



SPORTS BETTING INTEGRITY RULES: RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

February 2018

The Sports Betting Group

The Sports Betting Group (SBG) was formed in 2010 following the publication of the Report of the Sports Betting Integrity Panel (the Parry Report) commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The SBG's role is to bring together sports bodies to provide leadership and to share good practice on sports betting integrity issues. The SBG is chaired by the Sport and Recreation Alliance which also provides the group's secretariat function. More information on the work of the group can be found at www.sportsbettinggroup.org.

Summary

A core function of all sports governing bodies and player associations is to maintain, and be seen to be maintaining, the integrity of their sport. Integrity must be upheld in order to retain public confidence and to protect the reputation and financial viability of sport. Sports governing bodies must therefore take action to address the risks posed to integrity by corrupt betting. A key part of this is to set and enforce clear rules in relation to betting.

The Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan 2017¹ identifies a number of actions for key stakeholders designed to improve the regulatory framework governing sports betting integrity. One of the actions in the plan is for sports governing bodies to undertake a best practice review of rules and regulations on betting to ensure sports regulatory frameworks remain fit for purpose.

This review therefore identifies a series of good practice principles which the Sports Betting Group believes should be applied by governing bodies when setting and reviewing rules on betting integrity.

Applying the principles

The following governing body members of the Sports Betting Group agree to apply the good practice principles contained herein when setting and reviewing their rules²:

British Horseracing Authority
British Curling
British Cycling
British Rowing
Darts Regulation Authority
England and Wales Cricket Board
The Football Association
Greyhound Board of Great Britain
Rugby Football League
Rugby Football Union
Table Tennis England
World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association

The Sports Betting Group also encourages other sports governing bodies to utilise these good practice principles in developing betting integrity rules for their respective sports.

¹ *Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan 2017*: <http://www.sbif.uk/images/Documents/SBI-Action-Plan-2017-FINAL.pdf>

² The Lawn Tennis Association is committed to these principles but is not listed here as betting integrity matters within tennis are handled by the Tennis Integrity Unit.

Background: The Parry Report recommendations

The Report of the Sports Betting Integrity Panel (the Parry Report)³ published in 2010 made a number of specific recommendations on betting integrity rules, in particular:

- There should be a new Code of Conduct⁴ on integrity in sports in relation to sports betting that includes minimum standards which all sports shall observe and cover in their rules on betting.
- Each individual Sports Governing Body (SGB) should make such amendments as may be necessary to their rules and regulations so as to at least satisfy the minimum standards contained in the Code (recognising that a “one size fits all” approach is unlikely to be appropriate).
- Each SGB put in place a satisfactory education/communication programme for its competitors and participants on their sport’s rules on betting and the preservation of integrity in their sport in relation to betting.

The report went on to specify some minimum standards in terms of betting rules as follows:

“A participant shall:

- *Not place or attempt to place a bet on a match, race or other event or competition in which he or his club participates in.*
- *Not solicit or facilitate, or attempt to solicit or facilitate, another person to bet on a match, race or other event or competition in which he or his club participates in.*
- *Not offer, or attempt to offer, a bribe in order to fix or contrive a result or the progress of a match, race or other event or competition in which he or his club participates in.*
- *Not receive, or seek or attempt to receive, or seek a bribe in order to fix or contrive a result or the progress of a match, race or other event or competition in which he or his club participates in.*
- *Report any approach or other activity which contravenes, or which may contravene, the sport’s rules on betting, cooperate with any investigation and/or request for information including the provision of documentation (e.g. telephone/betting records to officials engaged in the investigation of suspected integrity issues in the sport in relation to betting).*
- *Perform to the best of his ability in any match, race or other event in which he participates in.*

Sports Governing Bodies shall ensure that they include in their rules and regulations a provision that a participant shall not use in relation to betting any inside information that is not publicly available and which has been obtained by virtue of the participant’s position within the sport, and in this respect Sports Governing Bodies should within their rules clearly define what is meant by “inside information”.

Every Governing Body shall take steps to ensure that the sanctions laid down in their rules and regulations are enforced for breaches of rules on betting by participants, are proportionate and yet sufficiently robust.”⁵

³ Report of the Sports Betting Integrity Panel:

<http://www.sportsbettinggroup.org/downloads/Report%20of%20the%20Sports%20Betting%20Integrity%20Panel%20-%20Feb%202010.pdf>

⁴ Subsequently the Sports Betting Group Code of Practice:

<http://www.sportsbettinggroup.org/downloads/SBG%20Code%20of%20Practice%20-%20Final%20Sept%202016.pdf>

⁵ See note 3.

The Sports Betting Group Code of Practice

The Sports Betting Group Code of Practice sets out seven key actions sports governing bodies should take to protect their sports from the risk of betting corruption.⁶ Of particular relevance in the context of rules are:

Action 1: Establish rules, regulations and sanctions on betting. Sports governing bodies must have robust rules and regulations in place that reflect the risks to their sport. The rules must make it clear to participants what is and what is not acceptable in terms of betting and should include provisions covering the misuse of inside information which is not publicly available and which is obtained by virtue of the participant's position within the sport.

Action 7: Undertake a regular review of integrity arrangements. Sports governing bodies should undertake a review of integrity arrangements to learn lessons from particular cases or investigations but also to ensure systems and processes reflect the latest good practice. Where relevant, any such review should include a consideration of rules, regulations and sanctions.

The SBG Code recommends sports governing bodies include the Parry Report minimum standards within their rules on betting. However, the Code is not prescriptive and recognises that sports require the flexibility to adopt different rules according to the specific circumstances and risks they face.

Good practice principles for betting integrity rules

The Parry Report minimum standards remain an important cornerstone of sports governing bodies' betting integrity rules. However, since 2010, the betting integrity landscape has developed rapidly, with new technologies and the proliferation of betting markets and products posing new challenges. Similarly, wider legislative and regulatory frameworks governing betting integrity have evolved and matured. It is therefore important for sports governing bodies to ensure their rules, regulations and sanctions are fit for purpose and address the full range of integrity risks which exist currently and which may emerge in the foreseeable future.

In this context, the following good practice principles are intended to provide a useful sense check for sports governing bodies to apply when setting and reviewing betting integrity rules. These principles may be used to identify where new rules are required or where further refinement of existing rules is necessary. They may also help to identify potential changes which deliver wider benefit – for example, improved clarity and transparency may assist in ensuring participants better understand the scope of the rules and the obligations upon them.⁷

1. **Scope and clarity** – *Rules should identify to whom they apply, cover all relevant matters, be specific and clear and easy to understand. The definition of a 'participant', if used, is necessarily sport-specific and governing bodies should ensure that the rules make it clear which roles and positions within the sport are covered and, if there are exemptions, that they are clear and justified appropriately.*
2. **Betting by participants** – *Rules should clarify what is expected of participants in terms of betting on their own sport and ensure that any prohibition on betting is unambiguous.*

⁶ See note 4.

⁷ It is recognised that some specific issues e.g. disciplinary procedures and sanctions, data protection etc. may be dealt with in more general governing body rules or policies. In this context, it is recommended betting integrity rules make explicit reference to relevant provisions in other rules and/or policies as necessary.

3. **Corruption offences and sanctions** – Rules should make clear what is considered corrupt conduct including, but not limited to, any attempt to influence improperly the outcome of a fixture or specific event within a fixture and the misuse of inside information for betting purposes. It is recommended sports governing bodies establish minimum sanctions for betting integrity breaches but it is for sports governing bodies to determine what these minimum sanctions should be, taking into account the specific circumstances of the sport and the need for proportionality.
4. **Inside information** – Rules should define what is meant by ‘inside information’ and its misuse and highlight, where relevant, any related rules or codes of conduct regulating participants’ use of mobile devices and social media. Rules on inside information should also explain under what circumstances the dissemination of such information e.g. via social media makes it information that is considered to be in the public domain.
5. **Use of mobile communication devices** – If relevant, rules should identify any specific arrangements for the handling of mobile communication devices – including phones but also any other connected devices that may be used for communication purposes e.g. smart watches – in designated areas and at designated times. This may, for example, encompass restrictions on participants’ use of mobile communication devices in dressing rooms, recognising that any such arrangements should be risk-based and proportionate.
6. **Reporting and cooperation with investigations** – Rules should include positive obligations on participants to report corrupt or suspicious activity promptly and to cooperate with any investigations, making clear the requirements expected as well as the sanctions for non-compliance.⁸ Rules should include the right to request relevant financial and communications records necessary to investigate integrity breaches. Similarly, rules should also require the cooperation of third parties (i.e. individuals outside of the sport) with integrity investigations and sanctions for non-compliance should be set out clearly. Sanctions may include banning individuals from entering sports grounds and/or banning participants from associating with such individuals.
7. **Commission of other offences/rule breaches** – Rules should make clear any links to related criminal offences (e.g. bribery, cheating at gambling) and, if relevant, any international federation rules relating to betting corruption e.g. reciprocity of sanctions.
8. **Data protection** – Rules should identify clearly any relevant data processing required in order to fulfil the governing body’s integrity functions and the grounds for such processing in accordance with applicable data protection law. Such rules should include provision for sharing participant information with relevant third parties e.g. regulators and law enforcement where it is appropriate and lawful to do so. Sports governing bodies should also ensure that relevant systems and processes will be compliant with data protection requirements under the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) effective from May 2018.
9. **Provisional suspension** – Rules should provide for the ability to provisionally suspend a participant where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to preserve the integrity of the sport. Any decision to provisionally suspend a participant on these grounds should be subject to appropriate checks and balances so as to ensure participants are afforded a fair process. For example, in football, an application by the Football Association for an

⁸ Where there is an obligation on participants to report corrupt or suspicious activity, sports governing bodies should ensure there is a clear mechanism for reporting in place – for example through a designated contact person and/or reporting hotline – and that participants are made aware of it.

interim suspension order can be made to the Judicial Panel Chairman only after obtaining written agreement from the Professional Footballers Association (in the case of a player) and the appropriate League (in the case of a player/club).

10. **Disciplinary procedures** – *Rules should identify clearly the burden and standard of proof applied to betting integrity breaches and set out the relevant disciplinary procedures to be followed in determining a case. These procedures should provide for a fair and proper opportunity for cases to be heard before an impartial tribunal and include appropriate provisions for appeal.*
11. **Transparency** – *Rules, sanctioning guidelines and full, reasoned disciplinary decisions relating to betting integrity breaches should, wherever possible and subject to confidentiality requirements, be made available publicly.*