



END OF SEASON SALE OR NOT

There are different periods during the football season, anywhere around the globe, when doubts crop up about the validity of certain match results. This might be true in some instances but it also seems to be a fact that fixing is permanently works in progress.

Sid Lowe @ The Guardian - **Over the years, few have doubted that games have been bought and said so publicly.** Angel Vizcay ex General Manager of Osasuna in La Liga said that he withdrew money from the club's accounts to pay fix games as Osasuna sought to escape relegation. He talks of meetings held in cars, hotels, players' physios and directors' offices. He says that match-fixing was agreed in board meetings. He alleges that Osasuna offered third-party incentives to Valladolid to beat Deportivo and for Betis to beat Celta. He also alleges that in the following year Osasuna offered Betis money to beat relegation rivals Valladolid and to lose to Osasuna. He also says that Espanyol were paid big money to draw to Osasuna. There is also an accusation that Zaragoza paid €965K to Levante to throw the game that saw them survive on the final weekend. Bank movements suggested that money was paid by the club into the accounts of nine players plus the manager. Girona president accused Racing de Santander of trying to bribe their opponents to "accidentally on purpose" field an illegible player against them. References were constant and one player said "yeah it happens, always has". Like any corruption, it reaches a tipping point. It becomes normalised. And if the talk is always of key games being bought at the bottom, it would surely be naive to assume that there are not games bought at the top too, or to imagine that the men running Spanish football would not do such thing.

RFE/RL @ Radio Free Europe – **Georgian Soccer Referees arrested in alleged Spot-Fixing** . Eight referees of Georgia's soccer league have been arrested in connection with alleged match-fixing. Georgia's Interior Ministry said in a statement that the alleged scheme involved so called spot betting in which odds are offered on a number of yellow and red cards, as well as on penalties or other incidents during a match. Eight referees, among them a FIFA referee qualified to officiate at international level, are accused of taking cash ranging from €2.5 K and €5K in exchange for securing a certain number of bookings in matches.

The Telegraph @ Sky News – **Probe in the English Football Conference league.** The fixer says; "So I talk to them. Double confirm. I also tell them, this is what I want.. because simple, I commit myself and they commit. So you tell me how many goals. Give me at least five. Ok I need five, either 3-2, 4-0, 4-1, I will say for me four is enough. The players are not difficult to persuade. "What the players want... they want the money" So for 90 minutes I pay them £7K...definitely they take. I know what they're going to do.. I know because they all tell me every time" the man reportedly said. Gambling on matches is thought to have taken place on Asian- based betting services and so far investigators do not believe British betting markets are involved. Sky News' Paul Kelso says that fixers were likely to target the lower leagues because the players do not get paid large sums..there are huge profits to be made from these small games.

Does our football fit in any of the above scenarios? ft