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Common international initiatives from the Nordic sports organizations related to the fight against match fixing

With both national and international attention focused on the threats from match fixing against the integrity of sport. National and international initiatives have been implemented, which in the long-term can secure an efficient fight against match fixing at international level.

International initiatives targeting the fight against match fixing

The Nordic Sports Organization regards some of the most ambitious international initiatives to be the following:

1. Working groups established by the IOC to fight irregular and illegal gambling on sports events. The IOC working groups is one the most ambitious initiatives taken from sport itself, and the IOC has been able to start a dialogue with some of the countries, where match fixing is particular problematic. This counts amongst others for the dialogue in the IOC working groups with the Governments of Singapore and China.
2. The preparation of a convention on the fight against match fixing under the auspices of the Council of Europe, which shall come up with a binding international legal instrument which will set certain obligations to the parties of the convention. The convention against match fixing must subsequently be ratified in the parliaments of the member countries. The majority of the European countries are represented in drafting the convention. Also some countries outside Europe are involved in the drafting process. Recently the EU member countries have decided that the EU Commission can participate in the future negotiations with a common EU mandate. The drafting of the convention on the fight against match fixing is so far the initiative, which is uniting most stakeholders around the table, when it comes to making some kind of an international agreement on the fight against match fixing.
3. Initiatives which have taken place in the EU Commission and the EU Parliament on the fight against match fixing. The EU Commission submitted a proposal at the Council of Ministers meeting in November 2012, which should have set the framework for the fight against match fixing within the EU. However the member countries could not agree, because of a fundamental resistance from Malta. The EU Parliament has adopted conclusions and recommendations, which calls for an EU initiative on the fight against match fixing. The conclusions and recommendations from the EU parliament are far from binding in terms of a

closer EU cooperation and the specific initiatives aimed at making the fight against match fixing more efficient.

The political challenges on the international fight against match fixing

Beside the discussions about the organizational base of the international fight against match fixing, the Nordic Sports Organization have specified a number of political challenges which are prominent in the international discussions on how to fight match fixing. This is particularly the case in relation to the following questions:

How will the future initiatives be organized, and which authorities and organizations should be the ones that define the agenda, when it comes to the fight against match fixing. This discussion is primarily about if one should have an international organization such as WADA, which can act and sanction in specific cases about match fixing, or if the fight against match fixing should take place within recognized public authorities such as the police and tax authorities in close cooperation with sports organizations and betting companies.

The question about which international obligations the stakeholders can agree on, when it comes to defining the requirements the betting companies have to comply with when taking part in an international monitoring unit, which collects data from all bets with the purpose of identifying suspicious betting patterns and results. This step is recently initiated by the IOC

The discussion about how match fixing should be treated in criminal law. The main point in this discussion is about if the fight against match fixing is a part of the current penal provisions about corruption and fraud, or if the fight against match fixing requires a separate part in criminal law, because match fixing is a special challenge, which has to be dealt with specifically in national criminal law

The discussion about if an EU regulation in the long-term should limit the betting opportunities, which can be offered by the betting companies, because this can be an efficient step, when it comes to the fight against match fixing and the manipulation and spot fixing taking place with bets on first corner, throw ins, yellow cards etc.

Recommendations

Referring to the current negotiations and discussions on the international fight against match fixing the Nordic Sports Organizations agree on and support the following common principles and initiatives in order to gain the most possible influence on how the international sporting society conducts its fight against match fixing:

1. The Nordic Sports Organizations call for sports organizations in their respective countries to adopt rules regulations or initiatives such as education for players, coaches and other people in the sports clubs in order to fight match fixing. The Nordic Sports Organizations will actively participate in national and international level forums where match fixing issues are discussed by different stakeholders (authorities, sports movement, politicians, betting industry etc.)

2. The Nordic Sports Organizations support and actively help national authorities who take part in the negotiations in the Council of Europe on a future international convention to combat the manipulation of sports competitions and also help to implement the convention when it enters into force
3. The Nordic Sports Organizations support that the fight against match fixing internationally takes place in organizations which have already shown proven abilities, when it comes to the fight against match fixing.
4. "The Nordic Sports Organizations support that an EU regulation on online gambling should force all betting companies, that are legally operated and comply with gambling legislation in each member state, to participate in a European wide monitoring of all sports bets. Furthermore the Nordic Sports Organizations support that an EU regulation will limit the type of bets, which can be offered by betting companies. That would be an important step to secure an efficient fight to prevent manipulation of results, and limit the possibilities for criminal organizations to recruit athletes to engage in more severe match fixing. The type of bets that are offered should be approved by the sport on which the bets are offered."
5. The Nordic Sports Organization will coordinate their international work related to the fight against match fixing by having an annual meeting between people responsible for these issues. In the future this could also include a bigger forum every second or third year with other stakeholders (authorities, betting industry, sports movement) being invited to participate.



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