

## Lest we forget

A recent incident in our football may have, for a short time, alienated us from reality. The discussion has temporarily deviated from the most serious concern which everyone should be worried about and better still, doing something about it, match-fixing. Wrongdoing will always remain such, but in our context, we need to be careful and clearly identify what is effectively ruining football's very existence.

Our football is infested by people who grade the game's sporting spirit at the lowest grade, if any. We had mentioned in past newsletters that some club officials are blind when they come across money and will dive into any abyss for it. They will try to achieve their aims with whatever means at their disposal, certainly not sporting.

Some people have recently come forward advocating values and appointing role models. Nothing new for us as we have been talking about the morals in Maltese football for a number of years. Some of the people in our game just snigger and look at us saying that we are tackling the impossible, whilst they carry on manipulating football matches. They may still be getting away with it, but we will certainly not be relenting, and in fact will be increasing our efforts to gain support and assistance from every quarter.

The hypocrites circling our football have carried on with their corrupt practices, unaffected by the repercussions and the irreparable damage that they have caused the game in which their own children already participate or will be moving into. They are happy enough to be part of a dishonest circle which is steadily destroying our football's image and turned honest people away from the clubs and stadiums.

Apparently we have not managed to strongly impress or alarm the authorities or, even more importantly the law enforcers, who have, for their own reasons, keep on procrastinating. They keep avoiding our representations hoping that all will sort itself out. They are mistaken. Match-fixing, in which some individuals in our football, have been meddling in for years, has grown to such an extent that the general public considers all our matches to be of a dubious nature. The public are now also aware of the other scam which allegedly some of our clubs are involved in. These clubs finance their entire operation by manipulating matches, betting on them and the winnings going towards the club whilst also lining their own pockets. They are ruthless and unaffected by the harm they have caused people who wish to love and be involved in our football.

It has not been comfortable for us to discuss our football's image when participating in seminars and conferences overseas, especially when faced with alarming information and statistics which do not reflect well on the wellbeing of our game. It is definitely not a pleasure to be classified on the same level as countries notorious for their long standing records in football corruption and bribery.

We cannot be accused about being complacent about this problematic situation, as we are the only organization which is educating and highlighting the dangers associated with match-fixing. Our efforts are positively recognized locally and internationally where we are regularly asked to share our experiences. It is only through the co-operation of others, who honestly have the game at heart and the responsibility to keep it clean, that we stand a chance of stopping these scoundrels hovering around us.ft