



EASG 2022

13th European Conference on Gambling Studies and Policy Issues

FCT Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

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Betting / match fixing and advertising a conflict of interest?

***Betting practices among players in Portuguese championships:
From cultural to illegal behaviours***

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Wednesday – 7 September 2022

BACKGROUND

- Growth of the online sports betting market (new technologies, live betting, etc.)
- New risk areas and threats to sport integrity (organized crime, betting market fraud, match-fixing);
- Betting-related match-fixing as one of the major threats to sport integrity and States security;
- “Zero tolerance” policy (education, disciplinary and legal framework; betting fraudulent detection systems; multi-stakeholder’s cooperation);
- Ban players and athletes from betting (disciplinary and criminal offense);
- Players still bet on their sport, competitions or matches.



WHY ATHLETES BET ON SPORTS AND EVEN IN THEIR OWN SPORT, COMPETITIONS AND MATCHES?

METHODOLOGY

- Grounded theory;
- Qualitative multimethod approach
 - Ethnographic fieldwork (in a futsal team)
 - Document analysis;
 - semi-structured interviews (institutional actors and sports actors). The most representative sports actors were football (8), futsal (6), basketball (6) and handball (6).

FINDINGS

➤ Betting in Portuguese Sports: Practices and incentives

Table 1 Types of betting on own games not related with match-fixing. *Source:* Own elaboration following the evidence collected

Bet on own games	Gambling as recreation and cultural practice			Gambling as collective motivation		Gambling as economic incentive	Gambling addiction
	Yes (win)	Yes (all results)	Yes (lose)	Yes (win)	Yes (goals)	Yes (lose)	Yes (all results)
Type of bet	1×2	Multiple	1×2	1×2	Goals amount	1×2	All types
Incentives	Cultural practice Prestige within the group, group internal cohesion Earning money	Cultural practice Prestige within the group, group internal cohesion Earning money	Frustration Earn money	Collective motivation Taking advantage of high odds Earning money	Collective motivation Earning money	Economic profit Guaranteed prizes	Pathological behaviour Non-rational incentive
Integrity protected	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	In risk	Yes	In risk
Auto-protection strategies	Bet in non-regulated operators Bet by third person Bet low amounts	Ibidem	Ibidem	Ibidem	Ibidem	Ibidem	Ibidem
Players betting in legal system	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

In Moriconi e Cima (2020a)

FINDINGS

➤ Betting in Portuguese Sports: Practices and incentives

Table 2 Betting-related match-fixing risk factors. *Source:* Own elaboration following the evidence collected

Intrinsic factors	Necessity	Personal factors	Economic problems, addictions, excessive luxuries or problems that imply extra expenses (for example those related with health, fines, etc.)
	Greed	Institutional factors	Delay in salaries payment or even breach of contracts
		Individual initiative	A sports actor decides to engage in match-fixing for personal gains
		Collective initiative	More than one sports actor decides to engage in match-fixing for personal gains
Extrinsic factors	Pact between external actors and internal sports actors (players, coaches and referees)	Coercion by institutional actors	Presidents, managers or agents force sports actors to get engage in match-fixing
		Outside-inside sport perspective	External agents (may have criminal interest or being member of organized crime syndicates) bribe one or more players to manipulate a game, or a specific event of the game, in exchange for financial amounts
Hybrid cases	Pact between internal sports actors (players, coaches and referees) and external actors	Inside-outside sport perspective	Players (or sports actors) fix matches and look for investors/bettors ready to share their profit
		Institutional schemes created to manipulate results	Investors acquire a club with objective of fixing matches and taking profit from the betting market. The team is built with a coach and players predisposed to be engaged in fixings or even player with match-fixing experience
		Institutional and sports actors willing to fix matches	

In Moriconi e Cima (2020a)

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling not related with match-fixing

- Gambling as recreational and culture practice

Incentives

- ❖ Prestige *within the group*
(*who know more about sports*)
- ❖ Group internal cohesion
- ❖ Win money

Auto-protection strategies

- ❖ Bet in non-regulated operators
- ❖ Bet by third person
- ❖ Bet low amounts

✓ **INTEGRITY PROTECTED**



"I think if they found out everyone who has been betting and cracked down on it, you'd have half the league out," (Joey Barton in BBC Radio 4's)



"I believe that 90% of the players bet on their own games. But they bet small amounts on multiple bets, based on their perception, and not with the intention of fixing results. There is no interference in the game [...] I bet from 40 to 50 euros per week, in multiples, including my matches and other games. If I win, the profit is around 500 euros. I never made a bet above 100 euros" (Portuguese futsal player).

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling not related with match-fixing

- Gambling as recreational and culture practice

Incentives

- ❖ Frustration
- ❖ Punishment
- ❖ Win money

Auto-protection strategies

- ❖ Ibidem

✓ **INTEGRITY PROTECTED**



"It was an expression of my anger and frustration for not being chosen" (Joey Barton after bet on the defeat of his team in games in which he was not called up)

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling not related with match-fixing

- Gambling as source of collective motivation

Incentives

- ❖ *Collective motivation*
- ❖ *Taking advantage of high odds*
- ❖ *Win money*

Auto-protection strategies

- ❖ *Ibidem*

✓ **INTEGRITY PROTECTED**



“As our odds were too high, I started telling the players that we were devalued in the betting market. Then, bets worked as a motivating factor. I used to tell them: if I were you, I would bet. What started out as a joke became an effective strategy and I started to use it more often” (Portuguese football coach).

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling not related with match-fixing

- Gambling as economic incentive

Incentives

- ❖ *Economic profit*
- ❖ *Guarantee prizes*

Auto-protection strategies

- ❖ *Ibidem*

✓ **INTEGRITY PROTECTED**



"Imagine that the prize to win was 200 euros and to tie was 100, then we bet 50 euros in our defeat. In such a condition, we already knew that, if we lost, we would win money from the bet and, if we tied or won, we would win the prize of the club. As we win money in any circumstance, betting against our team don't affect our performance" (Portuguese futsal player).

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling not related with match-fixing

- Pathologic Gambling

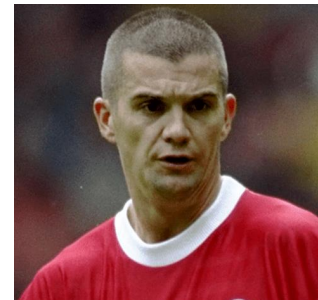
Incentives

- ❖ *Pathological behavior*
- ❖ *Non-rational incentive*

Auto-protection strategies

- ❖ *Ibidem*

× **INTEGRITY THREATENED**



"I gambled stupid amounts [...] One day I lost £100,000 on an evens-priced favorite and luckily won it back on another evens-priced horse a few hours later. All in all I lost seven figures by the time I packed it in but it was only the birth of my daughter Luisa that made me think: this is ridiculous and has to stop. I was gambling away her inheritance (Dominic Matteo, former football player).



"Compulsive gamblers are really good at hiding emotions and feelings, you can't look at them like an alcoholic or a drug addict and see that they're in trouble" (Matthew Etherington, former football player).

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling related with match-fixing

▪ Intrinsic factors

Incentives

- ❖ *Necessity: personal factors (economic problems, addictions, excessive luxuries); institutional factors (delay in salaries payment);*
- ❖ *Greed (personal gains).*

Structural opportunities

- ❖ *Betting market opportunities (grey and dark market; side bets; live bets, etc.).*
- ❖ *Political governance failures (lack of control by regulatory bodies; possibility of betting matches without competitive interest, etc.).*
- ❖ *Sports governance failures (delay in salaries payment; obsolete competitive models).*

"If we had the final position in the championship already defined and someone offered us money to lose the game, and we needed this money, we would consider accepting the proposal. We don't have professional contract and certain amounts of money can really change our lives" (Portuguese futsal player).



"allowing bets in amateur sports it's a crime [...] they are pushing those people to fix games" (Portuguese futsal player).

FINDINGS

➤ Gambling related with match-fixing

▪ Extrinsic factors

Incentives

- ❖ *Coercion: institutional actors (club president; sports directors, coaches); external actors (agents; mafias).*
- ❖ *Bribes: external actors (mafias) to players; players to external actors.*
- ❖ *Collusion: institutional actors (players, coaches, sports directors, club president).*

Structural opportunities

- ❖ *Ibidem*

“We get relegated, now is the time to make Money” (Portuguese football player about a president of a Cyprus club coercion).

“There are teams that use Portuguese Cup matches to fix results. Players and other club members bet and bet hard for make money for a sporting season” (Portuguese football player)

DISCUSSION

Evidences

- There are several motivations for the practice of betting. Not all threaten sporting integrity, some even promote it.
- The “zero tolerance” policy and the legal frameworks were ineffective in induce compliance in terms of betting rules.
- Legal and disciplinary frameworks adopted do not prevent fraudulent betting (as camouflage strategies such as the black market continue to exist) and are only useful for categorizing recreational players/gamblers as deviant.



IS THE ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY A WINDOWS DRESSING STRATEGY?

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MITIGATE THE PROBLEM?

DISCUSSION

Recommendations

- Resolving problems of form: legal and sporting frameworks are produced in a top-down perspective in which the sports actors whose behaviors can be influenced (players, athletes, referees, coaches, etc.) do not participate.
 - ✓ Understanding the motivations for gambling and adjusting regulations to this motivations.

- Resolving problems of content: the data suggest different conceptions of integrity between the normative discourse and sports actors' opinion. There isn't a direct link between betting on own games and manipulation of these games.
 - Allow players to bet on the win of their teams and create specific betting models for players bet that do not threaten sporting integrity (like multiple bets in different leagues).
 - Instead of educating players not to bet, teach them to bet with conscience.

DISCUSSION

Recommendations

- Reduce the incentives for fraudulent betting: identify and mitigate structure of opportunities for match-fixing.
 - ✓ Moving from a compliance logic to an enforcement logic (improve the economic, human and technological resources that law enforcement agencies have at their disposal);
 - ✓ Resolve sports governance failures like delay in salaries payment or obsolete competitive models;
 - ✓ Ban legal betting on games without competitive interest (friendly matches) or teams with wage arrears;
 - ✓ Promote the cooperation between government bodies, LEA´s, betting operators and sports organizations;



**END OF
PRESENTATION**

THANK YOU!

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