

## ESSA AND THE R&A TEAM UP TO PROTECT THE OPEN

**Brussels, 7 July 2016:** The R&A, organisers of The Open, have entered into a formal information sharing arrangement with the regulated betting industry's integrity body ESSA. The agreement is a precautionary measure with the aim of detecting and deterring any betting-related corruption.

The Open, golf's oldest championship with history stretching back to 1860, is one of the biggest events on the sporting calendar and has a large global television audience that also attracts significant interest from betting customers. ESSA will employ its alert and reporting system covering its members' regulated betting markets, which comprises some of the largest betting operators in the world, to monitor The Open for any suspicious betting patterns. As a result, the Championship will benefit from a heightened level of security from potential corruption.

Mike O'Kane, Chairman of ESSA, stated: "ESSA and its members believe that maintaining the integrity of any sporting event is fundamental to its future and we are committed to doing all we can to help to uphold the core spirit of sport and fair play. Golf is founded on such principles and there are few global sporting events bigger than The Open. ESSA is therefore delighted that The R&A has agreed to work with us to protect this historic international sporting event."

Martin Slumbers, Chief Executive of The R&A, said, "Golf has so far not been confronted by the same issues that many other sports have come up against. We cannot be complacent however, and we want to do all we can to protect The Open and the values for which golf is known throughout the world. Our arrangement with ESSA, whose members include many recognised international betting operators with access to detailed market data and a commitment to protecting sport, will allow us to effectively monitor betting on the Championship."

ESSA holds positions on match-fixing policy forums at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the IOC. It is also involved in a number of activities aimed at addressing betting related match-fixing in sport. These include a player education programme with EU Athletes (see [here](#)) and an international project, entitled "Keep Crime out of Sport", led by the Council of Europe and funded by the European Commission (see [here](#)). ESSA's Q2 2016 integrity report will be released in July; its Q1 integrity report is available [here](#).

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### About ESSA:

ESSA represents many of the world's biggest regulated sports betting operators, serving over 40 million consumers in the EU alone. Concerned regulated bookmakers created ESSA in 2005 to monitor betting

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markets and alert sporting bodies and national regulators to suspicious betting patterns. The goal was and is to protect consumers from potential fraud caused by manipulating sporting events. ESSA helps to combat this with evidence-based intelligence it provides to sporting bodies and regulators.

Every year, our members invest over €50m in compliance and internal security systems in order to help combat fraud. They also give back to sport and society by spending €400m on sponsorship around the world - €250m of that in Europe alone. This increases substantially when advertising and photo and video-streaming rights are taken into consideration. ESSA and its members also co-fund an education programme on gambling with EU Athletes that reaches out to 15,000 athletes/players across at least ten different sports in 13 EU countries.

ESSA continues to play a key role as the regulated betting sector's representative body at national and international match-fixing policy forums and holds positions on working groups at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The organisation is continually reassessing and improving its alert and reporting systems and has established information sharing arrangements with a range of sports bodies and regulatory authorities.

ESSA members include: the ABB, Betclix, Bet-at-Home, Betsson, Bet365, BetVictor, Betway, bwinparty, Digibet, Expekt, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Interwetten, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, Sky Bet, Sporting Index, Stanleybet, Unibet and William Hill. For more information see ESSA's website at <http://www.eu-ssa.org/> or visit us on twitter: [@ESSA Betting](https://twitter.com/ESSA_Betting)

#### **About The R&A:**

Based in St Andrews, The R&A runs The Open, elite amateur events, international matches and rankings. Together The R&A and the USGA govern the sport of golf worldwide, operating in separate jurisdictions but sharing a commitment to a single code for the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Equipment Standards. The R&A governs worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, with the consent of 152 organisations from amateur and professional golf and on behalf of over 30 million golfers in 140 countries.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the sport internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities.

For more information about The R&A visit [www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org).

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