Australia sets up independent complaints body after abuse allegations

SYDNEY, Oct 6 (Reuters) - Football Australia (FA) announced an independent complaint management procedure on Wednesday after recently retired international striker Lisa De Vanna said she had been the victim of sexual assault, harassment and bullying during her career.

De Vanna made her initial allegations in response to a Twitter post by Megan Rapinoe, in which the U.S. international commented on allegations of misconduct against former North Carolina Courage head coach Paul Riley. read more

The 36-year-old De Vanna, who played 150 times for her country over two decades, replied that she had witnessed women in the game abusing younger female players, and organisations protecting the abusers.

"There needs to be consequences. There needs to be accountability," she said in an interview with News Ltd media.

"I have seen cultural problems at all levels throughout the years - from men and women - and girls coming through need to be brave, and also the girls that have been through this also need to be brave and know they are not alone.

"Have I been sexually harassed? Yes. Have I been bullied? Yes. Ostracised? Yes. Have I seen things that have made me uncomfortable? Yes."

FA said in a statement it would investigate any abuse allegations and Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) would oversee an independent complaints process for former players and staff.

"We're committed to safe, inclusive environments for all footballers and staff," FA chief executive James Johnson said.

"There is no place for abuse, harassment or bullying in our sport and it's incumbent on organisations like ours to take the lead when it comes to dealing with these issues head-on."

FA said it had approached SIA, a government agency that oversees doping and corruption in sport, recently to discuss an independent complaints procedure and Johnson welcomed the "timely" announcement.

FA said in a Tuesday statement it had met De Vanna to discuss her "grievances" but some of the allegations she made in the media had not been raised at the time.

Another recently retired Australian professional, Rhali Dobson, told New Ltd that she had been the target of predatory behaviour from senior women players.

Professional Footballers Australia, the players' union, said it was deeply concerned about the allegations made by the former players.

"All players should feel safe, included and respected," it said.

Source: 7 October 2021, Reuters
Football
https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/australian-fa-will-probe-allegations-abuse-womens-game-2021-10-06/
**Netherlands**

**KNVB call for police to investigate matchfixing claims in youth football**

The Dutch football association KNVB has called for police to investigate allegations of matchfixing in the youth league after an NOS podcast produced evidence that betting syndicates are earning tens of thousands of euros from rigged games. The Gefixt podcast spoke to a person claiming to be a matchfixer after studying suspicious betting patterns on several matches, including one between Roda JC and RKC’s youth teams in November 2019. Data analysis by a firm hired by NOS found that the odds of Roda winning the game changed dramatically during the first half as large amounts of money were bet on a home victory via the Asian online platform Singebet. The game was goalless at half-time, but Roda JC won 2-1 despite going 1-0 down early in the second half. ‘It’s completely irregular in normal circumstances for the chance of a team winning to increase by 16% in 45 minutes when there are no goals or red cards. Roda went from clear outsider to clear favourite to win the match,’ the agency commented. The ‘fixer’ told NOS he had paid five RKC players €1,500 each to lose the match and won more than €20,000 from backing a Roda victory. He told NOS he was able to approach RKC’s youth team because he was friends with one of the players. ‘The players all know each other,’ he said. ‘Once you know one and you play football with them or go out for a bite to eat, you get to know them all. It’s a small world.’ The KNVB said it was aware of rumours of matchfixing at youth team level, but secretary-general Gijs de Jong said its ‘fears have been confirmed.’ De Jong said the governing body would investigate the claims, but lacked police powers to demand evidence from banks or telephone companies. ‘That’s why it would be very good if the authorities investigated further,’ he said. He admitted that the KNVB had been slow to recognise that youth team players are vulnerable to approaches from match fixers. The association only began monitoring games for suspicious betting patterns last season. ‘It’s not a very prestigious league, but a very important league for the development of young players,’ De Jong said. ‘These are often young players who don’t earn big wages and are easy to approach. There are hardly any crowds and little supervision.’

*Source: 5 October 2021, Dutch News*

[Football](https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2021/10/knvb-call-for-police-to-investigate-matchfixing-claims-in-youth-football/)

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**United States**

**Felipe Hernandez suspended for season after betting on MLS matches**

Sporting Kansas City midfielder Felipe Hernandez has been suspended without pay for the rest of the 2021 season for violating league gambling rules. An investigation by MLS found that Hernandez, who admitted to suffering a gambling addiction, wagered on two MLS games.

According to a league statement, the investigation began on July 5 after Hernandez told his club that he had become concerned with his personal safety because of his gambling debts.

"Over the last several months, I have been able to reassess, take responsibility for my actions and get the proper care for something that has greatly affected me," Hernandez wrote in a statement posted on social media Friday.

Neither of the two MLS matches Hernandez bet on involved Sporting Kansas City.

"Hernandez engaged in extensive and unlawful sports gambling," the league found. "No evidence was found that Hernandez possessed insider information about the teams or circumstances of those two MLS matches, or that he's ever bet on a match involving his own team."

The law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP conducted an independent investigation on behalf of the league and, in conjunction with law enforcement, conducted witness interviews, examined data from online betting accounts and reviewed activity related to certain MLS matches.

"I look forward to doing everything possible to get back on the field and will work harder than ever to help Sporting KC achieve its goals," Hernandez wrote.

Given his full cooperation in the league investigation, Hernandez will be eligible for reinstatement on Jan. 1 at the discretion of commissioner Don Garber.

*Source: 7 October 2021, USA Today*

Sweden Considers Additional Measures against Unlicensed Play, Match-Fixing

A new proposal calls for changes in the Gaming Act which may ban all unlicensed play from Sweden. If the government approves the tougher restrictions, even unlicensed gambling operators who are not targeting Swedish players may be banned. Besides a crackdown on unlicensed gambling, the proposal calls for strict measures against match-fixing.

Will Sweden Ban All Unlicensed Operators?

Sweden, one of the countries that already have tough gambling regulations is considering imposing even stricter measures. A new probe into the Gaming Act may push forward stricter regulations aiming at restricting all unlicensed providers from offering services in the country. The Swedish Chamber of Commerce director-general, Gunnar Larsson led a new investigation that proposes changes to the gaming law.

The proposal aims to introduce tougher restrictions applicable for all online gambling activities that Swedish players can access. In other words, if the proposal is accepted, all unlicensed gambling activities may be restricted, not only those that are specifically targeting the Swedish players.

“We view positively the proposals that strengthen our opportunities to work more effectively against unlicensed play and match-fixing.” Gunnar Larsson, director general at the Swedish Chamber of Commerce.

Larsson, who presented the investigation commissioned by the government outlined that the proposals will help in the fight against unlicensed operators, as well as match-fixing. Spelinspektionen’s director-general, Camilla Rosenberg, added that Spelinspektionen is looking forward to collaborating with the “players to better achieve the goals of the gaming market reform.”

Under the proposal, Spelinspektionen would be able to request information from payment providers regarding gaming businesses operating without a license. The regulator may also have the option to conduct “test purchases” for various online games to determine if those gambling sites allow payment from Swedish players.

Besides unlicensed operators, the new proposal seeks to crackdown match-fixing. The proposal tasks the regulator with conducting investigations about match-fixing, which would allow Spelinspektionen to collect and analyze evidence.

Additionally, the operators that are licensed to offer sports wagering will need to report suspected match-fixing to the regulator. Whenever the regulator discovers suspected match-fixing it would need to notify immediately the relevant sports federation, as well as the gambling operator.

Besides reporting suspicious match-fixing, the new regulations propose that operators monitor whether sports players have placed bets on games. As a violation of rules on match-fixing, licensees must also report such cases to Spelinspektionen. The proposal also calls licensed operators to report suspected match-fixing to sports federations.

Source: 7 October 2021, Gambling News
GOOD PRACTICES

International Swimming Federation

**Fina sets up integrity unit as part of major swimming shake up**

The International Swimming Federation (Fina) has announced it will establish an integrity unit as part of a number of reforms to improve the governance, transparency and culture of the organisation.

Fina’s reform committee published a report recommending changes to address concerns over the governing body’s operational independence and possible conflicts of interest in handling anti-doping violations.

The committee recommended reforms in six key areas, including the creation of an Aquatics Integrity Unit (AIU) to oversee anti-doping, event manipulation and corruptible offences and ethical violations.

Fina has been urged by the committee to disband its doping panel in favour of prosecuting potential violations before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) and to create an adjudicatory chamber to replace the current ethics panel.

“For years, FINA has been criticised for the way in which it handles not only alleged anti-doping rule violations, but all other matters of integrity such as ethical violations and corruptible offences,” the report said.

“Alleged offences were referred to the respected adjudicatory body in clandestine fashion, often without explanation [of] why certain matters were considered alleged offences and others were not.

“The adjudicatory bodies within Fina, while facially independent, were not operationally independent from Fina. Athletes, in particular, have had little faith in the integrity of the Fina anti-doping, adjudication and ethical system.”

Further recommendations include an overhaul of Fina’s existing marketing strategy, reviewing its current events calendar, increasing prize money and having greater diversity in its executive boards and committees.

Fina said it was hopeful the AIU would become operational in June next year, subject to approval during an extraordinary congress in Abu Dhabi on 18 December.

“Aquatics athletes and those who support them deserve the very best in terms of integrity protections, whether for anti-doping, competition manipulation, harassment, abuse or other ethical violations,” Fina executive director Brent Nowicki said.

“That is exactly what Fina is determined to put in place. The proposal to create an Aquatics Integrity Unit is a clear sign of Fina’s determination to prioritise the protection and wellbeing of aquatics sport participants.”

*Source: 12 October 2021, The Guardian*

Swimming

https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/oct/12/fina-sets-up-integrity-unit-as-part-of-major-swimming-shake-up
Malta

MGA demands technical partners report on suspicious betting

Identifying a need to take a ‘proactive approach’, the Malta Gaming Authority’s (MGA) Sports Betting Integrity Department has made a number of updates to its requirements.

As of 1 October, the MGA requirements now include licensees that offer a critical supply chain function relating to sports betting. Consequently the Authority must be notified of any instance connected to suspicious betting by any licensee offering a sports betting service or technical component.

In making changes to its alerts process, the MGA Sports Betting Integrity department will ‘alert its licensees with any knowledge of suspicious activity in its possession’.

The Authority has further confirmed that licensees will also be informed of instances of suspicious betting activity in relation ‘to any event that has been alerted by such’, without revealing the source of information.

Explaining its motivations for the updates, the authority stated: “One of the MGA’s commitments is to take a proactive approach in managing sports betting integrity with the aim of addressing the threats posed by match-fixing and malicious sports betting.

“In this regard, the Authority’s Sports Betting Integrity department continuously seeks ways of improving monitoring and reporting capabilities across the wider Maltese sports betting sector.”

The changes have been deemed as beneficial to operators licensed by the MGA, as it ensures that all stakeholders ‘are aware of suspicious betting activities known within the MGA’s radar.

Furthermore, the Authority added that licenced operators will be able to review their internal monitoring systems and better ensure that they have not been impacted by suspicious betting activity, whilst also benefiting from enhanced awareness of betting integrity risks across the Maltese gaming industry.

Lastly, the MGA is hopeful that the updates will enable it to conduct wider monitoring of betting activity and carry out a ‘holistic review and evaluation’ of the integrity risks throughout the jurisdiction.

The regulator further outlined its view that the ‘more informed Maltese betting sector’ brought about by the changes will bridge together ‘the Authority and its licensees in their collective fight against corruption in sports and sports betting’.

Source: 7 October 2021, SBC News
https://www.sbcnews.co.uk/sportsbook/2021/10/07/mga-demands-technical-partners-report-on-suspicious-betting/
**Sportradar**

**SPORTRADAR INTEGRITY SERVICES HIGHLIGHT THE SCALE OF MATCH FIXING IN SPORT OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS**

Sportradar underlines its commitment to protecting the integrity of sport with the official launch of Universal Fraud Detection System free of charge.

NEW YORK & ST GALLEN: Sportradar Integrity Services, a global supplier of sport integrity solutions and partner to over 100 sports federations and leagues, has detected more than 1,100 suspicious sports matches since the start of the global pandemic in April 2020, with 655 of those matches detected in the first nine months of 2021. Sportradar Integrity Services is a unit of Sportradar (NASDAQ: SRAD), a leading global sports technology company.

In the last 18 months Sportradar has utilised its bet monitoring system, the Universal Fraud Detection System (UFDS), to detect suspicious activity in 12 different sports across more than 70 countries worldwide. These insights are published as Sportradar officially begins delivering its UFDS bet monitoring service free of charge, effective today, to sports federations, sports leagues, and state authorities around the world, in its continued commitment to protecting the integrity of global sport and making the system accessible to all.

According to Sportradar’s UFDS figures, soccer is the sport at most risk of betting related corruption with more than 500 suspicious matches detected in 2021 to date. Approximately 40% of the suspicious activities reported within domestic soccer competitions comes from third tier leagues and below, including youth level, as fixers increase their attention on lower-level matches.

Andreas Krannich, Managing Director, Integrity Services at Sportradar said: “As our analysis shows, match-fixing is evolving, and those behind it are diversifying their approach, both in the sports and competitions they target, and the way they make approaches to athletes, such as the rise in digital approaches. To help address this, Sportradar has made a significant investment to make it possible to offer the UFDS for free to global sports organisations and leagues. The reason for this is that we are committed to supporting the sustainability of global sports and using data and technology for good.”

The rising popularity of esports has made it a target for fixers and has led to a rapid increase in the number of suspicious matches reported. Over 70 suspicious matches have been detected by the UFDS since April last year across five different game titles, with more than 40 of those suspicious matches identified since January this year.

In addition to the suspicious soccer and esports matches detected this year, Sportradar’s UFDS has detected suspicious activity in Tennis: 37 matches; Basketball: 19; Table Tennis: 11; Ice Hockey: 9; Cricket: 6, while suspicious activity has also been identified in Volleyball, Handball, and Beach Volleyball.

On a global level, the UFDS has detected 382 suspicious matches in Europe so far this year, with Latin America recording 115 suspicious matches in the same period. That’s followed by the Asia Pacific region with 74, Africa with 43, 10 in the Middle East and 9 in North America since the start of January 2021.

*Source: 13 October 2021, Sportradar*

UEFA FIFPRO
FIFPRO and UEFA join forces to fight match-fixing

Professional footballers encouraged to report potential match-fixing incidents via Red Button app. FIFPRO – the International Federation of Professional Footballers - and UEFA have signed a joint cooperation agreement that recognises the Red Button whistleblowing app as the go-to platform for professional footballers to report possible match-fixing incidents.

Launched in Finland almost 10 years ago, Red Button has become a central component of FIFPRO’s efforts to prevent match-fixing, complementing several other reporting mechanisms developed by football governing bodies - including UEFA’s integrity reporting platform.

Red Button, which can be downloaded by players upon receipt of a code distributed by a players’ union affiliated to FIFPRO, allows users to anonymously report valuable information about potential match-fixing concerns. While players can share contact details if they wish, all information remains strictly confidential unless otherwise agreed.

Closer coordination

The new cooperation agreement allows FIFPRO to exchange information received via the Red Button app with UEFA’s anti-match-fixing unit. This will facilitate closer coordination in the fight against match-fixing – a key goal of the new anti-match-fixing action plan approved by UEFA’s Executive Committee on 11 July 2021.

Collaboration across the entire football community, including the use of common whistleblowing channels, is critical to identifying and dismantling sophisticated, systemised corruption schemes that can threaten professional footballers’ careers and lives.

Recognise, Reject, Report

Both UEFA and FIFPRO are committed to delivering the same ‘3Rs’ message to players approached to fix a match: RECOGNISE, REJECT and REPORT.

It is of utmost importance to stand united and stay connected when facing such a scourge on the essence of the game. It is in the common interest of all those who love and live by football.

Source: 8 October 2021, UEFA.com


ODDS AND ENDS

Belgium

Pandora Papers: Standard Liège offshore financing revealed

Short of cash in 2018 after banks turned down their requests for loans, the Liège football club discretely borrowed €4.6 million from a Luxembourg fund which was, itself, financed by an offshore company registered in Samoa.

This latest instance of financial misconduct was reported by Le Soir, De Tijd, and Knack as part of the ongoing journalistic investigation of tax havens dubbed the ‘Pandora Papers’.

The cash injection was provided by Star Football Finance Fund SCSP, a fund created in Luxembourg in July 2016 to lend money to football clubs in need of financial assistance. Liège Standard secured a deal of €4.6 million with an interest rate of 7.25%, meaning that the club had to pay back a total of £5 million.

Bruno Venanzi, current owner of the Standard, confirmed the loan. “We would have preferred to work with normal banks who offered more favourable rates but Belgian banks no longer offer these services,” he explained. However, Venanzi completely overlooked the source of the funds that his club borrowed.

The Pandora Papers show that one of the partners that invested in the Luxembourg fund was Mercury Management Inc. – an offshore company opened in the British Virgin Isles and transferred to Samoa in 2017. Samoa is one of nine tax havens on Europe’s black list.

This company holds a bank account in Dubai and is owned by a trust whose beneficiaries are all from a Pakistani family headed by a prominent businessman. Importantly, the Pandora Papers show that various members of this family are “high-risk profiles” that are currently being pursued by Pakistani financial authorities. The Luxembourg fund was unregulated at the time that it financed the Standard.

Source: 7 October 2021, Brussels Times

Football

MATCH FIXING

Riot Games

Beyond Gaming’s midlaner suspended following alleged match-fixing ahead of HLE best-of-five at League of Legends Worlds 2021

Beyond Gaming’s midlaner, Chien “Maoan” Mao-An has been suspended by Riot Games on account of match-fixing related issues at League of Legends Worlds 2021.

Beyond Gaming defeated Galatasaray Esports in the first best-of-five elimination match on October 8, 2021. They are supposed to face Hanwha Life Esports (HLE) for a chance at qualification for the group stages of the main event.

However, it seems that their run might have reached a hurdle with Maoan being caught for match-fixing. Riot Games apparently has concrete proof regarding the matter. Further details on this have been provided below. Maoan has been leaking draft-related strategies to a friend for wagering on their match at League of Legends Worlds 2021.

Riot Games has found out that midlaner Maoan had been leaking draft strategies to a friend of his. It seems they were wagering on the picks and bans of Beyond Gaming during their matches at League of Legends Worlds 2021.

According to Riot Games, “During the 2021 World Championship, Maoan violated Rule 9.3 of the 2021 World Championship Ruleset, which prohibits association with gambling. Competitive integrity is the foundation for our sport and we take all violations of our ruleset extremely seriously. The Competitive Operations team obtained definitive evidence showing Maoan provided inside information to a friend for the purposes of wagering on today’s match. Maoan will be suspended for the remained fo the 2021 World Championship, and may be subject to additional penalties following a full investigation”.

Further news suggests that Beyond Gaming’s boss Xue “DinTer” Hong-Wei has claimed that he will be firing Maoan on account of this incident. There is still no news as further investigation is ongoing as there are reports of another player being involved as well.

As of now, the phones of all the players have been confiscated in order to check any messages relating to leaking of drafts. This has definitely put the League of Legends Worlds 2021 elimination match between HLE and Beyond Gaming at risk.

Beyond Gaming has not announced any substitute midlaner as of yet, however, hopefully they will have someone ready and the match will be held as per normal.

Source: 9 October 2021, Sportsskeeda
eSports
POLICY
Council of Europe
The Committee of the Macolin Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions holds its third meeting
The Monitoring Committee of the Macolin Convention held its third meeting on 11 and 12 October 2021. It was once again a hybrid meeting with the presence in Strasbourg of the Chair of the Committee, Mr. George Mavrotas (Greece) and remote participation of over 30 members and observers.

During this important meeting, the Committee adopted its action plan for 2022-2025 aimed at increasing the number of parties to the convention, supporting its implementation and advancing cooperation among key stakeholders at the national and international levels.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 31.2 of the Macolin Convention, the Committee adopted the first version of the list of "sports organisations", emphasising its dynamic and updateable nature, as necessary.

The Committee took note of the forthcoming meeting (on 22 November) of the network of national platforms, more commonly known as the “Group of Copenhagen” and reaffirmed the importance of this Group and of its establishment as Advisory Group to the Committee.

Regarding the ratification of the Convention by member States of the European Union, the Committee invited its Chair, in the light of the recent opinion 1/19 of the Court of Justice of the European Union, to convey the Committee’s call for rapid ratification of the Convention.

It also supported the adoption of the Macolin Data Protection Principles jointly with the Committee of Convention 108 highlighting that work in this field should be pursued.

The list of decisions of the 3rd meeting will be accessible shortly.
Source: 13 October 2021, Council of Europe
The French Boxing Federation (FFB) has denounced the conclusions of a preliminary independent report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren into alleged corruption in boxing at the Rio 2016 Olympics, stating there was no "tangible and factual proof" of what the report suggests.

A 149-page report was filed by McLaren, detailing corruption within the International Boxing Federation (AIBA) at the time, concluding 10 suspicious matches were likely part of a "bout manipulation" scheme.

A bribe of up to $250,000 (£186,000/€216,000) was offered to fix the outcome of the lightweight semi-final between Otgondalai Dorjnyambuu of Mongolia and Sofiane Oumiha of France, said McLaren.

Frenchman Tony Yoka's men's super heavyweight gold medal win was also called into question over Britain's Joe Joyce.

He confirmed the manipulated bouts included the bantamweight quarter-final between Ireland's Michael Conlan and Vladimir Nikitin of Russia and the gold medal heavyweight match between Russia's Evgeny Tischenko and Kazakhstan's Vasily Levit.

Senior AIBA officials such as Ching-Kuo Wu and Karim Bouzidi, then AIBA President and executive director respectively, were accused of allowing the corruption to go unchecked.

It also said "compliant and complicit" referees and judges acted under "a culture of fear, intimidation and obedience" created by AIBA.

FFB President Dominique Nato criticised the report in a statement, arguing the report does not provide "tangible and factual proof of what it puts forward."

The statement continued: "The process is most shocking in view of the seriousness and the prejudice that these assertions cause to the athletes concerned as well as to the French Boxing Federation."

"We note, in this report, that the former executive director - French - of the AIBA would have knowingly favoured certain competitors among which are three-coloured athletes.

"We are awaiting the proofs which would support such assertions, which are, for the moment, only hypotheses."

The statement highlighted that Bouzidi and the seven five-star referees were "ousted" before the semi-finals and finals, some of which were deemed to be manipulated.

"After analysing all the battles of the French, we can see that some were both very balanced and therefore necessarily undecided but that no anomaly is to be noted," the FFB claimed.

"We note that our athletes won their medals without dispute, thanks to their unwavering commitment and the quality of the boxing they produced inside the ring.

"Proof of this is that none of their defeated opponents has, at the time, officially contested the decisions or brought any complaint before the competent authorities."

Yoka's lawyer, Arnaud Pericard, called for punishments for cheats following the release of the report.

"If people have cheated, they should be penalised, and as quickly as possible," said Pericard to AFP.

"It's an independent report by AIBA, maybe in a difficult context.

"Right now there's nothing to take away from it.

"It puts the athlete in an uncomfortable situation, and the real victim is the athlete."

AIBA was suspended and stripped of the right to organise boxing competition at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics after a review into sport's governance, management, refereeing and judging from the International Olympic Committee exposed its flaws.

Source: 6 October 2021, Inside the Games

Boxing

https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1113880/france-mclaren-report-rio-2016-boxing