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Match Fixing Incidents

A brief history on match fixing cases – ELS, September 2010

Match-fixing represents the dark side of any game, be it cricket, football or hockey. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of match-fixing incidents. However, they are not new to the world of sports. A match is said to be fixed when one or more players agree to influence the result of the game, rendering the very nature of competitive sports void. Here we bring you a flavour of several key match-fixing incidents that have occurred in the world of sports.



- The first ever match fixing incident took place in the year 1919 when gamblers bribed a few members of the Chicago White Sox to throw the World Series. This came to be known as the Black Sox Scandal. It was made famous through the movie and book, *Eight Men Out*.
- In 1952, Frank Hogan, District Attorney accused basketball players from 4 New York schools including Long Island University, New York University, CCNY and Manhattan College of match fixing.
- In 1978, gangsters contacted the popular Lucchese crime family in the New York. With them, Jimmy Burke and Henry Hill planned for a match fixing scheme with important members of the Boston College basketball team.
- Pete Rose, a former baseball player accepted a ban from Major League Baseball for gambling on Cincinnati Reds games on August 24, 1989 while managing the baseball team. In his autobiography, *My Prison Without Bars*, which was released in 2004, he wrote about the allegations and confirmed them to be true.
- Campus bookmaker Benny Silman along with several players from Arizona State University planned a comprehensive match fixing scheme in 1994. Las Vegas bookmakers smelled something fishy over large bets being made against Arizona State University, and thus helped to uncover the entire plot.

- In February 1999, a Malaysia-based betting group was caught red handed while installing a remote-control device to disrupt the functioning of the floodlights at Charlton Athletic's ground with the assistance of a corrupt officer. Further investigations revealed that the group has been responsible for floodlight failures at West Ham's ground in November 1997. A month later, the gang damaged the lights at Crystal Palace's ground.
- In 2000, Delhi police tapped the conversation between the Cricket captain of the South African team, Hansie Cronje and a blacklisted bookie. The conversation revealed that Hansie Cronje accepted money to lose matches. However, the South African government didn't allow its players to assist the investigation being conducted by the Indian government. Cronje admitted taking bribes to fix matches in the court enquiry. He was banned from playing cricket. He also disclosed the name of other players including Ajay Jadeja and Mohammed Azharuddin (India) and Saleem Malik (Pakistan). Ajay Jadeja was banned from playing cricket for four years. As a key witness, Hansie Cronje exposed the dark side of gambling to the world. Two renowned South African cricketers Nicky Boje and Herschelle Gibbs are wanted by the Delhi Police for their role in match fixing. In 1998, two Australian cricket players, Shane Warne and Mark Waugh were fined for disclosing important information about the weather to a bookie.
- In October 2000 the Italian Football Federation declared that it had found eight football players guilty of match fixing. Five were from Serie B side Pistoiese and the other three played for Serie A side Atalanta. The players were Girolamo Bizzarri, Gianluca Lillo, Daniele Amerini, Massimiliano Allegri (all Pistoiese) and Sebastiano Siviglia, Cristiano Doni and Giacomo Banhelli (all Atalanta).
- Thirty people including club officials, an official of the South African Football Association, a match commissioner and nineteen referees were arrested for fixing a match in June 2004 in South Africa.
- In the summer of 2004, Belfair gave an evidence of fixing a horserace to the London Police that led to the arrest of fifteen people including jockey Kieren Fallon on race fixing charges.
- In the latter part of 2004, the match between Dinamo Tbilisi and Panionios in the 2004-2005 UEFA Cup was suspected of being fixed after bookmakers noted a high number of half time bets for a 5-2 win for the Greek team which was trailing 0-1.
- Bundesliga Scandal 2005 – In January 2005, the German prosecutors and the German Football Association (DFB) started separate inquiries into charges that referee Robert Hoyzer fixed and bet on various matches including a German cup tie. Later, he admitted the allegations. There were reports of him being involved with the notorious Croat gambling gang. He involved other players and referees in the scheme. The first arrests in the Hoyzer investigation were made in Berlin on January 28. Further investigations revealed that he was involved in fixing more matches than he admitted. This led to his arrest on February 12. A lifetime ban has been imposed on him by DFB. On March 10, police arrested another referee, Dominik Marks, for being involved in match fixing. Hoyzer was sentenced for two years and five months in prison.
- In July 2005, Italian Serie B champions Genoa were suddenly relegated to Serie C1. It was discovered that they had bribed the opponent team members in the final match, thereby securing promotion to Serie A.
- Brazilian Football Match Scandal – A Brazilian magazine revealed in September 2005 that two football referees, Paulo Jose and Edilson Pereira de Carvalho accepted money to fix matches. Following this, sport authorities announced the replaying of eleven matches in the country's top competition, the Campeonato Brasileiro that had been worked by Edilson. Both referees faced a permanent ban and may face criminal charges as well.

- 2006 Serie A Scandal – It was in 2006 that the largest match fixing scandal was brought to light by the Italian police involving league champions Juventus and powerhouses Lazio, Fiorentina and AC Milan. Teams were suspected of choosing favourable referees and the goalkeeper of Italy’s World Cup team, Gianluigi Buffon was accused of putting money on football matches. Juventus were stripped of their titles in 2004-05 and 2005–06, and all four football clubs were denied entry to the European club competition in 2006-2007.
- 2007 NBA Referee Scandal – In July 2007, it was discovered that the National Basketball Association referee Tim Donaghy had placed money on ten to fifteen games including the matches refereed by him. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating the matter along with the NBA.
- In 2007, Russian tennis player Nikolay Davydenko was subjected to an ATP match-fixing investigation after a match against Martín Vassallo Arguello. Both Davydenko and Arguello were cleared.
- “The Fix”, 2008 – A book written by Declan Hill revealed that in the 2006 World Cup, the group game played between Italy-Ghana, the round-of 16 game between Brazil-Ghana, and the Ukraine-Italy quarter-final were all fixed by the Asian betting groups who knew the final scores. The German Football League (DFL) and German Football Federation (DFB) looked into the allegations made in a Der Spiegel interview that Bundesliga games were fixed by William Bee Wah Lim.
- 2008- According to a report published on October 1, a Spanish judge who headed the probe against the Russian Mafia uncovered information alleging the gamblers might have tried to fix the 2007-2008 UEFA Cup Semi-Final between Bayern Munich and eventual champions Zenit St. Petersburg. However, both clubs denied having any knowledge of match fixing.
- 2008 – On October 4, suspicious online betting on the match between Derby County and Norwich City led to questioning the validity of the Football League match. It was believed that gamblers in Asia had bet a large amount of money during half-time which in turn had raised concerns over the result. However, the inquiry conducted by the Football Association found no evidence to prove that the match had been fixed. Derby County won the match 2-1.
- 2009 – On May 6, 2009 a federal jury in Detroit accused six former athletes from the University of Toledo – three each from the school’s basketball and football team – on charges of match fixing that ran from 2003 to 2006. This turned out to be the first major U.S. betting case incorporating two sports team from the same college.
- In November 2009, police in Germany arrested people on suspicion of fixing 200 football matches in nine countries. Among the suspected matches were those from the top leagues of Turkey, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Bosnia and Austria and games from the second tiers in Switzerland, Germany and Belgium.
- Snooker 2010: Triple world champion John Higgins and his manager were caught out by a “News of the World” sting. Higgins, the world No.1, was filmed receiving a £261,000 bribe for agreeing to lose four chosen frames in four tournaments. A week later, the English newspaper then exposed him for trying to bet against himself in the 2009 world championship final.
- Also in 2010, Japanese sumo wrestling was struck by a betting scandal linked with organized crime after magazine reports linked the top wrestler Kotomitsuki with heavy gambling debts and that he was paying hush money to keep it quiet. Other wrestlers and stable masters were also involved. Sponsors withdrew and NHK - the national broadcasters - threatened to pull out.

- In 2010, the Chinese Football Association relegated two top clubs - Guangzhou Pharmaceutical and Chengdu Sheffield United - for match fixing and threw out a second division team, Qingdao Hailifeng, whose players had tried to score an own goal to help their boss win a bet.
- August 2010 Cricket – Pakistan vs. England: A reporter from “News of the World” posed as a member of a Far East gambling cartel and paid a total of £ 150,000 to Mazhar Majeed, the alleged match-fixer and manager of 10 players of the Pakistani team. In return Majeed gave exact information about no-balls which would happen during the 4th day of the test match on August 28. This information included the name of the bowler and the exact ball and over (e.g. Amir will bowl a no-ball on the first ball of the third over of the innings).

Scotland Yard arrested Majeed on the evening of August 28. The three main players involved, Asif, Amir, and alleged ringleader and team captain Salman Butt were suspended from cricket under suspicion of spot-fixing.

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EL Sports does not claim full accuracy or full coverage of all cases.

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