When the ISL marketing company went bust in the spring of 2001 – they'd paid too many bribes and run out of money – it emerged that ISL had failed to pay nearly £50 million it owed to FIFA, money paid by the Brazilian network Globo and the Japanese Dentsu companies for World Cup rights.

FIFA President Sepp Blatter had no choice but to report the alleged crime to the authorities in Zug and he issued a press release naming a number of ISL executives, mere functionaries at the company.

Curiously Blatter omitted from his list of alleged criminals the name of the key man in all the secret dealings of ISL, the inheritor of Dassler's black book of kickbacks, the architect of modern ISL bribes, the tall, angular, grey-haired, reticent figure of Jean-Marie Weber.

Blatter was sending a clear signal. Jean-Marie was to be protected. He was too important to be messed with. He knew too much. Jean-Marie knows everything.

The Zug authorities knew what pressures they were up against. Undeterred, they hired in one of their former Investigating Magistrates who had gone to live in Vienna. His name is Thomas Hildbrand, an investigator of great integrity and great determination. A man with a developed nose for corruption. Hildbrand was given the FIFA case and promptly disappeared from public view.

But Blatter was hearing what was going on, who was being questioned, what documents and bank records Hildbrand was gathering from the wreckage of the ISL company.

This was disastrous. Decades of kickbacks were being uncovered. What could be done?

Blatter moved secretly to kill the investigation. He wrote to the authorities in Zug and withdrew FIFA's complaint. They really weren't bothered anymore.

Hildbrand ignored Blatter and went on digging. Blatter induced friendly reporters at papers like the Financial Times to publish stories alleging that Hildbrand was unfit to conduct the investigation. Hildbrand and his bosses in Zug ignored these smears.

In May 2005 Investigator Hildbrand emerged from the shadows, his investigation completed, and issued an indictment against the ISL executives – including Jean-Marie Weber – accusing them of embezzling that £50 million from FIFA and a number of related financial crimes.

Subsequently Hildbrand's report has been adopted by the Zug Prosecutor's office and the case has been sent for trial [...]
obtained during the ISL embezzlement investigation, Hildbrand had been instructed to launch a second investigation.

Blatter didn’t issue a press release about this raid. He never talks about it in public. Neither do the other 23 men on FIFA’s Executive Committee. […] That was November 2005 and as ever, Hildbrand disappeared from sight. Then in April 2006 he emerged in a courtroom in Vaduz in Liechtenstein, neighbouring Switzerland.

It was the excellent reporter Jean-François Tanda who got hold of crucial evidence.

It emerged that this was Hildbrand’s second application to the court. He’d been there earlier, asking to use documents from two secret ISL-owned offshore enterprises in his case against the ISL executives. He was given that permission by the Vaduz judge. Now he was back – he wanted to use these documents again in his new investigation.

Bribes for TV and marketing rights

The first enterprise was a Foundation ISL had set up in Liechtenstein. It was called Nunca – Spanish for “Never.”

In documents filed separately in a Berlin court, one of the shareholders of ISL described the function of Nunca as “to pay bribes to obtain licences for TV and marketing rights for sports events, for example, the football World Cup.”

In our parallel investigations, James and I discovered that in the late 1990s ISL had secretly transferred nearly £20 million to Nunca to pay bribes into the new century.

But the money wasn’t paid out from Nunca. It travelled across the Atlantic to another company set up in the British Virgin Islands. It was called Sunbow and if you were on the secret Sunbow money distribution list, the sun would shine forever.

Back in Vaduz in April last year, less than two months before the World Cup kicked off in Germany, the court was told by Hildbrand that the liquidator of the bankrupt ISL company had secretly forced some of the sports officials who took bribes to repay some of the money.

The court was then told that Hildbrand was investigating his belief that the money had not been repaid by the crooks – but had been repaid by FIFA! […] In February this year Magistrate Hildbrand turned up in South Germany with some tough questions for a potential – but unwilling – witness.

Hildbrand’s investigation has typically gone quiet again – he doesn’t talk about it – but I can assure you that it continues. […]

Cross your fingers that Hildbrand does the job. The signs are promising – and that will be the end of an era of FIFA corruption.

Read the whole presentation on www.playthegame.org

by Kirsten Sparre

A young man from Guatemala was present with his camera at almost every session of Play the Game. The man is Juan José Marroquin who was busy documenting the conference for use in an upcoming documentary film about corruption in sport.

For a young filmmaker trying to penetrate the murky world of sports corruption, Play the Game has proven to be an invaluable source of information and networking opportunities.

“I got inspired by other journalists who are chasing for stories, mostly in the corruption part of our sports world. I think this gives me new energy to go on with these subjects”.

John Volkers, Journalist de Volkskrant, the Netherlands.
After years of turmoil, a new league has been formed based on values such as democracy, transparency and equality.

by Kirsten Sparre

Cleaning up corruption in Kenyan football has turned out to be a much larger project than expected. But after seven years’ hard work, Bob Munro, the Canadian-born chairman of top club Mathare United, can begin to see progress.

“I expected it would only take 1-2 years to clean up the sport. I was wrong. There were many, many times over the past seven years when I wanted to give up. But that was no longer a personal choice as I have never broken a promise to the Mathare youth. Some predators in the Kenyan Football Federation were stealing the future of the youth of the Mathare slums and I had promised to help them,” Munro told participants on the opening day of Play the Game 2007.

The conference carried the ambitious subtitle “Creating coalitions for good governance in sport”, and engineer Bob Munro is a veteran of such coalitions. In 2003, he was instrumental in setting up an alternative football league in Kenya for eleven Premier League clubs who shared a wish to play corruption-free football, and he holds important posts such as Vice Chairman of the Kenyan Premier League Ltd. and Chairman of the football club Mathare United FC that is part of the Mathare Youth Sports Association.

A false dawn

For a while the strategy of an alternative football league seemed to be working and in early 2006 FIFA convened a meeting in Cairo in Egypt. Here FIFA, the African Football Confederation (CAF), the Kenyan Sports Minister, the Kenyan Football Federation and three representatives from the...
Despite the threats of being deported from the country, chairman of Mathare United football club, Bob Munro, has worked for many years to create a corruption-free football league in Kenya.

new Kenyan Premier League Ltd. signed the so-called Cairo Agreement to normalise the situation for football in Kenya.

“Sadly, that historic break-through meeting soon turned out to be a false dawn and again the turning point was money,” Munro told the conference.

On the back of the Cairo agreements, the Kenyan Premier League Ltd., attracted sponsorship money worth more than 100 million Kenyan shillings. Officials from the Kenyan Football Federation then changed their minds about the Cairo Agreement and said that the sponsorship money really belonged to them and not to the clubs. That led to a drawn out battle with the government and KFF officials on one side and the Kenyan Premier League with CAF and FIFA on the other side, and it culminated in Kenya being suspended from FIFA.

**Threat of deportation**

The politics of football in Kenya are baffling for most outsiders, and in late 2006 events took a turn for the bizarre. The Kenyan Sports Minister decided to dissolve the Kenyan Football Federation although he had no authority to do so, and he set up a Munro Probe Committee to investigate Bob Munro and his conduct. Munro was also threatened with deportation from the country.

“The deportation threat was real. In late November 2006 several immigration officers with plain-clothes policemen suddenly appeared at my office and insisted I accompany them downtown to see the Principal Immigration Officer,” Munro told the conference.

Immigration officers said Munro had been given a wrong category of immigration permit and should hand it back and apply for a new permit in a different category. But Munro was certain that if he complied, his application would be rejected and he would be deported.

“I was saved by the fact that I had actually done nothing wrong and by the interventions of friends in and outside government especially the Canadian High Commissioner but also the international petition started by the Play the Game network,” Munro explained.

**The unsung heroes**

The work on combating corruption in Kenyan football continues and 2007 brought good news too. With support from FIFA, CAF and the legitimate Kenyan Football Federation, all legitimately qualified clubs were re-united in a single league under the ownership and management of the Kenyan Premier League Ltd. It is a company in which all clubs have equal shares and votes. FIFA also lifted the international ban on Kenya.

There are many unsung heroes in the struggle for corruption-free football in Kenya, and Munro paid tribute to a number of them. They include club officials, coaches, players and referees who invest their time and energy in cleaning up sport and building good clubs. They also include journalists who refuse bribes and resist threats to exposure the culture of corruption, and international aid agencies, Transparency International and the Stramme Foundation in Norway who have filled financial gaps left by corruption.

“But the real reasons for fighting corruption are not monetary. They are not just stealing money, they are stealing the future of our sport. Particularly they are stealing the future of our youth and especially the poorest youth, who dream that through sport they can help themselves and their families escape poverty. Stealing the dreams of the youth is the worst crime committed by the corrupt. That is why you and I and everyone else must never ever relent in the fight for corruption-free sport,” Munro concluded in answer to his own question: why fight corruption in Kenyan football?

**CORRUPTION**

**Lessons learned**

Bob Munro has learned the hard way that in fighting corruption in sport
- corruption is never sporting; it always fights back and usually behind your back
- corruption has no regulation time; injury time starts at the first whistle
- corruption has no offside rule; there are always opponents between you and the goal
- honesty pays, but beware if you are asked to pay for honesty
- never underestimate the capacity of the villains to use even tougher tactics against you
- never be tempted or provoked to adopt the dirty tactics used against you
- watch out when the villains stress the need for more “give and take”, they want you to give whilst they continue taking
- expect attacks on your motives and character
- insist on “zero tolerance” and don’t be tempted by appeals to compromise
- be like Liverpool fans and make sure “You will never walk alone”, especially after dark
- always double or triple the time you think or are told it will take

**UPDATE**

**Clubs help heal Kenya’s wounds**

In February 2008, the Kenyan Premier League Ltd. (KPL) adopted a new motto to guide all their future activities on and off the field. The motto is: For the good of our sport and our nation.“

Living up to the motto, the KPL decided to begin this year’s season with a special series of “Football for Unity” friendly matches with the aim of bringing people together again in a peaceful way after the violence that swept the country in the wake of the disputed presidential elections in December.

The clubs set a low ticket price and agreed that all gate receipts and referees’ fees would be pooled and the funds donated to the Kenyan Red Cross to help the victims of post-election violence.

The power of football to create unity may also be furthered by the fact that KPL has entered into a four year sponsorship deal with Africa’s leading satellite tv-station, SuperSport. This means that for the first time in history, KPL matches will be beamed across Africa.

“Being participant of Play the Game conference was an unforgettable experience. It was the most informative, academic and professional experience I ever participated in”.

Fikir Yilikal, Journalist, Ethiopia.
Football players prop up autocracy in hunt for money

Players and fans should act as checks and balances for FIFA, says former top goalkeeper Shaka Hislop

Money makes the world go around in professional football according to Play the Game speaker Shaka Hislop. Players have bought into a world of profit and loss that is distorting the culture of football. It is also concentrating power amongst the game’s administrators in an ever-more autocratic fashion, putting the autonomy of the game under constant threat from within.

Hislop retired from professional football in 2007 after a distinguished playing career as goalkeeper for Premier League clubs Newcastle, West Ham and Portsmouth, and international recognition for both England and Trinidad and Tobago (by virtue of his dual nationality). However, this has not dampened his long-held interest in the political side of football, an area of the game he believes has been forgotten by many of today’s professionals.

Their apathy has been paid for by the increasing wealth in world football, in which everything has its price, including players themselves.

“Footballers continue to ignore, turn a blind eye or be completely oblivious to our sport’s governing as we chase our boyhood dreams around the pitch. Our dreams neatly packaged and branded and sold to the highest bidder,” Hislop told delegates.

“As the rewards of success grow even higher, we distance ourselves even further from anyone and everyone around the game. We’re only following everyone else’s lead though,” he continued. “Our indifference, our self-absorption, indeed our arrogant disregard is as a result of our recognition and acceptance of this fact of the modern day game.”

As more and more clubs and federations sign up to this new era of professional football where the ‘big business model’ rules, Hislop believes that the nature of the game has changed, losing its innocence and its ideals. The ‘big business model’ of football rewards those who keep quiet and play by the system. This ‘trickle-down’ system relies upon the unwavering support of the fans, who are bank-rolling world football, for the benefit of administrators and players for whom “bank balances have become far more important than medals won.”

The rise of Warner

The sport’s autonomy is increasingly under threat. Hislop believes that FIFA is increasingly being dominated by a select group of people, with the same names appearing on list after list of FIFA committees and sub-committees. Names like that of fellow Trinidadian, Jack Warner, Vice President of FIFA and a dominating figure in Trinidadian and Tobagonian football.

“Over the last decade Mr Warner has transformed himself into a larger-than-life character, based largely on his success in the rise to the near peak of football’s governing hierarchy. All this while navigating occasional run-ins with the FIFA Ethics Committee,” Hislop told Play the Game delegates.

Accusations against Warner include a world cup ticketing scandal, improper accounting and the hosting of international football tournaments on Trinidadian soil for his personal enrichment. Given that FIFA has been strident in its calls for a separation between government and sport, it may or may not come as a surprise that Warner is also chairman and co-leader of the opposition party in the Trinidad and Tobago parliament.

“Football in Trinidad and Tobago and indeed the Caribbean has become far more autocratic than autonomous. The pure autonomy I experienced as a child on my grassy Eden had given way to the forbidden fruit of autocracy and I was living its consequences,” believes Hislop.

FIFA is too insular

With people like Warner sitting in the upper echelons of FIFA’s hierarchy, one might forgive Hislop for giving up hope for the future. However, he believes there is hope for the future, against an increasingly autocratic world football. This hope lies within the games true assets, the players, and its lifeblood, the fans. Without either of whom, footballs business model would collapse.

“FIFA’s credibility problems, real or perceived, are of its own making,” says Hislop. “FIFA has become far too insular. With next to no outside involvement or input how can FIFA hope to be seen as transparent or just?

“It is here that both Players’ and Fans’ Associations hold the trump cards in this game of football governance. A fact that FIFA is now alluding to with their signing of a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ with FIFPro, the world body of players’ associations,” he continued.

But, this recognition should not be one-sided, Hislop warns. “With it comes a responsibility on the part of players to steer football back towards its roots. Players and fan groups have the power to act as checks and balances for FIFA. Through their joint actions, football can have an autonomous future.

“The most impressive thing for me was that Play the Game is really the one and only conference I’ve been to so far which succeeds in making interdisciplinary debate and the theory-practice dialogue working at the same time.” Markus Kurscheidt, Msc and PhD Economics, Senior Lecturer of Sport Management, School of Sport Science, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany.
When Trinidad and Tobago's football team, the Soca Warriors, qualified for the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, the players were heroes on the islands. However, one year later many of them were blacklisted from representing the national side the following year. Their crime? To stand up to the Trinidad and Tobago Football Federation (TTFF) and demand the share of the World Cup revenues they had been promised before the tournament.

As reward for qualifying for the World Cup, the players were promised 50 per cent of earnings generated by the TTFF. Much to their astonishment, this led to a payout of just 800 USD for each player, despite World Cup sponsorships that totalled millions of dollars.

Within months, 16 members of the Trinidad and Tobago squad had launched a legal challenge to the figures. Government accountants backed up the players' suspicions, putting revenues at approximately 28 million USD, suggesting a bonus fund of 14 million USD.

A very angry reaction

The reaction from Jack Warner was swift and condemning. Warner is Vice President of FIFA, President of the regional football association CONCACAF and a special adviser to TTFF, and he was not pleased about the player's actions.

Shaka Hislop, former goalkeeper for the Soca Warriors, told delegates at Play the Game that Warner in a press interview with the Caribbean Media Corporation accused the players of greed, and of holding the TTFF to ransom.

"He promised that we would 'stay outside the pail of organised football!' Those comments and threats prompted me to write to him personally in response, pointing to our human right to legal counsel and, particularly, that despite his position within the region's football, he had taken leave of neutrality all together," Hislop said.

The TTFF has later agreed to go to arbitration in London over the issue, and Warner's ban on the sixteen players was lifted. The case will be heard in April 2008.

A troubled relationship

While the World Cup experience was a line in the sand moment for many of Trinidad and Tobago players, Hislop is no stranger to the internal wranglings of the TTFF, and in particular TTFF special adviser Jack Warner. In fact, it was not the first time he had faced exclusion from the national team after disagreeing with the game's most senior administrator in the Caribbean.

"My relationship with Mr Warner started some 13 years ago," explained Hislop. "I was in the third year of my professional life and the only goalkeeper on the books of modest second division club, Reading FC. I was being forced, by a curious TTFF mandate, to return to Trinidad for the anniversary 'celebration' of a game that we had lost some 5 years earlier. A game that had we won would have seen us qualify for World Cup Italia 1990. A strange thing to celebrate by anyone's standards. Nonetheless, I resisted. A spell of 5 years in the international wilderness followed."

When Hislop returned to the international fold in 2000, he was installed as captain of the national team, in recognition of his standing within the English game where he represented Premier League club West Ham United at the time.

Six years later, the island's players managed to achieve what no other Trinidadians or Tobagonians had achieved before - to qualify for the World Cup - and later had the rare, but dubious pleasure of being excluded from representing their own country because they complained about broken promises from Warner.

Greed and the World Cup

In October 2006, investigative reporter Andrew Jennings exposed FIFA Vice President Jack Warner as the greediest ticket tout during the World Cup. Jennings had obtained copies of confidential reports by auditors Ernst & Young that estimate that the Warner family could have cleared a profit of at least half a million British pounds on illegal sales of World Cup tickets.

Warner has escaped sanctions even though FIFA itself concluded that Warner's son Daryan had sold World Cup tickets illegally. However, FIFA's Disciplinary Committee said that it could not find proof that Warner knew about his son's actions, and therefore he only received a reprimand from FIFA’s Executive Committee in December 2006.

See reports at: www.transparencyinsport.org
Russian mafia has run Brazilian club into the ground

by Kirsten Sparre

Investigations by the Brazilian police have confirmed what sports journalists in the region have suspected for a long time. The Brazilian football club Corinthians is managed by a company that is funded by profits from organised crime in Russia and Georgia and has used the club for money laundering. The club is now fighting for survival.

Rafael Maranhão is a Brazilian sports journalist, and he has followed the relationship between the Corinthians and the company Media Sports Investments (MSI), since MSI took over management of the football club in 2004 in return for paying off 20 million dollars the club had accrued in debts and investing another 35 million dollars in new players. The amount of money spent by MSI and its mysterious investors that the company refused to name attracted the attention of Brazilian police and prosecutors at both city and federal level, and at Play the Game 2007 Maranhão talked about what the police have learned during its investigation and how four people have played a key role in the affair.

KIA JOORABCHIAN, an English Iranian-born businessman who came to Brazil in 2004 as head of the MSI. Brazilian police has captured a telephone call where Kia tells an associate to “put an end to the money laundering.” Kia went back to London in 2006. The Brazilian authorities have issued a warrant for his arrest.

BORIS BEREZOVSKY - a Russian billionaire living in London. Berezovsky is wanted in Russia where he is accused of embezzling millions of dollars from Aeroflot during the time he owned the airline. Some of that money is believed to have been invested in the Corinthians-MSI deal although Berezovsky denies being one of the investors. The Brazilian authorities have also issued a warrant for his arrest.

BADRA PATARKATISHVILI – a Georgian businessman and ally of Berezovsky who once told the Guardian that he had “invested in a wonderful football club in Brazil.” Until October 2007, Badri was president of the national Olympic Committee in Georgia but the members of the organisation voted for his impeachment following his involvement with a political scandal in his country.

ALBERTO DUALIB – chairman of the Corinthians from 1993 until he resigned in September 2007. He has made many remarks about the involvement of Berezovsky and Badri in telephone conversations captured by the police. A Brazilian court has accused Dualib and other club directors of pocketing 224,000 US dollars from false invoices in the period from 2000 to 2005, and Dualib is also accused of money laundering for his part in the MSI deal.

The future for Corinthians does not look so good, Maranhao concluded. Right now the total amount of the club’s debt is believed to be between 50 and 60 million US dollars. Many debts contracted by the MSI during the partnership must now be paid by the club, and the club is in the relegation zone for the Brazilian championships.

Carlitos’ – football

by Ezequiel Fernández Moores
Sports journalist, Argentina

Carlitos Brigante, in the Brian De Palma film Carlito’s Way, grows up in Harlem in the 1960’s selling heroin.

Carlitos Tevez, striker first for the Argentine National Team and now for Manchester United, grows up in Fort Apache, our very own Bronx, no more than 400 metres from the western city limit of Buenos Aires.

Carlitos Brigante survives thanks to Hollywood shoots.

Carlitos Tevez has survived the shoot-outs of Fort Apache, like the one that killed Gabriel Torres, one of his closest friends, in 1998.

Carlito’s Way is a movie about the New York mob.

Carlitos Tevez is a business deal of the Russian mob. [...]

Selling to the mob

At the end of 2004, I had the following conversation with Mauricio Macri, President of Boca, on the radio.

“Doesn’t it give you chills to sell a twenty one year old to the Russian mob?”

“Boca”, Macri replied, “didn’t sell Tevez to the Russian mob. It sold him to Corinthians.”

Let me smile.

The whole football world is by then aware that Corinthians, the second most popular club in Brazil, with twenty six million fans, also had a twenty million dollar debt. And that it had sold its soul to MSI. At the time, it was public knowledge in Buenos Aires that MSI was a creation of Boris Berezovski, identified as a member of the Russian mafia and wanted by the Russian police for a variety of crimes, including money laundering.

Tevez goes from Boca to Corinthians. That is what the first clause of the contract I have with me says. From Buenos Aires to San Pablo.

The money trail is more complex. Sixteen million dollars are deposited in an account at JP Morgan Chase in New York. The account belongs to an investment firm of the Royal Bank of Canada, RBC Dominion Securities.
East European money

MSI also pays the middlemen’s commissions—of Gustavo Arribas, Macri’s lawyer friend, and his partners in the company HAZ. The Z in HAZ stands for Zahavi. Pini Zahavi. Have you heard of him? English football’s super-agent.

He has made millions by placing players in Chelsea, acquired by the Russian magnate Roman Abramovich. In Argentina, Zahavi has managed the transfers of other important national team players, who were bought with money coming from Eastern Europe, like Mascherano and Lucho Gonzalez. The Argentine national team itself is now under contract to a Russia firm, Renova, that sets up and profits from the friendly matches. Zahavi has also acquired youth stars from River Plate, the second most popular club in my country, at rock bottom prices. We all know that football rules prohibit the sale of players to individuals, which is why Zahavi uses the Swiss club Locarno as a screen. He used it last year to buy Gonzalo Higuain from River, and resell him two months later to Real Madrid at twice the price. [...] But the romance ends upon his return from the German World Cup. The young Iranian who represents MSI, Kia Joorabchian, decides to move Tevez from Corinthians. Carlitos and Javier Mascherano, another great player for the Argentine national team, who has also been acquired by MSI, were taken from Corinthians to West Ham, an English team that Joorabchian wanted to buy. But West Ham is finally bought by the Icelander Eggert Magnusson, Bjorgolfur Gudmundsson’s man.

Tevez suffers at the beginning. Prior to his arrival he had been on the starting lineup of the Argentine national team in the German World Cup. Humble West Ham sends him to the bench. He accepts with discipline and silence, but in the end it is the goals he scores that save the team from relegation. The fans vote him player of the year. One dedicates a poem to him on the BBC.

Carlitos has won the applause of the two groups of fans that most despise Argentines: Brazil’s and England’s. His price goes up once again and MSI decides it is time for a new sale.

As a result, it becomes clear that Tevez never really belonged to West Ham, but to MSI. A clear violation of English rules that forbid ownership by third parties. Scandal erupts, and FIFA and UEFA express their concern about the Tevez case.

But rules are made to be broken, in Argentina and in England. West Ham pays a fine, and Carlitos, who by now is worth sixty million dollars, is sent out on loan, to none other than Manchester United, his new club as of last September. From Fort Apache to the Theater of Dreams, as the Old Trafford stadium is known.

Read the full story about Carlitos Tevez at www.playthegame.org