

Practical go-to Guide

Norbert Rubicsek J.D
CSCF - Foundation for Sport Integrity

#EPSM
#BeFairDontFix

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Practical go-to guide on understanding and tackling manipulations of sports competitions

I. Introduction of the project – EPOSM

EPOSM (Evidence-based Prevention of Sporting-related Match-fixing) is an Erasmus+ collaborative partnership between academic and on-field organisations, which studies sporting-related match-fixing in different sport disciplines on a European level, and organizes tailor-made training sessions.

There is little doubt remaining that **match-fixing** – being the active manipulation of sport competitions – poses one of the **biggest threats to sport**. Accordingly, the research interest in match-fixing has been steadily increasing over recent years, and several Erasmus+ projects focusing on this topic (e.g. 'Integrisport', 'Anti Match-Fixing Top Training', and 'Fix the Fixing') have been initiated. Yet, academia, governance, the media, and other stakeholders mainly pay attention to match-fixing which has a gambling component. Despite that, *gambling-related* match-fixing has a **devastating impact** on the attractiveness of sport and on the integrity of those involved, yet it only represents one type of match-fixing.

As different 'diseases' ask for different remedies, EPOSM proposes that **current insights** in how to tackle gambling-related match-fixing are **not fully applicable to sporting-related match-fixing**. A recent research of Ghent University indicates¹ that people involved in the latter type of match-fixing **lack awareness and do not consider to be doing something wrong**. In other words, moral awareness and moral judgment, both important steps in the moral decision-making process of an individual, are lacking. Raising awareness and stimulating moral judgment should be at the core of any initiative countering sporting-related match-fixing.

The aims of EPOSM are:

1. **Raising awareness** about the prevalence of *sporting-related* match-fixing.
2. **Stimulating moral judgment** regarding the fact that sporting-related match-fixing is wrong, as it threatens the credibility and attractiveness of sport.
3. **Sharing and transferring knowledge** on sporting-related match-fixing through the organisation of a training procedure.

All together, the expected direct impact of the project is to improve the fairness of sport competitions, so sport can play its positive educational role in society.

The objective of the practical go-to guide on understanding and tackling manipulations of sports competitions

This guide was developed to introduce the phenomenon of sport manipulation, its legal background at national and international level and to provide guidance to understand it, how to recognize it and what to do to avoid/prevent it from happening. The content is based on the

¹ Van Der Hoeven et al., 2019

knowledge of CSCF Foundation for Sport Integrity experts as well as the results of the EPOSM Survey (*please see Annex I*)

The document is designed for everyone from sport managers to youth athletes and their parents. CSCF Foundation for Sport Integrity would like to thank the KNVB and Utrecht University for their support and co-operation with the development of this document.


CSCF Foundation for Sport Integrity

CSCF is a non-profit organization that endeavours to protect sport from negative aspects including manipulations in sport, corruption and fraud. The main activities of the foundation are to provide education and consulting. The aim of the foundation is to encourage respected and experienced experts to share their experiences and raise awareness on sports corruption with lotteries, athletes, sport officials, law enforcement, governmental officers, judiciary.

The experts are well recognized in area of law enforcement, sport integrity, betting and cyberspace at operational and strategic level.

We believe that sports- and the athletes in particular, are vulnerable to the manipulation of sport competitions; they need external assistance to protect themselves. We have observed and experienced that the optimal manner to prevent, tackle, investigate and counter manipulations in sports competitions is by effective understanding, trust and regular co-operation between public and private authorities. Our focus is on helping to develop prevention, education, co-operation and investigation techniques for law enforcement and governmental officers, prosecutors and judges by fostering their understanding of other relevant stakeholders and helping them be better understood by other stakeholders.

For more information, please visit **www.cscfsport.com**.



1. Part

Introduction to sport manipulation and general information on the topic for sport management and sport personnel.

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I. Addressing the topic of sports manipulations

Several cases of sports manipulations have been documented throughout history, from the ancient Olympic Games up to today. All the main actors helping to prevent and fight match-fixing agree that, as sport has become a veritable business and is increasingly commercialised, it attracts almost anyone who can have a direct or indirect financial interest and is therefore more exposed to the risk of match-fixing. Although sports organisations and competition organizers have worked hard to prevent their competitions from match-fixing, corrupt practices are still existent. This is because sport is attacked by criminals beyond the jurisdiction of sport organisations and, therefore, to tackle the issue, a knowledge of the wider context and cooperation with other stakeholders is needed.

Sports manipulations does not fit into the morals of sport as fair play and, therefore, it should be in the interest of all to fight against the problem. Sports manipulations has become a problem for popular sports such as football and tennis, but also for smaller sports because criminals think they will be more successful with less television or other media attention. In some sports, like hockey, there were almost no cases, but the sport, participants and regulations should be prepared because no sport is immune to this problem. It is important that organisations and competition organisers address risk factors, such as salaries, transparency and conflicts of interest, and engage in effective communication with stakeholders to always be aware of the threats surrounding their competitions.

Many well-publicised cases involve star players and famous clubs. Bribery, losing games to make money and transfers between clubs for non-sporting reasons are all just some of the types of cases we have seen over the years.

The manipulation of sport competitions is a major international problem, which can occur in professional but also in amateur sport, and the techniques of the manipulators are still evolving. In the international domain, the International Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention) was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2014, and entered into force in September 2019. It is the only international, legally binding instrument to exist in the domain, effectively providing a framework for States, as well as positive obligations on public authorities, to support the implementation of measures to protect the integrity of sports competitions, through prevention, detection and sanctioning. Although Article 3 of the Macolin Convention sets out the definition of the manipulation of sports competitions and is described below, it was drafted to leave space for each State to define the scope. In order to support the understanding and application of this definition, the Council of Europe launched a document - Typology Of Sports Manipulations- in June 2020. The Typology classifies the different types of competition manipulation that could fall within the CoE definition of sport manipulation, and also provides examples of each type.

II. International legal instruments and the Royal Dutch Football Association's (KNVB) regulations on fighting manipulations in sports competitions.

The KNVB's regulations

Betting regulations of the Dutch Lottery and the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association)

The Dutch Lottery and the KNVB joined forces to create a code of conduct for safe betting in order to combat match-fixing.

The KNVB and the Dutch Lottery have a joint responsibility over anti-match-fixing policies, education and information exchange. Active information exchange and cooperation between the KNVB, the Dutch Lottery and government(s) when irregularities are detected is the norm.

The Dutch Lottery has an active policy of not offering bets on competitions and sports that are vulnerable to match-fixing. International cooperation, knowledge and information exchange between UEFA, FIFA and the KNVB in the area of tackling match-fixing is essential.

Safe participation in sports betting

It is a joint responsibility of the KNVB and the Dutch Lottery to provide information about the risks of taking part in sports betting.

The Dutch Lottery ensures a high level of protection by providing a safe offer, by taking extra measures to protect young adults (18-24 year-olds) and by individual and targeted interventions when risks and problem players are suspected.

Preventing conflicts of interest

Athletes, officials, club owners, financial influencers and managers of sports organizations, who may have influence on the soccer match, should not simultaneously be employed by a gaming provider that offers this match in its gaming offer, and vice versa.

Sports organizations shall ensure that employees of a gaming provider do not, or cannot, play in a soccer match or competition that is part of the gaming offer of this operator. It is not permitted for those directly involved and officials to place sports bets on their own soccer matches and competitions.

National Olympic Committee and International Olympic Committee regulations

The KNVB is collaborating with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) to help football clubs in their efforts to combat sexual intimidation. The NOC and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have published toolkits and statements to help clubs create sufficient regulations in this joint fight.

The NOC's toolkit for the prevention of sexual intimidation in sport (<https://rm.coe.int/pss-description-practice-a3-the-netherlands-a-toolkit-for-the-preventi/1680770fd9>) states the following:

- Sexual intimidation should be put on the agenda of board meetings, staff meetings, parent meetings, etc. The toolkit provides tips on how to raise the topic sensitively. The toolkit advises the establishment of a working group on this topic, consider collaborating with nearby sport clubs and advises that the club board to sign a commitment statement.

- Clubs should audit their current position by taking an inventory of existing risk factors for unacceptable behaviours within their club. A template risk assessment for this is provided in the toolkit. Clubs are encouraged to discuss the outcome of the audit with stakeholders, including board members, sports personnel, athletes and their parents.
- Clubs should appoint a Local Confidential Counsellor. These individuals are the first point of contact for anyone within their organisation who would like more information about sexual intimidation or who wishes to make a complaint about sexual intimidation. These individuals are also responsible for referring reports of sexual intimidation to counterparts at a national level, known as National Confidential Counsellors.
- Clubs should implement a code of conduct for sport leaders that covers the prevention of sexual intimidation in sport, and club board members are responsible for enforcing this.
- Clubs should develop a set of house rules that formalise the values of the club and its members. For example, these rules might include statements such as, 'I accept and respect everybody and do not discriminate' or 'I will not harm other people'. These rules should be created in collaboration with all stakeholders to encourage ownership and acceptance.
- Clubs should check the background and experience of sport staff during their recruitment process. This could be done through interviewing prospective candidates, checking the credentials of coaches from previous clubs, and asking for a curriculum vitae.

International legal instruments

Macolin Convention - The **Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions**, better known as the **Macolin Convention**, is an international, multilateral, legally binding treaty that aims to prevent, detect, and punish, not only match fixing in sport, but also manipulations beyond the sports venue. The convention addresses completed actions as well as attempts at manipulating competitions. The convention was concluded in Macolin, Switzerland, on 18 September 2014, and entered into force on 1 September 2019. The Macolin Convention is a legal instrument and the only rule of international law on the manipulation of sports competitions. It places a positive obligation on public authorities to co-operate with sports organizations, betting operators and competition organizers to prevent, detect and sanction the manipulation of sports competitions. It proposes a common legal framework for an efficient international cooperation to respond to this global threat. The Macolin Convention has been ratified by Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland, Italy and Ukraine. It has been signed by over 30 other States worldwide and currently its statutory Committee has, not only the 7 States Parties, but also observers – Interpol, the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, UEFA, and the Global Lottery Monitoring System (GLMS).²

UNODC Resolution - The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, through its Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), adopted **Resolution 7/8 on Corruption in Sport**, in Vienna from 6 to 10 November 2017.

The resolution addresses corruption in sport, and was supported by the 183 States parties to the UNCAC. It covers a wide range of issues, including that of competition manipulation, and it is now available in all official languages of the United Nations.³

III. Reaching grassroots players with the knowledge on sport manipulation

To protect the federation from criminal infiltration and sport manipulation in general, aside from detection, investigation and sanction, the key is the prevention and education of athletes, especially at a young age. They need to know what is not acceptable, against the regulations, or even law, in order to better understand the phenomenon of sport manipulation and know what to do to avoid it.

How to reach them?

- **Using this document**

In this document we are using situations from everyday lives of sports people involved in competitions and in the federation, combining experience to illustrate that the danger of manipulations in sports competitions is always present. The examples should be familiar to them and should help them raise awareness of the topic and possible threats.

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/t-mc>

³ https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session7/UNCAC_-_Corruption_in_Sport_resolution.pdf

- **E-learning and toolkits**

Today, the use of e-learning and other digital tools is much more common, popular and practical. Because of this, there is a need to make awareness raising sessions on sensitive topics accessible and interesting. Preparing e-learning tools has proven to be practical, cost effective and far-reaching, with all important information accessible with a PC or through mobile devices.

- **Train the trainers method – spreading the knowledge in the federation**

Train-the-Trainer is a framework for training potential instructors or subject matter experts to enable them to train other people in their organisations.

The core advantage of the Train-the-Trainer model is its effectiveness to teach new skills and knowledge to a wide range of people within an organisation by involving internal resources to scale training delivery.⁴

Example of train-the-trainers education in the field of sport integrity and, more specifically, combating sport manipulation:

Integriball Erasmus+

Integriball Erasmus+ is an education programme focusing on protecting grassroots footballers (adolescents - U16-18) and female footballers throughout Europe from threats of sport manipulation.

After the education program was carefully developed by experts of the Project, the knowledge was transferred to future local trainers (coaches, supporting personnel, sport managers) selected by their respective football federation or union (project partners) in all 5 countries. In this way, the Project was able to increase the dissemination of information and sustained transfer of know-how on combating match fixing in Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece and Malta.

Integriball Erasmus+ is co-ordinated by CSCF Foundation for Sport Integrity, in partnership with the football federations of Belgium (RBFA), Czech Republic (CRFA), Greece (HFF) and Malta (MFA) and the Pancyprian Footballers Association (PASP), as well as an international organisation and academic partner, respectively Global Lottery Monitoring System and Ghent University. The project has the support of UEFA and the Council of Europe.

For more information, please visit: www.cscfsport.com

⁴ <https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/train-the-trainer-model/>



2. Part

Knowledge and education on Sport manipulation for grassroots athletes and coaches.

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Knowledge and education on Sport manipulation for grassroots athletes and coaches.

IV. Sport manipulation

A. Defining sports manipulations

The Macolin Convention developed a definition of sports manipulations that has been widely accepted, including by the sport movement and the International Olympic Committee in its Ethics Code. The Manipulation of sports competitions is:

An intentional arrangement, act or omission aimed at an improper alteration of the result or the course of a sports competition in order to remove all or part of the unpredictable nature of the aforementioned sports competition with a view to obtaining an undue advantage for oneself or for others.

1. What does this mean?

This means that a player, coach, an agent, or staff of a federation is not allowed to change any part of a sports event or its result in order to gain an unfair advantage. It does not mean only that someone fixes to bet, but there are many other reasons. The potential fixer could be someone within the sport or outside the sport working together with someone in the sport. It includes the actions on the sports ground and also the actions away from it. Finally, this definition also punishes any attempts to manipulate a competition, even if those attempts were unsuccessful.

The methods, actors and sports that may be involved and affected by sports manipulations are limitless.



2. Sports manipulations or match-fixing: what is the difference?

First of all, it is important to understand our reference when we say manipulation of a competition or match-fixing. Match-fixing is what happens on or just around the sporting venue – usually the final actions. Sports manipulations is a wider term, encompassing match-fixing PLUS all the preparation before and around the actual fixing, such as the agreements that an intended fixer makes at the restaurant in the weeks before the game, or so on. This means that it may take place in a restaurant, or in a training session.

3. Why is sport manipulation bad for sport/How does sport manipulation damage sport/ What is at stake?

Good sport involves equal opportunities, fair play and the results of its competitions being unpredictable. When any of these factors are threatened, then the value of sport, for the athletes and for the spectators, is threatened. Manipulations of sports competitions would also heavily impact the positive influence of sport on society. Many young people take up sport to improve the quality of their lives, to engage in fair competition and to find self worth. Cheating, bribery, and other related acts threaten this culture.

In general, sport manipulation can have long term bad consequences for certain sports or leagues and also it goes against all values and rules of sport. Reputations will be ruined, sponsors and fans will leave, as nobody wants to support and watch games which are possibly manipulated. Sport is also connected often with fame, popularity and big money and that can also attract some criminals or people with bad intentions.

The closer the person is to the sports ground, the more at risk they are. Players, coaches and referees are the most exposed people, even if they did not develop the plan. In addition to being the most exposed, they are also the ones that will gain the least if the manipulation is successful. For many reasons and obstacles, organizers are rarely punished and, even when they are punished, the sentence is not as severe and the impact not as permanent as for the player or the coach in the stadium.

Remember: if anything happens, you were the person actually cheating on the pitch and you will suffer the consequences – you may have to pay a fine, or be suspended, or be banned from ever playing or coaching. You may even be criminally liable if your country has laws against sports manipulations!

Even the slightest manipulation can have major consequences against yourself.

Example

It may seem like nothing to you to make a foul just after halftime because someone you asked you to do it. In reality, you are changing the course of the game. Imagine that the foul is too strong and you are yellow carded or sent off. Yellow cards in many competitions count towards your eventual suspension for a game. Imagine that the foul was so strong that you severely injured another player just because someone asked you to do it. Imagine that after the foul, there was a free kick and a goal against your team.

When you try and plan such actions on the field, this is match-fixing. Everyone can see that you did it. But no one knows about the person that asked/intimidated you to do it. They are also a manipulator.

4. Why may someone manipulate a competition?

If you can identify the risks and reasons that a competition can be manipulated, it is easier to prevent it, or to recognise and address it.

There are some explanations as to why someone might want to gain an unfair advantage of some kind:

a. Athletes, coaches, persons on or around the competition sports ground

- You may try to obtain a certain result in a knockout competition to avoid or to meet a certain team
- In the league when your position is secure, you try to lose or draw after agreeing with your adversary (or under force) so that they can win and finish in a certain position.
- Your agent convinces (with money, or a promise of a transfer) or forces you to play in a certain way or to lose because it will help another team where he also has players.
- Another team approaches you to help them qualify for a higher league/competition where there are better bonuses and sponsorship opportunities
- Your agent may threaten you that if you do not do as they say, they will no longer be your agent, or they promise you a contract with your favourite club, for example.
- Your agent may convince you or blackmail you to change clubs. Sometimes, this can be because they use your transfer money and commission for illegal reasons.
- You pretend to be older or younger in order to have an advantage in a certain age group
- You change the pitch, or tamper with the ball, or wear certain clothing that is not allowed so that it gives you a physical advantage over the other team
- You are exhausted from your last performance or training and you feel it will be better to lose the next game so that you or your team will be eliminated from a tournament
- Someone is blackmailing you, or your loved ones
- You need, or want, some easy money
- Someone in a management position is using their power to force you to fix your game or part of the game, either on the field or related to it, such as using a certain sponsor.
- Somebody paid the referee/umpire to fix the games. These are called 'vulnerable referees' and this can happen when referees are paid badly or not trained well.
- You need to travel soon for more important tournament so you decide to throw the next game in order to have more time for rest before next tournament

b. Others beyond the ground of play

- An agent may see a benefit, such as his players in various teams staying in the higher level of the competition
- A staff member of a team may be tempted to bet on the competition because they have privileged information or need/want the money
- Someone wants to launder money through the clubs, through transfers, through predictable results
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Promotion opportunities

- You dislike your coach and you know that because of bads result she/he will be sacked
- You are in conflict with your federation or tournament organizers
- Influence tournament organizers to select an opponent of your own choosing in first round or whole tournament schedule

In addition, there are situations that may lead to manipulating a competition. These situations increase the risk and make the competition more vulnerable to manipulations, such as:

- Insufficient salaries for players and staff
- Unpaid salaries
- Disinterest in certain groups within the federation/team (i.e. less attention on women or certain age groups, or variations of the sport)
- Lack of or limited regulatory rules on conflicts of interest, behaviour of employees
- Insufficient due diligence with regard to sponsors, contracts agents, coaches, etc.
- Lack of awareness of the implications of the regulations of the sport
- Lack of awareness of approaches inciting people to manipulate
- The sport/competition is exposed to betting – while betting in itself is not a problem (except for members of federations that prohibit betting in their rules), many potential manipulators will attempt to abuse betting, for example by abusing privileged information.

The above examples are by no means exhaustive, but are drawn from various real-life experiences.

5. Who can manipulate a competition?

Now that we understand the full scope of manipulations, you can see that almost anyone can be involved in a manipulation. **As mentioned previously, this issue is not only on the sporting ground but often far beyond it. The planning and preparation of a final fix also counts in the manipulation. This may involve intimidation, convincing someone, planning with others or alone, and carrying out preparatory actions, such as bribes or threats.**

The potential actors:

- On the sporting ground: One type are those people inside your football environment.** Manipulators could be teammates, coaches, team managers and support staff, club management up to the chairman, player agents, match organizers and club sponsors, but also fans, family and major club financiers.
- Outside the sporting ground: Outside of your everyday player environment,** there are various possible manipulators: former players or coaches, gamblers, betting tips website owners, criminal groups, friends, or amateur players (friends).⁵

Logically, if you want to manipulate a match you need someone on the sports ground to make it happen. Actors off the sports ground can prepare plans and force these plans on actors on the sports ground to cooperate.

⁵ http://rc3sport.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Article_Exploring-the-definition-of-the-manipulations-of-sports-competitions_Norbert-Rubicsek_JD-1.pdf

Many approaches now take place online. Beware of people that you don't know who may try to speak to you to get to know you and then start asking you questions about your competitions or your team, or who offer you gifts/money with no real reason. Beware also of detailed questions about your game/team from people you may already know. Remember that you are someone with considerable inside information!

6. Who are the targets of a manipulation?

Now that we have clarified the wide scope of manipulations, this means that the targets are numerous. There are the targets who will carry out the final action, such as the players and referees. There are the targets who instruct on the final action or influence the final action, such as coaches. There are also those that would reveal privileged information in order to facilitate a manipulation, such as the entourage of the team or the player.

- Players and coaches - with low salaries, debts or a precarious financial situation.
- Referees in financial problems or in conflict with their federation.
- Young players – without adequate salary or knowledge about manipulation risks.
- Athletes who receive less pay/attention/resources (i.e. women of certain age groups, other categories of the sport not in the mainstream, etc)
- Players at the end of their careers, who have a limited sporting future but retain an influence and connections within teams and clubs.
- Gamblers (betting or casino), as they often have financial problems.
- Foreign players, who have no or limited knowledge of their new environment and/or who sometimes have a match-fixing history from previous country or club
- Amateur players, who may be more receptive to bribes.
- Competitions with low media attention
- Players whose agents manage other players in the same league or competition

Therefore to prevent yourself from becoming a target, or being tempted to manipulate, it is important to understand the risks and vulnerabilities. This is because these characteristics may be identified and used as *weaknesses* by the manipulators.

A Corruptor/Corrupted individual asks himself these questions⁶

- Is the game important enough to fix?
- Is it ethical to fix a game?
- Can my team/athlete win honestly?
- Can I afford to fix the competition?
- If I am caught, is there a high risk of sanctions?

7. How might a potential manipulator approach a target?⁷

Sometimes the danger of a match-fixing approach could be around you in your club. Match-fixers could also try to use a close personal relationship with a person, or a position of superiority and power. For example:

1. An approach by your coach – it is very hard to reject your coach's instruction. It is possible that sportsmen sometimes even not realise that the purpose of his coach's instructions is to manipulate the course of the match.

⁶ The Insider's Guide to Match-Fixing in Football (Hill 2013)

⁷ Interpol IOC Handbook on Protecting Sport from Competition Manipulation (2016)

2. An approach by your team mate – they can ask you to manipulate and if you reject they can turn it to a joke. This is a red flag and may be difficult to report a teammate. In team sports when more people are involved it is also very hard not to participate in manipulation.
3. Another possibility is when the manipulation is orchestrated by older and experienced athletes within the sport who have natural authority and they could try to influence you.
4. By club officials or staff – you could be approached by those in a higher position in the club or federation. They may want you to manipulate a game because they have a good relationship with another team, for financial purposes (sponsorship, betting) or for sporting reasons (choosing next opponent). Often the athlete fixing the competition may not even realise the real motive.
5. By people outside the sports world, often through a long process of becoming friendly with someone at the federation/team/club OR through threats directly on him/her or on their family and friends.

How do potential manipulators who are not part of the team/athletes/federation's entourage approach their targets to fix the actual competition? Two tactics are popular.

1. Grooming: The first is to contact a player and lie about the reasons for a meeting. They try to persuade players that it will be only meeting for coffee, and they will offer them a tempting transfer possibility. After having built a relationship they will offer a fixing proposal and focus on marginalizing potential risks. This can be referred to as grooming a player. There are many ways to achieve this. The manipulator may also simply approach a player in their bar or café or club. It may even be someone known to the player.
2. The second most used tactic is to approach players through social media websites, such as Facebook or Instagram, or using communication apps like WhatsApp, Viber or Signal. This is why it is crucial to understand what is privileged information and to be careful about sharing it.

Sometimes they also try to build a “trustworthy” relationship through the player's partner, husband, wife or entourage.

Corruptors tend to approach their targets either

- Directly through
 - gifts
 - money
 - sexual favours
- indirectly through
 - family
 - friends

Many tricks are then used to convince the target to agree to manipulate, typically through ‘grooming’ of the target or using threats, e.g. by exploiting some previous or a created issue, using violence or intimidation.



Therefore, manipulation approaches can come from persons that are already within your personal environment, such as teammates or club officials, but also from others beyond the sports entourage. Many manipulators are known agents, club presidents, teammates, etc, that don't need a grooming or social media approach.

Factors that a corruptor may consider in the grooming of a sports participant⁸

There are some situations or occasions/opportunities which can indicate possible involvement in sport manipulation, which we will call “red flags”:

Players or coach:

- *strange group of friends* – if your close friends have problems in their lives, such as alcohol, drugs or fraud, this could be a way in for potential manipulators who could use them to pressure you.
- *strong focus on lifestyle/career* – if you value your lifestyle very much, a potential manipulator could use this to convince you to manipulate or to identify your weaknesses.
- *visiting casinos or playing poker regularly* – you could be a potential victim for match-fixers. Gambling addiction can cause big financial and personal problems and, even without an addiction, you could lose a lot of money in a night.
- *betting online regularly* – you can't bet on your own team and league. This is also where inside information could be used, which is prohibited. You can also become addicted to gambling, which has been the case for many famous sportsmen.⁹

Management:

- *strange sponsors from other countries or with “secret” businesses, or multiple responsibilities* – not all sponsors are transparent and have good intentions.
- *strange persons around dressing room/sporting venue* – some cases also shows that match-fixers were people with good contacts with the federation/team.
- *Making the payment of salaries conditional on manipulating the competition* – if an official says that unless their instructions to manipulate the competition are followed, the target will not get paid.
- *strange behaviour or promises by your agent* – your own agent can ask for favours or intimidate you as a player, coach or referee, or ask for inside information that he can use for betting or other profits
- *your salary is not paid on time* – when the players don't receive a salary for some weeks or months, it allows time for match-fixers to approach them with match-fixing propositions to fulfil their financial needs

Generally

- Addiction (drugs, sex, alcohol)
- Excessive gambling and gambling debts
- Bad sports results and lack of recognition and reward
- Pressure, opportunity and rationalisation

⁸ The Insider's Guide to Match-Fixing in Football (Hill 2013)

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/dec/05/andros-townsend-lost-46000-gambling-bed-night-addiction>

- Living beyond personal income and high personal debt
- Desire for personal progression, greed, naivety of the target, unfulfilled ambition
- Pressure from family and friends to succeed
- Fluid moral values and a desire to challenge and/or abuse the system

Building a checklist of red flags

It is important to be able to recognise an attempt, an act or a preparation of a manipulation of a competition. In most sports, manipulations are prohibited but in some countries, it is a crime. Manipulations can take many forms. Not only can the final result or winner be manipulated, but also some parts of the game (halftime score, last minutes goals, corners, number of goals, cards, etc.)

In order to be able to recognise a future or ongoing manipulation, it is important to understand the scope of the manipulation, the potential manipulators, the targets and the potential reasons.

A great way to understand in advance about whether you may be exposed to manipulations is to prepare a checklist specific to your sport/federation/team about certain situations that could lead to match-fixing. Creating a list of red flags related to your sport, competition and group about certain situations could help recognise and prevent manipulations regarding match fixing. For instance:

- the vulnerabilities and risks mentioned above
- approaches, i.e. If a stranger wants to invite a player out for food or a drink, but out of blue asks unusual questions about the game or line-up, or b.) Someone you know starts asking questions about your team mates' injuries, or gives you instructions on what to do on the pitch, etc.
- checking for conflicts of interest (i.e. an agent with multiple athletes in the same competition, a betting operator offering bets on the sport and also sponsoring teams/athletes in the competition, management of teams with multiple responsibilities)
- high number of young athletes who may be more vulnerable to approaches,

8. Types of sport manipulation through examples and videos additional

There are many types of manipulations, although very often we hear only about manipulating competitions in order to place specific bets. But this is far from the only reason.

The Council of Europe developed, together with countries a helpful framework to classify and understand the different types of competition manipulation that could fall within this definition, using including examples.

There are three main types of sports competition manipulation¹⁰:

1. Direct interference in the natural course of a sporting event or competition, i.e. deliberate manipulation by individual(s) involved in the event

¹⁰ Typology of Sports Manipulations. Interactive Typology Tool. June 2020, Council of Europe, National Platforms Network – Group of Copenhagen (GoC). Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/interactive-typology-tool-final-version-june-2020/16809eb82c>

This means the manipulation of sports competitions, or element of a sports competition, in order to gain an unfair sporting advantage or corrupt financial benefit (e.g. athletes deliberately lose a sporting event or competition)

2. Modification of an athlete's identity or personal information in order to influence the natural course or outcome of a sports competition

This means providing false information related to the personal data, physical characteristics or capabilities (mental or physical) of an athlete (e.g. athletes gaining unfair advantages by being younger / older than their opponents, or by playing in a classification for which they know they are ineligible)

3. Modification that is non-compliant with criminal laws or sport rules relating to:

- playing surfaces
- equipment
- athlete physiology
- sporting venue

This means tampering with pitch or court surfaces, with sports equipment used during a competition (balls, racquets, etc.), with equipment vital to the staging of an event or competition (e.g. changing the temperature), using unauthorised or banned equipment and illegally modifying athlete physiology (food poisoning, using drugs to sabotage performance)

These three types can then be further sub-categorised relating to the people that start an act that will lead to a manipulation (either on the field or somewhere else).

A. Exploitation of governance

Exploitation of governance is the abuse of a dominant position. The instigators (Agents, Sponsors or other persons who have a direct interest in the athletes' or teams' economic rights or sporting achievements) misuse their dominant insider position (within a Sports Organisation) to instruct or force the executors (Athlete(s), Athlete Support Personnel and Competition Officials) to manipulate sports competitions, or element of a sports competition.

B. Exploitation of power or influence

This means the abuse of financial and contractual position. Misusing the power that comes from a financial or contractual position, the instigator (same as in A.) instructs or forces the executor (same as in A.) to manipulate a sports competition, or element of a sports competition.

C. External influences

Approaching, influencing or controlling the executors (same as in A.) is classified as an external influence. In this case there is no intention to gain a sporting advantage. (i.e. Person(s) outside of the jurisdiction of the relevant sports organisation.)

D. Opportunistic

This is when individuals (Athlete(s), Athlete Support Personnel and Competition Officials) exploit their sports participant status to deliberately underperform or manipulate the expected outcome of a sports competition, or element within a sports competition, where this activity is considered to be non-compliant with criminal laws or sport rules.

Below are some more examples of situations:

- You or your team are without salary for some months and the opposing team will pay you money
- You are injured but you will start in the tournament because of prize money and you will bet against yourself / your team
- You have qualified for the next stage but you decide to underperform in the next game in order to play against a weaker opponent in the elimination stage of tournament
- Your coach or manager asks you to underperform to help your opponent win because they have good personal relationship with them
- Your sponsor promises you sponsorship for the next year if you finish on top so you decide to bribe the referee or opponent to achieve this goal
- You try to bribe the umpire or referee of your next game
- Using your status and management power to influence your next opponents and thus the whole tournament schedule
- You decide to lose the next game against your former team to help them avoid relegation from the league

The methods, actors and sports that may be involved and affected by sports manipulations are limitless. Therefore, a simple, but general definition could define 'match-fixing' as:

- deliberately causing a part of the game or the result to be predictable.
- Deliberate modification of tools or documents (age/gender documents) in order to enhance performance.

Remember, if you fix once, it is very difficult to escape the situation. You can be blackmailed and even if you are never sanctioned, the risk of being discovered and the moral pressure will remain with you during your entire career and later in life. The internet or your accomplice(s) do not forget and for your later careers in football or in sport, such cases can always arise.

Inside information

We have mentioned privileged information often. This is because such information can be an important trigger for various actions related to manipulations, and people with such information are targets or can be potential manipulators.

When you are in a position to know more information than the general public about a competition, a team or a sporting event in general, you should not share it outside. This information is privileged and can be used for gaining an unfair advantage or fix a sporting event in some way, either with or without involving others. This is the abuse of inside information.

So, when your friends and family ask you about information about an upcoming game that is not public, resist the temptation to tell them. If you are not sure, ask your coach or federation first.

EXAMPLE: a player on your team is injured in the last training session before the competition. This information is not public and therefore you should not share it on social media, or to anyone else who may ask, even if you know them.

Your teammates from U17 team suggest you place a bet on your women's team match this weekend because he feels that your team may lose. What will you do?

- **What can ill-intentioned people do with privileged information (inside information)?**

While you as the player, or the referee, or even the coach, should not use privileged information to gain unfair advantages over others, it is important to understand that other people beyond the team/competition/sport may also abuse the inside information in many ways:

- To bet on the game
- To convince or force someone to fix a part of the competition or the result
- To change an element of the competition/opposing teams to gain more favour
- To influence transfers of athletes – for example an agent who has more than one athlete in the same competition can use this information to influence their transfers, or to coerce them or the coach to fix games

- **Misuse of betting - How inside information could be used**

Inside information should not be abused. Betting on your competition is an example of abusing inside information. Even if you do not intend to use your knowledge in a bad way, this is not in the spirit of betting. Betting depends on the unpredictability of the result. This is why federations ban betting on football – not just on your own games, but on your league and sometimes on football in general. This is to avoid you using inside information and creating a conflict of interest as well - it protects you from sanctions.

Examples:

1. You can't tell anybody the starting line-up before is publicly known. For example, you can't say that, in a pre-season match, your coach will start with youth players who will be replaced at half-time by experienced players.
2. Two English football national team players, Daniel Sturridge and Kieran Trippier, were banned for a breach of inside information rules. They leaked information about their future transfers, and their friends used this information for betting purposes. Trippier was banned for 10 weeks¹¹ and Sturridge for 4 months¹².
3. You also can't share any information that is not public, and which can influence betting. This could be a conflict in the dressing room which could change a starting line-up, or you can't post that you are in or not in the starting line-up.
4. You can't speak with anyone outside of your team about the current status of your injury or your possible limited performance because of it.
5. You should also not reveal information about your struggles during training or if you are not well prepared for next game.

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/dec/23/kieran-trippier-banned-for-10-weeks-for-breaching-fa-betting-rules-atletico-madrid>

¹² <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/51712017>



Annex I – Match-fixing in grassroots sports – Survey results in the Netherlands



EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION OF SPORTING-RELATED MATCH-FIXING

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MATCH-FIXING IN GRASSROOTS SPORTS

SURVEY RESULTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Maarten van Bottenburg (Utrecht University)

Ineke Deelen (Utrecht University)

Stef Van Der Hoeven (Gent University)



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing

Match-fixing concerns the manipulation of sports competitions. Match-fixing involves intentional arrangements or actions aimed at nullifying the unpredictable nature of a sports competition or any of its particular events in order to obtain an unjustified advantage for oneself or third parties (cf. ISR 2016).

When it comes to match-fixing in the media, it mainly concerns manipulation of matches that can be associated with betting on the outcome of or within the event. This can be described as gambling-related match-fixing. There is also another form of match-fixing that is not related to gambling. This form of match-fixing involves improperly influencing the course or outcome of a match, with the aim of achieving a sporting advantage; sports-related match-fixing. This may involve an in-kind or cash reward, but not as a result of betting on the particular event or outcome. It is important to distinguish between these two forms of match-fixing (Spapens & Olfers 2013, 2015; Van Der Hoeven et al. 2020).

First, the reasons for manipulating a match differ between the two forms of match-fixing. Gambling-related match-fixing involves financial gain by betting on an event in the match or its outcome. Sports-related match-fixing can be based on several motives. It can be about mutual sporting self-interest. An example of this is a 'deal' between two teams about the desired outcome of their mutual match if that suffices for both to qualify for the next round. It may also be intended to favor or disadvantage a third party by intentionally underperforming. Another motive may be that one of the opponents let a game or match go in order to avoid a great effort or to have more time for other matters (Spapens & Olfers 2013).¹

Secondly, preventing and reducing both forms of match-fixing requires a different approach and division of responsibility from sports organizations and governments. While gambling-related match-fixing requires a joint approach between sports organizations and governments, sports-related match-fixing is in principle purely a matter for the sports organisations. Third, both forms of match-fixing have different backgrounds and consequences. Gambling-related match-fixing concerns the higher levels of competitive sports. Moreover, this often involves persons with criminal connections. Non-gambling-related match-fixing occurs at all levels of competitive sport and mainly involves individuals who are linked together because of sporting competition.

¹ Sports-related and gambling-related match-fixing can coincide. A match whose course or outcome has been arranged to create a sporting advantage can be used to gain financial gain by betting on the match in question (Spapens & Olfers 2013).

In addition to these differences, gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing have in common that they conflict with fair play. Both forms of match-fixing undermine the uncertainty of the course or outcome of a match, which threatens the credibility of sport.

1.2 Research into the prevalence of match-fixing

More and more information is becoming available about the manner in which and the extent to which these forms of match-fixing occur in the Netherlands. The most large-scale and reliable research into match-fixing in the Netherlands can be found in the report by Toine Spapens from Tilburg University, Marjan Olfers from VU University Amsterdam and forensic researchers from Ernst & Young (Spapens & Olfers 2013, 2015). The qualitative part of this research provides extensive information about match-fixing in five sports: football, tennis, trotting and racing, basketball and boxing. The quantitative part is limited in scope in two respects. First, the survey response group only allows statements about match-fixing in one sport (soccer). Second, the figures in this quantitative section are based on practitioners from the highest levels of amateur and professional football, as well as referees, trainers and sport agents at that level. The figures on the prevalence of match-fixing that are most commonly used in the Netherlands therefore only relate to the highest amateur football leagues and professional football.

The present report provides an update and supplement to the quantitative research part of Spapens & Olfers (2013). It is based on a survey conducted in the Netherlands in 2020, with a larger response group in two additional sports (tennis and hockey), and at all levels of grassroots sports. Moreover, the survey was conducted simultaneously in seven European countries (Belgium, France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom and Switzerland) with sufficient respondents to make statements about six sports: football, basketball, handball, tennis, hockey and cricket. After the reports on the results in the individual countries, an additional report will be published with an international comparison that can put the Dutch data in a broader perspective. In the present report, this is only possible for a few key figures.

1.3 Research question

The central question addressed in this report is to what extent match-fixing occurs, what the motives and characteristics of match-fixing are and how requests for match-fixing are responded to. In answering this question, gambling-related match-fixing is distinguished from sports-related (non-gambling-related) match-fixing. It is examined, among other things, at what playing levels these forms of match-fixing occur, what compensation is offered, whether there is pressure or threat, to what extent proposals for match-fixing are accepted and how sports associations respond to this.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Sampling method

Online survey

The data for this study was collected through an online survey. This survey has been developed for common application in the seven countries participating in the EPOSM project: Belgium, France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

Tennis, hockey and football

The survey in all participating countries focuses on tennis and football and a third sport. Tennis and football have been selected in a European context on the basis of their popularity in all countries and the signals about match-fixing within these sports. Hockey has been added to this in the Netherlands for three reasons. Firstly, hockey is the sixth largest sport in the Netherlands in terms of club membership and the largest team sport after football. Secondly, just like football and tennis, hockey is known for its club culture, which may be relevant in relation to the occurrence and prevention of match-fixing. Thirdly, fewer signals are known about match-fixing in hockey than in the other two sports, which offers interesting possibilities for comparison.

Creation of the survey

Where possible and relevant, the questionnaires in the EPOSM study have been aligned with previous studies on match-fixing, in particular those by Spapens & Olfers (2013) and Van Der Hoeven et al. (2020). This applies in the first place to the definition of match-fixing that is used, in which a distinction is made between gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing. Second, questions about the prevalence of match-fixing, the underlying motives and the people involved were posed in the same way as in these previous studies.

The questionnaire was submitted to the Royal Dutch Lawn Tennis Association (KNLTB), Royal Dutch Hockey Association (KNHB) and Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB) with a request for comments on the questionnaire and cooperation in its distribution. Subsequently, one standardized questionnaire was drawn up and distributed among hockey players, tennis players and football players. The only differences between the questionnaires were related to differences in classification and terminology in the hockey, tennis and football worlds, such as the difference between Eredivisie, Hoofdklasse and Level 1 for the highest playing level.

Members panels (hockey and tennis) and social media (football)

The KNHB and KNLTB were willing to send an invitation to participate in the study, with a link to the questionnaire, to their member panels. By clicking on this link, the members of these panels were immediately taken to the welcome page of the survey, after which they could start filling out the survey. The questionnaire was open to these member panels in the months of May and June 2020.

This was not possible for football. Alternatively, the link to the questionnaire was distributed via social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook), both from the accounts of the researchers and those of the KNVB. This has been done several times in the period from July to October 2020.

2.2 Response groups

A total of 7,497 people were approached via the member panels; 3,097 members of the hockey association and 4,400 members of the tennis association. A total of 965 respondents, including 545 members of the hockey association and 420 members of the tennis association, completed the questionnaire in whole or in part. This is a response of 13 percent for both sports together (18% for hockey and 10% for tennis).

The recruitment of respondents in football via social media resulted in 74 completed questionnaires. Since these respondents were not recruited on the basis of a member panel, the response rate cannot be determined.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the background characteristics of the response groups.

	Hockey N = 545		Tennis N = 420		Football N = 74	
Seks	man	72,5%		67,1%		77,0%
	women	27,2%		32,6%		23,0%
	Unknown	0,4%		0,2%		0,0%
Age	mean	47		51		39
Involvement in sport	number of years	28		29		24
Involvement in sport	Athlete/player	65,9%		83,6%		74,3%
	Coach/trainer/assistant-coach/team manager	15,6%		2,9%		8,1%
	Medical staff member	0,0%		0,0%		1,4%
	Referee/assistant-referee/official	9,4%		1,0%		5,4%
	Club board member	2,9%		7,6%		4,1%
	Other	6,1%		5,0%		6,8%
Playing level	Internationaal	1,8%	Niveau 1	1,2%	Internationaal	1,4%
	Hoofdklasse	7,1%	Niveau 2	4,5%	Eredivisie	4,1%
	Promotieklasse	4,4%	Niveau 3	6,2%	Eerste divisie	2,7%
	Overgangsklasse	14,1%	Niveau 4	12,9%	Tweede divisie	4,1%
	Eerste klasse	23,6%	Niveau 5	17,9%	Derde divisie	2,7%
	Tweede klasse	18,8%	Niveau 6	25,5%	Hoofdklasse	6,8%
	Derde klasse	18,0%	Niveau 7	19,0%	Eerste klasse	2,7%
	Vierde klasse	7,7%	Niveau 8	9,8%	Tweede klasse	14,9%
	Vijfde klasse	1,8%	Niveau 9	3,1%	Derde klasse	24,3%
	Zesde klasse	2,6%			Vierde klasse	20,3%
					Vijfde klasse	16,2%

Table 2.1 – Background characteristics response groups

2.3 Validity and reliability

The member panels of the KNHB and KNLTB are a reflection of their total membership base. To assess whether the response groups in turn reflect the member panels of both sports associations,

both groups (response group and member panel) were compared on a number of characteristics for which data is available.

Table 2.2 shows that both response groups are a reliable reflection of the member panels. The age distribution of the two groups is very similar. Men are somewhat overrepresented in the response groups in both sports. The most important difference concerns the playing in tennis: members of the tennis association who play at a somewhat higher level have responded to the survey more often. If match-fixing occurs more frequently at higher levels of play, it is possible that figures on the prevalence of match-fixing based on the response group among tennis players are somewhat higher than they actually are. For hockey, the response group shows an overrepresentation of young seniors and an underrepresentation of veterans.

	KNHB	EPOSM hockey		KNLTB	EPOSM tennis
Sex			Sex		
Man	63%	73%	Man	54%	67%
Woman	37%	27%	Woman	46%	33%
Age category			Age category		
0 - 9	0%	0%	18 - 25	7%	3%
10 - 19	3%	2%	25 - 35	13%	12%
20 - 29	17%	13%	35 - 45	16%	17%
30 - 39	11%	10%	45 - 55	23%	29%
40 - 49	32%	24%	55 - 65	19%	23%
50 - 59	28%	34%	65+	22%	16%
60 - 69	7%	12%			
70+	2%	4%			
Playing level			Playing level		
Young seniors	5%	11%	1 tm 4	2%	24,8%
Seniors	47%	51%	5 en 6	7%	43,4%
Veterans	42%	28%	7 tm 9	91%	31,9%
Other	3%	9%			

Table 2.2 - Comparison of KNHB and KNLTB member panels and response groups

With these caveats, it can be stated that the survey, based on the total of 965 respondents, with the distribution according to various background characteristics as presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, has been a valid instrument to assess the experiences and views with regard to match-fixing within hockey and tennis clubs.

This applies to a lesser extent to football. First, the social media recruitment resulted in a much smaller response group. Secondly, it is not possible to determine how the response group relates to the total group from which this is a sample. For example, it is possible that football players who have had to deal with match-fixing have been more inclined to complete the questionnaire than football players who have not, while this has been a confounding factor to a much lesser extent for hockey and tennis. After all, in these sports the members' panel is taken as the starting point. And in relation to match-fixing, that member panel is composed completely randomly. Thirdly, the reliability of the respondents in football is less easy to assess. For hockey and tennis, the response group appears to be a good reflection of the member panel. The members of these panels are known to the relevant sports association as reliable participants in research. The background of the respondents who participated in this survey for football via social media is neither known nor verifiable. For example, 6.8 percent of the respondents indicate that they play football at the level of the Eredivisie and Keukenkampioen Divisie, while 0.1 percent of the football teams at the KNVB

play at that level. If the respondents among football players answered the questionnaire truthfully, the overrepresentation of higher levels of practice should be taken into account when generalizing the findings. It cannot be ruled out (nor can it be verified) that the overrepresentation gives a distorted picture because some of the respondents did not fill in the questionnaire truthfully.

The results among football players are therefore not added to the results among hockey players and tennis players in this report, but are stated separately with the necessary caveats where this may be of significance.

2.4 Comparison with previous research

Compared to the match-fixing survey conducted by Spapens & Olfers in the Netherlands in 2013, the match-fixing survey conducted in the Netherlands in the context of the EPOSM project in 2020 differs in two respects (see Table 2.3):

1. The first difference concerns the target group. While the survey in the EPOSM study was conducted in the Netherlands among athletes, trainers/coaches, medical staff, referees, board members and similar stakeholders at all playing levels (see table 2.1), the Spapens & Olfers survey at the time was aimed at athletes and other involved at the higher and highest levels of practice (football: referees, agents, coaches Professional Football, players topklasse, hoofdklasse en 1e klasse, Jupiler League and Eredivisie; tennis: players and former players; equestrian sports: pikeurs and judges; boxing: elite and youth participants; and basketball: Eredivisie players, coaches/trainers Eredivisie and Eredivisie referees).
2. The second difference concerns the size of the response group by sport. The survey in the EPOSM survey in 2020 resulted in 965 respondents who reflect the member panels of the KNHB and KNLTB. In addition, 74 questionnaires were completed by persons involved in football, but these are not taken into account in this study for methodological reasons for the overall picture. The questionnaire issued by Spapens & Olfers in 2013 was completed by 636 representatives of football (at high playing levels). In the study by Spapens & Olfers (2013), the respondents of the other sports form too small numbers to be able to make statements about these sports as a whole: tennis: n=12; equestrian sports: n=15; boxing: n=12; basketball: n=53.

It can be concluded that the survey by Spapens & Olfers (2013) mainly allows statements about match-fixing in football at the higher and highest level, while the present EPOSM survey in the Netherlands allows statements about match-fixing in hockey and tennis in a broad sense.



Spapens & Olfers (2013)				EPOSM-NL (2020)		
	N	%			N	%
Approached (football, tennis, basketball, equestrian sports, boxing)	5547			Approached (hockey and tennis)	7497	
Response total	732	13%**		Response via member panels	965	13%**
Football	636	87%*		Tennis	420	10%*
Basketball	53	7%*		Hockey	545	18%*
Equestrian sports	15	2%*				
Tennis	12	2%*				
Boxing	12	2%*				
(former)Player		73%*		(former)Player		73%*
Referee		18%*		Referee		6%*
Coach		6%*		Coach		10%*
Club board member		0%*		Club board member		5%*
Other		4%*		Other		6%*
Playing level:	Referees, sports agents, coaches professional football, players topklasse, hoofdklasse en 1e klasse, professional spelers Eredivisie en Jupiler League			Playing level:	All playing levels, with limited representation of professional athletes	

Tabel 2.3 – Reponse groups comparison Spapens & Olfers (2013) and EPOSM-NL (2020)

* In percentage of response

** in percentage of approached

3 PREVALENCE OF MATCH-FIXING

3.1 **Gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing**

Our survey among the member panels of the KNHB and KNLTB shows that 12 percent of the respondents know someone who has been approached to fix a match. No distinction is made here between gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing. There are hardly any differences in this respect between hockey and tennis (see figure 3.1).

In the survey via social media among football players, the percentage was much higher: 24 percent of the respondents indicated that they knew someone who had been approached to fix a match. As argued in the previous chapter, this may be the result of self-selection.

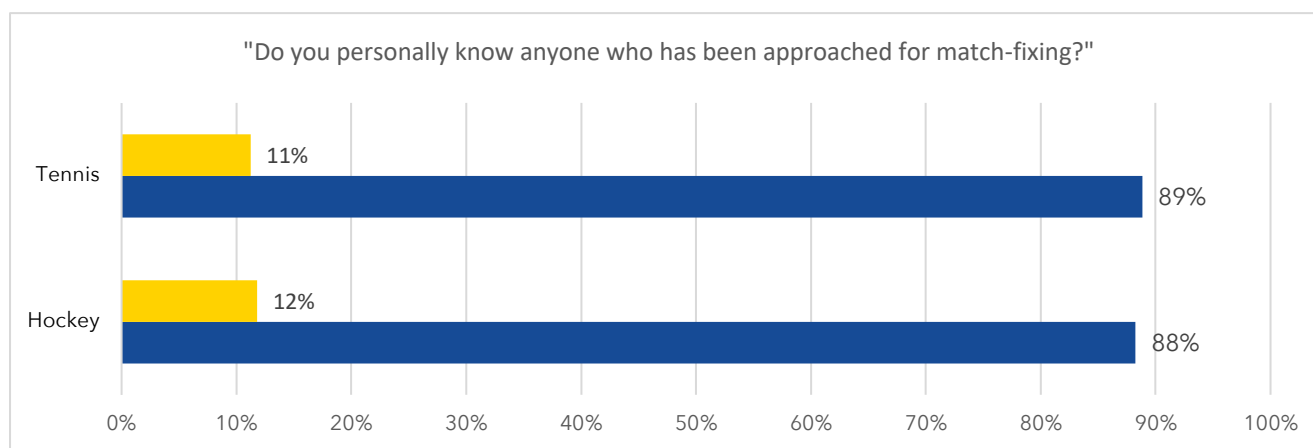


Figure 3.1 – Respondents who personally knew someone who had been approached for match-fixing (N=965)

12% of respondents know someone who has been approached to fix a match

The percentage of 12 percent among hockey and tennis players is lower than what emerges from the EPOSM survey in Belgium, France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom and Switzerland combined. Of the 5,014 respondents from these countries together, 18 percent indicated that they personally knew one or more people who had been approached to fix a match. It should be noted here that the sampling methods and groups of respondents differ in the countries mentioned and are therefore not easily comparable.

Earlier research by Spapens & Olfers in 2013 showed that 8 percent knew someone who was approached to fix a match. As indicated in the previous chapter, the response group of that survey concerns football players at the higher and highest levels. The lower percentage among this target group may be explained by the fact that non-gambling-related match-fixing is more common at lower levels of practice, while gambling-related match-fixing is more common at higher levels. The following results from our survey in the Netherlands support this statement.

Of all respondents in hockey and tennis, 7 percent (an equal percentage in both sports) indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match (see figure 3.2).

7% of the respondents have themselves been approached to fix a match.

In the survey via social media among football players, this was true for 15 percent of the respondents. In the EPOSM survey in the seven European countries, 8 percent of all 5,014 respondents (and 9 percent of 745 tennis players) indicated that they themselves had been approached about match-fixing.

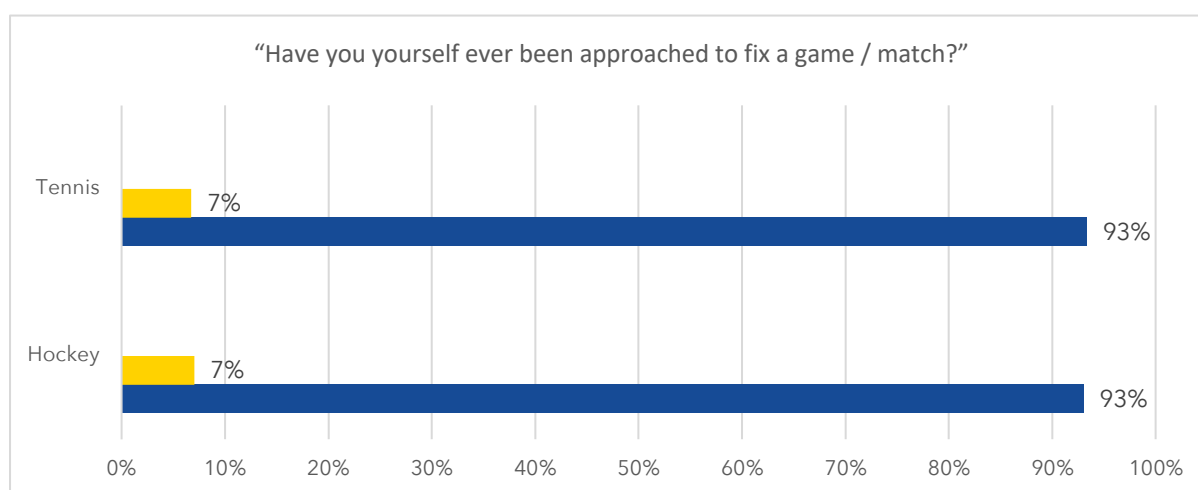


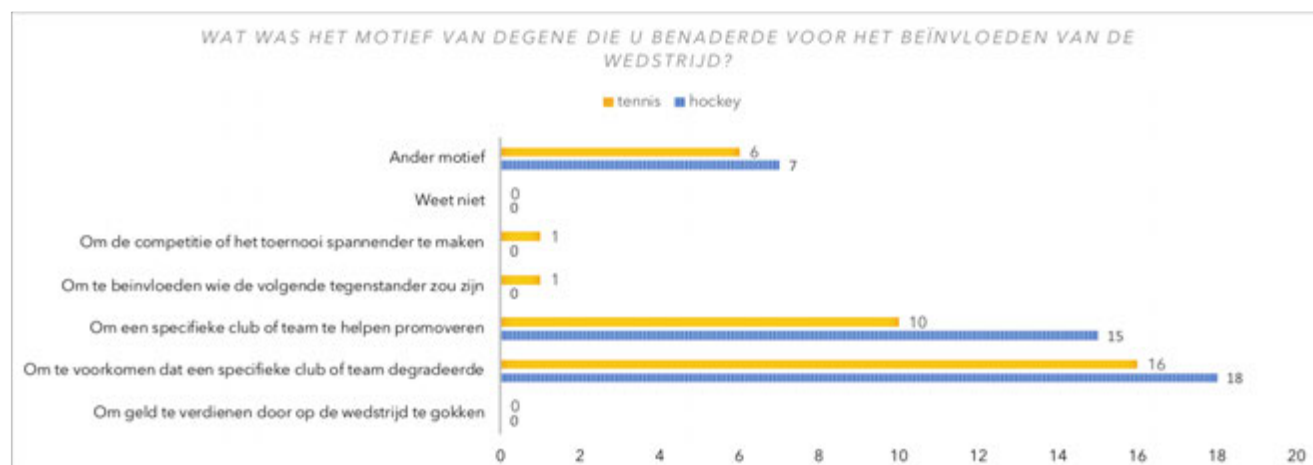
Figure 3.2 – Cases of having been approached themselves in the Dutch sample (n = 965)

35 percent of the respondents in hockey and tennis who have themselves been approached to fix a match indicate that they have experienced this once. For 42 percent, they were approached two to three times; 23 percent say this happened more than three times. In the survey via social media among football players, these percentages are 64 percent, 18 percent and 18 percent respectively.

3.2 Sports-related match-fixing

7 percent of all respondents in hockey and tennis indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match. This concerned sports-related match-fixing only.

By far the most cited motive (just over 80 percent of all motives mentioned) behind the particular request to fix a match was to help prevent relegation of a specific club or player, or to help a specific club or player win a championship . To do this, the approached party had to intentionally underperform. This applied to both hockey and tennis (see Figure 3.3).



Figuur 3.3 – Motives for approaching respondents to fix matches in hockey and tennis

None of the respondents from the member panel of the hockey and tennis association indicated that the motive for match-fixing was to earn money by betting on the match in question. The social media survey of football players also made no mention of gambling-related match-fixing.

The match-fixing for which respondents themselves were approached related exclusively to sports-related (non-gambling-related) match-fixing.

In the study by Spapens & Olfers (2013), a majority of respondents indicated that influencing the competition was the basis for the rapprochement towards match-fixing, while 20 percent stated that the manipulation was aimed at making money by betting on the concerning match.

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORTS-RELATED MATCH-FIXING

4.1 People involved

When the respondents were approached for sports-related match-fixing, 77 percent were active as practitioner, 16 percent as referee and 7 percent as trainer/coach/team manager. They were approached by predominantly practitioners (78 percent), coaches/trainers/team managers (18 percent) or club board members (3 percent) to fix a match. Most of these were opponents (71 percent) but also members of their own club (27 percent).

4.2 Playing level

The results of the survey indicate that sports-related match-fixing hardly occurs at the lowest playing levels (in hockey the fifth and sixth class and in tennis levels 8 and 9). However, match-fixing was reported more often than could be expected on the basis of the response group by respondents playing at a level between the upper and lower regions: in hockey, in particular, the transition class and first class (see figure 4.1); in tennis especially level 4 (Figure 4.2). With regard to the survey via social media in football, the numbers are too small to make general statements (Figure 4.3).

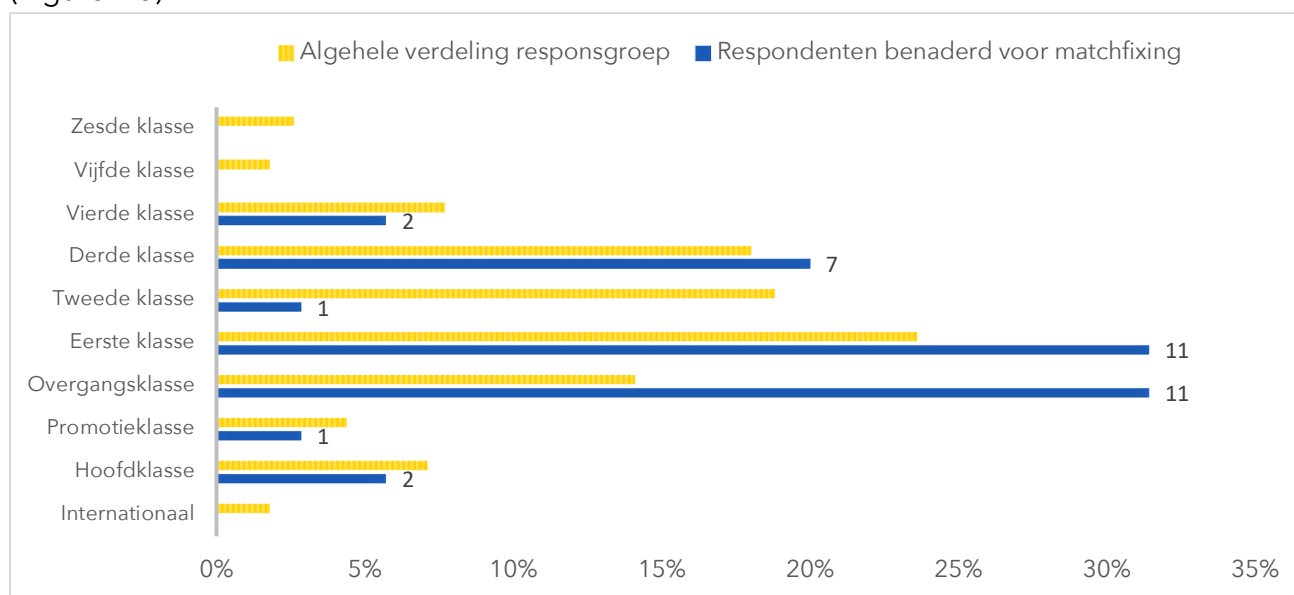
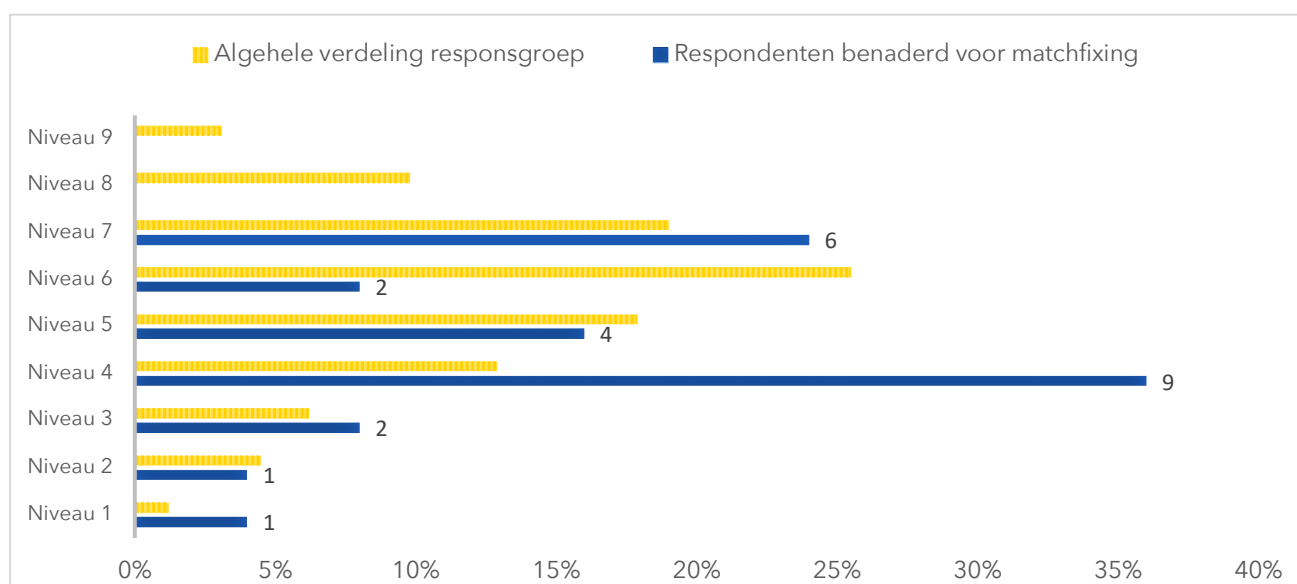
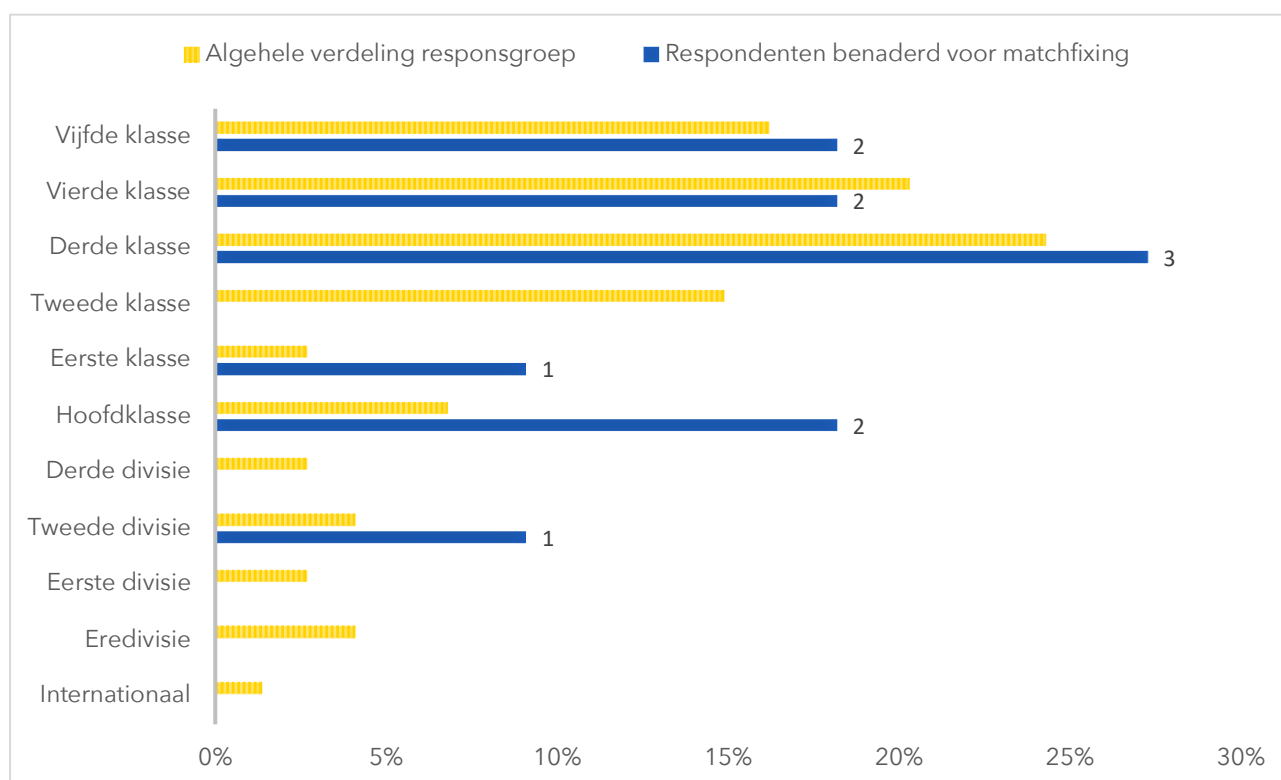


Figure 4.1 – Hockey respondents approached for sports-related match-fixing by playing level (in absolute numbers; n = 35) compared to response group in hockey as a whole by playing level (in percentages; n = 545)



Figuur 4.2 – Tennis respondents approached for sports-related match-fixing by playing level (in absolute numbers; n = 25) compared to response group in hockey as a whole by playing level (in percentages; n = 420).



Figuur 4.3 – Football respondents approached for sports-related match-fixing by playing level (in absolute numbers; n = 11) compared to response group in hockey as a whole by playing level (in percentages; n = 74).

4.3 Compensation

In return for fixing a game or match, in 40 percent of the cases a small amount of money and/or a gift in kind was offered. Four respondents in hockey and tennis reported that money had been offered. In three cases this involved an amount less than one hundred euros. One respondent reported a sum of money between one hundred and five hundred euros (see figure 4.1). More often it concerned gifts in kind; 36 percent of the respondents who were approached for match-fixing themselves stated that it concerned a gift in kind, such as paying for a case of beer, wine/beer, drinks or the bar bill.

In 40% of the cases in which the respondent was approached for match-fixing, a gift in cash and/or kind was offered. This involved small amounts of money.

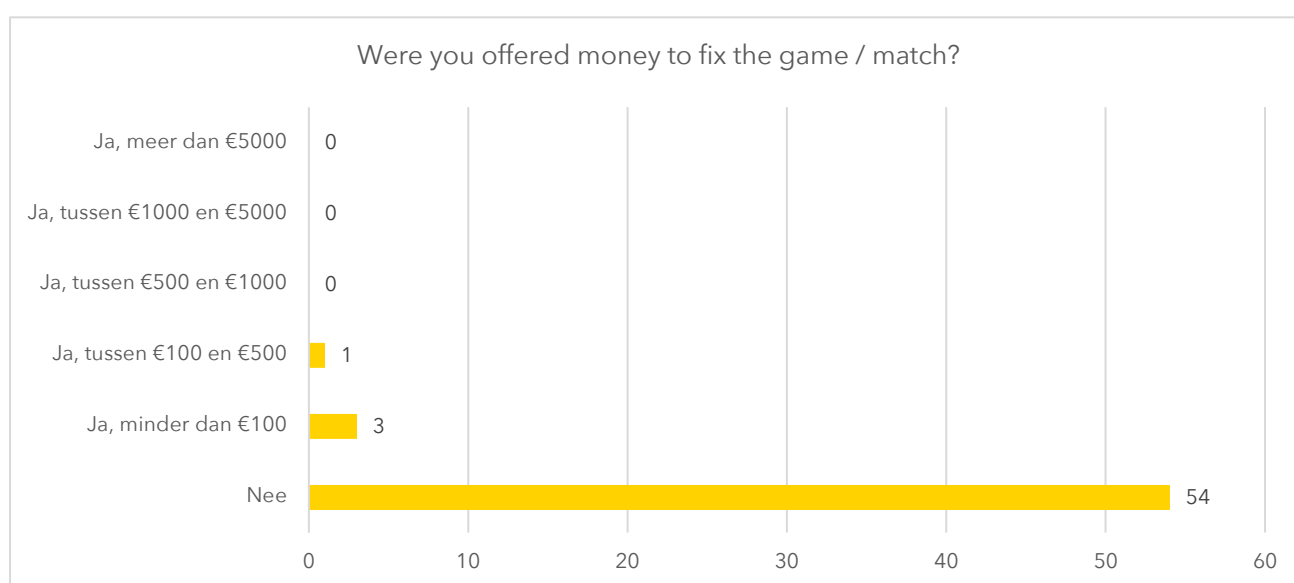


Figure 4.4 – Financial compensation for sports-related match-fixing in hockey and tennis

In the survey via social media among football players, eleven respondents indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match. Five of them indicated that money was involved: in four cases less than a thousand euros, in one case between a thousand and five thousand euros. According to seven respondents, other considerations were offered, in particular paying the beer bill and/or other drinks.

4.4 Pressure or threat

Of the 58 respondents in hockey and tennis who indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match, seven respondents indicated that they felt threatened or pressured. This was not mentioned in the survey via social media among football players.

	With pressure or threat	Without pressure or threat
Gambling-related	0	0
Non-gambling-related	7	51

Table 4.1 Nature of match-fixing for which respondents in hockey and tennis were approached

4.5 Consent

Of the respondents in hockey and tennis who indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match, just over a quarter indicated that they had agreed to the request. This percentage was more or less the same in both sports. In the survey via social media among football players, almost half agreed to the request.

26% of the respondents who themselves have been approached to fix a match agreed with the request.

As the main motivation, the respondents stated that they agreed to the request because of its importance to their own team or as a friendly gesture towards another club or player or the person who made the proposal. Two respondents indicated that they agreed to the request because of pressure exerted on them from their own team. None of the respondents in hockey and tennis indicated that they agreed to the request because of an offer of money or gifts or personal financial problems. In the survey via social media, one footballer indicated that he agreed because of an offer of money or other material compensation.

5 REPORTING OF MATCH-FIXING

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they had ever reported suspicions of or experiences with match-fixing to anyone. This question was left open as to whether it was gambling-related or non-gambling-related match-fixing. About 60 percent of the respondents in hockey and tennis indicated that they had indeed shared such suspicions or experiences; mainly with teammates, board members of the sports club or the sports association (see figure 5.1 in which the labels show the absolute numbers of respondents).

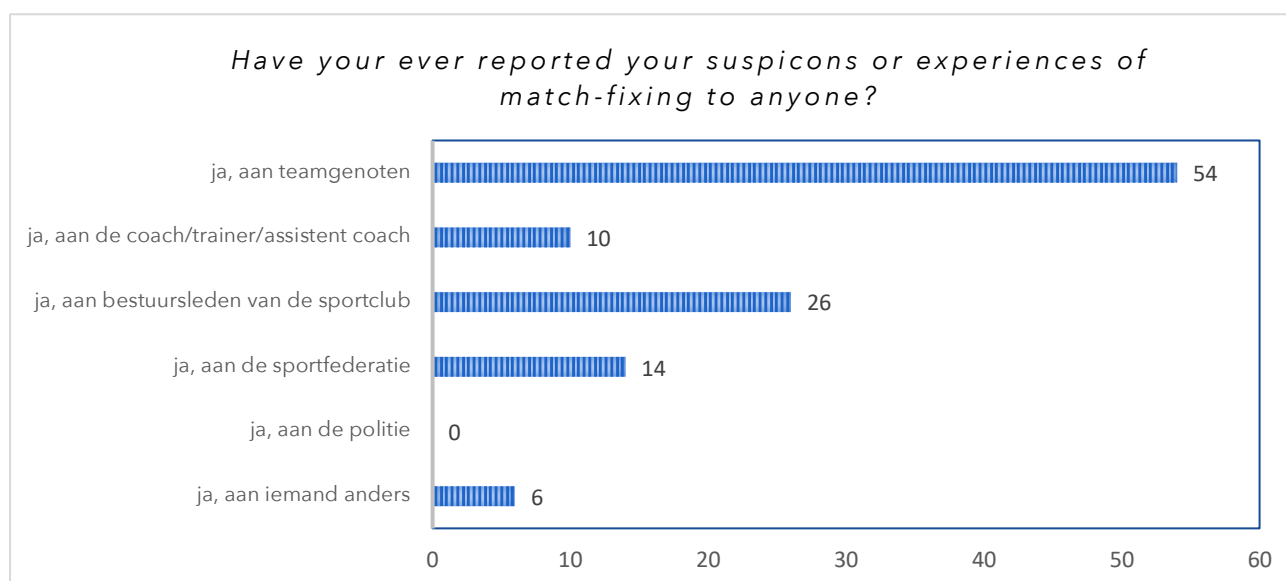


Figure 5.1 Reporting suspicions of or experience with match-fixing in hockey and tennis (in absolute numbers; n = 77; multiple answers per respondent possible)

Of the respondents who are still involved with a sports club in hockey or tennis, 9 percent indicate that their sports club pays attention to gambling-related and/or non-gambling-related match-fixing; 49 percent indicate that the club does not; 42 percent don't know.

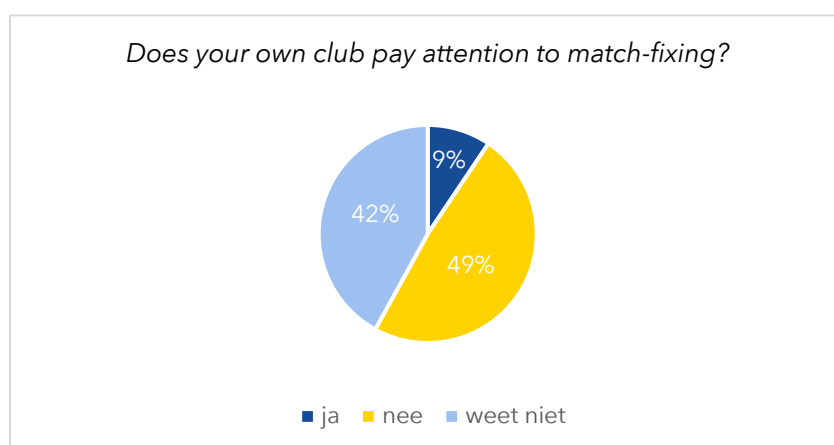


Figure 5.2 Attention paid to match-fixing by hockey and tennis clubs according to respondents (n = 924)

Insofar as tennis and hockey clubs pay attention to ***gambling-related and/or non-gambling-related match-fixing***, this is mainly done through general instruments, such as a code of conduct/code of ethics or a confidential advisor. Actions specifically aimed at match-fixing, such as giving explicit warnings, prohibiting gambling on matches or reporting suspicious acts to the police are less common.

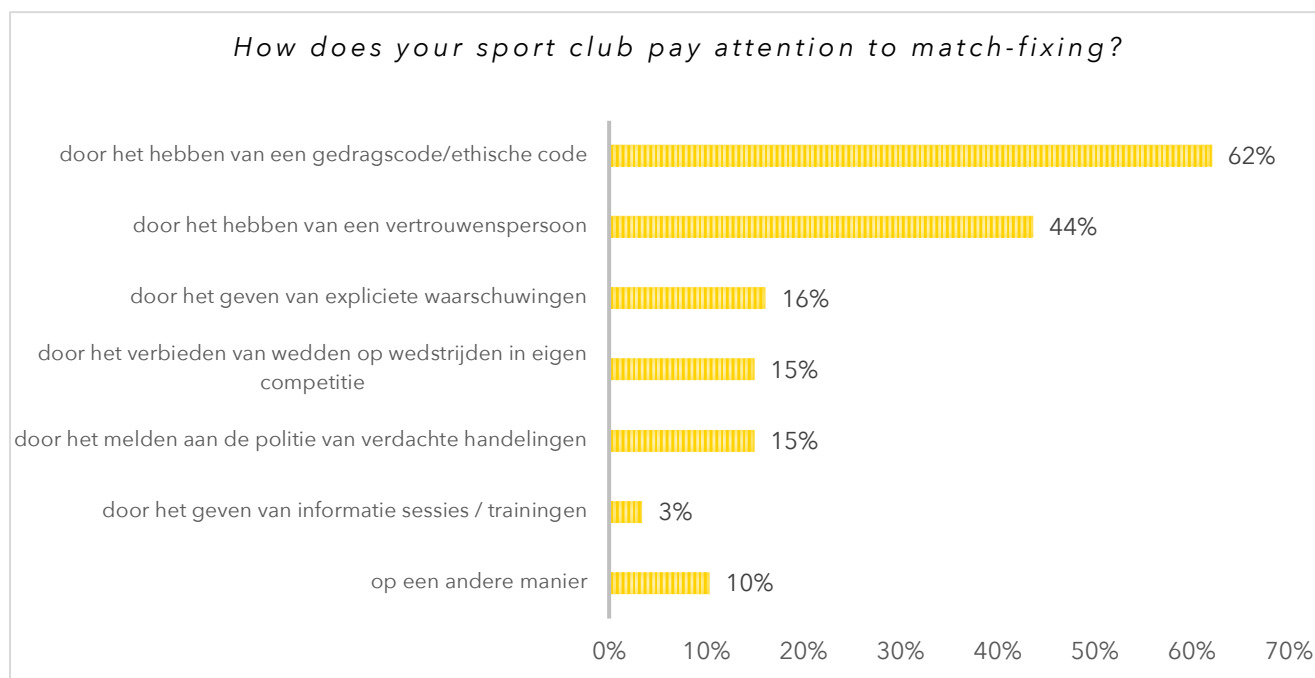


Figure 5.3 How hockey and tennis clubs pay attention to gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing (n = 87)

6 ASSESSMENT OF MATCH-FIXING

Match-fixing in general – ie both gambling-related and sports-related – is not regarded by two-thirds of the respondents as a real problem in their sport in the Netherlands. One third of the respondents see match-fixing as a real problem. Of the respondents, 80 percent consider it unlikely that they can be approached to fix a match themselves.

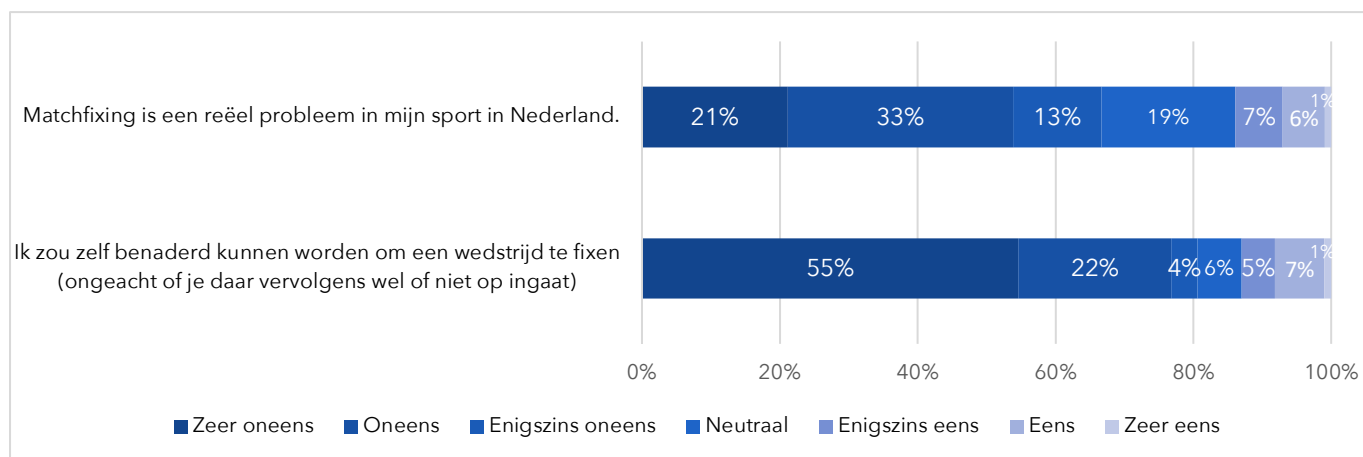
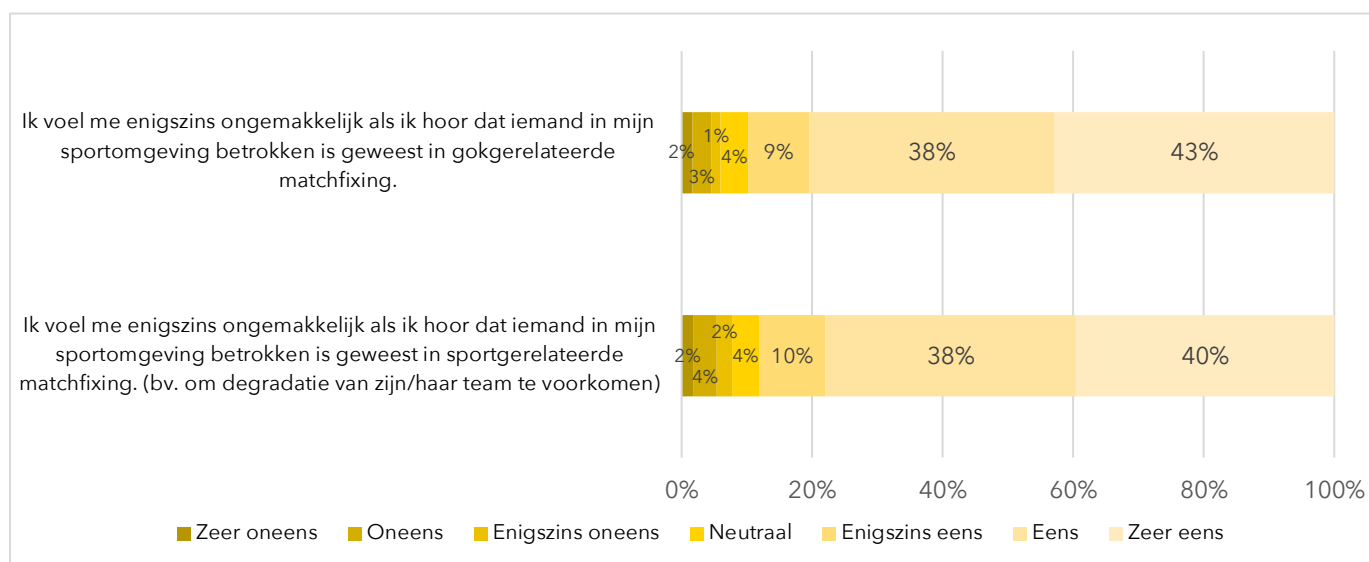


Figure 6.1 Extent of the problem of match-fixing as experienced by members of the hockey association and tennis association.

A large majority of respondents feel uncomfortable hearing about match-fixing in their sports environment. It does not make much difference whether it concerns sports-related or gambling-related match-fixing.



Figuur 6.2 How members of hockey and tennis clubs deal with gambling-related and non-gambling-related match-fixing.

Gambling-related match-fixing is disapproved of by a slightly larger proportion of the respondents than sports-related match-fixing. While 97 percent of all respondents in hockey and tennis find it unacceptable to participate in match-fixing for the purpose of making money by betting on a match, 90 percent find it unacceptable to participate in match-fixing to avoid relegation of their own team.

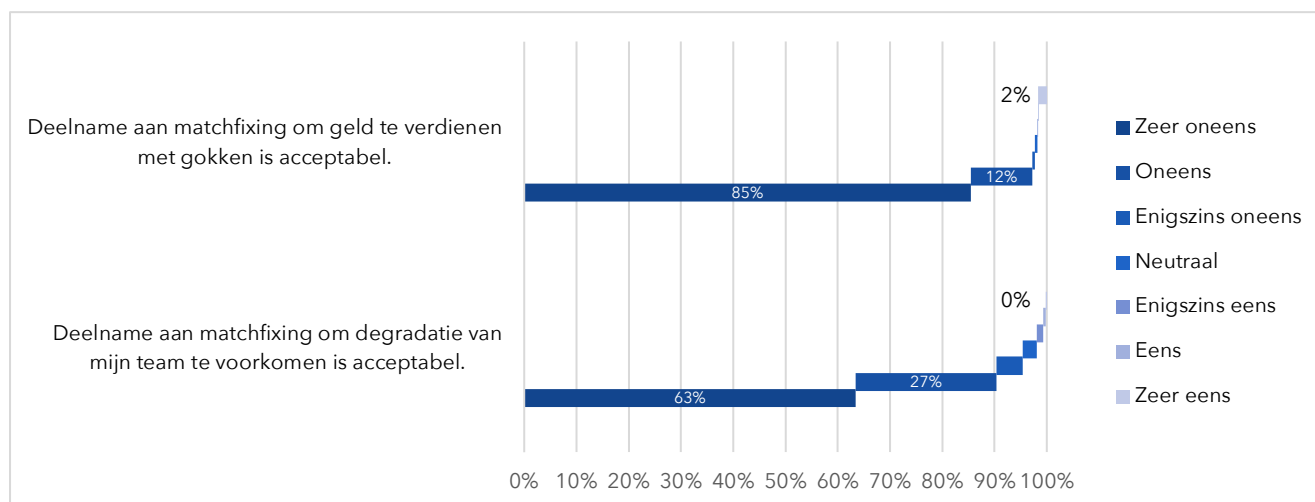


Figure 6.3 Assessment of participation in gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing by members of the hockey and tennis associations

According to the respondents, both forms of match-fixing should be punished. A large majority (87 percent) of respondents say they feel uncomfortable if match-fixing goes unpunished. This applies to both gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing.

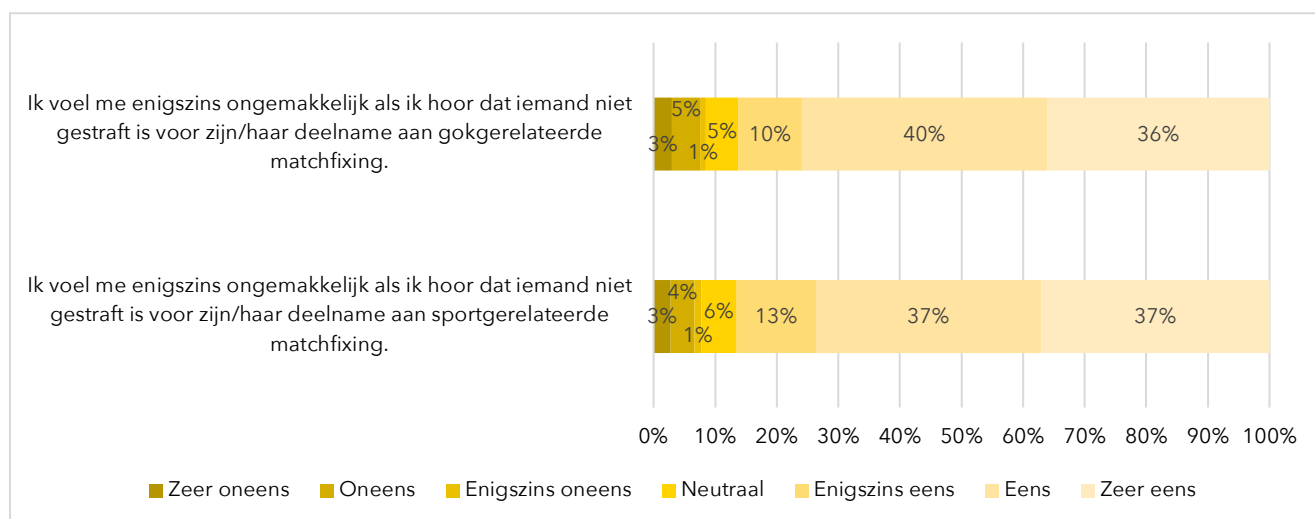


Figure 6.4 Feelings among respondents in tennis and hockey if gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing go unpunished

Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that they gambled during the past year. In addition, eight of the 965 respondents in hockey and tennis indicate that they have already bet on a match in which they were personally involved. Gambling on your own matches does not fall under match-

fixing but can provoke match-fixing and is therefore strictly prohibited under the regulations of many sports associations.

7 **CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 **Prevalence of match-fixing**

- The results of this study show that match-fixing occurs at most levels of grassroots sports. In grassroots competition sports, this is not about gambling-related, but about sports-related match-fixing.
- Of the nearly one thousand respondents in tennis and hockey, 12 percent know someone who has been approached to fix a match. It was not asked what form of match-fixing this concerns. Of the respondents, 7 percent had themselves been approached to fix a match. In all cases, this involved non-gambling-related match-fixing. The main motive was to help another player or club by intentionally underperforming; not to make money by betting on the match in question. That is why this form of match-fixing can be described as sports-related match-fixing.
- Our survey shows no differences between tennis and hockey in the prevalence of match-fixing. Therefore, this study does not indicate that the difference between an individual sport and a team sport is a determining factor for the occurrence of sports-related match-fixing in grassroots sports.
- The percentage of Dutch respondents who know someone who has been approached for match-fixing (12 percent) is slightly lower than the average that emerges from the EPOSM survey among seven European countries (18 percent). Further research into this difference should show whether this is the result of a methodological artefact or a characteristic of Dutch grassroots sports.
- The percentage of Dutch respondents who know someone who has been approached for match-fixing (12 percent) is higher than the 2013 Spapens & Olfers survey showed (8 percent). It cannot be concluded from this that match-fixing was more common in 2020 than in 2013. It is more plausible that this difference is explained by the different target groups under which the study was conducted. In Spapens & Olfers (2013) respondents were mainly involved in football at the higher and highest level, while the results of the present study relate to those involved in hockey and tennis at all playing levels.
- Our research indicates that sports-related match-fixing occurs (much) more often than gambling-related match-fixing. This conclusion is in line with previous research findings (Van Der Hoeven et al. 2020).
- Compared to sports-related match-fixing, gambling-related match-fixing is probably more common at a higher playing level. That is not only a logical consequence of the functioning of the gambling market. This is also apparent from the difference between the results of our survey and those of the earlier study by Spapens & Olfers (2013). While the latter survey among practitioners, referees, trainers and agents from the highest levels of amateur football and

professional football showed that 20 percent of match-fixing was intended to earn money by betting on the match in question, our research among practitioners of all playing levels has not revealed any mention of gambling-related match-fixing.

- The results of the survey indicate that sports-related match-fixing rarely occurs at the lowest playing levels. The greatest chance of sports-related match-fixing occurs between the highest and lowest playing levels.

7.2 Characteristics of match-fixing

- Of the respondents in hockey and tennis who said they had been approached for manipulating matches, 40 percent said they were offered something in return. Cash amounts were promised only a few times, concerning less than one hundred euros. Gifts in kind are much more common, like a case of beer or paying the bar bill after the game.
- While sports-related match-fixing is infrequent and does not involve a lot of money, such requests to 'fix' a match are sometimes accompanied by pressure or threats. Of the 965 respondents in hockey and tennis, 58 respondents indicated that they themselves had been approached to fix a match, of whom seven respondents stated that this was accompanied by pressure or threats.
- A quarter of the respondents who were approached for match-fixing themselves complied with this request. The main motive for this was that it was in the interest of one's own team or was a friendly gesture towards another player or team. For two respondents, the pressure or threat exerted was a reason to agree to the request.
- Sports-related match-fixing is not kept secret among athletes. More than half of the respondents with suspicions of or experience with match-fixing indicate that they have shared this with others in the team, club or national governing body.
- It seems that sports associations pay little attention to sports-related match-fixing in grassroots sports. To the extent that attention is given to this issue, this takes the form of a code of conduct or ethical code and the presence of a confidential counselor within the club.

7.3 Assessment of match-fixing

- Respondents take both gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing seriously. They find match-fixing unacceptable and would feel very uncomfortable if they learned that match-fixing is taking place in their sports environment or if a match fixer would not be penalized. This assessment and condemnation of match-fixing concerns both gambling-related and sports-related match-fixing, although gambling-related participation in match-fixing is more strongly rejected than match-fixing in order to avoid relegation of one's own team.

- At the same time, two thirds of the respondents do not consider match-fixing to be a serious problem in their sport in the Netherlands. That is understandable: 88 percent of respondents don't know anyone who has been approached to fix a match; 80 percent consider it unlikely that they themselves will be approached with such a request.
- It is nonetheless striking that 15 of the 58 respondents in hockey and tennis who had been approached to fix a match agreed to the request. It thus appears that members of sports clubs are more susceptible to sports-related match-fixing than would be expected on the basis of their assessment and conviction.
- An important factor here is that sports-related match-fixing usually 'only' involves a case of beer or a friendly gesture towards another player or club. Mutual sporting self-interest in a competition context can also form the basis of a 'deal', whether or not explicitly expressed, about the desired outcome of a match. This occurs, for example, if a tie in a match is beneficial to both parties in a competition or tournament context. Such sporting self-interest creates a grey zone between tactics and manipulation within which differences in perception can arise as to whether match-fixing is involved (Van Der Hoeven et al. 2021).

7.4 Concluding remarks

- Spapens & Olfers (2013) distinguish four forms of match-fixing: gambling-related match-fixing with and without bribery or threats; and non-gambling match-fixing with and without bribery or threat. Like their study, our results show that sports-related match-fixing without bribery or threat is the most prevalent. This conclusion is even more true in grassroots sports than in elite sports.
- Sports-related match-fixing is not widespread. It also has no relationship with crime, which makes gambling-related match-fixing even more problematic. Still, there are good arguments for taking this problem seriously. Like gambling-related match-fixing, sports-related match-fixing undermines the integrity of sports competitions. It occurs relatively rarely, but members of sports clubs are susceptible to it in grassroots sports; precisely because it can coincide with sporting self-interest and seems 'only' a futility compared to the interests that play a role in professional sport.
- The problem of sports-related match-fixing requires a policy that, compared to gambling-related match-fixing, places a stronger emphasis on awareness and information than on control and punishment. Within each sport it is important to discuss to what extent and forms sports-related match-fixing occurs, what the underlying motives are and where permitted tactics turn into unacceptable manipulation.

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