



### Olympics: Fostering Political Apathy in the World's Largest Playground

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Recently, the Olympics 2024, a leading sports event took place in Paris. It was praised as the first game in history with 'full gender equality' on the field. Ironically, Manizha Talash, an Afghan break-dancer, was disqualified during the pre-qualifiers routine for showing off the slogan, 'Free Afghan Women' on her cape. She was a part of the refugee team. The said decision was made in accordance with the violation of Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter.

This controversy has reignited the issue about this rule which is the reason for many disqualifications in the history of the Olympics.

To start with, the Rule states, 'No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas.' Further, the Bylaw to Rule 50 explains that the rule is applicable to all. It means that all the participants, team personnel, officials, coaches, heads of state, etc. are bound to follow this rule. It prohibits all acts, gestures,

and verbal expressions, wearing any accessories and displaying any protests against religious, political, racial events or human rights violations. It disallows hatred, and violence towards a community, nation, group, society, or organization as well as the promotion of universal values on the field during official ceremonies, competitions, and in the Olympic Village. Non-adherence to any guideline or ceremonial protocol is also forbidden under this rule.

Failure to comply with the rule will result in strict disciplinary actions against the player or the participant after the evaluation by the respective National Olympic Committee, International Federation and the IOC. In many cases, violations have caused sanctions on the players. The rule dates back to 1975 when it was part of Rule 55. At the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, the protest against racial injustice by Tommie Smith and John Carlos led the IOC to establish this rule. It was amended before the Tokyo Olympics 2020 where it allowed expression during press conferences & interviews, on digital or traditional media. The expressions are also permitted before the start of the competition given that they are not violent or

### News at a Glance

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Russia had violated an official's and a group of filmmakers' right to freedom of assembly and free speech. The applicants in the case were subject to administrative sanctions for violating the Public Events Act. For more information, see [here](#).

The German Ministry of Interior announced plans to introduce border controls with France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark for six months starting September 16 to curb irregular migration and strengthen internal security. For more information see [here](#).

The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Georgia and Azerbaijan violated the rights of Azerbaijani journalist Afghan Mukhtarli, specifically his right to an effective investigation and his right to private life. The case involved Mukhtarli's alleged abduction, ill-treatment and unlawful transfer of the Azerbaijani journalist from Georgia to Azerbaijan. For more information, see [here](#).



disruptive, not targeted towards any particular group, community, organization etc, and are consistent with the fundamentals of the Olympics. However, in the Tokyo Olympics, Algerian Judoka, Fethi Nourine and his coach were banned for 10 years by the International Judo Federation for withdrawing against an Israeli opponent to show his support for Palestine. The decision was dismissed by the media and was deemed unreasonable. Even though the restrictions are loosened after this amendment still they are condemned as unjust. It is criticized for being inconsistent with the international human rights laws given by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) under Article 19 as well as by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) under Article 19. It upholds the right of every person to express their opinion without interference with reasonable and fair restrictions.

According to the IOC, Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter advocates political neutrality, one of the fundamentals of the Olympics. It aims to promote international unity and harmony. Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the

modern Olympics, always sought to keep the games politically neutral. Supporters of the rule argue that it is meant to respect all the players, and their views and to focus solely on their performances.

The Olympics provide a huge platform and if participants use it to call out global attention on some issue, then absolutely no one can deny them and infringe their fundamental right. Players around the world come from different backgrounds with different struggle stories. Their socio-political situation is an important factor in determining their chances of success and world affairs around the players impact their life decisions. Their right to defend the universal values and human rights must not be denied. In the history of the Olympics, this rule has resulted in suppressing the voice of minorities which ultimately reinforces white political supremacy. Thus, an apolitical approach in sports will result in more harm than good to humanity.

### International Frameworks governing Match-Fixing in Sports

- Avantika Patra (II B.B.A.LL.B) and Anushka Sarkar (II B.A.LL.B.)

### News at a Glance

Over 26 human rights organizations, including the Kurdistan Human Rights Network and Centre for Human Rights in Iran, issued a joint statement calling for the immediate revocation of the death sentence imposed on Kurdish women's rights activist Pakhshan Azizi. For more information, see [here](#).

The Supreme Court of India dismissed a suit that sought to halt arms exports to Israel amid its ongoing conflict in Gaza, citing the court's inability to interfere in matters of foreign policy. For more information, see [here](#).

Former President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro led a political rally on Brazil's Independence Day, amid growing dissent over the suspension of social media platform X (formerly Twitter) in the country. For more information, see [here](#).



Wilson Raj, a famous match-fixer from Singapore had once remarked how the concern for money among players is so deeply entrenched that when players are offered money to tackle their problems, they would hardly reject such ludicrous offers. This issue echoed deeply in an infamous match-fixing scandal in cricket involving South African cricketer Herschelle Gibbs, who had admitted to fixing a match since he was in dire need of money for his mother's treatment.

Match-fixing is usually defined as an arrangement or irregular alteration of the course or result of a sporting competition or any of its particular events (e.g. matches, races etc.) in order to remove all or part of the uncertainty normally associated with competition. The important principles of sport are competition, equal opportunities, fairness, and the 'sweet tension of uncertainty of outcome'. The reason why sports are attractive to us in the first place is embedded in this factor of uncertainty. Match-fixing completely violates these principles of sport and thereby takes away from the enjoyment that people experience.

Modern sport is no longer national;

international sports organisations are influenced by their constituent nations and their laws and also by other international organisations. A clear demarcation of jurisdiction can be outlined with the following example— A bettor can place an internet bet on a sports competition in another country, through betting operators from yet another country, whose online betting platform is accessible from almost anywhere globally, whilst based in a country where the betting market is unregulated. Gambling on E-sports is unregulated, leading to the creation of a black market via virtual currency. This has led to match-fixing, especially in areas where E-sports gambling isn't officially recognised.

Increasing commercialisation of sports has led to a shift from amateurism to professionalism. This implies that professional clubs gain enormous amounts of income in the form of club fees, sports tickets, IPRs, but, most significantly, from sports bets. There are more than 8000 sports betting operators around the world and most of these are based in low tax-rate territories, also known as tax havens, like Malta, Gibraltar, Isle of Man, etc.

### News at a Glance

Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report criticizing asylum and migrant protections in Latin America. The report outlined "poor regularization and integration policies" between Latin American countries that drive migrants to attempt dangerous passages into Central and North America. For information, see [here](#).

The United Nations issued a dire warning about the worsening crisis in Sudan, emphasizing the devastating impact of ongoing conflict and the inadequate international response. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), reported that over 20,000 people have died since the conflict began in April 2023. For more information, see [here](#).

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued two rulings, imposing a €2.4 billion fine on Google for abuse of its dominant market position and ordering Apple to repay Ireland €13 billion in tax. For more information, see [here](#).



The fight against match-fixing cannot be won by the sports sector alone. It requires 3 components:

### a. The mobilisation of states

Many match-fixing cases involve complex transnational organised-crime networks, and sophisticated gambling and money laundering techniques. Sports organisations do not have the capacity (or mandate) to address these criminal networks.

### b. International cooperation

Match-fixing networks and sports-betting operators are not confined by national borders, especially in the case of online betting.

### c. Multisector cooperation

Cooperation between law-enforcement bodies, sports organisations, sports-betting operators, and public authorities responsible for regulating sports betting is required. Because of the number of actors involved and the complexity of the undertaking, in 2012 the Council of Europe began multipartite discussions aimed at drawing up a convention against match-fixing.

came into force in September 2019 after being created in 2014, is unique as it is the only international convention with specific provisions on match manipulation. It aims to combat the manipulation of sports competitions and protect the integrity and autonomy of sports. While the convention covers match-fixing, it does not differentiate between match-fixing with and without betting, despite the different risks involved. Match-fixing without betting can still lead to significant financial gains by securing advantages like better sponsorship deals and TV rights. The convention promotes a risk-and evidence-based approach, setting commonly agreed standards and principles for preventing, detecting, and sanctioning the manipulation of sports competitions. It imposes obligations on three major stakeholders—signatory states, sports organizations, and sports-betting operators—and covers areas such as prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, exchange of information, and follow-up actions. Its main objectives are to promote cooperation between public authorities, sports organizations,

### News at a Glance

The Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on 8 September, 2024 that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has revoked its consent for the Federative Republic of Brazil to represent Argentina's interests and nationals in Venezuelan territory, effectively immediately. For more information, see [here](#).

Former President of Colombia Andrés Pastrana claimed that Venezuela is facing a “coup d'état” following the country's disputed 2024 presidential elections. The leader of the IDEA group, a coalition of 31 former heads of government from countries in Latin America, emphasized the urgency of international intervention. For more information, see [here](#).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) released a new working paper, finding that people with disabilities are less likely to participate in the labor market. The paper also highlights that people with disabilities tend to earn less than their non-disabled counterparts. For more information, see [here](#).



and sports-betting entities while ensuring the integrity of sports remains intact.

According to Article 3.4, “manipulation of sports competitions” means 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.

Apart from Macolin Convention, certain other conventions like the United Nations Conventions against Corruption (UNCAC) have addressed match fixing. Being an only legally binding instrument in this sphere, the ambit of UNCAC ranges from establishing liabilities (Article 26) to whistleblower protection (article 32), additionally also touches upon jurisdiction, active and passive bribery etc. The Conference of State Parties, a policy making body of UNCAC has consistently endorsed mapping out a global framework for establishing a consolidated system to tackle corruption in sports, and create

more accountability and transparency.

Betting and fixing in sports is mostly a transnational issue since a number of internationally organised crime groups tend to control results of matches by offering pecuniary benefits to players. Mostly these fixers invest in domestic leagues of other countries or international matches. Match-fixing is a crime that satisfies all the conditions of a transnational crime under United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) where, all the planning is done in one state, but a sizable amount of its implementation takes place in another state, entailing wider consequences over the state where it was enacted. However, the issue of transnational crimes comes up with its own stumbling blocks, since the rules and regulations of one country may contradict another, and hence, ascertaining the intensity of a crime may vary enormously. The UNTOC fails to collectively address the global hindrance of match fixing, neither does it cater to sub-issues within this point like that of safeguarding whistleblowers.

Over the years, INTERPOL has

### News at a Glance

Around 1200 anti-war and anti-genocide protesters clashed with police outside the Melbourne Convention and Exhibit Center, according to a media statement by Victoria Police. Thirty-nine of the protestors against the Land Forces International Land Defense Exposition have been arrested so far and charged with various offenses, including assault on police officers and obstruction of police. For more information, see [here](#).

International human rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) announced in a news release that Iran has arrested the family members of dozens of protesters who were imprisoned or killed during the 2022 anti-government protests that took place in the country. For more information, see [here](#).

Former Venezuelan presidential candidate Edmundo González arrived in Spain after being granted safe passage through an agreement between Venezuela and Spain. For more information, see [here](#).



engaged with several sports federations like the IOC, FIFA etc, and actively aided the state organisations in dismantling numerous organised match fixing groups by providing “investigative support such as forensics, analysis, and aid in locating fugitive”. The INTERPOL Match-Fixing Task Force (IMFTE) is aimed at working closely with law enforcement agencies around the world. With “100 member units in the task and 150 national points of contact worldwide,” providing a common platform to coordinate and perform joint investigation, maintain global data on the issue like a central repository, and share best practices to address match fixing. The task force’s distinctive outreach program acts as a nexus between criminal investigative units of countries, special integrity units, International Sports Federations, thereby consolidating efforts of all organisations to work against corrupt practices and exploitations in sports. INTERPOL has also devised tools and mechanisms like “Project ETICA” which gathers data on sports corruption, or “financial crimes analysis (FinCAF)”. INTERPOL’s most recent venture was cooperating with the Spanish National Police, Spanish Tax

Agency and Europol, and after a series of thorough investigations by these agencies, an organised crime group of match fixers and bettors who were using technology to gain early access to match information were brought down.

After navigating through this array of international laws and law enforcement agencies regulating match fixing, it can be inferred that despite the presence of a number of mechanisms, match fixing and betting has grown substantially recently. With the advent of technology, this problem seems to have intensified since ascertaining liability, extradition processes, and issues of jurisdiction come into play. Sports in itself carries a spirit of unity, ethics and integrity; however, increasing commercialisation seems to have taken this essence from it. Since, match-fixing is a trans-border issue, it is quintessential to devise a fully structured binding framework only governing corrupt practices in different sports. The framework should comprise of clearly delineated jurisdiction, protection of whistleblowers, and should ensure that public money invested in sports is not used to indulge in illicit activities. For upholding the ethos value of sports, dilution of

### Upcoming Activities

Call for Abstracts: European Yearbook of International Economic Law.

The 2025 volume of the European Yearbook of International Economic Law (EYIEL) will have a Focus Section on “Global Sports and International and European Economic Law”. The editors have issued an Open Call for Abstracts to invite scholars and practitioners to share their legal perspectives and ideas in the EYIEL 2025. For the General Section, abstracts should address topics of current relevance to European and International Economic Law. For more information, see [here](#).



corruption in this sphere is essential.

## Upcoming Activities

**Legal Education During Armed Conflict: Live Webinar.**

The upcoming webinar on “Legal Education During Armed Conflict” will explore how armed conflict impacts legal education and how we can continue to teach law students about justice, respect for diversity, and the rule of law in environments where rights are restricted, and critical voices are often silenced due to war-induced intimidation, nationalism, fear, and trauma. Legal educators and clinicians will share their personal experiences addressing these challenges. For more information, see [here](#).

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