

The Play the Game Statement for Integrity and

PREAMBLE

The initiative

There is growing awareness in sport of the risks posed by corruption and other unethical behaviour, and the public is expecting greater accountability and probity from the sports sector.

The organisers of Play the Game believe that the timing is right for the introduction of a set of general principles for countering corruption in sport and in sport management, because the sport sector must take account of increasingly stringent domestic and international regulatory frameworks.

The organisers of Play the Game are delighted to have initiated the development of this Statement for integrity and anti-corruption in sport.

The Statement was developed and formally adopted by the participants of the 4th Play the Game conference on sport and society in Copenhagen on 10 November 2005.

The Statement is supported by Transparency International, the global anti-corruption coalition.



Jan Borgen from Transparency International Norway and Hans B. Skaset, former head of Norwegian sport, headed the workshop that wrote Play the Game's groundbreaking statement.

The objectives

- **To be** a guiding tool to which national sports associations, but also governments, international sports associations, the media, Play the Game, and others can look for a reference to counter corruption in sport.
- **To be** used by national sports associations as a starting point for developing codes of conduct systems or as a benchmark in their organisations.
- **To assist** national sports associations, as well as players, referees, coaches, and sponsors to:
 1. Ensure that corruption, in all its forms is eliminated from sports (zero tolerance)
 2. Ensure that the integrity of sports management is upheld through strong leadership and by maintaining the highest standards of ethical behaviour
 3. Demonstrate their commitment to countering corruption

Widest possible acceptance

The Statement aims at attracting the widest possible acceptance. Those using them should contribute to their further development.

The values

The Statement is based on a commitment to fundamental values of integrity, transparency and accountability. National and international sports associations shall aim to create and maintain a trust-based and inclusive internal culture in which corruption is not tolerated.

I. THE NEED FOR ACTION

Corruption is damaging

With the changing role of sport, abandoning the previous social role, becoming more and more commercial, and with the increase in television coverage and corporate sponsorship, sport and sport management have become a perfect breeding ground for corruption.

Corruption in sport is damaging. It is stealing the future of youth, the future of athletes and players and the future of sport:

- a. It damages** clubs and sports associations, resulting in mismanagement and incompetence, misuse of funds, unnecessary expenses, extortion and blackmail, criminal prosecutions, fines, and blacklisting. Corruption in sport is used to attain certain positions (honorary or otherwise), influence the allocation of television or other rights, acquire construction contracts, etc. Corruption excludes clubs, coaches, players and referees from effective participation in decision-making.
- b. It damages** individuals, resulting in reduced morale, criminal prosecution, fines and imprisonment. It lowers the standards of sportsmanship.
- c. It damages** the reputation of sport. Illicit dealings by players, referees, and officials throw sports into public disrepute. The public is increasingly calling into question the integrity of clubs and sports associations and federations, at the national and international level.

d. It is particularly damaging in the developing world. It leads to poverty, and underdevelopment. Corruption usually hits the poorest first and most.

Lack of guidance

Existing ethical guidelines in sports do not effectively prevent or detect corruption, and do not adequately support the many clubs and sports associations and federations which wish to see a corruption-free environment. In particular they fail to address:

- lack of transparency and accountability in the management of clubs and associations, including the financial administration and the transfer of players
- exploitation of young players through agent and transfer contracts for under-age players
- lack of training and discussions about corruption issues among the different actors in sport, especially among sports officials and players
- lack of awareness of corruption risks
- lack of strategy to counter corruption systematically

The need to act

Play the Game and Transparency International strongly endorse the elimination of corruption in sport and sport management, and call on all those with an interest in fighting corruption in sport, to take effective and co-ordinated action, on both a domestic and international basis.

Anti-Corruption in Sport

II. RECOMMENDED ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTIONS

Play the Game recommends the adoption of the following actions, which it believes would materially contribute to the reduction of corruption in sport, at the national and international level.

1. Actions for national sports associations

Sports associations and federations can play a vital role in combating corruption. They provide an avenue through which sports leaders can meet and exchange views. They are the voice of sports nationally, and have a duty to ensure the integrity of their member clubs.

Play the Game recommends that national associations:

1. **Demonstrate** a strong commitment, within own organisation, to countering corruption and to improving standards of integrity, transparency and accountability in sport
2. **Endorse**, within own organisation, a strict zero tolerance policy against all forms of corruption
3. **Publicly speak** out against corruption
4. **Hold to account**, within own organisation, those in positions of power who abuse these positions for private gain
5. **Ensure** that corrupt practices do not develop in relationship with the sponsor companies they partner
6. **Increase awareness** among their leaders and administrators, as well as among the members of sports associations and federations, trainers, players, and sponsors of the issue of corruption and its consequences through publicity and training
7. **Adopt and adhere** to appropriate corporate codes of conduct that commit them to a strict anti-corruption policy. They must, inter alia:
 - a. Ensure that the integrity of sport management is upheld through strong leadership and by maintaining the highest standards of ethical behaviour
 - b. Adopt measures to ensure protection of whistleblowers (i.e. secure and accessible channels through which players and others can raise concerns and report violations without risk of reprisal)
 - c. Adopt transparent measures to maintain financial accounting, internal controls and independent auditing practices
 - d. Establish independent ethics committees whose role it is to monitor the implementation of the code of conduct within the organisation

- e. Establish sanctions and means of restitution in the case of breach of the codes of conduct.
8. **Encourage** members to adopt and adhere to appropriate corporate codes of conduct that commits them to a strict anti-corruption policy. The code should provide a disciplinary mechanism under which members who breach the code are sanctioned.
9. **With regard** to international sport associations, national sport associations should:
 - a. Assert their rights and legitimate means, laid down in the rules and regulations of the international federations, to influence the good governance of the international organisations
 - b. Work in conjunction with them, both in the developed and the developing world, so as to develop a co-ordinated approach to anti-corruption issues
 - c. Demonstrate a commitment to countering corruption and to improving standards of integrity, transparency and accountability in international sports organisations
 - d. Question and debate the role of international sports leaders and how they interact with the corporate world
 - e. Hold to account those international leaders who abuse their positions for private gain.
10. **Work** in conjunction with government bodies to ensure that national and international efforts to curb corruption in sport are well-founded, consistent and effective.

2. Actions for Governments

Action by governments is fundamental to an effective anti-corruption environment in sport. The perception in sport is that while many governments may have signed international anti-corruption conventions, and may have introduced anti-corruption laws, few are taking genuine effective action to prevent corruption.

Play the Game recommends that national authorities:

- **Hold to account** government officials who, directly or indirectly, are involved in sport corruption. There must be no immunity or impunity for corrupt practices.
- **Hold to account** government officials who allow, by connivance or complacency, sport administrators to corrupt sport
- **Effectively defy** any attempt by international sport associations, in criminal matters, to claim superiority over national legislation and national authorities.
- **Co-operate** with other governments in preventing corruption in international sports
- **Increase** their efforts to work with

appropriate international institutions, to ensure that all countries properly implement their international obligations under the UN, OECD and other international anti-corruption conventions and agreements

- **Co-operate** with the sport sector in effectively implementing national anti-corruption initiatives

3. The role of the media

Media coverage of corruption in sport is vital. Play the Game recommends that national and international media organisations:

- **Foster** greater transparency in the coverage of sport corruption. A particular responsibility lies with the international media organisations, including those which support the 2003 Charter on Media Transparency, to raise issues of transparency and accountability in sport management in national and international sports organisations
- **Media** organisations and institutions must adopt policies that ensure coverage of social issues in sport as a way to monitor corruption in sports organisations
- **Encourage** journalists to investigate allegations of corruption in national and international sport associations
- **Educate** journalists in sport corruption and its consequences

4. The role of Play the Game

Play the Game will consider to:

- **Expand** Play the Games international news service for exposing corruption in sport
- **Establish** an annual Play the Game award for the best investigative journalism on corruption in sport
- **Strengthen** the Play the Game international networks for linking and supporting those fighting corruption in sport
- **Establish** a link with human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Reporters Without Frontiers, to provide protection to journalists who report corruption cases
- **Develop** a set of indicators for use in national and international surveys and indexes on the scope, scale and negative impacts of corruption in sport. Play the Game may consider to work this out together with Transparency International
- **Establish** annual awards for honouring those fighting against corruption in sport.
- **Involve** former and current top athletes in different sports in an international coalition for corruption-free sport (e.g. members of the World Sports Academy)