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Third of athletes believe matches have been fixed: report

More than a third of athletes across 13 different sports believe match-fixing has taken place and some said they had been approached by fixers in the past year, a European report said on Tuesday. The research by "FIX the FIXING", a project co-funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ project at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, surveyed more than 600 athletes about whether they had experienced manipulation of results in their sports. The results revealed that about 35 percent of those questioned believed games had been fixed while 20 percent were aware of manipulation within the last 12 months. Footballers and rugby union players were among those questioned, along with competitors in basketball, handball, volleyball, water polo, martial arts, badminton, tennis, athletics, swimming, gymnastics and weightlifting. Fifteen percent of athletes said they had been approached in the past year to fix matches, with financial difficulties and "easy money" cited as possible reasons for temptation. The Football Association of Ireland announced this month that it had charged two players from first division side Athlone Town FC in connection with match-fixing, and a third in relation to betting. The London-based Tennis Integrity Unit announced last week that it was investigating alerts over unusual betting patterns involving one match at the French Open and three at Wimbledon, one of them being in the main draw at the All England Club. "The findings show the extent of the phenomenon of manipulated games and highlight the need for immediate treatment through scientifically documented educational interventions," said Vassilis Barkoukis, coordinator of FIX the FIXING. The report has been partnered by the International Centre for Sport Security whose head of research Ezechiel Abatan said more education was needed to help athletes deal with potential match-fixing threats. "This data shows that match-fixing is still a major issue within European sport and demonstrates that more can still be done to educate and train athletes, as well as preventing and reporting issues to relevant authorities," he said.

Source: 25 July 2017, Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sport-matchfixing-idUSKBN1AA2E1>

