



Journalist Declan Hill knows how to fix a football match but does not recommend it as a career choice.

## Good fixers are experts on human nature

Most people can only wonder how you go about fixing a football match. Someone who knows is Canadian journalist and academic Declan Hill. He has spent years researching the subject and at Play the Game he let participants in on some of the secrets.

To fix a match without getting caught takes expert knowledge of human nature in order to convince players or referees to help get the right result. The method of approaching those individuals is the very key to successful match fixing, according to Declan Hill. Getting an effective result involves establishing a personal

# HOW TO FIX A FOOTBALL MATCH

by Kasper Lindberg

bond with the victim, isolating him or her from the rest of the team and posing the right type of threat in order to force the victim to work for the match-fixer.

In an example of successful match fixing, Hill revealed how Malaysian match fixers had succeeded in fixing up to 90 per cent of the matches in the national football league for several years in the early 1990's.

The Malaysian scandal came to an end but Declan Hill was impressed by the expertise of the network of fixers.

"There are half a dozen master fixers, and these guys are brilliant. If you want experts on human nature, these guys are really good," he said.

Hill's example of poor match fixing came from Turkey. The fixer was taped during an approach of one of the key players because at the time people had already gotten word that fixing was about to take place. The whole story ended in a tragedy as the person who attempted to set up the fixers with the tape recorder was shot down, and the people responsible for the crime remain unknown.

### Malaysian example: How to fix a match

- Connect with the player. Establish a relationship.
- Approach a player when he is vulnerable.
- Isolate the player psychologically from the rest of the team.
- Establish a bond. Build trust.
- Pay the player quickly.
- Approach only one player. Then let that player get the rest of the team in on the idea.

### Turkish example: How NOT to fix a match

- Bet a huge amount of money on one very improbable result, thereby drawing attention to the foul play.
- Approach a number of players individually to try and get the result.
- Show them money, but do not give them any before they have fixed the match.
- Shoot the guy who tries to uncover the fix.

## Betting is threatened too

### Match fixing is an old practice that has become easier

by Kasper Lindberg

Match fixing has been around as long as sport itself but with the nature of modern sports gambling, the fixing of matches has become easier and is rapidly becoming a serious threat to sport.

So says an expert on the topic, Warwick Bartlett, Director of Global Gaming and Betting Consultants. At Play the Game, he put match fixing into a historical perspective and pointed out that it is only now that sport's governing bodies are fully waking up to the presence of irregular betting patterns.

For the sport gambling industry match fixing is also a serious problem and the fight against it

is a fight for survival for sport as well as betting companies. If customers pick up on widespread fixing, their gambling will decline. As Bartlett pointed out, horse racing's market share has declined because it is much easier to fix a race than it is to fix a football match.

He admitted, however, that today's betting exchanges make the act of profiting by betting on a loser much easier, and he pointed to actions which are being taken to combat abuse of the system.

### Warning systems

Usually, the first sign of a match being fixed is when large sums of money are being placed on that particular match, so to Bartlett the most important thing is to have an exchange of information between bookmakers and the sport in order to detect these gambling patterns and to inform the sport federations.

The Wimbledon tennis tournament, for example, has agreed a deal with the Betting Exchange Belfair to receive advance warning of any suspicious betting patterns.

Bartlett emphasized the need for strong law to back up the exchange of information as well as increased penalties that outweigh the profits of match fixing. In the UK, a gambling commission is being set up – a commission that has wide powers of search, is able to introduce harsh penalties, and can demand audit trails.

"They're working with rather than against the sports and the gambling companies. And we are hoping that great things might come of this. We are hoping that it might provide a template for the rest of the world to follow," Bartlett said.

Another idea currently being discussed is a so-called "white list" in which only certain approved gambling websites are awarded a licence to operate.

# MATCH FIXERS PLAY ON A LOSER

Match fixing is emerging everywhere football is played

by Jesper Kock

Football is all about winning. It does not matter whether the championship is within reach or the team is about to be knocked out of the Cup, the official agenda always dictate that you play to win. However, over the past year a hidden agenda has begun to emerge. This agenda is not about winning but to achieve a fixed result for the game. Match fixing has become an unfair opponent in the world of football and there is a real risk that sport will be paying a huge price.

In 2005, German referee Robert Hoyzer was as convicted of match fixing. At the time, FIFA president Sepp Blatter characterized the case as a "one-off". But a review of articles about match fixing published in international media in the period from 1 January 2005 to 1 April 2006 paints a radically different picture. The media can report more than 25 cases of match fixing allegations, police investigations and convictions from more than 20 countries and four different continents.

What the examples have in common is the fact that match fixing is not employed in an attempt to make a short cut to the championship or promotion. Instead match fixing aims for the immense sums of betting money placed with Internet bookmakers. English bookmakers alone handle more than four billion pounds a year and 40 per cent involve football. As in any other kind of business, the rule of getting maximum outcome for minimum input applies. In other words, higher odds are better odds.

## Odds 1-8787

High odds became a reality in the summer of 2005, when the Finnish club FC Allianssi lost 8-0 to FC Haka Valkeakoski. Sums invested in this game were unprecedented with money coming primarily from Southeast Asia. The "lucky" winners were able to collect their money times 8787. To complete the picture, Allianssi had been purchased by a wealthy Chinese businessmen just one month prior to the game. A new coach had been instated and nine new players had their first appearance in



In 2005, German football referee Robert Hoyzer was sentenced to 29 months in jail for taking bribes to fix the outcome of a number of matches in the German football league. Photo credit: Polfoto

the game against Haka. Meanwhile the club's goal keeper was sent off to attend a "training camp" in Belgium.

Perhaps this is not a typical example of match fixing, yet one tendency prevails. More often than not, match fixing occurs in less prominent leagues or lower divisions where the salaries of players are low and therefore may work as an incitement to engage in match fixing.

Odds of 8787-1 are striking; but so is a match result of 8-0. To avoid attracting too much attention, match fixing can be done in other ways. One method is to bet on a specific result and yet another method is to bet on combined half time or full time results. Having an impact on several matches simultaneously is also highly desirable because it gives you the opportunity to combine results.

## Getting the right players

In most match fixing cases which have surfaced in public, outcomes have been as predicted. The reason is that it can be easier to persuade players to guarantee defeat when the team is already trapped in a downward spiral. Despite high-profile referee scandals in places like Germany, Brazil, Czech Republic and Poland, buying a referee is not simple. Therefore, the goal keeper and defenders are important players to get on board

too. Penalties and own goals are part of the game after all.

Though match fixing so far has emerged mainly in lower divisions and less prominent leagues, the problem is steadily approaching the very top of the hierarchy. German referee Hoyzer was convicted of fixing a cup match in a German tournament and in Vietnam match fixing has infiltrated matches at national level in this recent year's Southeast Asian Games.

## Match-fixing reported by international media 2005-2006

### Allegations:

China, Greece, Bangladesh, France, Serbia-Montenegro, Ghana, Mexico and Northern Ireland

### Police investigations:

Portugal, Finland, Vietnam, Belgium, Kenya, Austria, Germany, Italy and Singapore

### Convictions:

Brazil, Turkey, Italy, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic and Slovakia

More match fixing details at [www.playthegame.org](http://www.playthegame.org)