



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

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Photos International Olympic Committee

INVESTIGATIONS

Argentina

Argentina – Match fixing scandal erupts in Argentina

In one of the biggest scandals to ever to rock Argentine football a number of players for Division C team El Porvenir have confessed to match fixing. The team currently plays in Primera C, the regionalised fourth division of the Argentine football league system and is based in the province of Buenos Aires. President of the club Enrique Merelas filed a complaint at the local police station.

According to Argentine television sports channel TYC Sports after a series of bad results and increasing suspicions over the performance of some players, there were clashes inside the El Porvenir locker room. One of the players broke down and confessed that he had collected money for bets, then pointed to others who were involved.

It is not yet confirmed if the players threw matches on purpose but eight players have been suspended. According to the President of the club Enrique Merelas a player was offered “a huge amount of money” to fix three corners and a penalty against his own team.

The team’s player Luis Parieti said: “We did not win any games, the suspicion is that they received money in the seven games, we will have to check it. We still do not want to say the names of the players until the Justice Department has acted accordingly, but they have already been kicked out of the club and the complaint will be made in the Disciplinary Court so that they receive the corresponding sanctions,” he said. “If the Disciplinary Court finds that the players received money, they will not be able to play football anymore, neither in Argentina nor anywhere in the world.”

Porvenir is currently last in the standings with just two points in seven games as a result of two draws and five losses. The scandal broke after goalkeeper Diego Córdoba told Merelas what was happening. One of the players served as the nexus with the bookmaker or bookmakers and told his teammates about what they should do in exchange for between 100 and 300 dollars.

The club issued a statement confirming the news and has asked that the harshest penalties be applied to those who took part in the betting scam.

According to The International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) there were 17 suspicious betting alerts in South America in 2021 – seven football related occurred in Brazil and one in Colombia.

Source: 1 April 2022, g3Newswire

<https://g3newswire.com/argentina-match-fixing-scandal-erupts-in-argentina/#>



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Switzerland

Platini files criminal complaint against FIFA's Infantino

PARIS (AP) — Former France great Michel Platini has filed a criminal complaint against FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

A statement on behalf of Platini, who previously served as president of UEFA and was Infantino’s boss at the time, was released Tuesday.

Platini’s lawyers said they filed the complaint in France alleging Infantino peddled influence and that Marco Villiger, FIFA’s legal director until 2018, was complicit.

Platini asked French prosecutors to seek international cooperation to question Infantino, Villiger and four other men in Switzerland, including former attorney general Michael Lauber.

The criminal complaint was said to be filed on Nov. 17, two weeks after Platini was indicted in Switzerland along with former FIFA president Sepp Blatter on fraud charges. That case relates to a 2011 payment of 2 million Swiss francs (then \$2 million) to Platini that led to both men being banned from soccer in 2015. Infantino was elected FIFA president weeks later.

The trial of Blatter and Platini at federal criminal court in Switzerland is expected this year.

Source: 5 April 2022, Denver Gazette

Football

https://denvergazette.com/ap/sports/platini-files-criminal-complaint-against-fifas-infantino/article_1d990adc-e019-5fd4-821b-8f56ed0bc614.html

United States

Federal Authorities Announce Charges Related to Multi-Million Dollar Sport Gambling Business Involving Current and Former Pro Athletes

Federal authorities today announced a series of cases stemming from an illegal gambling operation that involved current and former professional athletes, some of whom assisted with the business and others who placed large bets on games.

In documents unsealed Wednesday in United States District Court, the principals of the operation agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy charges and admitted they took in millions of dollars in bets, many of which were facilitated by a Costa Rica-based gambling website. One of the leaders of the scheme also admitted that he failed to report to the IRS nearly \$1.5 million in income he received from the gambling scheme over two years.

The owner of the online gambling business and website pleaded guilty earlier this month and admitted the business was illegal under California law because it involved at least five people, operated for at least six years, and often had gross revenue of well over \$2,000 on a single day.

Four new cases and related plea agreements were unsealed this week against:

Wayne Nix, 45, of Newport Coast, a former minor league baseball player, who was charged with one count of conspiring to operate an illegal sports gambling business, and one count of filing a false tax return;

Edon Kagasoff, 44, of Lake Forest, Nix's longtime partner in the operation, who was charged with one count of conspiring to operate an illegal sports gambling business;

Howard Miller, 63, of Gardena, who was charged with one count of aiding and abetting the operation of an illegal sports gambling business by assisting in the collection and payout of gambling proceeds related to the Costa Rica-based website; and

Celebrity Financial LLC, dba Sherman Oaks Check Cashing, which was charged with failing to maintain an effective money laundering program related to it cashing at least \$18 million in checks from the illegal sport gambling business at its San Fernando Valley check cashing store.

Representatives of Celebrity Financial appeared in court on March 28. Nix made his first court appearance Wednesday afternoon, and he is scheduled to formally enter his guilty plea on April 11. Miller has agreed to appear in court this afternoon, and Kagasoff has agreed to appear in court on Friday.

The Justice Department also announced that earlier this month the court unsealed cases against two other defendants:

Kenneth Arsenian, 52, of Newport Beach, who pleaded guilty on January 26 to four charges: operating an illegal sports gambling business, filing a false tax return, money laundering, and accepting a financial instrument for unlawful internet gambling; and

Joseph Castelao, 56, of Rancho Palos Verdes, the owner of the gambling website – Sand Island Sports – who pleaded guilty on March 15 to operating an illegal gambling business.

According to the court documents made public this week, Nix began operating a bookmaking business about 20 years ago. Through his contacts in the sports world, Nix developed a client list that included current and former professional athletes, and he employed three former Major League Baseball players to assist with the business.

Kagasoff joined Nix in the gambling operation around 2014, and they used an online infrastructure and calling center operated by Sand Island Sports to create accounts for bettors, according to court documents, which note that Nix and his associates paid winning bets and retained nearly all of the money collected from bettors.

Nix's plea agreement outlines specific incidents related to the betting scheme, including receiving payments for gambling losses from a professional football player, a Major League Baseball coach and a baseball analyst. The plea agreement also discusses a bettor who wagered \$1 million a year with Nix's operation, a \$5 million bet on the 2019 Super Bowl, and a sports broadcaster who told Nix he was going to refinance his home to pay off gambling debts.

In relation to the tax count against him, Nix admitted receiving \$1,466,947 in income that he failed to report on his 2017 and 2018 federal income tax returns. In his plea agreement, Nix agreed to pay all back taxes due for those years – a total of \$1,248,429, which includes the back taxes, penalties and interest. Nix also agreed to forfeit to the government nearly \$1.3 million seized in February 2020 from two bank accounts and two brokerage accounts he controlled.

When Arsenian pleaded guilty in January, he admitted failing to report to the IRS more than \$2.8 million in income for the years 2015 through 2018. Arsenian has agreed to pay \$1.1 million in back taxes, plus additional penalties and interest. Arsenian also agreed to forfeit \$341,459 in United States currency seized from his residence in February 2020.

In its plea agreement, Sherman Oaks Check Cashing admitted that it encouraged customers to bring large business checks

– far in excess of the \$10,000 that normally triggers a Currency Transaction Report (CTR) to federal authorities – and employees of the company told customers that it would not file CTRs. As a result, many of its customers brought checks that were proceeds of unlawful activity, including two customers of the gambling operation who cashed at least \$18.35 million in checks. Sherman Oaks Check Cashing admitted that it made at least \$500,000 in profits by engaging in this activity. In its plea agreement, the company agreed to pay a \$500,000 fine, which is the maximum penalty under the law.

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and IRS Criminal Investigation are conducting the ongoing investigation in this matter. The HSI agents are part of the El Camino Real Financial Crimes Task Force.

Assistant United States Attorneys Jeff Mitchell of the Major Frauds Section and Dan Boyle of the Asset Forfeiture Section are prosecuting these cases.

Source: 31 March 2022, Justice.gov

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/federal-authorities-announce-charges-related-multi-million-dollar-sport-gambling>

the Netherlands

Eredivisie footballers alleged to have owned shares in illegal betting site

Several Eredivisie players are alleged to have had accounts with an illegal betting site which has been linked to organised crime. Sparta Rotterdam players Tom Beugelsdijk and Aaron Meijers are alleged to have held a 1% and 2% stake respectively in Edobet, which was wound up last year, AD reported. Beugelsdijk, 31, told the newspaper he had arranged for the money he invested in the company to be paid into the footballers' pension scheme to support him after his professional career was over. - Advertentie- 'People are quick to judge, but it was for after my career, as it says in the documents,' he said. Both players were included in the squad for Sparta's match at the weekend against Heerenveen. Team coach Henk Fraser said: 'These matters are decided by the justice department. I have to think about the interests of Sparta and I couldn't care less what other people think.' The football association KNVB declined to comment in detail on the allegations, but said it could investigate 'in theory' if professional regulations had been breached. FIFA rules forbid players from being involved in 'betting, gambling, lotteries or similar events or transactions related to football matches or competitions' either directly or indirectly. NOS reported on Sunday that it knew of other players who had signed deals with Edobet, including former Dutch international Jordy Clasie, who was said to have paid €30,000 into an Edobet account. ADO Den Haag forward Ricardo Kishna was reportedly offered a contract for €50,000, but decided not to accept it. He said he had placed bets with Edobet on several occasions: 'If I won, I was paid out in cash'. Other current and former professionals including Wesley Sneijder and Dirk Kuijt allegedly placed bets with the site. Prosecutors say Edobet was set up by Freddy S., whose father, Piet S., was implicated in an international drug smuggling ring. Kuijt and Sneijder were interviewed by police investigating Piet S.'s connections with a narcotics operation spanning 10 countries, though the 65-year-old from The Hague was not ultimately convicted of drug smuggling or any involvement in underworld killings.

Read more at DutchNews.nl:

Source: 4 April 2022, Dutch News.nl

Football

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2022/04/eredivisie-footballers-alleged-to-have-owned-shares-in-illegal-betting-site/>



INTERPOL
INTEGRITY IN SPORT

SENTENCES/SANCTIONS

League of Legends

LGD mid laner Jay permanently banned from Riot Games tournaments for match fixing in LPL games

LGD's mid laner Chen 'Jay' Bo has been found guilty by the LPL for match fixing, after a series of messages with an outsider were leaked which implicated him in plans to purposefully lose selected matches in the LPL spring split.

The LPL has a long and troubled history with match fixing. In 2021, 38 players and coaches from the LPL and its developmental league (LDL) were banned after an investigation of match-fixing allegations that took place across 2020 and 2021.

One year on from that scandal, and another instance of match fixing has come to light, with LGD mid laner Jay reportedly agreeing to lose selected matches in the LPL 2022 spring split.

The allegations come after LGD failed to reach the LPL playoffs, ending the split with a 3-13 record in joint last place with ThunderTalk Gaming. Those allegations have now been confirmed by both LGD and the LPL's investigative board. As of April 8, Jay has been banned for life from competing in any Riot Games or Tencent-affiliated tournaments.

The nature of the allegations

The allegations first came from a Weibo account with the username 6199419983. It appears as though the account was created on April 4 for the sole purpose of posting the incriminating screenshots of messages and voice conversations allegedly between Jay and an unnamed other.

According to the posts, the match fixing allegations pertain particularly to LGD's match versus BLG on March 20, and an unspecified game versus Top Esports.

The conversation in the screenshots outlines specific conditions that the third party asked Jay to fulfil within the game, presumably for the purpose of betting.

According to translation provided to Dexerto by @sgbros1_OW on Twitter, the screenshotted conversations mainly involve discussion of specific champion picks, and a plan to throw a fight at rift herald in a game versus Top Esports.

Weibo @User6199419983

Translation via Twitter user @sgbros1_OW

The messages also claim to show discussions of payment for the alleged match fixing, with the unnamed third party telling Jay he would receive payment after the second game of the BLG series. The messages also potentially implicate another, unnamed member of LGD, with Jay stating his "teammate" would help him in fixing a match.

One message from the unnamed party asks Jay "How much do you want for the 20th?", potentially referencing fees for throwing the match versus BLG, but the fee itself is not discussed. Riot and LGD's response

After the initial allegations came out on April 5, Riot and LGD were quick to respond. On April 8, both Riot and LGD published their official responses to the issue, after an "in-depth investigation into the situation."

He was found to be in violation of multiple sections of the official LPL rulebook, including Articles 11.1 (involvement in match fixing), 11.3 (involvement in gambling), and 11.2.5 (lack of co-operation with the investigation).

Riot have banned him from competing in any Riot or Tencent-affiliated tournaments for the rest of his life. He has also, in collaboration with all major live broadcasting platforms, be banned from broadcasting any League-related content on a public platform.

LGD have imposed their own sanctions, firing Jay almost immediately after the allegations were confirmed. They also state that they "reserve the right to pursue legal responsibility" after Jay's firing.

Source: 6 April 2022, Dexerto

eSports

<https://www.dexerto.com/league-of-legends/lgd-mid-laner-jay-under-investigation-for-match-fixing-in-lpl-games-1799065/>

Nicaragua

Nicaragua sanciona a cuatro jugadores y a un técnico por amaño de partidos

Cuatro jugadores de fútbol de un mismo club de la Liga de Ascenso o de Segunda División de Nicaragua y un director técnico de otro equipo fueron sancionados por amaño de partidos, informó este martes la Federación Nicaragüense de Fútbol (Fenifut).

En una declaración, la Fenifut explicó que el veredicto se dio "tras el cumplimiento efectivo de un proceso de investigación" de su Departamento de Integridad, que confirmó "casos de manipulación de partidos en el campeonato Liga de Ascenso", sin precisar cantidad de juegos.

"Dicha confirmación se ha establecido a partir de pruebas contundentes y entrevistas directas con los involucrados, en las cuales se demuestra su participación en amaño de partidos, que obviamente atenta contra la deportividad y justa competencia", continuó la Fenifut.

La Federación no especificó si el arreglo de los partidos alteró el campeonato local de la Liga de Ascenso o de Segunda División.

Las autoridades del fútbol nicaragüense prohibieron a los cuatro jugadores del equipo El Sauce FC y al director técnico del Deportivo Masaya participar en cualquier actividad relacionada al fútbol federado y organizado de forma directa o indirecta por la Fenifut, durante el tiempo que la Comisión Disciplinaria "ha establecido de sanción en cada caso puntual de acuerdo a su implicación".

Los afectados son los jugadores Henningston Santiago Real Salgado y José Donovan Martínez, sancionados hasta el 4 de noviembre de 2023, y Saddys Alexander Sandoval Fletes y Yunior Alexander Lazuna, castigados hasta el 4 de noviembre de 2027.

En tanto, el director técnico del Deportivo Masaya, Milton Ángel Bustos García, fue castigado hasta el 1 de noviembre de 2024.

Asimismo, la Fenifut informó que su Departamento de Integridad está investigando "de forma responsable" presuntos casos de amaño de partidos en la Liga Primera o Primera División.

Mostrar más

¿En qué medida es neutral Suiza?

Ser neutral no es nada fácil. La política suiza se esfuerza por interpretar su neutralidad frente a una política mundial cada vez más unilateral.

"El caso, desde el momento que se recibieron las pruebas, ha sido investigado de forma responsable por el Departamento de Integridad de Fenifut y una vez se determine de forma correcta la cantidad de personas involucradas y la sanción que amerita cada caso, se informará", agregó.

Hace un año, la Federación aseguró que había descubierto una red de "amaños de partidos de fútbol" y sancionó entonces a 19 jugadores más otras ocho personas de toda actividad en este deporte.

En esa lista de futbolistas suspendidos de por vida destacó el caso del central Jason Casco, del Juventus FC, de Primera División, que llegó a ser fundamental en la selección de Nicaragua en la segunda mitad de la década pasada bajo las órdenes del técnico costarricense Henry Duarte.

La selección nicaragüense ocupa la posición 144 de la clasificación de la FIFA, y la plaza número 16 en la Confederación de Norteamérica, Centroamérica y el Caribe de Fútbol (Concacaf).

Source: 29 March 2022, Swiss Info

https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/f%C3%BAAtbol-nicaragua_nicaragua-sanciona-a-cuatro-jugadores-y-a-un-t%C3%A9cnico-por-ama%C3%B1o-de-partidos/47474892

LEGISLATION

Canada

Canada's Complex Sports Betting History & New Launch, Explained

Canada's legal online sports betting market launches April 4 in Ontario and there are a few regulatory features that make it different from the United States's gaming landscape.

Like the U.S.'s state-by-state approach, Canada is legalizing sports betting one province at a time starting with Ontario, though unlike the states there's no cap on the number of operators per province. Regulators have approved over 25 sportsbooks already to launch Monday, with the potential for dozens more to come.

Some of the big players launching on Monday include:

- BetMGM
- BetRivers
- Bet365
- Caesars
- DraftKings
- FanDuel
- theScore Bet
- Unibet

The legal age to bet in Ontario is 19.

The Grey Market

Sports betting's been legal in Canada since 1985 but a ban on single-game wagers had limited it to parlay betting through provincial lotteries.

Before Canada passed the Safe and Regulated Sports Gaming Act in June 2021, allowing provinces to regulate single-game online sports betting, online betting wasn't expressly illegal.

"Grey market operators" — meaning they're legal sportsbooks but have been operating in a legal grey area in Canada for years — will be allowed to cross over and become regulated operators.

This gives books such as Bet365 and Betway, with already established customer bases in Canada, a leg up U.S. books like DraftKings and FanDuel.

Offshore sportsbooks that operated in Canada prior to legalization won't be penalized or barred from entering the legal market, like there are in the U.S.

Low Barrier to Entry for Sportsbooks

The Safe and Regulated Sports Gaming Act also legalized iGaming. Most providers will also launch online casino apps Monday, which Americans only have access to in Nevada, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Over 12 million adults live in Ontario, putting it on pace to generate CAD\$1 billion in online gambling revenue, according to Vixio Regulatory Intelligence. That's on par with top legal markets in the U.S like New Jersey and Pennsylvania . With many more providers potentially on the way that number could double in 5 years.

It should be easy for more to join, as unlike many U.S. states, Ontario does not require providers to partner with land-based gaming entities to enter the online market. It costs just \$100,000 for operators to enter, with a 20% tax rate. The licensing fee is on the lower side compared to most U.S. states, while the 20% tax rate isn't the lowest but is much better than New York's 51%.

Alberta, which is expected to legalize online sports betting sometime in Summer 2022, has indicated it will also allow multiple providers. Other provinces could simply just expand their lotteries to run online an sportsbook.

If more jurisdictions launch through their lotteries and allow multiple commercial providers we could have a scenario where the government is directly competing with the private sector.

Limits on Promos and Daily Fantasy Sports

Unlike when a new U.S. state launches, Canadians televisions won't be plastered with gambling offers and free to play promos.

Regulations from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario prohibit sportsbooks from marketing their incentives. Canadians should still have access to the same promotions Americans do, but only through the apps themselves.

Those big brands will be at further disadvantage as the launch of Ontario's online sports betting market means the end of its daily fantasy sports market.

DraftKings and FanDuel, the only Ontario DFS operators, have already announced they're pulling out, as Canada's new law considers DFS sports betting.

Because betting is to be confined each province, Canadian DFS players would be unable to compete against users from different provinces. Sportsbooks that run DFS would also have to pay the \$100,000 licensing fee and 20% provincial revenue share twice.

By comparison, daily fantasy sports contests are considered games of skill in most U.S. states, which has allowed operators to enter most markets even before they've legalized sports betting.

The big name operators haven't announced they're pulling out from any other provinces yet. They'll likely continue to offer DFS contests there until those provinces regulate sports betting.

Regulation is handled by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, which reviews license applications and governs the market. A subset of the agency, iGaming Ontario, will handle contracting and disbursing revenue throughout the province.

Source: 3 April 2022, Action Network

<https://www.actionnetwork.com/legal-online-sports-betting/canada-complex-sports-betting-situation-explained>



BETTING

Colombia

Colombia Increases Efforts to Combat Significant Presence of Illegal Gambling

Colombia is stepping up its efforts to diminish the presence of illegal gambling in the country. This week, regional leaders signed a new pact to respond to an analysis that shows the segment controls 30% of the market.

Quindío, Colombia

A typical street scene in Quindío, Colombia. The state is increasing its efforts with the gaming regulator to eradicate illegal gambling operators. (Image: Colombia Tourism and Vacations)

Colombia has repeatedly been at the forefront of gaming expansion in Latin America. However, the illegal gaming market is still healthy in Colombia, and leaders across the country are ready to fight back. Regional leaders recently signed a new pact to reduce or eliminate the illegal gambling segment.

Colombia recently witnessed the arrival of a new anti-illegal gambling effort. The first Pact for Legality entered into force between the country's gaming regulator, Coljuegos, and the state of Quindío. The goal is to confront illegal gambling through joint actions involving the political leaders, gaming regulators, the police, and the Army.

Coljuegos leads the charge to establish "Pacts for Legality" with many Colombian states as possible. The regulator hopes that, through them, it can unify efforts between different public and private entities to raise awareness among citizens about the importance of playing legally and responsibly.

Efforts to Reduce Illegal Activity

César Augusto Valencia, the president of Coljuegos, said that this pact "implies the commitment to join efforts and reduce this illegal activity."

The governor of Quindío, Roberto Jairo Jaramillo Cárdenas, emphasized the importance of the new joint pact. He stressed the attention of many people already part of the gambling industry. However, he pointed out that more needs to be done. Jaramillo added that "legality contributes to the economic dynamics of the department, and therefore, the importance of articulation is possible."

Although it is difficult to determine exact figures, studies show that illegal gambling is responsible for around 30% of all gambling activity.

Legal Gaming is Big Business in Colombia

Nationwide in Colombia, the gambling industry has 382 authorized localized gaming operators (casinos and bingos), 3,032 gambling establishments, 93,321 electronic slot machines, and 17 authorized online gaming operators. The sector also includes innovative games at the national level, such as Baloto, Super Astro and online games. There are territorial games of chance, including regional lotteries and other options.

In Quindío alone, there are currently 34 authorized localized gaming operators with 2,265 electronic slot machines. That equates to about 2.4% of the total number of machines in the country.

That means significant revenue for the state. On average, it collects around US\$2.2 million a year from the activity. However, if illegal gambling controls 30% of the market, Quindío, and other states, are missing out on substantial funds.

In the first two months of this year, Quindío removed 872 illegal gambling machines. Crunching the numbers on what the devices recorded, the state lost around US\$2.8 million in direct revenue and another US\$1 million in sales tax revenue.

Source: 5 April 2022, Casino.org

<https://www.casino.org/news/colombia-increases-efforts-to-combat-significant-presence-of-illegal-gambling/>



GOOD PRACTICES

Sweden

Sports match-fixing training

Match-fixing is one of the biggest threats to Swedish sports. It goes against the fundamental values of fair play in Swedish sports. If sports competitions or parts of sports competitions are manipulated, then sports will no longer be interesting to watch or participate in.

The Swedish Sports Confederation's work against match-fixing is part of the partnership with Svenska Spel, which has contributed to making this education possible.

This educational tool aims to provide athletes, coaches, officials and others in sports with a good knowledge of match-fixing and its associated problems such as illegal sports betting and problem gambling.

Source: 5 April 2022, web

<https://utbildning.sisuidrottsbocker.se/sisu/generell/matchfixning/match-fixing/english/>



United Kingdom

The Fix – innovative sports integrity partnership project launched

Police Scotland has teamed up with Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Taskforce (SOCT) and Abertay University to deliver an innovative sports integrity programme – The Fix.

Presented by club coaches and anyone involved in the coaching of young people – the programme warns and advises young elite athletes of the dangers posed by serious organised criminals, high-profile social media as well as match fixing and gambling.

It also highlights the potentially negative and adverse influence these factors could have on their wellbeing as well as their future participation, or career, in their chosen sport.

Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable Andy Freeburn said:

“The Fix programme is about prevention and the interactive sessions will provide information which will help young athletes avoid being drawn into the world of serious organised criminality and prevent them being exposed to the harm that it undoubtedly presents.

“We also want to ensure that the integrity of the young person's chosen sport is not compromised in any way.

“Social media can be a hugely positive aspect of being involved in sport at the highest level and helps raise the profile of an athlete. However, there can be a negative side to the attention it brings and the teaching pack explains this.”

During the interactive session, the young athletes will be shown a hard-hitting video showing the career-threatening consequences of becoming involved with criminals, who persuade a young footballer to be part of fixing matches. The real-life inspired events in the video are depicted by actors.

The Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Chair of the SOCT Keith Brown said:

“I welcome the launch of The Fix and am grateful to those who have supported the development of the programme. I'm also pleased that the SOC Taskforce was able to support the project through our Small Grants Fund.

“Sport is an integral part of life in Scotland, delivering a wide range of benefits. The Fix is a good way to open a forum for discussion with young people about the threat and harm that serious organised crime can have on their lives.

“It's important that we make young people aware of and understand the risks and potential harms they and their sport can be exposed to. Those engaged in serious organised crime will use any trick they can to ingratiate themselves and exploit any situation for their own financial benefit. They are not interested in the young person and will leave them to face the consequences, which can have long-term impacts on them.”

Abertay University's Professor of Duty of Care in Sport, David Lavalley and Dean of School of Applied Sciences, Andrea Cameron conducted the underpinning research for The Fix film script and teaching pack, in collaboration with a doctoral student.

Professor Lavalley said: “This proactive initiative led by Police Scotland is a hugely positive step towards better educating our nation's athletes and protecting them from serious organised criminality.

“There's no doubt that issues like match fixing, gambling and the toxic side of social media pose significant dangers to modern athletes and that's one of the reasons why we embed education on welfare and integrity into all of our academic programmes, in addition to making duty of care in the sector a prime research focus.”

Chief Executive of sportscotland, Stewart Harris, said: “This collaborative project, delivered by Police Scotland, Abertay University and the SOCT, highlights an important issue that faces many young athletes today. ‘The Fix’ is a fantastic programme that demonstrates the real dangers that exist as a result of match fixing and gambling and the threats that it can pose to a young athlete's sporting career.

“Developing initiatives such as this one, is vital to the education of sportsmen and women in our country and is a big step forward in helping protect them from organised criminality. As the national agency of sport, we fully support the work being done to educate young athletes across many different sports and performance levels.”

Assistant Chief Constable Freeburn added:

“As well as helping to protect the young athletes, The Fix underlines that Police Scotland, in partnership with a wide range of people including coaches and parents is committed to the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce and delivery of the country's

Serious Organised Crime Strategy.

"I am proud of this initiative and the hard work that has gone producing The Fix teaching pack and video. We are also grateful for the assistance of the Scottish Government, Interpol, Abertay University, Screen Education Edinburgh, Aberdeen Football Club and Aberdeen City Council."

Video: <https://vimeo.com/407629867/5371466416>

Source: 5 April 2022, Police Scotland

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2022/april/the-fix-innovative-sports-integrity-partnership-project-launched/>



INTERPOL

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

MATCH FIXING

Ireland

Organised criminals infiltrating teams to fix matches, Garda warns

Organised criminals infiltrating teams to fix matches, Garda warns

Organised criminals are infiltrating Irish sports clubs in order to fix matches, Garda fraud detectives have warned.

The Garda National Economic Crime Bureau said on Tuesday it was conducting multiple ongoing investigations into suspected match fixing.

It is one of several categories of corruption and bribery investigations currently being undertaken by the Bureau's Anti-Corruption and Bribery Unit which was established in 2017 to investigate both foreign and domestic corruption.

Det Supt Catharina Gunne said gangs were attempting "to infiltrate themselves into clubs and teams" to rig matches by having a key player deliberately underperform "to ensure a match or a game goes a certain way".

Organised criminals are using these fixed matches both to "gain illicit funds" and to launder money. The corrupt bets were typically made through unregulated betting channels, she said.

Betting patterns

"We're involved in investigations but we can't go into details as they're active investigations," Det Supt Gunne added.

Among the investigations launched by the bureau is one into suspected match fixing in the League of Ireland. This was launched after it detected unusual betting patterns during a match in 2019.

Det Sgt Daniel McGinty said bribery did not have to involve money being handed over, and that even the offering or request of a bribe constituted an offence of corruption.

Under the offence of corruption in public office, it was not required for a public official to be paid a bribe, he said. "The public official just has to make a corrupt act in their office which benefits someone else.

"That could be interfering in a procurement process to ensure a particular company they favour gets a contract unfairly."

Bribes "can also be favours and influences. And if you're talking about a public official, it doesn't necessarily have to benefit themselves," he added.

'Brown envelopes'

Corruption and bribery offences can also involve private companies. It was vital company management set the tone from the top that bribery was not acceptable, Det Insp Mel Smith said.

Most corruption cases investigated by the unit had an overseas dimension, which could slow down the already-complex cases, the detectives said.

"Brown envelopes" were a thing of the past, said Det Sgt McGinty. Bribes to companies were typically disguised as agency or consultancy fees, he said.

Det Supt Gunne said Ireland was considered the 13th "cleanest country" in the world by Transparency International. However, she warned it was important not to become complacent.

Det Chief Supt Pat Lordan said tackling corruption was vital to maintain Ireland's reputation and ensure the continued flow of foreign direct investment.

"Bribery and corruption are not acceptable in Irish society or when conducting business abroad and An Garda Síochána is committed to proactively investigating offences of this nature," Det Supt Gunne said.

Source: 29 March 2022, the Irish Times

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/organised-criminals-infiltrating-teams-to-fix-matches-garda-warns-1.4839366>



Spain

Las criptomonedas juegan a favor de los amaños deportivos

La Operación Oikos, desarrollada en mayo de 2019, fue un auténtico terremoto en el mundo del fútbol profesional español. Por primera vez, la sombra del amaño de partidos por apuestas salpicaba a la Primera División. Hoy, casi tres años después, la causa sigue abierta en un juzgado de Huesca intentando sortear las dificultades que entrañan las ramificaciones en el extranjero, los mensajes de telefonía encriptados y el imperceptible rastro que deja el trasiego de dinero que se mueve en la clandestinidad. De los aciertos y errores tanto de aquella operación policial —la más mediática—, como de otras, como la denominada Bitures, que destapó el amaño de partidos de tenis, surgen las enseñanzas que recibirán el 4 y 5 de mayo 30 agentes de la Policía Nacional a los que el Ministerio del Interior quiere formar ante las nuevas formas de corrupción en el deporte. “Con estas jornadas se pretende que los diferentes sectores implicados en la lucha contra los amaños en el deporte compartan experiencias e iniciativas”, explican fuentes de la Dirección General de la Policía.

Durante el curso, en el que participarán juristas, expertos en el mundo de las apuestas y responsables de la LaLiga, habrá un apartado dedicado al uso creciente de las criptomonedas por estas tramas. Iñaki Arbea, policía en excedencia que participó, en 2015, en la investigación del caso Osasuna que llevó por primera vez a los tribunales las primas ilegales en fútbol español y que en la actualidad es el responsable de Integridad de LaLiga, centrará en ellas parte de su intervención. “Las criptomonedas se han convertido en un instrumento sencillo para el blanqueo de las ganancias de las apuestas ilegales porque dificultan seguir el rastro del dinero”, señala Arbea, que alertará también sobre la proliferación en internet de plataformas no reguladas de juego.

El representante de LaLiga recuerda que la cercanía del final de las competiciones oficiales (cuando muchos equipos ya no se juegan nada y existe el riesgo de que futbolistas se presten a estos fraudes) y la próxima celebración de un Mundial de fútbol incrementan el riesgo de amaños. En estos casos, Arbea insiste en la necesidad de intensificar la colaboración internacional, plasmada en operaciones como Soga, de Interpol, cuya octava fase, desarrollada el pasado septiembre en 28 países, se saldó con 1.400 detenidos, 800 de ellos en Hong Kong. “Es un problema global”, insiste.

Según la convocatoria del curso, a la que ha tenido acceso EL PAÍS, podrán aspirar a una de las 30 plazas agentes de todas las escalas y categorías de la Policía Nacional que cumplan un requisito: que en la actualidad realicen, precisamente, funciones de investigación relacionadas con la corrupción deportiva. En la actualidad, el epicentro de las pesquisas policiales contra el fraude en el deporte es el Centro Nacional Policial para la Integridad en el Deporte y las Apuestas (Cenpida).

Al curso ha sido invitado, según ha confirmado el Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Navarra, el juez Fermín Otamendi, responsable de la instrucción del caso Osasuna, aunque su asistencia aún no ha sido confirmada. A partir de la investigación de este magistrado, un tribunal de la Audiencia Provincial de Pamplona condenó a nueve personas, entre ellos dos futbolistas. El fallo concluyó que las llamadas primas a terceros, con las que algunos equipos incentivan a otros a ganar en sus enfrentamientos con otros clubes, son ilegales por influir en la competición. Del ámbito jurídico, también intervendrá un miembro del equipo jurídico de LaLiga, que se persona como acusación en todos los sumarios que se abren por corrupción que afectan al fútbol, tanto profesional como aficionado. “Explicaré a los agentes las vicisitudes a las que se enfrentan las investigaciones judiciales”, señalan desde La Liga.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

También participará un representante de la Dirección General de Ordenación del Juego (DGOJ), dependiente del Ministerio de Consumo. La DGOJ se encarga de “velar por la integridad, seguridad, fiabilidad y transparencia de las operaciones de juego” y para ello cuenta, desde 2017, con el llamado Servicio de Investigación Global del Mercado de las Apuestas (Sigma), encargado de colaborar con las Fuerzas de Seguridad y otras entidades en la prevención y detección de amaños de partidos. El año pasado, Sigma realizó 440 actuaciones, de las cuales 146 estuvieron relacionadas con la integridad de las competiciones deportivas. De ellas, 88 tuvieron que ver con el fútbol; 23, con el tenis de mesa y 13, con el tenis, los tres deportes que acumulan el 89% de los expedientes.

La empresa privada también estará presente. Los operadores de juego por internet estarán representados por la patronal JDigital y su director general, Jorge Hinojosa. “Ni al deporte ni a los operadores nos interesan las prácticas no autorizadas”, señala Hinojosa, que también pone el foco en las criptomonedas: “Todavía hay que conocer más estos productos y trabajar en su regulación”. Además, se espera que participe un miembro de Stast Perform, empresa dedicada al análisis de grandes cantidades de datos del deporte que trabaja para ligas profesionales, medios de comunicación y casas de apuestas.

Los teléfonos encriptados que atascaron la Operación Oikos

El responsable de Integridad de la Liga de Fútbol Profesional, Iñaki Arbea, uno de los participantes en el curso, destaca que las tramas que se dedican al amaño de partidos y el fraude en las apuestas deportivas suelen ser grupos delictivos que, en muchas ocasiones, participan en otras actividades ilegales, principalmente el blanqueo de capitales. “Y, como siempre ocurre en el crimen organizado, utilizan la última tecnología en sus actividades”, señala. El material intervenido en la Operación Oikos, en 2019, refuerzan esa idea.

Entonces, la Policía se incautó dos teléfonos encriptados a los dos presuntos cabecillas de la trama desmantelada entonces, los exfutbolistas Raúl Bravo y Carlos Aranda. Los responsables de las pesquisas siempre consideraron que ambos terminales podían

contener buena parte de las claves para conocer el supuesto alcance real de sus actividades y, por ello, intentaron por todos los medios acceder a su contenido. De hecho, en algunas de las conversaciones telefónicas intervenidas, otros presuntos integrantes de la trama hablaban de utilizar este tipo de dispositivos para mantener las conversaciones más comprometedoras. “Cuando vayas a hablar de algo, fuera móviles, fuera...”, decía uno a su interlocutor.

Por ello, los investigadores pidieron a expertos de la Policía, del Centro Criptológico Nacional (dependiente del servicio secreto CNI) y de varios laboratorios europeos que intentaran burlar el encriptado, pero sin éxito. Entonces solicitaron al juez del caso enviarlos al laboratorio digital forense que Interpol tiene en Singapur. En su escrito, los agentes reconocían “la imposibilidad técnica, debido al sofisticado nivel de encriptación, de hacer el volcado [acceso al contenido]” en España. “Tenían más medidas de seguridad que algunos grandes narcos”, resumía entonces a este diario un alto mando policial.

El magistrado autorizó el envío, pero los teléfonos móviles finalmente no viajaron a Singapur. Los expertos de Interpol tampoco veían forma de desbloquearlos. Así que el acertijo sigue esperando ser desvelado en dependencias policiales.

Source: 4 April 2022, El País

<https://www.msn.com/es-pe/noticias/mundo/las-criptomonedas-juegan-a-favor-de-los-ama%C3%B1os-deportivos/ar-AAVJU5H?ocid=EMMX>



Zimbabwe

How cricket is at a crossroads in Zimbabwe

Brendan Taylor, former Zimbabwe cricket captain, was handed a three-year ban earlier this year for failing to report a match-fixing approach from a trip to India.

He made the trip in October 2019 where he received \$15,000 which he claimed he was blackmailed into accepting by his hosts using a video of him taking cocaine.

The suspension has brought back into the limelight the plight of players and the state of the game in Zimbabwe where cricket has a significant fanbase.

Taylor, who accepted his offence, said he had been under financial pressure because the players had not been paid for six months around the time of his India trip.

At that time, the country was suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for government interference in the affairs of the governing body, Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC), which came after a government-appointed body, that controls all sports in the country, fired top ZC officials on several charges, including financial mismanagement.

ZC, which is often in financial hardship but claims to have now completed payment of huge debts running into nearly \$20m, has been forced to operate under controlled funding from the ICC.

The ZC suspension in 2019 therefore meant ICC funding was frozen and players had to bear the brunt of it.

The ICC suspension was eventually lifted later that year after the sacked officials were reinstated.

Players were then awarded a lump sum for the six months they were owed.

By early 2020, ZC announced it had reduced salaries by 30 percent, which was followed, until the present, by frequent delays in payments.

Zimbabwe failed to qualify for the 2019 World Cup, the first time it missed the tournament since 1983.

ZC chief Tavengwa Mukuhlani defended the cuts when he revealed the move two years ago, saying it was a necessary measure to “make sacrifices today and survive tomorrow”.

The delays, Mukuhlani explained to Al Jazeera, were due to ICC’s strict financial controls.

He rejected allegations of misadministration, saying he had done well under the circumstances, especially after clearing what he refers to as “legacy debts”.

“We are in a very healthy financial situation,” Mukuhlani told Al Jazeera. “We are the only [sporting] association in the country that is audited by one of the big four in the world. We are the only association that constantly publishes results. We are moving from strength to strength.”

But the players are not totally satisfied with the board’s handling of things.

“I have played for Zimbabwe under some very difficult conditions in the past and we have gone for months without being paid,” said a senior player who requested anonymity.

“They need to improve their communication so that people can plan accordingly. Things have improved a bit, but there is just no consistency. My main issue with our administrators is that they don’t know how to communicate. Last year, when we had salary delays, we were left to just speculate.”

Talent drain

Disillusionment and lack of confidence in the system has also resulted in a serious talent drain, with many of the country’s brightest young players no longer finding the prospect of representing Zimbabwe appealing.

Dion Myers, a teenage prodigy and gifted young Black player, made his Test debut in 2021. He also played three One-Day Internationals and eight T20s.

A former headboy at one of the country’s prestigious schools, St George’s College in Harare, and Zimbabwe’s captain at the 2019

Under-19 World Cup, a national contract was almost guaranteed for Myers.

But he did not find it tempting and decided not to stick around.

Choosing to secure his future, the 19-year-old, at the advise of his family, is now studying Agriculture at Royal Agriculture University in Gloucestershire, England.

In 2018, Zimbabwe failed to qualify for the 2019 World Cup, the first time since 1983 they were not taking part in the global event. The team is currently sitting bottom of the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League, pathway to 2023 World Cup qualification.

Based on current form, they may miss out on another World Cup which will be a huge financial blow.

Former Zimbabwe bowler Gary Brent, recently appointed the national women's team coach, believes the country will be stronger if everyone available was allowed to contribute.

"I see cricket in Zimbabwe as I have seen it for the last 15 years," Brent told Al Jazeera. "We have great talent but we are unable to fully harness and nurture that talent to be a fully competitive side in international cricket.

"It starts with grassroots all the way to franchise cricket. It's a pity we can't all work together to build a solid Zimbabwe cricket team. We have to forget what happened, we can't do anything about it. If we work together, I'm sure we will be extremely competitive."

Struggling with facilities

The grassroots that Brent speaks of are no longer as vibrant as they used to be 20 years ago when cricket was almost competing with football for public interest.

Government schools like Prince Edward and Churchill, which used to churn out a great number of national team players, are struggling with facilities and now produce half-baked players – a far cry from the likes of Tatenda Taibu, Hamilton Masakadza, Elton Chigumbura, Prosper Utseya – all former national captains who were schooled at the latter courtesy of ZC bursaries.

It is not just the schools that are having to contend with poor infrastructure.

Across the country, club facilities, which used to be looked after by the national association, are in bad shape because members are unable to meet costs for maintenance.

It is a reflection of the club game itself which is virtually non-existent, with seasons not coming to logical conclusions even in pre-pandemic times.

The strength of club cricket was what bred Zimbabwe's competitive streak at international level. Promotion to the first XI, sharing a changing room with national team players, or facing international players in the opposition, was something for a young player to treasure.

It is a feature of Zimbabwean cricket that is very hard to speak of in the past tense by those who witnessed those days, like Nick Chouhan, a former ZC board member in charge of development.

A one-time sport broadcaster and now a regular blogger on the history of sport in Zimbabwe, Chouhan reckons the demise of club cricket structures has hurt the national side.

"There is no formal league cricket structure now, they are just playing when they want," Chouhan said.

"Some players practice but there no games. You can spend the whole day in the nets, but if you can't play proper games, it won't be the same. Years back, we had eight teams in the first league, eight teams in the second league, eight teams in the third league and six to seven teams in the fourth league. We played league cricket from September to March, and all were completed.

"These days a lot of our players go straight into the national team. In the other countries, guys play 200 to 300 games before international cricket."

Source: 3 April 2022, Al Jazeera

<https://www.aljazeera.com/sports/2022/4/3/how-cricket-is-at-a-crossroads-in-zimbabwe>