

Corruption in Sports

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1.0 Introduction to Corruption in Soccer

Without a doubt, soccer is one of the most famous sports in the world. It is a source of happiness for the fans but somehow the corruption is spoiling the game and its spirit. Corruption in the Soccer world is an immense issue and causing trouble which is hampering the image and the spirit of the game. There are people involved who are doing this for the monetary benefits and only tampering the image of the game and its value in the hearts of the fans (Raventós & Zolezzi, 2011). The corruption is caused because certain actions of the clubs, agents and the officials related to the game, whose involvement is for personal gains and nothing else. People look up to this game and the players and it gives them immense happiness and motivation. Corruption is taking this away from the fans and the people associated with the game. Soccer is watched by millions around the world and supported by even more (McNamee, 2013). This paper aims at highlighting the allegations and incidents related to corruption in soccer. The paper also states the manner in which immense negativity for the fans and people associated with the game closely is created. It has shown a bad side of the popularity of game that has taken over the spirit of the game (Lamont, Hing, & Gainsbury, 2011).

2.0 Types of Corruption

Every game is supposed to be played unhampered by the forces that destroy the image and spirit of the game. If there is corruption around the game, it loses the importance and the fan base it deserves. There are various types of corruptions that tamper the game. They are gambling or betting, Match fixing and bribery.

2.1 Gambling and Betting

Gambling and betting on soccer games is a growing global industry which is huge and that can be concluded with the fact that it is worth billions of pounds per year. The growth of online betting is also a relevant growth over the years. Billions of pounds involved in betting including both legal and illegal betting in sports and about 70% of the same is related to soccer. Considering the popularity of the game, the amount involved is huge (Croxson & Reade, 2013). **Due to advancement in** internet services and mobile devices, **the people are able to make quick** access which makes betting much easy. **The media such as** television channels and coverage of live soccer matches across the world **increases** interest and opportunity for the people interested in betting. This has led to the widespread practice of "in-running" betting, **where the parties can bet their money based on the live updates** (Gainsbury, 2012)

2.2 Match fixing

Match fixing is the malpractice of fraudulently determining the outcome by bribing or using other methods, of the matches before even they are played. Fixing a match's outcome and then betting accordingly for the personal gains, that is a practice done in case of soccer and it has been around for a while now (Bag & Saha, 2011). The betting scandals can be traced back to 1915 when 7 players were banned after Manchester United defeated Liverpool 2-0 in the match at Old Trafford where the penalty was missed by the visitors (Wheatcroft, 2013). The investigation started after getting complaints from bookmakers and that indicated a run of bets on the goals in each half of the match. In the earlier 2013, 58 Chinese football officials were found involved and given a ban on match fixing and later on 14 people were arrested by the police in Singapore who were said to be a part of a gang which was involved in match-fixing globally. The match fixing has been

detected involving all the major nations with soccer as their primary sports. England, France, Italy and many other countries had the incidents involving match fixings and arrests (Wheatcroft, 2013).

2.3 Bribery

Bribery has been a problem as it affects the decision making everywhere across the world. Recently seven officials from FIFA have been arrested by the US Department of Justice (Fortune.com, 2016). These officials were the governing body of international soccer. The United states were investigating the bribery relating to the broadcast of the world cups but they found evidence related to the world cups bidding too (Anderson et al., 2012). Few moments later the Swiss officials opened another investigation in the bidding process for the world cup 2018 to be held in Russia. **Another investigation was also opened for** world cup 2022 to be held in Qatar (Fortune.com, 2016). One of the informants, who was also a former FIFA official admitted to taking bribes for awarding the world cups hosting to France (1998) and to South Africa (2010). Now the investigation started by the Swiss officials for is to figure out the bribery involved in the bidding of 2018 and 2022 world cups to be held in Russia and Qatar respectively (Fortune.com, 2016).

3.0 Prolific Form of Corruption

As identified in the previous section, the different forms of corruption are match fixing, betting, bribery and gambling. Out of these forms, it is interpreted that match fixing is the most prolific form of corruption in soccer (Abrams, 2010). Various match-fixing incidents have been reported that act as evidence that match fixing cases are present widely (Hill, 2010). According to Chappelet (2016), match fixing has become a new sport for the sport organizations in the twenty-first century. Not only the sport organizations, but it is a new scourge for the stakeholders. Several

cases have been reported where the players or officials have been penalized and/or faced lifetime ban from the sport (Giulianotti, 2011). Match fixing has been termed as ‘epidemic’ in the words of Banks (2016). It is further argued that it is easier for the lower league players to get corrupt (Humphreys & Howard, 2010). However, the players and officials involved in World Cup seem to be no less involved in corruption through match fixing (Feustel & Rodenberg, 2015).

One of the most important motivations that make people involved in soccer match fixing is money. It is argued that money alone is the sole reason for people to get involved in match fixing. It is interpreted that the individuals get involved in match fixing as it is easier to manipulate referees than the team players in soccer (Dunn, 2016). As stated in the Associated Press, El Salvador claimed that the team players were offered money for helping Honduras for qualifying in World Cup. It was reported that Honduras would lose the second place in World cup if Canada won the match and eliminates the opponent from qualifying. Further, it was found that the businessman Ricardo Padilla has offered players money before and has done it again. However, investigations are still going on for this case (Washingtonpost.com, 2016).

Banks (2016) argues that several sports such as basketball, table tennis, hockey and volleyball have match fixing as endemic. But in the case of soccer, match fixing is considered an epidemic as the proportion of scandals in this sport is higher than any other sport. Another incident is reported by Canadian broadcast television network where three former South African Football Association (SAFA) officials were banned by FIFA for match fixing. The people were suspected when South Africa won over Guatemala with a score of 5-0 out of which three goals were made through penalty kicks. Another friendly world-cup score of 4-0 against Thailand were also sought for involvement in match fixing. The SAFA were found guilty of misconduct and wrong-doing. The officials also prevented Perumal's referees and did not allow them to take control of warm-up

games in the World Cup. It was reported that the officials used an amount of \$10 million to be the World Cup host and the officials were arrested and penalized for the same (Cbc.ca, 2016). One of the former strikers of England Delroy Facey was found guilty in a trial for conspiring and bribing the players for match fixing. The player was offered £15,000 which was considered as easy money for the player. The player was found guilty as evidence of Whatsapp and Skype conversations were presented in the court (Theguardian.com, 2015).

The above incidents report the arrest of a few officials in every case. However, it would be astonishing to present the findings of the reports coming from Italy. The reports suggest that the former Italy midfielder, Gennaro Gattuso was involved in match-fixing. On deeper investigation, it was found that over 50 people were arrested for match fixing in Italy since the year 2011. A few other people who were arrested were Fabio Quadri, Francesco Bazzani and Roberto Di Martino (Theguardian.com, 2013). Therefore, it is interpreted that the fixing issue in Soccer is a symptom of a larger problem. The people who do not follow soccer or understand it must have also heard about the Africa Cup of Nations. The people expected Nigeria to win, however the pointers were only 1-0 (Brooks, Lee, & Kim, 2012). The reports suggest that the Burkinabe team encountered several issues such as poor refereeing to multiple injuries in players. It was delightful for the soccer fans to see the players working hard to score against their opponent. There were accuses made for the players being on drugs and it is unfortunate for soccer to face such issues (Kordas, 2016).

Match-fixing is increasing and taking a much greater place in soccer, but gambling on soccer is a growing industry with transactions of billions of pounds annually **and globally**. Betting on soccer is an emerging phenomenon as the people are wagering huge sums bringing it to a threat of match-fixing (Nilsson & Andersson, 2010). Going by the history of cheating in sports, it is estimated that the illegal market of gambling is worth \$700bn out of which 70% is earned through

soccer trade (Keogh & Rose, 2013). It is analysed that the people are betting on over 55,000 matches annually out of which 500 matches are potentially fixed (Keogh & Rose, 2013). These activities are leading to run millions of pounds through criminal activities. According to the Interpol, 2300 raids have been conducted for disrupting match fixers. The Interpol have seized over \$27m and bets are worth \$2billion (Keogh & Rose, 2013).

It is further analysed that people are betting on a wide array of options in different countries. In Asia, the people are found wagering on choices of draw, win or lose. In case of Europe, the people are found wagering on a wide array of choices than the straightforward ones (Spapens & Olfers, 2015; Hassan & Hamil, 2013). A few examples are betting on the correct score, hat-trick, and number of goals, penalty, sending-off or amount of corners (Veuthey, 2014). Additionally, people are also betting on time-specific odds such as penalty in the last five-minutes of the match. It is interpreted that the betting and gambling is not a new phenomenon (Xu & Harvey, 2014). The trend has only been rising in the recent times as the people are in a hope of winning cash prizes (Hill, 2010).

Very often, there are concerns if betting is legal or illegal. It is found that betting on sports is ban in a few countries, but the people find it more attractive to bet as the winnings are lucrative. The arrangement of gambling is made on mutual trust and there are no records of bets. Risk is taken by the gamblers (Towfigh & Glöckner, 2011). Going down the history, seven British players were banned in 1915 at the match where Manchester United beat Liverpool by 2-0 as they missed a penalty. The players were jailed 50 years later as there were a series of floodlight failures (Wheatcroft, 2013).

All these facts and findings leave us with the real question of why and whether the match fixing and other corrupt practices matter. It is cheating on the soccer fans as the integrity of sports is harmed. It is argued that the ramifications of match fixing take the form of reputational damage, penalties from governing bodies and criminal sanctions (Rompuy, 2014).

4.0 Conclusion

Gambling and betting on soccer games is a growing global industry which is huge and that can be concluded with the fact that it is worth billions of pounds per year. Fixing a match's outcome and then betting accordingly for the personal gains, that is a practice done in case of soccer and it has been around for a while now. Bribery has been a problem as it affects the decision making everywhere. Out of these forms, it is interpreted that match fixing is the most prolific form of corruption in soccer. Match fixing has been termed as 'epidemic'. There is a need to recognize the issue of match fixing and other corrupt practices in soccer. It seems like the true essence of sports and spirit is getting lost in between the scandals. The associations and commissions need to find different approaches to fight against match fixing. There is a need of comprehensive strategy for combating the complex threat of match fixing and other corrupt practices. Unless the players in the field regain conscience about integrity and doing justice with the sport, no policy can stop them from being corrupt.

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