

WHEN IN ASIA

The Asian illegal gambling industry is so well structured.

"The facilitator utilizes an alias. Joining the architecture of the industry is similar to joining a country club or fraternity which operate on a vouching system. A prospective gambler gains entry to this world via the recommendation of a contact who already circulates within it.

Once the gambler proves that he can settle his debts, he receives an account with someone who is known as an agent. The gambler places his bet with this agent, who then passes the wager to his superior. This person is known as the master agent, one step up in the hierarchy.

Above this master agent is the super agent. Of these, there are few in the world, and they are almost all Chinese. This man is a trusted, known criminal figure – a face – who can handle upwards of €50 million in bets. The super agent distributes his bets to the many legal and illegal books with which he has relationships, his initial €50 million stake, often divided up into smaller bets throughout the shadow system. If a gambler loses a bet with his direct agent, someone higher up the chain of command may ultimately come calling. That is how the money enters the structure.

Cash circulates through the Asian market from gambler to bookie through Chinese bank accounts in the names of "genuine but anonymous people". Finally, via a "money changer" the lost money of the gambler exits through a corporate entity, into the pocket of the criminal organisation. Without the "money changer" they're dead in the water. This is the guy who takes the money from offshore to onshore. The chain goes further up. There is so much free-flowing money in sports gambling in Asia that life within its boundaries could lead to a single decadent outcome. "This is the best business in the world".

The general limit for betting on an English Premier League match on the Asian handicap market is €80,000. But the limit is per "per click", not per match. Each time the bookie changes the line or the odds, setting a new price, the gambler can place a new bet. Bookies routinely alter the odds hundreds of times per match. On the rate of one change per minute, a gambler could place ninety bets over the course of a match that's €7.2 million. And in Asia, gamblers can bet, through the agenting system, ten times per-click limit of €80,000. Conceivably, on the Asian market, one gambler could place hundreds of €800,000 bets with one bookie on one match throughout its duration. The size of the marketplace is staggering, as are the nerve and wit necessary to manipulate it." B Forrest.

Over the last two decades the Asian infiltration into European football reached alarming levels and has now reached a point of no return. Europeans associate themselves with Asians and enter their market.

This is the reality we are facing. It rests on true football lovers to be on the lookout for any indicators leading to match-fixing.

Match-fixing does not only happen for betting purposes, but also for sporting reasons, with the latter, more often than not, "hijacked" for the former's benefit or even intentionally structured in tandem. Any form or scope of match-fixing is a criminal offence. ft