pegasus as a reward for fixing the outcome of that match. A third charge alleges that between March 23 and 31, 2016, Cheng, Lee Wai-lim, Chan and Lee Ka-ho conspired together and with a then football player of Biu Chun Rangers to defraud Pegasus and the HKFA by trying to contrive the result of a reserve game between Pegasus and Biu Chun Rangers on March 23. A fourth charge alleges that on March 27, Chan offered HK\$10,000 to a Pegasus player to contrive the result of that match. Two other charges allege that between March 23 and 31, Lee Wai-lim and Lee Ka-ho each accepted HK\$20,000 from Cheng for the same purpose. The remaining charge alleges that between April 13 and May 13, 2016, Cheng, Lee Wai-lim and Chan conspired together and with the Biu Chun Rangers player to defraud Pegasus and the HKFA by dishonestly contriving or attempting to contrive the result of a third RDL match between Pegasus and Biu Chun Rangers on April 13. Lee Wai-lim played 30 times for Hong Kong as an attacking player, while Kwok, a defender, represented the city on 35 occasions. Cheng played 10 times. The HKFA and Pegasus said they had given their full assistance to graft-busters during the investigation. The defendants were released on ICAC bail pending their court appearance on Friday.

Source: 29 June 2017, South China Morning Post

<http://www.scmp.com/sport/hong-kong/article/2100455/five-former-hong-kong-footballers-charged-match>

India

Fixing charges erupt over India-Pak match

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) will ask hosts England to investigate India's allegation that attempts were made to 'fix' their Hockey World League Semifinal clash against Pakistan last month. FIH's decision came after Hockey India (HI) lodged an official complaint to the world body about the timing of former captain Sardar Singh's interrogation by Yorkshire police during the HWL Semi-Final in London last month. The interrogation was in relation to a year-old sexual assault case filed by an England international hockey player of Indian origin. In the letter sent to FIH CEO Jason McCracken on July 5, HI president Mariamma Koshy referred to a June 19 incident where, acting on a complaint filed by an England junior-level hockey player on June 17, Sardar was summoned to Leeds for questioning. The FIH said it expects the report of the investigation to be out in the next two to three months. "The FIH is seriously looking into India's complaint. We will follow the standard protocol and ask the host nation -- England Hockey -- to probe the case with the help of the local law enforcement agencies," an FIH official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

"We expect the report of the investigation to be out in the next two to three months. "The complaint was lodged with the FIH after Indian team manager Jugraj Singh asked HI to take up the matter seriously with the FIH in his report. An HI official said the Leeds police did not follow any protocol while summoning Sardar for questioning, that too in the middle of a tournament. "Sardar was not there as a tourist. He was representing India as an athlete. The protocol says if you have to investigate any complaint you need to wait till the event is over. How can a player be asked to report to a police station that too 5-6 hours from London in the middle of a tournament?," the HI official said. "As per protocol, the Indian High Commission should have been informed first but this was not followed. In 2015 this lady had filed a similar complaint in London. She now again filed the same complaint in Leeds. How can one file the same complaint in two different places," he questioned. Jugraj, in his report to HI, had stated that Sardar was disturbed by the questioning and after the incident, India lost three back-to-back matches.

Source: 8 July 2017, *The Hans India*

Hockey

<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Sports/2017-07-08/Fixing-charges-erupt-over-India-Pak-match/311024>

Ireland

Footballers now charged on match fix

Two footballers with Athlone Town FC have been charged by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) in connection with match fixing, and a third player has been charged in connection with betting, following a month-long investigation. The two professional players were charged under the FAI rules on bringing the game into disrepute and manipulating matches and betting. It is understood an amateur player was charged under its rules on betting and gambling. The three men will face a hearing before an Independent Disciplinary Committee on August 3. This latest development was announced by the FAI yesterday in a short statement that took Athlone Town FC and players by surprise. The FAI identified the three individuals as "members of Athlone Town FC". However a spokesman for the Professional Footballers Association of Ireland (PFAI) confirmed that two of the individuals were professional footballers with the club and the third was an amateur player. Stephen McGuinness, of the Professional Footballers Association of Ireland (PFAI), previously said they were "shocked and surprised" at the allegations. The PFAI is standing by the two professional footballers and said the charges are not based on any evidence. "The sole basis for the charges are that there were suspicious betting patterns and a panel of three experts were of the opinion that some of [the] players' actions were suspicious. No other 'evidence' whatsoever has been proffered," a PFAI spokesperson said last night. "The players have denied all wrongdoing from the moment they were made aware of this investigation and this remains the case. They have done all that was asked of them to assist in the investigation which they believed would be carried out in a fair and objective manner. The players will defend these allegations vigorously and will do so as far as the Court of Arbitration for Sport if necessary." The FAI's investigation began in May when Uefa became suspicious about Asian gamblers betting heavily on the club. Uefa detected unusual betting patterns on an SSE Airtricity League of Ireland First Division match between Athlone and neighbouring Longford Town on April 29.

In its report to the FAI, Uefa found "clear and overwhelming betting evidence" that the match result was "unduly influenced with a view to gaining corrupt betting profits". The FAI investigation also covers two other matches. It forwarded Uefa's report to the Garda's Economic Crime Bureau which is also investigating, while also launching its own investigation. It is understood that investigation is ongoing. Last night, Athlone AFC said it was disappointed with the FAI's decision to bring charges against members of the club. In a statement it said: "It is important to note that no finding has been made against the club itself, which Athlone Town AFC welcomes. "The club now awaits the production of all the evidence related to the allegations the individuals have been charged with from the FAI in advance of the disciplinary hearings scheduled to be heard by an independent panel in early August. Athlone Town AFC denies being involved in match fixing/match manipulation. At this point in time no finding of wrongdoing has been made against any coach, player or official at the club."

Source: 9 July 2017, *Independent Ireland*

Football

<http://www.independent.ie/sport/soccer/league-of-ireland/footballers-now-charged-on-match-fix-35910157.html>

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Albania

Skenderbeu's match-fixing woes lead to stripping of title on top of UEFA exclusion

The Ethical Commission of Albania's Football Federation have stripped leading club side Skenderbeu Sports Club of its 2015-16 League Championship win and deducted 12 points from last season's total due to "conspiring to influence the outcome of matches contrary to sports ethics for the season 2015-2016." Skenderbeu have already been banned from European football by UEFA for the 2016-17 season following a sanction for match-fixing and a failed appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against that decision. CAS ruled that the volume of abnormal betting patterns evidenced in the UEFA reports provided overwhelming evidence of match manipulation. The club, which had won the Albanian Superliga six seasons in a row from 2010-11 to 2015-16, also has to pay a fine of 2 million leks (\$16,660) to the Albanian FA. It is suspected of fixing about 50 domestic matches and has, according to the Ethics Committee, an opportunity to appeal under Article 18 of the Code of Ethics. Skenderbeu, which came third in the 10-club Superliga last season, is one of Albania's best supported clubs, based in Korce district in the country's south. The loss of 12 points does not change the club's final position as the fourth place club was 28 points behind.

Source: 26 June 2017, Inside World Football

Football

<http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2017/06/26/skenderbeus-match-fixing-woes-lead-stripping-title-top-uefa-exclusion/>

BETTING

Australia

Players need educating on betting

Sports Minister Stuart Ayres has backed a NSW Police investigation into alleged salary cap breaches and match fixing within the NRL.

The rise of sports betting means players are at greater risk of "ill-doing" than ever before and need to be better supported and educated, NSW Sports Minister Stuart Ayres says.

NSW Police are reportedly investigating cases of players passing on vital information to gamblers as well as spot-fixing, money laundering and illegal third-party payments across multiple teams as part of an inquiry into alleged NRL match fixing.

"We see betting in sport more than we've ever seen in the past (and) that means we've got to continue to support our athletes, continue to educate our athletes, to make sure they are not subject to any ill-doing," Mr Ayres said in Sydney on Thursday.

"I'll continue to support the NRL, and any other sport for that matter, in protecting integrity measures and, importantly, educating players about the risks involved in betting and wagering."

Fairfax Media reported on Wednesday the Manly Sea Eagles were one of a number of clubs under investigation for alleged top-up payments. The Sea Eagles deny they've made such payments.

"Everyone wants to know that the match they are watching is an even match and what they see on the scoreboard is based on the skill and capacity of the players," Mr Ayres said.

"We don't want players betting on their matches and we don't want players betting on their own performance."

Source: 6 July 2017, SBS Australia

Rugby

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/07/06/players-need-educating-betting-ayres>

ODDS AND ENDS

Europe

FIXED Germany and Italy accused of match-fixing by Slovakian PM Robert Fico after 1-0 win for Italians meant BOTH qualified for Euro U21s semis

The allegation comes from Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico. Slovakia were denied a semi-final spot in the European Championships when Italy beat Germany 1-0. They had hoped to qualify as the best second-placed side after finishing behind England in Group A. But Federico Bernardeschi's goal killed Slovakia's hopes as, despite their loss, the Germans pipped them to the post. Instead, Italy face Spain in the last four while Germany take on Aidy Boothroyd's England. But Fico thinks there was something wrong about the result and suggested the Slovakian FA would launch an appeal. In an open letter to UEFA chief Aleksander Ceferin he claimed his country were the victims of "unjust match fixing." "This was an orchestrated farce between two experienced footballing nations," he said. "I am confident that this incident will be fully investigated by UEFA and that rules will be set in place in future tournaments that reward sporting effort and prohibit convenient results of this nature." At Euro 2004 Denmark and Sweden were accused of conspiring to secure a 2-2 draw - which saw both sides through and Italy eliminated.

Source: 26 June 2017, The Sun

Football

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/3887945/germany-and-italy-accused-of-match-fixing-by-slovakian-pm-robert-fico-after-1-0-win-for-italians-meant-both-qualified-for-euro-u21s-semis/>