

RFU and ESSA team-up to protect rugby

Brussels, 25 January: The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has teamed up with international sports betting integrity body ESSA (Sports Betting Integrity) to protect rugby in England from potential match manipulation and sports betting breaches. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both parties will see ESSA employ its monitoring and alert system covering its members' regulated betting markets, which comprises some of the largest operators in the world, to monitor for any suspicious betting patterns.

ESSA Secretary General Khalid Ali said: "No one can or should be complacent in the face of criminal elements intent on corrupting any sport to defraud betting companies. ESSA therefore welcomes the continuing proactive approach of the RFU and the formation of this alliance. The RFU is among a group of sports bodies that have made important and effective strides in this area and ESSA remains committed to working in partnership with those responsible organisations."

Angus Bujalski RFU Legal & Governance Director said: "While no instances of betting related match-fixing have to date been identified in English rugby union we need to continue to be vigilant. We have already put in place a range of measures to raise awareness and to set clear rules to maintain the integrity of the game. This MoU is another important milestone in that process and complements our existing work. English rugby has so far been free of betting related match-fixing and we are working hard with our partners such as ESSA to ensure that it remains that way."

ESSA holds positions on match-fixing and betting policy forums at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the IOC. It is driving a number of important initiatives aimed at addressing match-fixing and is currently involved in four anti-match-fixing projects (see [here](#)), having hosted an international betting integrity conference at Lords Cricket Ground (see [here](#)) at the end of last year, attended by over 150 senior officials from sports bodies, regulators and other key stakeholders.

ESSA's Q3 integrity report for 2017 ([here](#)) stated that 72 cases of suspicious betting had been referred to the relevant authorities during the quarter, adding to a total of 152 alerts over the first three quarters of the year; the 2017 annual report will be available shortly. The RFU is a member of the UK Sports Betting Integrity Forum (SBIF); its betting and anti-corruption rules can be found [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 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Khalid Ali,
Secretary General
Sports Betting Integrity
ka@eu-ssa.org
www.eu-ssa.org



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: 888sport, ABB, Bet-at-Home, Betclac, Betdaq, Betsson, BetStars, BetVictor, Betway, bet365, bwin, Cashpoint, Expekt, Fonbet, Gamesys, Interwetten, Ladbrokes Coral, Paddy Power Betfair, Sky Bet, Sportingbet, Sporting Index, Sportium, Stanleybet, Stoiximan, Unibet and William Hill. For more information see <http://www.eu-ssa.org/> or visit us on twitter: [@ESSA_Betting](https://twitter.com/ESSA_Betting)

About the Rugby Football Union:

The Rugby Football Union is the National Governing Body for rugby union in England and supports participants and fans from the grassroots to the national team.

For more information visit www.englandrugby.com

You can keep up to date with all RFU news on [@EnglandRugby](https://twitter.com/EnglandRugby)

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ka@eu-ssa.org
www.eu-ssa.org

