



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

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Photos International Olympic Committee

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Darts Regulation Authority; Professional Darts Players Association

Wessel Nijman and Kyle McKinstry suspended with match-fixing cases to answer

Wessel Nijman has admitted to match-fixing after he and Kyle McKinstry were found to have cases to answer amid suspicious betting activity during the recent Modus Live League.

Both men were regulars in the Darts Regulation Authority-sanctioned events that featured players competing from their own homes during the suspension of competitive darts due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Two matches were flagged by the International Betting Integrity Association, and a subsequent investigation by the Darts Regulation Authority found that there were two cases of match-fixing to answer for McKinstry in relation to breaches of DRA betting rules, and one for failing to cooperate with the DRA by producing his phone itemised billing. Nijman has one case of match-fixing to answer.

The pair have been suspended from attending or competing in DRA-sanctioned events until the conclusion of any hearings, but can appeal their suspensions.

One of the matches in question was between McKinstry and Nijman on May 2, while McKinstry's match against David Evans on April 30 is also being investigated. There is no suggestion Evans was involved in any alleged match-fixing.

Nijman, a regular of the Challenge and Development Tours, has issued a statement through the Professional Darts Players Association (PDPA) after admitting to match-fixing, and will work with the organisation on an education process throughout the hearings.

"I would like to place on public record my sincere regret and apology for the mistake I made in relation to betting and match-fixing," Nijman said. "I was put under some pressure to lose a match and I agreed to do this. I have admitted the offence and take full responsibility for it and will accept my punishment.

"I should have spoken to my management, the PDPA, DRA or police when I was put in this position and would advise any other player who finds themselves in a similar position to do that.

"Instead, I went along with it and made a stupid mistake that I am rightly being punished for.

"It was a one-off error of judgement which I want to put behind me and do everything I can to put right. I have made private apologies to the people who I have let down, including my family who have backed me through my whole career, my management and sponsors, and I want to publicly apologise to them and everybody involved in darts, including fans.

"My actions are a personal mistake made by me and not a reflection on the sport of darts.

"I want to move on, rebuild my career and reputation and am committed to helping to educate others through my own unfortunate experience so that this kind of offence can be prevented.

"I will be making no further comment on this matter at this time."

McKinstry has yet to speak publicly, but his management team issued a statement saying they take allegations of match-fixing seriously, and would accept any decision from the DRA.

"MDA Promotions are deeply disappointed with regard to Kyle McKinstry and match fixing allegations," read the statement.

"This management prides itself on sporting integrity at all times and has done for its entire involvement in any sporting activity, darts or otherwise.

"Therefore such allegations for one of our players is to be taken very seriously and we will, of course, accept any decision by the Darts Regulation Authority.

"MDA Promotions will not be making any further comment on the matter until after the full investigation is completed by the Darts Regulation Authority."

Source: 19 August 2020, Sky Sports

Darts

<https://www.skysports.com/darts/news/12288/12052217/wessel-nijman-and-kyle-mckinstry-suspended-with-match-fixing-cases-to-answer>

Laos

AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee bans a player for life

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has taken tough action on match-manipulation by banning Laos national team player, Thipphonexay Inthavongsa, from taking part in any football related activities for life. He was found to have committed offences under Article 66.1 of the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code – 2018 edition. Inthavongsa was found guilty of conspiring to manipulate the result of an international match between the Hong Kong and Laos national teams on October 5, 2017.

The AFC put integrity at the heart of its Vision and Mission and has demonstrated great leadership in its determination to stamp out attempts at match manipulation and to punish those who have been found to have taken part in such activities.

Several key measures, including the appointment of an Independent Head of Integrity, building the capacity of its Member Associations through training and workshops, and also the introduction of the AFC Integrity App, have been implemented in recent years to strengthen the AFC's role in fighting match manipulation in Asia.

The Lao Football Federation (LFF) has been informed of the decision and the AFC will request FIFA to extend the ban worldwide in due course.

Source: 30 July 2020, Asian Football Confederation

<https://www.the-afc.com/afc-home/media/media-releases/news/afc-disciplinary-and-ethics-committee-bans-a-player-for-life>

Pakistan

Pakistan's Umar Akmal gets ban halved to 18 months

LAHORE, Pakistan (Reuters) - Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal's three-year ban for an anti-corruption breach has been halved by an independent adjudicator, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Wednesday.

The middle-order batsman was banned in April for failing to report approaches to engage in corrupt practices ahead of this year's Pakistan Super League Twenty20 competition.

Umar, who last played for Pakistan in a Twenty20 International against Sri Lanka in Lahore last year, appealed against the suspension in May.

Independent adjudicator Faqir Muhammad Khokhar said Umar's confession that he failed to report match-fixing approaches on two occasions had left "no room for doubt as to the veracity of the charges."

"The stance taken by the appellant is self-contradictory and not credit-worthy. The case against the appellant stands proved to the hilt," the retired Supreme Court judge added.

However, the PCB said the adjudicator, "taking a compassionate view" had reduced Umar's ban to 18 months, backdating the start to Feb. 20 when the player was provisionally suspended.

Umar, whose brothers Adnan and Kamran have also featured for Pakistan, will be eligible to play from August 2021 but the 30-year-old hopes to return earlier.

"I will decide about the remaining sentence and try to get it reduced further," he told local media after his hearing.

"For now I am not satisfied and will consult my lawyers and family how to take this ahead. There are many players before me who made mistakes and just look at what they got and what I got."

Source: 29 July 2020, Reuters

Cricket

<https://in.reuters.com/article/cricket-pakistan-umar/pakistans-umar-akmal-gets-ban-halved-to-18-months-idINKCN24U1PM>

LEGISLATION

Spain

Así ha sido la primera condena de la historia judicial española por un delito de corrupción en el deporte

La sentencia número 111/2020 de la Sección Segunda de la Audiencia Provincial de Navarra, dictada en fecha 23 de abril, se ha convertido en la primera sentencia de nuestro país en condenar por un delito de corrupción en el deporte.

Conviene recordar que el delito de corrupción en el deporte es un delito que puede generar responsabilidad penal para las personas jurídicas (artículo 288 del Código Penal).

El delito de corrupción en el deporte castiga las conductas de corrupción en los negocios que tienen lugar en el ámbito deportivo, tratando de salvaguardar de este modo el "fair play" en las competiciones con el fin de proteger su resultado y la integridad deportiva, confluyendo así los valores sociales y económicos inherentes al deporte profesional.

Concretamente, el artículo 286 bis.4 del Código Penal establece que lo dispuesto para el delito de corrupción en los negocios "será aplicable, en sus respectivos casos, a los directivos, administradores, empleados o colaboradores de una entidad deportiva, cualquiera que sea la forma jurídica de ésta, así como a los deportistas, árbitros o jueces, respecto de aquellas conductas que tengan por finalidad predeterminar o alterar de manera deliberada y fraudulenta el resultado de una prueba, encuentro o competición deportiva de especial relevancia económica o deportiva".

Emilio García Silvero (FIFA): "El fútbol acapara el amaño de resultados entre 2008 y 2020 con casi el 70% de los casos"

El Director Legal y de Cumplimiento de la FIFA señala que "la jurisprudencia del TAS ha marcado una senda que se puede aplicar en España".

En el presente caso, la Audiencia Provincial de Navarra condena a los que eran en aquel entonces el gerente, presidente y vicepresidente de un club de fútbol (en adelante, el Club) de primera división de la Liga Nacional de Fútbol Profesional (en adelante, LaLiga), junto con otros directivos y jugadores del Club, a un delito de corrupción en el deporte, entre otros delitos.

La sentencia considera probado el ofrecimiento y entrega de cantidades económicas, previamente pactadas, a jugadores de otro equipo de fútbol de LaLiga para que ganaran el partido de la jornada 37 y se dejaran ganar posteriormente por el Club en la jornada 38 de la liga 2013-2014.

A raíz de los hechos probados, la Audiencia Provincial de Navarra afirma que los citados sujetos han incurrido en un delito de corrupción en el deporte, al ser éste un delito de mera actividad que se consume con el mero ofrecimiento o solicitud de un beneficio o ventaja de cualquier naturaleza no justificado, no requiriéndose la producción del resultado deportivo pactado.

El presente caso también ha despertado un gran interés en materia de "Compliance Penal". Esto último es así debido a que, en su momento, en el Auto del Juzgado de Instrucción núm. 2 de Pamplona, de 11 de enero de 2016, se dirimió si el Club podía tener algún tipo de responsabilidad penal en relación con los hechos, pasando a ostentar, en caso afirmativo, la condición de investigado.

¿Cómo lucha LaLiga contra los amaños de partidos y las apuestas ilegales?

Florentino Villabona, jefe de seguridad de LaLiga, lo explicó en el ISDE Sports Convention

En dicho auto el juez de instrucción afirmó que el Club disponía de mecanismos idóneos para prevenir la comisión del delito de corrupción deportiva, aunque estos últimos resultaron ser ineficaces debido a la actitud de los directivos de la entidad, también investigados por dicho delito a título personal. No obstante, se concluyó que no debía existir reproche penal alguno para el Club en relación con los hechos expuestos, acordando no investigarlo por el delito de corrupción en el deporte, gracias al hecho de haber acreditado que la entidad había implantado medidas de control y prevención de delitos eficaces.

A raíz de casos como el presente y otros acontecidos en los últimos años que han afectado a otros clubes de fútbol españoles, LaLiga prevé, en el art. 55.19 de sus estatutos sociales, la obligación de que todos los equipos de primera y segunda división cuenten con un sistema de Compliance Penal.

Source: 29 July 2020, Confilegal

Football

<https://confilegal-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/confilegal.com/20200724-asi-ha-sido-la-primera-condena-de-la-historia-judicial-espanola-por-un-delito-de-corrupcion-en-el-deporte/amp/>

BETTING

Iran

El submundo de las apuestas clandestinas en Irán: jóvenes arriesgan todo en la web

Era marzo, la pandemia se intensificaba en Irán, el trabajo escaseaba y el aburrimiento de pasar horas y horas en casa llevaron a Hamid a investigar qué era eso de las apuestas online. “Me mató la curiosidad”, dice. No sorprende.

Las promociones de estas páginas saltan cada vez que se abren páginas de internet en Irán que además son promocionadas por algunos de los instagramers más famosos del país, especialmente músicos, muchos de ellos raperos, que han convertido el juego en alternativa para aliviar los problemas económicos. Que no son pocos en Irán.

Son hombres, por lo general. Viven mayoritariamente en Turquía y España y su objetivo es apuntar a un grupo de la población iraní joven que aspira a tener el estilo de vida que ellos representan: dinero, mujeres y éxito. “La mayoría de los que juegan no son jóvenes ricos o acomodados, esos apuestan en otros escenarios, los que vienen a estas páginas son jóvenes con menos dinero o de pueblos y ciudades más pequeñas”, explica Hamid, que investigó en ocho páginas diferentes antes de encontrar la fórmula para no perder.

Eso es lo que argumenta este productor audiovisual freelance, que asegura que todo tiene una fórmula matemática. Al menos Bomb Crash, que es el juego que él, y miles más, prefieren. Otros se van por el póker, o por las apuestas de fútbol o cualquier otro deporte. “Esto está hecho para gente que solo se lanza a apostar y no piensa mucho. De allí que pierdan”, cuenta Ali, otro usuario habitual que como Hamid tiene 28 años y que pide no dar su apellido.

Pero las páginas en las que el ingreso mínimo está alrededor de los 20.000 tomanes, algo menos de un euro, son las más populares. “Cuando me concentro puedo llegar a ganar cuatro millones de tomanes –alrededor de 150 euros– en media hora”, confirma Hamid que asegura que cada vez ve a más gente conectada.

El que las apuestas sean cada vez más populares en Irán no significa que sean permitidas. Los juegos de azar están prohibidos desde la victoria de la Revolución cuando las cartas de la baraja eran tan perseguidas como el alcohol. Esto ha cambiado en cuatro décadas. Las barajas se venden hasta en los semáforos, aunque el juego sigue siendo parte del mundo subterráneo.

Las redes

El ciberespacio ha abierto las puertas a un mundo hasta entonces vetado para la población iraní. Incluida la difusión de la información libre, que es la que permite a estas páginas existir. Es a través de las redes sociales que se anuncia cada vez que tienen que cambiar de nombre a las páginas después de haber sido bloqueadas por las autoridades.

Algo que sucede con frecuencia. Es a través de estas redes que se obtiene el número de las cuentas bancarias a la que hay que consignar el dinero. “Voy a revelar el origen de estos portales muy pronto. Estamos analizando y lo diremos cuando llegue el momento”, aseguró hace menos de un año el ministro de Comunicaciones, Mohamed-Yavad Azari Yahmori que resaltaba que esas transacciones financieras provenientes de las apuestas se hacían a través del sistema bancario iraní. Hasta hoy no se ha pronunciado.

Pero cada vez hay más información de cómo funcionan. Ali, como se identificaba un ex trabajador de uno de estos portales, contaba días atrás en Hamsharionline que la operación de estas páginas se dirigía desde un país extranjero, generalmente Turquía o Armenia, y que los diferentes grupos de trabajo se coordinaban a través de Skype, pero nunca con las cámaras abiertas.

Su trabajo era “asesor de comunicación”, lo que significa estar atento a la comunicación con los clientes para tomarles los datos –número de carnet de identidad y cuenta bancaria- y darles el número de la cuenta a la que deben transferir. Estas cuentas están dentro de Irán y las alquilan a personas naturales por cierto número de días.

“Otra opción cada vez más frecuente es comprar con criptomoneda, lo que hace aún más difícil el rastreo”, contaba Hamid que mostraba cómo era de fácil comprar este tipo de moneda en la web y luego transferirla a la página. La policía contra el crimen ciberespacial ha advertido en muchas ocasiones que estas páginas son fraudulentas y cada vez ponen más esfuerzos para controlarlas, pero el número de apostadores demuestra que no está siendo fácil.

El mayor golpe lo habrían dado en mayo cuando la policía española, siguiendo una orden de captura de la Interpol, detuvo en Málaga a Pooyan Mohtari, un músico de 30 años con más de 3.4 millones de seguidores en Instagram y dueño de una página conocida como Hazarat. Hoy está en libertad.

Pero él no es el único, como él hay otras figuras muy conocidas en el país incluido el hijo del exembajador de Irán en Venezuela en tiempos de Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Sasha Sobhani. Detrás de todo este grupo se señala a otro joven conocido como Montiego, también con millones de seguidores que junto con su padre son señalados como los líderes en este negocio. Todos ellos, según muestran en sus redes sociales, viven o pasan mucho tiempo en España.

“Es muy fácil volverse adicto a esto y pensar que te puede solucionar la vida. Yo trato de controlarme, pero cada vez que estoy corto de dinero, apuesto”, concluye Hamid.

Source: 10 August 2020, Total News

All Sports

<https://totalnewsagency.com/internacionales/el-submundo-de-las-apuestas-clandestinas-en-iran-jovenes-arriesgan-todo-en-la-web>

GOOD PRACTICES

Spain

Spain launches new action plan on sports integrity

CONFAD, Spain's 'national commission' for combatting sports manipulation and fraud has published its action plan for 2020/2021, outlining 21 directives to safeguard the integrity of Spanish sports.

The action plan overseen by Spain's Consumer Affairs Ministry, as the government department of Spain's betting industry seeks to bolster four core areas protecting all levels of Spanish sports; 'analysis and diagnostics', 'awareness and disclosure', 'control and monitoring' and a 'the oversight of current regulations and operations'.

Supporting CONFAD directives, the Consumer Affairs Ministry states that the action plan will be implemented by the DGOJ and further coordinated with Spain's National Sports Council, federal police force and Guardia Civil.

CONFAD and government counterparts will work together to improve all Spanish professional sports understanding of integrity threats and competition fraud related to betting.

Initiatives include developing a training programme for athletes, coaches and further stakeholders on identifying integrity risks and criminal activities.

The action plan further aims to improve all core disciplines related to integrity monitoring and reporting of suspicious events, improving data transfer and cooperation frameworks between sports clubs, betting operators, government departments and police agencies.

As a final objective, CONFAD and its government counterparts will work to ensure that Spain's legal framework is 'accurately adjusted' to help prosecute sports integrity criminal cases.

The increasing relevance and constant evolution of the manipulation of sports competitions and betting fraud demonstrate the need to have an effective approach in the fight against this practice," CONFAD explained.

Source: 3 August 2020, SBC News

All Sports

<https://www.sbcnews-co-uk.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.sbcnews.co.uk/europe/2020/07/30/spain-launches-new-action-plan-on-sports-integrity/amp/>

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Sportradar

Sportradar launches social media sports integrity solution

Strengthening its integrity services, Sportradar has launched a sports solution to support organisations in safeguarding professional athletes from social media abuse.

The service, created by Sportradar's Intelligence & Investigation Services team, will use advanced techniques, technology and 20 years of sports industry experience to create a new solution that addresses and protects athletes from the growing problem of online abuse.

Andreas Krannich, Managing Director Integrity Services at Sportradar stated: "Maintaining the integrity of sport and ensuring that it's safe, fair and enjoyable for all, has long been our priority.

"Now, with this new service, we've strengthened our position in this space by safeguarding the athletes who compete in it and protecting them from online harm and social media abuse.

"We are providing a tangible output that our partners can share with their athletes and we're providing support to those partners in pursuing an appropriate course of action. The service we now have in place can act as a deterrent to future online abuse and create real change, particularly when people see the impact it has."

Sportradar's new integrity service will be made available for all sports federations, leagues and governing bodies with the solution designed to protect the mental health health of its athletes. The investigation, proactive intervention and disruption service is also expected to discourage future trolling and abuse.

As a result of the new solution, 'troll' or burner accounts used for abuse will be identified while organisations will also be provided with information from Sportradar's team as to how the individuals conduct online abuse in an attempt to mitigate it. Appropriate action will then be taken, which could include removing abusive accounts from social media platforms and working with law enforcement to bring legal proceedings.

Krannich added: "We believe this safeguarding solution can have a similar positive impact on sport as our Fraud Detection System has had on match fixing, where we've reported more than 5000 suspicious matches across global sport in 11 years."

The product has already been trialled earlier in the summer at the Exo-Tennis Series, which featured players from the ATP and WTA Tours including Germany's Dustin Brown and the US pair of Taylor Townsend and Sachia Vickery who shared abusive social media messages.

Following an investigation, Sportradar's new service provided the event organisers with details of the problem accounts along with a set of recommendations to prevent future trolling and abuse.

Prior to the launch of its new solution, Sportradar's Intelligence & Investigation Services team has already assisted more than 80 partners in identifying and investigating integrity threats to countries. These include federations, clubs, national anti-doping organisations and law enforcement.

Source: 17 August 2020, Insider Sport

All Sports

<https://www.insidersport.com/2020/08/17/sportradar-launches-social-media-sports-integrity-solution/>

MATCH FIXING

Andorra

Escàndol en el futbol andorrà: la UEFA investiga apostes i partits arreglats

Els mals presagis s'estan cenyint sobre el futbol andorrà després que s'hagin denunciat proves d'arreglaments de partits entre l'Inter Escaldes i la UE Sant Julià, dos dels equips punters d'Andorra. Les proves apunten que els dos equips haurien acordat repartir-se la Copa i la Lliga, cosa que finalment no va passar perquè l'Inter va aconseguir un doblet històric.

El Sant Julià hauria jugat amb menys intensitat en l'últim partit dels play-off per tal que l'Inter guanyés la Lliga, amb un resultat final d'un 3-0 favorable als escaldencs, afirma el Diari d'Andorra, que va destapar l'escàndol. A canvi, en les semifinals de la Copa on s'enfrontaven novament els dos equips protagonistes, l'Inter s'havia de deixar guanyar perquè el Sant Julià arribés a la final, cosa que no va passar perquè va guanyar el partit per 1-2.

Hi ha dues proves definitives. Per una banda, una conversa captada per la càmera que gravava el partit de les semis de Copa. Al capità de l'Inter, Ildefons Lima, li recriminen que el seu equip està jugant amb més intensitat de la pactada, fet que ell nega perquè l'alineació que presentava l'Inter estava plena de suplents. El cop de gràcia va venir quan el porter escaldenc va aturar un penal i el joc de recriminacions va començar. Aquesta és la part bona dels efectes del coronavirus en l'esport, qu si tens un camp buit i hi ha jugadors a la graderia parlant de com han arreglat el partit, se'ls escolta tot.

En l'acta arbitral que adjunta el Diari d'Andorra, al finalitzar el partit, els jugadors es van escridassar i els membres del Sant Julià els recriminaven que "en l'últim partit anàvem al 30% perquè guanyéssiu la Lliga".

Moviments sospitosos en les apostes en línia

La segona prova que demostra l'arreglament dels partits són els moviments estranys en les apostes en línia. El programa Integrity de la Federació Andorra de Futbol (FAF) va detectar anomalies durant el partit de la semifinal de Copa. La UEFA, en conseqüència, ha sol·licitat a la Federació que obri una investigació per tal d'esclarir els fets.

La FAF s'ha declarat aliena a tot aquest embolic, però ha confirmat mitjançant un comunicat que el programa Integrity de la FAF i de la UEFA estudiaran el cas conjuntament.

El motiu d'aquest suposat arreglament és purament econòmic, ja que el campió de Lliga s'emporta un premi de 450.000€, mentre que el de la Copa s'embutxaca 350.000€, un premi prou substancial com per temptar a les males arts en el futbol.

Source: 1 August 2020, El Nacional cat

Football

https://www.elnacional.cat/ca/esports/futbol-partits-arreglats-inter-escaldes-sant-julia-andorra_527208_102.html



Europol

Europol: global sport under 'greater risk' of match fixing

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — As the sporting world gradually emerge from months of coronavirus lockdowns, the European Union's agency for law enforcement cooperation is warning against the "greater risk" of game-fixing by criminals.

In a report published Wednesday focusing on the involvement of organized crime groups in sports corruption, Europol said criminals involved in the sector have quickly adapted to the crisis to exploit new opportunities despite the virus' disruptive impact.

"Criminal business continued and it is anticipated that the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may be particularly significant in the area of organized crime, including money laundering and corruption," Europol said.

With only a limited number of competitions offered on betting markets because of the pandemic, criminals turned their focus to lower-tier games, youth games and friendly matches.

Many events remain suspended because of the health crisis, but several top-tier cycling and tennis events have recently started again after soccer matches resumed in the big European leagues.

Europol said "it is highly possible that match-fixers will focus on the few matches being held and put them under greater risk."

In soccer — the most targeted sport by organized crime groups — Europe's top club tournament, the Champions League, resumes later this week.

Europol also recorded instances of so-called ghost matches in several European countries during the pandemic, where fixers advertised games that did not exist to make money from bets.

"In those cases the 'ghost matches' are advertised on social media, blogs or fake websites and fixers create non-existing line-ups, stats, and match outcomes," Europol said.

According to the agency, the size of the annual betting market for sports is estimated to be €1.69 trillion (\$2 trillion). The global annual criminal profits from betting-related match-fixing are estimated at €120 million (\$142 million).

Source: <https://apnews.com/45680ce8cc6be693addbe76d6af90d49>, 5 August 2020, AP News

All Sports



India

Goa Pro League and the match-fixing allegations in Indian football

With the recent match-fixing allegations in the Goa Professional League, Goal takes a look at some notable instances from the past...

The Goan top division league has been embroiled in match-fixing allegations. Six matches of the suspended 2019-20 Goa Professional League have been red-flagged by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for a possible "match manipulation".

This is the latest chapter of match-fixing allegations that have cropped up in Indian football.

The communication from AFC came through to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) integrity officer, Javed Siraj, in March which indicated a "clear and overwhelming betting evidence that the course or result of the match was unduly influenced with a view to gaining betting profits" in six matches held between October 16 and November 19, 2019.

The matches in question involve seven clubs, namely Calangute Association, Panjim Footballers, Guardian Angel Sports Club, FC Goa II, Dempo SC, Salgaocar FC and Sporting Clube de Goa.

However, the Goa Football Association (GFA) - the governing body for football in Goa - has distanced itself from the allegations on the basis of their own findings. In the Goan FA's reply to the AIFF integrity officer, GFA general secretary Jovito Lopes suggested the name of a company which is purportedly is linked to an online betting site but maintained that GFA has no confirmation that it accounted to match-fixing.

Goa has been rocked by the shadows of match-fixing from 16 years ago when an atrocious 118 goals were scored in a single day where four clubs were involved. The GFA had suspended and fined Curtorim Gymkhana, Sangolda Lightning, Wilfred Leisure and Dona Paula an amount of INR 5,000 each for allegedly prearranging the final round of the second division inter-zonal play-offs. Curtorim had beaten Sangolda 61-1 and Wilred defeated Dona Paula 55-1.

In 1983, there was a similar instance when two Calcutta Football League (CFL) matches were reportedly fixed with the scorelines reading 114-0 and 80-0. The Kolkata third division teams back then, International and Indian Boys Athletic Club (IBAC) reportedly "advised" Juga Shanti and Victoria Sporting to lose in an exorbitant manner and the results were 80-0 and 114-0 respectively. The Indian Football Association (IFA) - the governing body for football in West Bengal - had to step in and suspend the four clubs and the players involved in the scandal.

Indian Football Association

The CFL would see more such allegations later on. In 2015, after Tollygunge Agragami and Southern Samiti officials reportedly decided to fix the result of the match between themselves, with the former needing a win to stay afloat in the Premier A Division. Southern Samity allegedly picked a very young team to help Tollygunge Agragami win but when Tollygunge players went on to score four goals, the disparaged Southern Samity officials accused them of "breach of trust". The Tollygunge players seemingly even apologised to their opponents but no official action was taken.

In 2017, when Tollygunge Agragami defeated NBP Rainbow AC 2-1, the result was allegedly deemed "manipulated" as FIFA-appointed anti-corruption watchdog SportRadar supposedly had pre-hand information that the game will end in a similar scoreline and questioned the result of the game.

In September 2018, a month before IFA signed a multi-year partnership with SportRadar integrity services to monitor and safeguard the integrity of matches, a conversation over the phone between the former footballer and a Tollygunge Agragami player was made viral by Bengali news portal News 18 Bengali. The clip exposed the former star ostensibly telling the Tollygunge player - "Allow the opponent (Pathachakra) to score one after the 75-minute mark, that way the betting is done. They've been doing it for four years. Does anyone know? Did you know?"

Further back in 2005, allegations were levelled against the then Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Subrata Paul after the 1-4 humiliation at the hands of arch-rivals East Bengal in an IFA Shield group stage encounter. After the game, Bagan coach Amal Dutta said, "I worked hard to put him back on track but with the kind of fishy goals he conceded, he has blown away everything."

Paul was suspended for a brief period while the club conducted an investigation but the goalkeeper was let off soon.

And in the CFL 2014, Southern Samity technical director Raghu Nandi accused East Bengal of trying to fix their match. "East Bengal are in the championship race, so they approached us for fixing the match," Nandi had told Times of India back then.

Elsewhere, in Assam, the 114-year-old Gauhati Town Club decided to disband their senior team in 2012 and opted not to participate in any senior level football tournament including the Assam State Premier League for at least three years after the

side's players were alleged to have been embroiled in match-fixing in the 2012 I-League second division.

Meghalaya-based Ar-Hima (later Rangdajied United) also lodged a complaint with the AIFF against Bhaichung Bhutia-owned United Sikkim for allegedly bribing their players to lose a match - a charge that the former India skipper denied. Questions were also raised over the Snow Lions' loss to Aizawl FC in the final match of the preliminary round of the I-League Second Division that helped both the teams progress to the final round.

Manipur's TRAU was in the news for the wrong reasons in the 2018-19 I-League second division when Mohammedan Sporting had complained to AIFF that the match between Chhing Veng FC and TRAU on March 23, 2019, was "a total fixed match".

In the 2017-18 I-League second division, FC Kerala felt it necessary to release a statement that read, "The FC Kerala management has been informed of a media report alleging two of our 2nd Division I-League matches were rigged. Not only is the report factually incorrect, but also malicious in its commentary."

This was after Fateh Hyderabad wrote to the AIFF, complaining about the result of two matches between FC Kerala and Kerala Blasters reserves.

In the 2016-17 I-League, former owner of Minerva Punjab (now Punjab FC), Ranjit Bajaj, divulged that a total of seven of his players along with then-coach Khogen Singh were approached by bookies. They also wrote to the AIFF claiming that Chennai City officials were promised monetary benefits if they underperformed in certain matches.

An AIFF statement back then read - "We have received a letter from Minerva Punjab Football Club highlighting approach to their players and officials from other participating teams in the Hero I-League. The case is presently being handled by AIFF Integrity officer who is doing a thorough investigation into the matter and necessary action will be taken as per the regulations."

Mumbai FC (defunct in 2017) club official Atul Bagdamia told a joint workshop organised by FIFA and Interpol in New Delhi in January 2014 that he had been approached by a businessman who offered to sponsor a visit by his team to Malaysia to play a series of friendlies.

However, as the Indian Express newspaper quoted Bagdamia, "When they mentioned match-fixing, I immediately broke contact with them."

Dattaraj Salgaocar Zico Shrinivas Dempo FC Goa ISL

The Indian Super League (ISL) also has a tale of match-fixing allegations after Chennaiyin FC dramatically defeated FC Goa 3-2 with two stoppage-time goals in 2015 final. In the aftermath, FC Goa levelled allegations that the ISL final was fixed and boycotted the ISL championship ceremony.

ISL issued a statement that read - "It has been brought to the notice of the ISL and concerns expressed by our partner Star India that FC Goa management has made adverse comments in the media disputing the result of the ISL 2015 finals played in Goa on Sunday night. The league has also taken a serious view of the unsporting behaviour by the Goa franchise and alleged unsporting behaviour of certain players of the teams on and off the field. ISL does not accept such behaviour from any member of the club management, support staff or players. The matter has now been referred to the ISL Disciplinary Committee. ISL has a strict code of conduct with an established integrity unit and an ACSU division. The league has not received any complaint from the Goa management," the official statement from the league read.

In September 2016, The ISL also brought on board a tie-up with SportRadar, who has been associated with the AFC since 2013 with a renewed contract with the Asian federation till at least the end of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup that will be held in China.

Source: 12 August 2020, Goal

Football

<https://www.goal.com/en-in/news/goa-pro-league-match-fixing-allegations-indian-football/ac4xhftvbkj1tmtmqmdu2mf>

CORRUPTION

Switzerland

FIFA President Gianni Infantino Faces Criminal Investigation

A federal prosecutor in Switzerland said on Thursday that he had opened a criminal investigation into Gianni Infantino, the president of FIFA, after concluding that there were “indications of criminal conduct” in meetings between Infantino and an official overseeing an investigation into soccer corruption.

The investigation follows the resignation last week of Switzerland’s attorney general, Michael Lauber, who stepped down after a federal court upheld allegations that he had lied about meeting with Infantino. Lauber had been overseeing an investigation of the 2015 corruption scandal that led to criminal indictments against some of the top leaders at FIFA, soccer’s Switzerland-based world governing body. The scandal led to the ouster of most of FIFA’s senior leadership, and paved the way for Infantino’s victory in a special presidential election a year later.

The federal prosecutor, Stefan Keller, announced the new investigation after reviewing two complaints made against Infantino, Lauber and Rinaldo Arnold, a regional prosecutor and a childhood friend of Infantino’s who had helped arrange meetings between the FIFA president and the attorney general. Arnold is also under investigation, Keller’s office said. Prosecutors called for Lauber’s immunity to be lifted so he could be investigated, too.

In a statement, Keller said the allegations in two new complaints against Infantino, Lauber and Arnold center on the abuse of public office, breach of official secrecy, assisting offenders and incitement to break the law.

The announcement is the latest legal complication for Infantino and Lauber, the attorney general, since details of their meetings emerged more than a year ago. They first came to light after a leak of emails by the Football Leaks platform, and became subject to more scrutiny when both men failed to remember what had been discussed at a meeting at a hotel in 2017, the third the pair had held in 15 months.

“On the basis of general life experience, such a case of collective amnesia is an aberration,” was the conclusion in the federal court ruling that largely upheld an earlier censure of Lauber.

Infantino has pushed back against the allegations, which have been the focus of intense news media interest in his native Switzerland and in Germany. In a statement on Thursday, Infantino pledged to continue to assist the Swiss investigations into FIFA.

“People remember well where FIFA was as an institution back in 2015, and how substantial judicial intervention was actually required to help restore the credibility of the organization,” Infantino said. “As president of FIFA, it has been my aim from Day One, and it remains my aim, to assist the authorities with investigating past wrongdoings at FIFA.”

But FIFA’s statement also pointedly rejected any implication of wrongdoing. “To meet with the Attorney General of Switzerland is perfectly legitimate and it’s perfectly legal,” Infantino said last week. “It’s no violation of anything.”

When he resigned, Lauber insisted he had been truthful at all times, but he said his position had become untenable. “The fact that I am not believed as the attorney general is detrimental to the federal prosecution office,” he said.

Keller, the federal prosecutor, was appointed in July after the receipt of anonymous criminal complaints that Infantino described as “quite absurd.”

The speed of the proceedings against Infantino is in stark contrast with the plodding pace of previous Swiss soccer investigations, including the one started after a 2014 complaint by FIFA about suspected money laundering in the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding campaigns.

Since then, a number of other cases have been opened, but none have concluded with a conviction. The only criminal trial, against a group of former German soccer officials, collapsed because it had surpassed a statute of limitations.

Lauber held a news conference after the details of the first two meetings with Infantino were revealed by Football Leaks. He claimed they were justified because of the longstanding investigation into the soccer body, though he recused himself from the FIFA case anyway. A third meeting came to light only after further revelations by the news media.

That disclosure prompted an inquiry into Lauber’s conduct by a supervisory body. In March, it punished him by cutting his salary by 8 percent. Lauber then hired the same lawyer as the former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who is facing a separate criminal investigation, to mount an appeal.

That panel restored some of the salary reduction, but it also issued scathing comments about his conduct in its final ruling.

Lauber, the panel said, had “intentionally made a false statement” to the supervisory body “and knowingly concealed the third meeting with FIFA president Infantino.”

The investigation is a new blow for FIFA, which has tried to turn the corner on the corruption scandal by instituting governance reforms under Infantino.

Infantino, a former official at European soccer’s governing body, UEFA, has often claimed the days of cronyism and corruption are now behind the organization. But accusations of wrongdoing against senior officials have continued. A day after Infantino had told the FIFA Congress in Paris last year that the days of scandal were over, one of his vice presidents, the head of African soccer, was arrested and questioned by French financial prosecutors.

A separate FIFA ethics probe into the official, Ahmad Ahmad, has yet to come to a conclusion even though the case has been with its investigators for more than a year.

Source: 30 July 2020, New York Times

Football

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/sports/soccer/fifa-gianni-infantino-investigation.html>

