

Investing in integrity

With the threat of match-fixing higher than ever, how must sports protect their competitions, fans and futures?



What do sports need to truly combat the threat of match-fixing?

Match-fixing poses the most significant threat to the integrity of modern sports. In combatting its threat, significant progress has been made of late. But what is the optimum model for protecting competitions and how can sports devise an integrity strategy that provides long-term protection and safeguards their future?

While there is no definitive figure for how much the global sports sector is worth, we know that many billions are spent each year on tickets, TV rights and subscriptions, sponsorships, club membership, development of facilities and all other aspects of this complex and multi-faceted industry.

But while the experts may struggle to come up with a meaningful figure, one thing is certain. If the public was to lose its fascination for sporting competition, it's value both commercially and to society would plummet.

The world's multi-billion dollar love affair with sport is based principally on the uncertainty of events. Sport is often described as the ultimate unscripted theatre, where we know the cast and setting, but where the ending is never certain. It's the reason why sport is best watched live and continues to pull TV viewing figures which have advertisers drooling.

But take away the uncertainty of outcome and what are you left with?

Ultimately the answer is a big fat zero. Sport without fair competition and an uncertain result becomes meaningless and ultimately irrelevant.

In short, sport faces an existential threat from those who want to rob it of its *raison d'être* by manipulating outcomes for their own ends. And it is a threat which has seldom been greater or more sinister. Fuelled by the huge sums to be made through illegal betting, the potential for athletes and officials to be coerced into match-fixing has never been greater.



(Marc Atkins /Getty Images)

Experts in the field tell us that fixers look for and exploit vulnerability in those who can influence the outcome of a sporting event. And once the line has been crossed they are mired, possibly forever, in a world which may start with a single point deliberately lost in a tennis match or a no-ball bowled in cricket, but which ultimately leads to the dark, sinister and dangerous world of international organised crime.

Match-fixing destroys trust and, consequently, reputation. A 2017 study by Portland Communications for their UK Sport Integrity index showed that match-fixing was the number one reason why fans would stop watching a particular sport, and this figure will only grow unless integrity issues are remedied.

And with the loss of fans and a damaged reputation comes the impact on the balance sheet. Sponsors walk away, tickets remain unsold and media companies think twice about paying for

rights to damaged goods.

This is not some imaginary doomsday threat; it is the real-life scenario which all sports face and is the reason why governing bodies need to take steps to develop strategies to protect their competitions from the prospect of manipulation.

By drawing on the expertise of integrity specialists Genius Sports, this special supplement looks at the threats sports face and the steps which can be taken to protect their competitions. Genius Sports works with international sports governing bodies to protect their competitions, reputation and assets by adopting a process which starts with the building block of an integrity audit to assess risk before implementing and continually reviewing educational programmes, monitoring systems and other tools designed to keep the fixers at bay. ○

Introduction by Kevin Roberts, founding editor of SportBusiness Review.

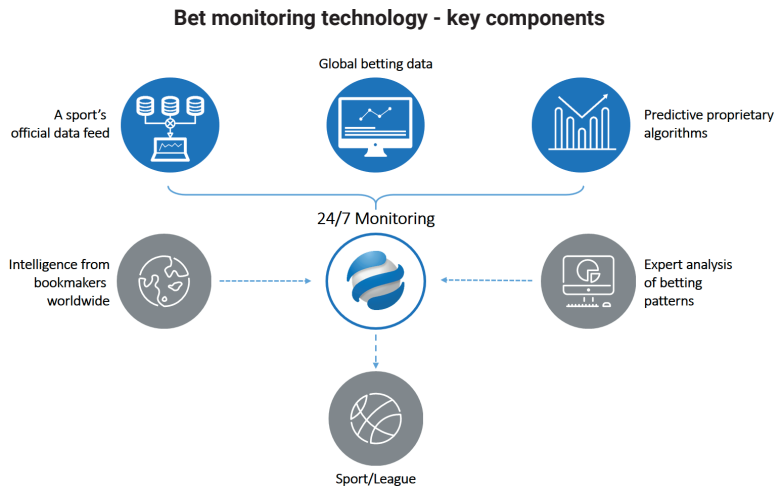
Identifying the issue

The fight against match-fixing begins with identifying when and where it is happening. And over the past decade, bet monitoring technology has provided governing bodies with crucial insight into global betting on their competitions.

These systems track and analyse millions of data points from sporting events around the world, scanning for significant odds changes across markets worldwide. This data can then be cross-referenced with predictive algorithms that indicate what the odds should look like at any given time. Together, these two data feeds create automatic alerts, highlighting potentially suspicious betting activity that requires further examination.

To add context to the data, expert integrity analysts consider key intelligence, ranging from late team changes and injuries to weather conditions, with information pulled from a variety of different sources including individual bookmakers, social media and fan forums.

When no legitimate explanation for the anomalous betting activity can be found, the governing body is alerted immediately, enabling them to cross-check information and, if necessary, launch an investigation.



Shining a light

However, the value of bet monitoring technology is not limited to simply identifying incidents of match-fixing. A number of recent high-profile cases have demonstrated the increasing value monitoring reports have in driving effective investigations.

This was particularly true during FIFA and the Court of Arbitration for Sport's (CAS) recent case against referee Joseph Lamptey. Following a series of questionable decisions by Lamptey during Senegal's 2-1 win over South Africa in November 2016, FIFA received dedicated reports from a number of monitoring

companies including Genius Sports.

FIFA's Appeal Committee described the detailed betting analysis as a "strong strand of circumstantial evidence" that supported their decision to issue Lamptey with a lifetime ban.

Bet monitoring information can be even more impactful in jurisdictions where there are specific laws against match-fixing as a criminal offence. The Southern Stars case of 2013, which led to a number of player arrests, was helped no end by the Victorian State legislation which enabled law enforcement authorities to quickly access key information such as phone records and email exchanges. ○

EXPERT INSIGHT: ADRIAN FORD, GENERAL MANAGER, FOOTBALL DATA CO



What is Football DataCo's role in safeguarding the integrity of English and Scottish football?

Football DataCo is the official data rights-holder of all

the professional leagues in English and Scottish football. One of our key responsibilities is to support the

Leagues in protecting the integrity of 14 different competitions, from the Premier League and Scottish Professional Football League to steps 1-4 in the English National League, through providing specialist bet monitoring technology.

What were the reasons behind your investment in bet monitoring technology back in 2014?

The integrity and unpredictability

of competitions has always been fundamental to both the English and Scottish Football Associations. With over 5,000 games a season, attracting betting from markets all over the world, we needed a system that shed light on global betting activity.

We particularly wanted insight into the specific market movements and the individual factors that could trigger sudden or significant odds changes on our games. The more information

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we have through monitoring reports, the more we understand the possible threat and the better we can equip ourselves to safeguard our competitions in the long-term.

How has bet monitoring technology evolved over time?

Since Football DataCo first began using bet monitoring technology, a major development has been the continued growth of in-play betting, which now accounts for up to 75 per cent of some online bookmakers' turnover.

For sports, this trend has increased the need for monitoring technology

that has highly accurate predictive models. These algorithms are derived from the technology that produces odds for bookmakers and take into account hundreds of different split-second factors such as injuries, sudden weather changes or substitutions.

What does the recent overturn of PASPA mean for the integrity of US sports?

Until the Supreme Court ruling in May, sports betting in the US had been prohibited outside of Nevada, leading to the establishment of a huge illegal betting market, estimated to

be worth more than \$150bn a year. So the integrity threat to US sports is already an issue from unlicensed or illegal bookmakers who often operate offshore. They don't have the same obligations to report information or enforce Know Your Customer protocols and they often accept higher levels of betting on individual markets.

Bringing sports betting into the open through regulation will provide greater visibility over betting activity and encourage cooperation between sports, betting and law enforcement and government. These are both key pillars to protecting the integrity of sports.

Investing in education

For any sport to have an effective integrity strategy, bet monitoring technology has to be at the heart of its approach. But prevention is better than cure and sports are also taking major steps to prevent the rot of match-fixing setting in at all.

The answer lies in education. The vast majority of sportsmen or women who become embroiled in match-fixing scandals have little or no understanding of the strategies of criminals attempting to manipulate games or the risks they are taking.

Sports must therefore take responsibility to educate stakeholders at all levels. This begins with showing their participants the typical approach of a match-fixer and how to spot them, and the type of information criminals may look for. It also involves reinforcing how to respond to these incidents, including specific reporting protocols, what constitutes inside information, and the possible consequences – both professional and personal.

All levels of a sport

Both in and out of sports, education has the invaluable ability to provoke long-term change. And to maximise its value, sports must put a great deal of emphasis



on the lower levels of their competitions and on youth teams, where salaries are lower and their players are more accessible to the public and possibly criminal influences.

Giving young players the tools and knowledge to understand match-fixing and then report or challenge attempts by other players, club owners or officials to manipulate games is paramount.

The foundations of education begin with face-to-face workshops between integrity experts and players, referees, coaches or officials. In-person sessions (delivered above by Integrity Operations Director Ben Paterson) have greater emotional impact, which can be particularly useful when demonstrating the potential consequences.

Meanwhile, the advent of e-learning technology has provided a new tool in every sport's armoury. Ahead of 2018,

the PGA Tour launched a customised e-learning module that has been made compulsory for all players, caddies and officials across its 130 competitions each year.

Moving with the times

The importance of player education was clearly demonstrated earlier this year by the Independent Review of Integrity in Tennis.

This review followed a number of allegations of potential match-fixing across world tennis by BuzzFeed and BBC Sport in January 2016. When publishing its interim findings in April 2018, the report recommended that the "TIU (Tennis Integrity Unit) will devote greater attention to education" going forward.

It recommended expanding the TIU's in-person training efforts and delivering more education to the most vulnerable participants (those below the top tier of tennis competition), the appointment of a dedicated Education Manager as well as specialist integrity educators.

"Effective education can turn the tide from an atmosphere of acceptance and resignation (of match-fixing) to an atmosphere of active participation and resolution to deal with the problem faced," the report stated. [O](#)

EXPERT INSIGHT: ANDY LEVINSON, SVP TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATION, PGA TOUR



What were the motivations/context behind the PGA Tour's Integrity Program?

Integrity is fundamental to the game of golf. The PGA Tour

Integrity Program was established to educate all those involved with PGA Tour competitions about the potential influence of betting-related corruption and to closely monitor all betting activity on our competitions.

PGA Tour athletes deserve to know that they are competing on a level playing field, and our fans deserve to know that each competitor is giving his best effort at all times.

Why did you see it as necessary to combine educational measures with the core bet monitoring service?

While sports betting has increased in popularity in the US, many athletes on the PGA Tour have had little to no

experience with it. Betting-related corruption can come in many forms, some overt and some seemingly innocuous. Therefore, it is imperative that all of our constituents are educated on the manners in which negative influences may present themselves.

What were the benefits for the PGA Tour of deploying an e-learning module (instead of face-to-face workshops) and how do you oversee/administer its use?

The PGA Tour operates six professional golf Tours that compete around the globe. Only a limited number of participants compete at any given tournament. The e-learning module gave us the ability to reach our athletes across all six Tours in an easily digestible, comprehensive manner. With the use of password protected access, we are able to track participation in the program, and we have had 100 per cent compliance to date.

What have been the outcomes/benefits of your Integrity Program to date?

The Program has validated what we believed in advance, which is that PGA Tour competition does not currently have an issue with betting-related corruption. That is not to say that our sport is not immune or that the Program is able to catch everything.

However, the results to date have been positive. Furthermore, we have been able to develop a baseline understanding of the betting activity on our sport in legal, regulated markets around the world, and this will help us as sports betting expands in the US and the popularity of betting on PGA Tour competitions grows globally.

Has the recent overturn of PASPA in the United States increased the need for sports to employ educational services as part of their integrity strategy?

Yes, particularly because many American athletes have never been exposed to regulated sports betting or even considered the potential for betting-related corruption.

Taking a bottom-up approach

Match-fixing can expose even the smallest weaknesses in a sport's armoury. If a sport's internal policies and procedures are not effectively set up and regularly reviewed, betting-related scandals can cause irreparable damage. And the consequences stretch far beyond reputational harm.

In recent years, sponsors have shown an increased willingness to terminate lucrative sponsorship agreements when match-fixing incidents arise, depriving sports of a key source of income. In October 2013, PepsiCo terminated its title sponsorship of the Indian Premier League just two years into a five-year contract reportedly worth \$71m (£59m) with the negative publicity following the 2013 spot-fixing scandal believed to

be a crucial factor.

When the stakes are so high, sports cannot afford complacency. And increasingly, governing bodies must look to the very foundations of their integrity strategy to ensure their competitions are as protected as possible.

From the ground up

Sports have to adopt a holistic approach to their integrity. Specialised integrity audits examine a governing body's entire integrity strategy, from the rules and regulations to their internal processes and means for participants to report suspicious information.

First, these audits enable sports to understand the level of threat they are facing through a comprehensive risk assessment. This begins by analysing

the profile of betting on that sport covering the levels of wagering on individual competitions, the number of bookmakers offering odds and assessments on which markets may be more susceptible to integrity issues.

Another key area analysed is the systems sports have in place for gathering information from players, officials and other stakeholders on suspicious games. Dedicated phone lines as well as mobile apps are being made increasingly available in order to ensure sports can be alerted as quickly as possible to any potential issues.

The complete integrity audit also covers the adequacy of rules and regulations in place, the organisation's internal processes, and the cooperation and partnerships they have with other key stakeholders in the fight against

match-fixing.

Designed to “maintain integrity and prevent and mitigate betting-related corruption”, the PGA Tour’s Integrity Program is one of the most comprehensive in world sport and crucially was a result of a thorough audit of its existing rules and regulations. It combines their customised e-learning module with round-the-clock bet monitoring protection and regular reviews of their internal structures and procedures.

Ultimately, a sport’s competitions will only ever be as secure as their foundations, and the PGA has taken a leading role in protecting the future of golf by looking to the long-term. ○



EXPERT INSIGHT: KEVIN CARPENTER, SPECIAL COUNSEL, GENIUS SPORTS



How important is it for sports to take a holistic approach to integrity and what does this mean in relation to integrity audits?

There is no one single measure sports can take that will eliminate the multi-faceted threats posed by match-fixing and competition manipulation. The only way to effectively combat these threats is by sports taking a broad holistic approach to their integrity.

However, this has to be done in a systemic way, starting with a thorough integrity audit led by a full risk assessment. You cannot devise an effective strategy without knowing the scale and scope of the specific threat that a particular sport is facing.

Why should sports ban betting on their competitions by all participants?

First, it is vital that sports convey a perception of clean and transparent competition which is supported by appropriate prohibitions on betting by participants. Also, by betting on their own sport, players, referees or coaches can make themselves vulnerable to those looking to manipulate games or events.

Different sports approach this issue in multiple different ways but the most important point is that leagues put a prohibition in place which can be actively monitored and enforced.

Should sports grant those who report suspicious information anonymity? What are the potential drawbacks of doing so?

Ideally, to encourage the reporting of information around integrity threats, there would be complete anonymity granted. However, very few sports are in a position to do this. For investigators, a fully anonymous reporting system makes it almost impossible to check the accuracy of the information provided, meaning it has very limited value in disciplinary hearings.

A good approach would be to guarantee anonymity to the reporting person only from the point that charges are brought against a participant and then formal evidence required, up to and including the hearing. Such an approach has already been accepted by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in the FK Pobeda case.

Are measures like integrity audits only available for leagues and federations at the top of sport?

Certainly not. Match-fixing is a threat

to all levels of sport and integrity audits are a vital tool for leagues and federations of all sizes. There are ways and means in which an integrity audit can be done at a minimal cost and at Genius Sports, we have developed an integrity pack which can be tailored to a sport of any size to implement good practices drawn from many sources.

Does the recent overturn of PASPA in the United States increase the need for US sports to invest in key measures such as integrity audits?

Six years ago at a conference in San Diego, I stated that sports betting would become legal within the United States within a decade. At the time, this was greeted with significant derision but now that PASPA has been repealed and with the levels of betting set to increase, it is more important than ever that the major leagues’ integrity strategies are robust, multi-faceted and built for the long-term.

Integrity audits can enable US sports, many of whom are already utilising bet monitoring technology, to address and enhance each component of their integrity strategy, projecting a positive public image to fans and demonstrating a clear commitment to protecting the integrity of their competitions.

Cooperation is key

Corruption can only be defeated by concerted and coordinated cooperation. Open communication between sports, betting operators, regulators, law enforcement, governments and integrity specialists is vital.

Sports assume the main responsibility for protecting the integrity of their competitions and governing bodies should share their experiences and strategies with one another. This enables best practices to be developed and new innovations in integrity to be more widely adopted.

LaLiga has led the way for cooperation in football, working closely with other leagues and federations across South America to present and discuss its own robust integrity programme.

At a time when international player transfers are commonplace, global cooperation is vital for sharing intelligence and identifying players or officials who have a history of being involved in suspicious games.

Engaging with betting

The consequences of match-fixing scandals are undoubtedly severe for sports. But they can be just as significant for bookmakers. The betting industry cannot survive without clean and transparent sport and bookmakers can face huge financial losses from corruption.

Licensed bookmakers are a valuable partner to sports and their integrity strategies. Although not enough on their own, information sharing agreements can complement a sport's bet monitoring capabilities, alerting them to individual account activity that may be suspicious, such as multiple new accounts being opened to avoid betting limits or significant sums being placed on smaller markets.

The Football Association combines information sharing agreements with

bookmakers such as William Hill with 24/7 bet monitoring technology and close working relationships with law enforcement and the Sports Betting Intelligence Unit (SBIU).

This commitment to cooperation is key to protecting all levels of English football and paid dividends in their recent six-year ban of professional player Bradley Wood (below, left) for 25 breaches of their Integrity and Betting Rules.

Going global

Match-fixing poses a truly global threat. More than ever, the bets that profit from manipulated games are largely being placed through an agency system with bookmakers operating in different jurisdictions to both the

criminals behind the fix and where the actual sport is being played.

Although attempts to stamp out match-fixing are increasingly complicated by the multiple jurisdictions involved, initiatives such as the Council of Europe's Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention) can be extremely valuable to sports.

As the only global legal framework for combatting match-fixing, supporting the Council of Europe's efforts enables sports to demonstrate their existing integrity measures, work alongside government bodies to push for specific integrity legislation and liaise with law enforcement authorities to launch effective investigations. ○



(Clive Brunskill / Getty Images)

Proactive action holds the key

Our love of sport relies almost entirely on one factor: its integrity. Sport's global appeal and unique position in society hinges on the unpredictability of competitions.

Fans have to believe that what they are watching is fair; unpredictable not preordained, exciting and not a cynical betrayal of sport's values. But with match-fixing and doping seemingly more rife than ever, public confidence in the integrity of sport is at an all-time low.

Doping clearly undermines the founding principles of any sport. But where it is often instigated by the athlete or his inner circle in order to win, match-fixing can see players purposefully losing games in order for others to make significant financial gain. And where doping is ordinarily a violation of a sport's rules, match-fixing is often run by international crime organisations looking to corrupt sport to circumvent


laws and financially exploit a sport's vulnerabilities.

"Match-fixing is the single greatest threat to the integrity of sport, infiltrating all levels of competition on a global scale" says Ben Paterson, Integrity Operations Director at Genius Sports. "When addressing this threat, all sports have two clear options. They can bury their head and pretend their competitions aren't at risk, or they can assume a multi-pronged approach that combats integrity issues in the long-term and helps to ensure their future."

The reality is that sporting integrity is at a crossroads. While progress has been made and there are a growing number of solutions now at sports' disposal, further action is

undoubtedly required.

Mere allegations of match-fixing can have disastrous consequences so perception is as equally important as reality. Public scrutiny on the integrity of sport will intensify until clear proof is provided showing that its leaders are giving integrity the importance it deserves.

Sports are not alone in the fight against match-fixing. But they must have a proactive vision towards the long-term that puts integrity at the top of their agenda. 

ABOUT GENIUS SPORTS

Genius Sports is global leader in sports data, technology and integrity services. It leads the global fight against match-fixing and betting-related corruption through cutting-edge bet monitoring technology, education (face-to-face workshops and e-learning modules), integrity audits and investigatory services.

Genius Sports is the trusted integrity partner to some of the largest organisations in world sport including Major League Baseball, the PGA Tour, Football DataCo and the English Premier League.

**Find out more from
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