



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Bi-weekly Bulletin

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Greece

Greek court clears Marinakis, Sarris and 25 others of match-fixing

A court of appeal has acquitted Olympiakos and Nottingham Forest owner Vangelis Marinakis (pictured) and 27 others of match-fixing in a case stretching back several years.

Athens judges ruled that there is no evidence for the two charges attributed to the defendants following their alleged participation in a criminal group including altering the outcome of matches.

Prosecutor Charalambos Lakafosis had called for the acquittal of 23 of the accused and the conviction of five others, but Thursday's unanimous verdict overturned his request for the latter.

Besides Marinakis, also in the group were former Greek football federation president Giorgos Sarris and four other federation officials.

The shipping magnate and his co-defendants had been charged with match fixing over two games, as well as for "the attendant charge of joint criminal enterprise".

But the defendants were acquitted by the three-member Criminal Court of Appeal.

Marinakis has been president of Olympiacos since 2010 and bought Forest in 2017.

Olympiacos communications director Nikos Gavalas wrote on Facebook: "For many years, Mr. Vangelis Marinakis chose the difficult path of patience. And he got justice! Throughout this painful journey, he did not bend."

Back in November, 2017, four criminal charges were dropped against Marinakis but the charges of match-fixing went ahead.

The case took inter-club and political rivalries in Greece to unprecedented vitriolic levels and caused huge damage to the commercial operations of the Greek Super League with fans walking away from attending club matches as confidence waned in the integrity of the league.

Source: 29 January 2021, Insider World Football

Football

<http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2021/01/29/greek-court-clears-marinakis-sarris-25-others-match-fixing/>



Kenya

Match-fixing is the biggest threat to Kenyan football

It's quite unfortunate that the local football scene is increasingly being infested by match-fixing scandals.

On Saturday, police nabbed a Ugandan national, Fred Ronald Niwagira Mwine, in a Kisumu hotel, for purportedly attempting to bribe players in order to influence the outcome of a Football Kenya Federation Premier League fixture between Western Stima and KCB at Nakuru Afraha Stadium.

According to reports, Mwine had already placed Sh70,000 on the table as down payment in an enticing deal that could have seen the team manager, four defenders and a goalkeeper ultimately share out a whopping Sh600,000 among themselves if the deal had gone through.

It isn't the first time Kenyan players and officials have been left with eggs on their faces. In January 2019, the then Kakamega Homeboyz coach Paul Nkata was dismissed after he was accused of allegedly engaging in acts of manipulating match results.

The development came just days after Fifa invoked article 69 paragraph one of the Fifa Disciplinary Code to ban Homeboyz players Moses Chikati, Festo Omukoto, Festus Okiring and George Mandela who were found guilty of the vice.

On April 24, 2019, former Harambee Stars player George Owino was banned from all football-related activities for 10 years and fined Sh1.5 million by Fifa over match-fixing.

Such incidents bring into question our players' moral aptitude and self-belief in the sport. Gor Mahia midfielder John Ochieng is, however, quick to defend local players from the hangman's noose, observing that those who fall into such traps are driven by an urge for making quick money especially considering how poorly Kenyan clubs do pay their players.

Indeed, clubs have a responsibility to curb such incidents by ensuring they offer their players good salaries. Hopefully, that will help nip the vice in the bud before it penetrates deeper and spreads its roots further.

On the other hand, our footballers must learn to believe in good work ethics because this is the only path to scaling greater heights. There is no shortcut to success. Kenyan soccer star Michael Olunga is a perfect example that persistence, hard work and discipline can yield fruits in the long run.

Source: 27 January 2021, Star

Football

<https://www.the-star.co.ke/sports/football/2021-01-27-match-fixing-is-the-biggest-threat-to-kenyan-football/>



SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

Chile

Chilean tennis player fails in appeal against lifetime match-fixing ban

Former Chilean professional tennis player Mauricio Alvarez-Guzman has had his appeal against a lifetime ban for match-fixing and corruption dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), formerly known as the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU), issued the ban in March 2019 after ruling Alvarez-Guzman's actions breached the sport's Tennis Anti-Corruption Program (TACP).

The player was found to have attempted to manipulate the outcome of an ATP Challenger match in Meerbusch, Germany, in August 2016 by offering a player €1,000 (£885.69/\$1,214) to lose a set.

Alvarez-Guzman was also found guilty of contriving the singles draw of the 2016 ITF F27 Futures tournament by purchasing a wild card for entry into the singles competition.

At the time, the TIU said Alvarez-Guzman also intended to purchase a wild card for the doubles competition of the same event, and while this did not come to fruition, it still stood as a corruption offence.

Passing ruling on the case, independent anti-corruption hearing officer Charles Hollander found Alvarez-Guzman in breach of three sections of the TACP.

These were Section D.1.d, which states that "no covered person shall, either directly or indirectly, contrive or attempt to contrive the outcome or any other aspect of an event".

Section D.1.e relates to someone soliciting or facilitating a player to not use his or her best efforts in an event, while Section D.1.g covers the offering of any money, benefit or consideration to negatively influence a player's best efforts.

As a result, Alvarez-Guzman was issued with a lifetime ban, which, effective from 14 March 2019, meant he was permanently excluded from competing in or attending any event organised or sanctioned by the sport's governing bodies.

Alvarez-Guzman, who reached a career-high ATP singles ranking of 1,050 and had a doubles ranking-high of 672, appealed to the CAS to overturn the decision.

However, the CAS dismissed the appeal, saying the original sanction of a lifetime ban remains unchanged and in place.

The ruling comes after the ITIA earlier this month banned players from Egypt, Slovakia and Uzbekistan for offences related to sports betting and match-fixing.

Egypt's Mostafa Hatem was banned for three years, with one year suspended, Temur Ismailov from Uzbekistan was handed a seven-year ban, with two years suspended, and Slovakia's Dagmara Baskova a 12-year ban.

Source: 21 January 2021, iGB

Tennis

<https://igamingbusiness.com/chilean-tennis-player-fails-in-appeal-against-lifetime-match-fixing-ban/>



Esports Integrity Commission (ESIC)

ESIC Issues Bans to 35 Australians Involved in Esports Match-Fixing

The Esports Integrity Commission (ESIC) continues to work actively to clear esports from match-fixing and cheating. A new group of Australian players has been targeted in the latest move with 35 individuals cited in a new round of penalties issued by ESIC.

The fines, which mostly pertain to suspension from competitive play, range from 12 to 60 months and have been handed down based on a specific algorithm the organization uses to assess the severity of each issue. The bans have been handed across a number of high-tier competitions, including BLAST, DreamHack, ESL, WePlay, 247 Leagues, and other entities.

ESIC has reached out to those high-tier parties that are still not a part of the organization's commitment to eradicating match-fixing and cheating and asked for those non-member parties to apply the penalties, as a failure to do so undermines the overall effort to keep esports clean.

ESIC Issues Bans to 35 Australians Involved in Esports Match-Fixing

Stoyan Todorov By Stoyan Todorov

Published January 22, 2021

Est. 3 minutes

ESIC Issues Bans to 35 Australians Involved in Esports Match-Fixing

In Summary:

ESIC continues to step up its efforts in regulating the esports industry with match-fixers suspended from professional gaming and referred to authorities

Australia is one of the countries that tends to punish match-fixers, including those who fixed esports contests, the harshest Offenses are most common in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, one of the premier esports competitions

Esports match-fixing continues as ESIC has just issued 35 new bans to offending players from Australia who have been referred to authorities.

ESIC Continues to Investigate Match-Fixers

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Australia, a place that takes a dim view of esports cheating, may also seek to open a criminal case against cheaters. The police authorities in the country have already been notified, and there is a precedent of esports players facing prison time already as reported before.

ESIC Monitors Global Esports and Tracks More Offenses

ESIC published the full report of culprits on Twitter, and the offenses varied from betting on their own matches as well as betting against their own team, which is a gross abuse of their position. Speaking on the occasion, ESIC had this to outline in its latest message:

"Cooperation between ESIC and all-tournament organizers in relation to anti-corruption matters are essential in the pursuit of safeguarding esports. We appreciate the proactive efforts of the ESEA in working with us diligently to investigate any indication of malpractice by participants within their events."

ESIC has cautioned that ancillary staff has also been complacent with abuses and match-fixes. Non-players who were participating in match-fixing acting on inside information have been reported to relevant authorities. ESIC recently opened a probe into the Mountain Dew League (MDL) and found seven offenses.

ESIC continues to investigate offenses in both Europe and North America with the majority of the cases gravitating around Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, one of the best established competitive video gaming titles out there.

Instances of cheating are reported all over the competitive world of video games, with most recently, the former roster of Newbee, a professional Dota 2 team, receiving lifetime bans for fixing games. One of the reasons why esports match-fixing flies is lack of sufficient interest from community members, but also the lack of enough support from league organizers.

Source: 22 January 2021, Gambling news

eSports

<https://www.gamblingnews.com/news/esic-issues-bans-to-35-australians-involved-in-esports-match-fixing/>

Russia

Two Russian Tennis Players Given Lifetime Bans

Two Russian Tennis Players Given Lifetime Bans

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) has today confirmed that two Russian tennis players, Sofia Dmitrieva and Alija Merdeeva have been banned for life from the sport, following investigations into multiple incidents of match fixing. Two of the matches concerned involved both the players as doubles partners.

The cases were ruled on by Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer Charles Hollander QC and the sanctions mean both players are permanently prohibited from playing in or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by the governing bodies of tennis.

Ms Merdeeva, who had a highest singles ranking of 928 and a highest doubles ranking of 644, was involved in two incidents of match fixing. Ms Dmitrieva, who had a highest WTA singles ranking of 1191 and a highest doubles ranking of 939, was involved in a total of six incidents of match fixing. In addition, she was charged with a failure to co-operate with the investigation.

The breach of the Tennis Anti-Corruption Programme that both players have been found guilty of are:

Section D.1.d of the 2018 TACP:

“No Covered Person shall, directly or indirectly, contrive or attempt to contrive the outcome or any other aspect of any Event.”

In addition, Ms Dmitrieva was charged with section F.2.b/D.2.c of the 2019 TACP:

“All Covered Persons must cooperate fully with investigations conducted by the TIU including giving evidence at hearings, if requested. After a Covered Person receives a TIU request for an initial interview or otherwise becomes aware of any TIU investigation involving the Covered Person, the Covered Person shall (i) preserve and not tamper with, damage, disable, destroy or otherwise alter any evidence (including any personal devices described in Section F.2.c.i.) or other information related to any Corruption Offense and (ii) not solicit, facilitate or advise any other person to fail to preserve, tamper with, damage, disable, destroy or otherwise alter any evidence or other information related to any Corruption Offense.”

The International Tennis Integrity Agency is an independent body established by the International Governing Bodies of Tennis to promote, encourage, enhance and safeguard the integrity of professional tennis worldwide.

End

Source: 27 January 2021, ITIA

Tennis

<https://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84431288/p1-b21027-a776b85e6e3341f3bd9eb1ae07503235/2/43/6e2e766d-904d-4f7b-8068-db905424eb35>

Sri Lanka

Tribunal finds Lokuhettige guilty under ICC Anti-Corruption Code

Former Sri Lanka player Dilhara Lokuhettige has been found guilty of three offences under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code following a hearing by an independent Anti-Corruption Tribunal.

Lokuhettige, who was charged under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code in November 2019, has been found guilty on all charges after he exercised his right to a hearing before a Tribunal. Lokuhettige remains suspended and sanctions will follow in due course.

The three-member Tribunal concluded, by a majority, that the ICC had jurisdiction to bring the charges against Lokuhettige and was unanimous in deciding the merits of the case.

Lokuhettige has been found guilty of:

Article 2.1.1 – for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match.

Article 2.1.4 – Directly or indirectly soliciting, inducing, enticing, instructing, persuading, encouraging or intentionally facilitating any Participant to breach Code Article 2.1.

Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code.

Lokuhettige has also been charged by the ICC on behalf of the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) with breaching three counts of the ECB Anti-Corruption Code for Participants for the T10 League and these proceedings are ongoing.

The decision (which has been redacted to protect the identities of the ICC's witnesses and other third parties) is available here.

Source: 28 January 2021, ICC

Cricket

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/2000484>

United Arab Emirates

Tribunal finds Naveed and Shaiman guilty under ICC Anti-Corruption Code

United Arab Emirates (UAE) players Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt have been found guilty of two offences each under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code following a hearing by an independent Anti-Corruption Tribunal.

Naveed and Shaiman, who were charged under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code for attempting to corrupt matches of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE, have been found guilty on all charges after they exercised their right to a hearing before a Tribunal. The pair remain suspended and sanctions will follow in due course.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Naveed and Shaiman have been found guilty of:

Article 2.1.1 – for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match or matches at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019.

Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019.

Naveed has also been found guilty of breaching the following two counts of the Emirates Cricket Board Anti-Corruption Code for Participants of the T10 League 2019:

Article 2.1.1 – for being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match or matches at the T10 League 2019.

Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the ACU full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in corrupt conduct under the Code at the T10 League 2019.

Source: 26 January 2021, ICC

Cricket

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/1986416>

Uzbekistan**FIFA referee Sherzod Kasymov suspended from all football-related activities for 3 years**

The Uzbekistan Football Association (UFA) has suspended the FIFA and AFC referee Sherzod Kasymov from any football-related activity for three years for involvement in match-fixing, the UFA said in a statement.

The decision was reportedly made at a meeting of the UFA ethics committee. Sherzod Kasymov was charged under Article 5.44 of the UFA Disciplinary Code.

A special inspection authority of the UFA is continuing to investigate cases of corruption during the matches of the Super League and Pro League of Uzbekistan, the statement concluded.

Source: 20 January 2021, The Tashkent Times

Football

<https://tashkenttimes.uz/sports/6270-fifa-referee-sherzod-kasymov-suspended-from-all-football-related-activities-for-3-years>



LEGISLATION

Brazil

Sports Betting in Brazil to Launch Next Year Ahead of 2022 World Cup

Waldir Eustáquio Marques Jr., an undersecretary with the Ministry of Economy, said the rules that will govern the country's forthcoming sports betting industry will be finalized by the end of July 2021. License applications will then be reviewed and issued as appropriate, and the first legal sports bet will be placed sometime in early 2022.

"Sports betting has some peculiarities, different from traditional lotteries, and includes much stronger technology requirements," Marques said.

[Sports betting] must be studied quite a bit, such as the integrity of the sport, the prevention of money laundering, the prevention of pathologies among vulnerable players," Marques explained of the lengthy process. "The administration technicians have studied this a lot, participated in various events, and have been trained to regulate this activity."

2022 is a very important year for Brazilians, as the men's World Cup will be held. The quadrennial international competition will coincide with the kickoff of legal sports betting in Brazil.

Operators Circling

Amid a corruption scandal in 2018, then-President Michel Temer signed a bill into law that legalized sports betting. PM 846 authorized Brazil's Congress to determine regulations that will oversee sports betting.

Caixa, Brazil's federal savings bank, also operates the country's lottery. The lottery is presently the only legal form of commercial gambling in the South American country. Once the sports betting details are ironed out, the lottery will be tasked with issuing licenses and governing the industry.

There is plenty of interest among the world's leading sports betting firms.

William Hill last month took on a majority stake in Colombian gaming firm Alfabet. And FanDuel, a subsidiary of Flutter Entertainment, recently aligned with CAGE Sports, a sports betting operator that does business throughout the Caribbean.

Global gaming industry analysts believe Latin America is a gold mine for sports betting development. And with Brazil being the largest economy and population, numerous operators are closely monitoring the legal progression of sports betting in Brasilia.

During the sports betting consultation period in 2019, some 600 respondents expressed interest in seeking a sportsbook permit in Brazil if welcomed.

Attractive Market



Home to roughly 213 million people, Brazil is set to become the largest sports betting market in the world. While the United States has more people — 331 million — sportsbook operators can only operate in the states where they're licensed.

Nineteen states plus DC have sports betting up and running. The combined populations of those states and the nation's capital is 108.7 million. The licensing costs to operate in all of those jurisdictions would cost tens of millions of dollars. The sports betting license in Pennsylvania alone is \$10 million.

In Brazil, initial regulatory guidelines called for each operator to pay an upfront R\$3 million licensing fee (USD\$566,500). The license would be good for nine years.

In addition, operators would need to pay monthly fees. For land-based betting operations, the fee would be R\$20,000 a month (USD\$3,800). Mobile operators would pay USD\$5,664, and for brick-and-mortar and internet betting, USD\$8,500.

Tax rates proposals on sports betting revenue have ranged from one to three percent.

Source: 18 January 2021, Casino.org

All Sports

<https://www.casino.org/news/sports-betting-in-brazil-to-launch-next-year-ahead-of-2022-world-cup/>

BETTING

GLMS

GLMS MONITORING AND INTELLIGENCE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

GLMS is pleased to share the 2020 Annual Monitoring & Intelligence Report, in which you will find key facts and figures from GLMS' monitoring and intelligence work over the first six months of 2020 in the service of its members.

The report also includes our main highlights from last year, namely educational activities including a global webinar with World Lottery Association and European Lotteries, as well as with projects including Integrisport and Integriball, and policy work including with the Council of Europe and the EU. Find out about GLMS' growth with its Executive Committee and Team as well as digital events. We also have interviews with our latest members, Cyprus Sports Organization and Tennessee Education Lottery Corporation, as well as a showcase of our supplier associate members - Scientific Games Digital, IGtT, Sporting Solutions and Intralot. Our supplier members answered the question of the year: How have you handled this unusual year and how have you endeavoured to support the work of the lotteries in such an unpredictable period?

Finally find a special interview casting the spotlight on our analysts in the 3 GLMS Monitoring hubs in Hong Kong, Denmark and Canada, sharing their experiences and work during the lockdown and how they managed!

Source: 20 January 2021, GLMS

https://glms-sport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/21_GLMS_Annual_Report_2020.pdf



United Kingdom

UK gambling firms accused of exaggerating scale of black market betting

Gambling firms have been accused of concocting a “dodgy dossier” to exaggerate the scale of black market betting, in an attempt to influence an upcoming government review expected to result in tougher regulation.

Gambling industry figures recently seized on a report claiming that 200,000 people in the UK spend £1.4bn on black market sites every year, warning that tougher regulation could drive more people into the arms of “unscrupulous” operators.

But in a letter to a cross-party group of MPs examining gambling-related harm, the Gambling Commission’s chief executive, Neil McArthur, delivered a withering assessment of the report.

Advertisement

The boss of the gambling regulator said the report, written by consultancy PwC, was “not consistent with the intelligence picture” and did not distinguish between real consumers using black market sites and bots or other automated systems.

He said the report should be treated cautiously, adding that it lacked any evidence to show an increase in illicit betting.

“We know that licensed operators and their trade bodies are concerned about the impact of the illegal market, but our own evidence suggests that the impact may be being exaggerated,” he said.

McArthur said black market concerns should be kept in proportion “despite ... reports from consultants paid for by the industry, and should not distract from the need to continue to drive up standards and make gambling safer in the regulated market”.

Such direct criticism from the regulator will be a blow for the industry lobby group, the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC), which has repeatedly referred to the report to back its arguments against stricter regulations.

The government is considering a range of measures that could involve limiting stakes on online virtual slot machines, or forcing web-based casinos to carry out thorough affordability checks if customers deposit a certain amount per month.

McArthur dismissed the BGC’s suggestion that such measures could fuel a surge in black market operations.

“In any event, we are not convinced by the argument that suggests that raising standards in the licensed market will prompt consumers to gamble with illegal operators,” he said.

The Labour MP Carolyn Harris, who chairs the MPs’ group that received the letter, said: “The online gambling industry talks up the threat of the black market in an attempt to resist regulation and protect its profits, but trying to hijack the debate by manufacturing dodgy dossiers of information to further their own ends is an incredibly transparent tactic and will not be any kind of excuse to hold down standards.”

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

The BGC and several of the UK’s major betting companies, which commissioned the report, refused a request to provide a copy.

But the Guardian has since obtained both a draft version, dated April 2019, and a final version, dated July 2019.

The two appear identical except that the final version removed a reference to the three firms that commissioned it, Ladbrokes owner GVC, William Hill and The Stars Group, which owned SkyBet and has since merged with Paddy Power owner Flutter.

Matt Zarb-Cousin, a former adviser to Jeremy Corbyn who runs the campaign group Clean Up Gambling, said: “The gambling industry has been quoting from this report as it attempts to drive a race to the bottom in regulation. Having finally seen the contents, it’s clear why it was reluctant to make this report available for public scrutiny.”

A BGC spokesperson said countries with tougher regulation than the UK had bigger black market problems.

“We have repeatedly called on the government to use the online harms bill to crack down on access to these sites, and we would support financial service providers being obliged to block black market transactions,” he said.

The industry’s use of the report has echoes of a similar tactic deployed when the government was weighing up whether to slash the maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2.

In 2018, the Guardian revealed that a government decision to delay the cut was influenced by a “discredited” report about the potential impact of the policy on jobs.

Like the black market dossier, the FOBT report was commissioned by the industry and written by a major accounting firm, in this case KPMG.

It claimed up to 21,000 jobs could be lost if FOBT stakes were capped, a prediction that has since proved to be an overstatement.

Source: 18 January 2021, *The Guardian*
All Sports

GOOD PRACTICES

Stats Perform

Stats Perform becomes first sports betting data provider to be awarded IBIA Data Standards Accreditation

Stats Perform, the SportsTech leader in data and AI technology, has become the first betting data provider to be awarded the International Betting Integrity Association's (IBIA) independently audited Data Standards Accreditation for the collection and distribution of sports event data for betting.

The award represents the highest mark of betting data quality and integrity available and is assessed by expert independent auditors, eCOGRA.

The IBIA launched the initiative to audit betting data providers after identifying that high-integrity sports data collection plays a critical role in protecting sports and betting markets against corruption.

Khalid Ali, CEO IBIA, said: "I am delighted to announce that Stats Perform is the first company to meet the data standards protocols IBIA published in October 2020. In passing the independent auditing process, Stats Perform has demonstrated secure and robust internal procedures for the collation of sporting event data for betting and may now utilise the Data Standards Kitemark."

Shaun McCallaghan, CEO of eCOGRA, said: "Stats Perform met every requirement set out in the data standards protocols. The company was well-prepared for the auditing process, and the evidence that was reviewed was representative of a company culture that is in line with the core principles of IBIA's data integrity standards and committed to continually improving upon them."

Andrew Ashenden, Chief Betting Officer at Stats Perform, commented: "This accreditation is thanks to tireless quality and integrity efforts from our sports data operations teams over the past 15 years and, whilst we're grateful for the recognition, we know our efforts don't stop here. We continuously search for new threats and assess opportunities to improve our sports data processes, people and technology. Stats Perform's RunningBall and Opta sports data is chosen by the world's leading rights holders, sportsbooks and pricing providers to power exceptional in-play betting experiences for millions of global sports bettors."

Jake Marsh, Global Head of Integrity at Stats Perform, said: "Our priority at Stats Perform is the integrity of the betting markets and of the competitions upon which they rely. Effective risk management of our data supply chain involves ongoing investment, collaboration and commitment across numerous expert teams who live and breathe the quality of our product. We are very proud to be recognised by the IBIA for our dedication to quality and integrity."

The accreditation follows recent news of Stats Perform's appointment as the exclusive official WTA tennis fast data supplier. That agreement includes the collection of an operationally independent, scout-collected data feed alongside the umpire chair data feed, cited by the sports data giant as further evidence of its commitment to driving integrity, quality, and trust in sport.

About Stats Perform

Stats Perform is the market leader in SportsTech providing the most trusted sports data and the latest advancements in applying AI and machine learning to deliver better predictions for teams, sportsbooks and a more engaging broadcast, media and fan experience. The company collects the most detailed sports data to create new experiences across sports. Leveraging the richest sports database, Stats Perform enhances sports competition and entertainment through machine learning and computer vision to create advanced predictions and analysis – be that for digital and broadcast media with differentiated storytelling, tech companies with reliable and fast data to power their innovations, sportsbooks with in-play betting services, rights holders with integrity services, or teams with first-of-its-kind AI analysis software. SportsContentCo is the exclusive reseller of Stats Perform premium sports betting content to licensed sportsbooks in the United States.

About the International Betting Integrity Association

The International Betting Integrity Association is the leading global voice on integrity for the licensed betting industry. Our members share a common goal of combating betting corruption to protect the integrity of sport and their businesses. Established in 2005 and formerly known as ESSA, we are a not for profit association whose members include many of the world's largest regulated betting operators, active across six continents. Members undergo a rigorous due diligence process and must adhere to our code of conduct committing them to responsible betting practices.

The International Betting Integrity Association's Monitoring & Alert Platform is a highly effective anti-corruption tool that detects and reports suspicious activity on its members' betting markets. The bespoke system tracks transactional activity linked to individual consumer accounts, clearly distinguishing it from commercial monitoring systems focused on simple odds movements. The association has longstanding information sharing partnerships with leading sports bodies including FIFA, UEFA, the TIU and the IOC and many gambling regulators to utilise this data and prosecute corruption. The association maintains a policy of transparency and publishes quarterly integrity reports analysing activity reported on the Platform.

Source: 20 January 2021, *Stats Perform*
www.statsperform.com.

ODDS AND ENDS

Belarus

Belarus stripped of ice hockey world championship after crackdown on protesters

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Belarus has been stripped of the right to co-host this year's ice hockey world championship due to safety concerns over political unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic there, the sport's governing body said on Monday, in a blow to President Alexander Lukashenko.

The move deprives Lukashenko, an avid hockey fan, of a stage to host the biggest international event planned in the country since he claimed victory last August in a vote the opposition said was rigged and marred with violations.

Members of the Belarusian opposition had been calling for the country to be stripped of tournament due to a crackdown on protesters in the wake of the disputed election.

Volkswagen's Skoda Auto and Liqui Moly, sponsors of the tournament, had threatened in the last few days to pull out if the event was to be held in Minsk.

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) said it had consulted with experts and stakeholders about how the tournament could be held in the Belarusian capital in light of political unrest and lax prevention measures against COVID-19.

The IIHF Council found that "it is currently impossible to ensure the welfare of teams, spectators and officials while holding a World Championship in Belarus."

Lukashenko had sought to reassure the IIHF last week that Belarus could safely host the tournament.

"COMMON VICTORY"

Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya welcomed the decision, saying it was the result of lobbying by Lukashenko's opponents.

"This is a victory for every Belarusian who knows that hockey is a game and Belarusians are not planning to play with criminals," she wrote on social media. "This is our common victory."

Swimmer Aliaksandra Herasimenia, a three-time Olympic medallist who heads the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation (BSSF), said in a statement: "The IIHF decision has restored the Belarusian community's faith in justice. Sporting events cannot be held in countries where violence and torture are used against civilians."

The IIHF said it would consider the status of Latvia as a co-host given its joint bid with Belarus, adding that it would consider the possibility of holding the tournament at a single venue to facilitate travel and the implementation of health measures.

Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said his country would honour its commitment and evaluate how it could host the entire event, which runs from May 21 to June 6.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) last month banned Lukashenko from attending the Olympic Games as head of his country's National Olympic Committee (NOC), saying the Belarusian authorities had not adequately safeguarded athletes from political discrimination.

Several prominent Belarusian athletes, including Olympic basketball player Yelena Leuchanka and decathlete Andrei Krauchanka, were jailed for taking part in protests. Others lost their state employment or were kicked off national teams for supporting the opposition.

Source: 18 January 2021, Reuters

Ice Hockey

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-belarus-election-icehockey/belarus-stripped-of-ice-hockey-world-championship-after-crackdown-on-protesters-idUSKBN29N106>

CORRUPTION

Engineers Against Poverty.

How to stop large-scale corruption in major sporting infrastructure projects

More must be done to prevent large-scale corruption in major sporting events infrastructure projects, according to an alarming report by Engineers Against Poverty.

The report, *Changing the Game: A critical analysis of large-scale corruption in mega sport event infrastructure projects*, concludes that major sporting events such as the Olympics or Fifa World Cup represent a “perfect storm for corruption”.

Poor planning and a lack of transparency coupled with collusion between politicians and contractors has marred several large sporting projects over the last 20 years, according to Engineers Against Poverty.

Recommendations to avoid corruption in future events include the formation of an independent whistleblowing unit, the introduction of transparency tools and reforms construction tendering process reforms (see full list of recommendations below).

The report points to enormous cost overruns in relation to projects at the World Cups in South Africa and Brazil as well as examples of bribery to obtain contracts at the Sochi Winter Olympics and New Delhi Commonwealth Games.

The report cites “high levels of collusion” between contractors and host nations. It states that “between 2002 and 2012, four of the construction firms responsible for most of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Rio Games infrastructure donated almost BRL500M to political parties managing the events’ funds”.

The report adds: “Corruption in the delivery of infrastructure for mega sport events (MSEs) seems to have become a common curse.

“High costs, low levels of monitoring and complex logistics create the perfect storm for corruption, repeating a history of malpractice that leaves poor, unsuitable and inflated infrastructure as a legacy.”

Engineers Against Poverty recommends a series of “tools for transparency and collaboration [...] to change the game”.

It recommends an open data system to “help citizens and civil society to identify red flags in the implementation of projects, unlocking the black box of how public money is spent”.

An open data system has in fact been implemented on the 2024 Paris Olympics project. The International Olympic Committee leads the strategy, and according to the new bid provisions it will be a necessity in all bids for Games from 2024 onwards.

The report also recommends the creation of “channels to report wrongdoing” to “foster new routes to transparency and reduce the opportunities for corruption”.

The report concludes: “Despite recent initiatives to improve monitoring and oversight of [mega sports events], evidence shows that corruption is a common issue across these events, costing taxpayers significant sums of money and compromising the quality and use of the infrastructure that is left in the host countries.”

“Our recommendations are a starting point to break the detrimental pattern of behaviour that seems to have become as cyclical as MSEs.

“Our suggested approach offers a combination of disclosure incentives and credible oversight, which could see concrete steps taken by host countries to fulfil the scope of anti-corruption provisions they now need to commit to in the new bids.”

Source: 28 January 2021, *New Civil Engineer*

All Sports

<https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/how-to-stop-large-scale-corruption-in-major-sporting-infrastructure-projects-28-01-2021/>

International Biathlon Union (IBU)

Biathlon boss linked to corruption, prostitutes and hunting parties

Former biathlon boss Anders Besseberg was accused Thursday of covering up Russian doping cases in exchange for favours in a damning independent report which cites corruption, prostitutes and hunting parties.

The external review board of the International Biathlon Union (IBU) described in detail how the Norwegian, who was president of the federation from 1992 to 2018, served the Russians for many years, with the help of former IBU secretary general Nicole Resch.

According to the report, Besseberg acted under "improper" Russian influence which may "be inferred from his consistent and implacable favouring of Russian interests, even when doing so took him well over the line of propriety into clear breach of his duties as IBU President."

It claims the Norwegian, now 74, received "between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in bribes to ensure his protection of Russian interests" and that he was invited to all-expenses paid hunting parties in Russia and was supplied with prostitutes.

The report said it had "evidence of systematic corrupt and unethical conduct at the very top of the IBU for a decade (2008 to 2018) and more, by a president who appears... to have had no regard for ethical values and no real interest in protecting the sport from cheating."

The report acknowledged that while "each of them has a case to answer", Besseberg and Resch "both deny all wrongdoing", adding that the criminal proceedings have not resulted in any formal charges, "let alone any convictions".

Neither Besseberg nor Resch gave evidence directly to the investigation.

- 'Notorious' -

The investigation, which looked into more than 70,000 documents, was launched in 2018 by Olle Dahlin who took over as head of the IBU when Besseberg resigned after the first revelations of the case and a report from the the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

The document, which has been released in redacted form, runs to over 200 pages and is based on the testimonies of whistleblowers, the WADA report and searches carried out by the Austrian and Norwegian police forces.

It is rich in detail of the alleged transgressions, not least in the salacious suggestions that the Russians supplied Besseberg with prostitutes.

"It was notorious within IBU circles that Mr Besseberg's hosts would often provide him with the services of a young, female 'interpreter' when he visited Russia," the report said.

In return, he directly concealed several cases of doping.

He also lobbied intensely to ensure the participation of Russian athletes at the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang -- even though they were banned by the IOC -- and pushed hard in September 2016 to award the 2021 world championships to Tyumen in Siberia, when Russia's role in the institutionalised doping scandal, which followed the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014, had already come to light.

Former IBU secretary general Resch was allegedly "offered" a jewelry box by Alexander Tikhonov, who was president of the Russian federation and vice-president of the IBU, "to induce her not to pursue suspected doping by Russian biathletes in 2008/2009".

- Compliance -

An indication of her compliance towards the Russians was her failure to follow the usual protocols after the revelation at the 2014 Olympics of abnormalities in the blood of biathlete Evgeny Ustyugov, who was busted for doping and stripped of all his titles between 2010 and 2014.

Resch also allegedly tried to hush up an investigation after the discovery of a syringe containing EPO.

The report is now in the hands of the Biathlon Integrity Unit, which alone has the power to take disciplinary action.

"We are shocked by the reprehensible acts which have been described," said current IBU president Dahlin in a statement.

"Thanks to the creation of the Integrity Unit and to the numerous governance reforms that we introduced over the past two years, we now have the guarantees that these wrong doings will not happen again."

WADA has also "welcomed" the report.

"We are pleased that our work has contributed to the investigation," said WADA President Witold Banka.

"The allegations presented in this report are appalling to all who care about the integrity of the sport.

"However, it is important to recognise that the IBU has taken important steps in the wake of this scandal to strengthen the integrity of its anti-doping programme."

Source: 28 January 2021, RFI

Biathlon

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/sports/20210128-biathlon-boss-linked-to-corruption-prostitutes-and-hunting-parties>

