EPOSM

EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION OF SPORTING-RELATED MATCH-FIXING

Co-funded by the
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RESULTS BELGIUM

Coordinator

GHENT UNIVERSITY

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ICES

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1 INTRODUCTION

Did you know that match-fixing is not always about betting on results or events in or during the match? Also for other reasons matches are 'fixed' and results are affected. It may cross paths of every athlete, coaches, board member or referees in competitive sport, on both the amateur and elite level. This phenomenon is called non-betting-related match-fixing or 'sporting-related match-fixing' and does not have to be related to betting.

EPOSM
Sporting-related match-fixing is subject of study in the EPOSM project and collaborative partnership. EPOSM stands for Evidence-based Prevention Of Sporting-related Match-fixing, and is a partnership between academic and non-academic parties. The EPOSM project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and studies sporting-related match-fixing in different sport disciplines across Europe.

EPOSM conducts applied academic research in collaboration with many national sport organizations and governmental bodies in the following seven countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The project has started in 2020 and takes until 2022. EPOSM stands for "raising knowledge, awareness and moral judgment about sporting-related match-fixing among people involved in sport, by using an evidence-based approach that can inspire others." The project aims to:

- Raise awareness about the prevalence of sporting-related match-fixing;
- Stimulate moral judgment regarding the fact that sporting-related match-fixing is wrong, as it threatens the credibility and attractiveness of sport;
- Share and transfer knowledge on sporting-related match-fixing through the organization of a training procedure.

Partners
The project is coordinated by Ghent University, and the International Centre Ethics in Sport (ICES) is one of the non-academic partners. Ghent University and ICES were responsible for the data collection and knowledge dissemination in Belgium. Other project partners include Utrecht University, the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS), Play Fair Code, Croatian Olympic Committee, Lausanne University, Loughborough University, Panathlon International, and Counter Sport Corruption Foundation for Sport Integrity (CSCF). The Council of Europe is an associated partner organization of the EPOSM project.

EPOSM study in Belgium
In Belgium, the project focuses on football, tennis, and basketball. In 2020 a survey was conducted among respondents in these three sport disciplines, in collaboration with the national sport federations for football, tennis, and basketball.

Survey results and next steps
This document shows the first results of the survey among actors involved in football, tennis and basketball in Belgium. On the basis of these results, ICES will develop concrete action plans for these three sport disciplines. The action plans will serve as roadmaps toward raising knowledge, awareness and moral judgement on sporting-related match-fixing in Belgium and will be implemented during several workshops with relevant actors in Belgian football, tennis, and basketball.

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2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data were collected via the online EPOSM survey, as developed and translated to Dutch, French, German, and English by Ghent University. This online (and anonymous) survey focused on people who are / were involved in football, tennis, and basketball. Football and tennis were chosen as these sport disciplines have already been plagued by a large number of match-fixing incidents. Basketball was added because it is the third most popular sport to bet on in Belgium.

Data were collected online, nation-wide and among a wide range of respondents, varying from athletes, former athletes, coaches, board members, referees, volunteers, and others. They could be related to both amateur and elite sport, nowadays or in the past.

To reach appropriate respondents (18 years or older and involved in Belgian football, tennis, or basketball), the online survey was communicated on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn in different languages. Moreover, the Flemish (and Belgian) football, basketball, and tennis federations provided help by sending emails to members / clubs explaining the purpose of the study and containing the web link to the survey and / or by placing the survey on their website or in their newsletter. Additionally, the head of refereeing of the Belgian football federation disseminated the survey to Belgian referees.

In total, 4435 people started the survey and 977 of them fully completed the questionnaire (response rate = 22,0%). We decided to retain the partially completed questionnaires that were completed for 37,5% or more, as questionnaires with less answers had no substantial value. Subsequently, we checked the main sport disciplines of the respondents. When there was a missing value for the question examining the main sport discipline, the respondent was removed from the sample, since the main sport discipline is vital information. Lastly, we checked the age of the respondents. All respondents under the age of 18 were removed from the sample, conform institutional ethics standards. The final sample consisted of 960 adult respondents who were / are involved in Belgian football, tennis, or basketball.

3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was performed with SPSS 24 software. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the respondents' characteristics (section 4), the prevalence of match-fixing (section 6), the reporting of match-fixing suspicions and experiences (section 7), and the preventive measures against match-fixing in sport clubs (section 8). Additionally, one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs, followed by univariate analyses) were used to examine the differences between the three sport disciplines (football, tennis, and basketball) regarding several statements about match-fixing (section 5). Moreover, the number of match-fixing cases per sport discipline in the total sample of the project (sample of all seven countries together) was added to section 6.2.1, to compare the Belgian prevalence figures of the three sport disciplines with the figures of the total sample.

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4 RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1: Overview of the respondents' characteristics (n = 960)

	Total (n = 960)	**Football** (n = 793)	**Tennis** (n = 70)	**Basketball** (n = 75)	**Other** (n = 22)
Language					
Dutch	71,9%	70,5%	98,6%	61,3%	72,7%
French	27,5%	28,8%	1,4%	38,7%	27,3%
German	0,2%	0,3%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
English	0,4%	0,5%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Gender					
Man	91,8%	96,2%	55,7%	80,0%	86,4%
Woman	8,1%	3,7%	44,3%	20,0%	13,6%
Other	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
I prefer not to say	0,1%	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Age: M (SD)*	40,5 (16,2)	41,1 (16,0)	33,7 (16,3)	39,9 (17,0)	45,8 (14,3)
How long have you been involved in this sport (in years)? M (SD)*	24,0 (13,9)	24,2 (13,8)	20,2 (12,3)	25,4 (15,2)	24,2 (13,4)
How are (were) you mainly related to this sport?					
Athlete	41,1%	37,1%	71,4%	57,3%	36,4%
Coach / Trainer / Assistant coach	8,6%	7,8%	10,0%	18,7%	0,0%
Medical staff	0,5%	0,6%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Referee / (Video) Assistant Referee / (Fourth) official / Jury member	36,1%	41,2%	11,4%	8,0%	27,3%
Board member / Assembly member / Manager of a sport club	9,6%	9,3%	5,7%	14,7%	13,6%
Other	3,8%	3,7%	1,4%	1,3%	22,7%
At what level are (were) you mainly involved?					
Professional	3,9%	3,2%	7,1%	9,3%	0,0%
Semi-professional	8,5%	6,3%	30,0%	9,3%	18,2%
Amateur	87,6%	90,5%	62,9%	81,3%	81,8%
At what playing level are (were) you mainly involved?					
International	2,2%	0,9%	12,9%	4,0%	9,1%
National	22,9%	20,3%	38,6%	33,3%	31,8%
Local / Provincial	69,1%	73,6%	34,3%	60,0%	45,5%
Leisure activity / Recreational	5,8%	5,2%	14,3%	2,7%	13,6%

*M = mean, SD = standard deviation

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5 STATEMENTS

Respondents were asked to answer a number of statements about match-fixing on a seven-point Likert scale, whereby "1" means "strongly disagree," and "7" means "strongly agree."

Table 2: Match-fixing: its seriousness, and risks (n = 938)

	"Match-fixing is a real problem in my sport discipline in Belgium."	"I could be approached myself to fix a match. (regardless of whether or not you would agree to it)"
Sport discipline	(M ± SD)	(M ± SD)
Football (n = 793)	4,4 ± 1,6	3,5 ± 2,1
Tennis (n = 70)	3,7 ± 1,6	3,3 ± 2,2
Basketball (n = 75)	2,9 ± 1,7	2,2 ± 1,5

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

A significant difference is noticed between the three sport disciplines regarding the statements (a) "Match-fixing is a real problem in my sport discipline in Belgium," and (b) "I could be approached myself to fix a match. (regardless of whether or not you would agree to it)" (one-way MANOVA: Wilks' λ = .923, F (4, 1868) = 19.214, p < .001, η_p^2 = .040). As shown in the first column of Table 2, a significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding the belief that their sport is compromised by match-fixing (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = 31.136, p < .001, η_p^2 = .062). The people involved in football assess the risk of match-fixing in their sport higher than do the actors in tennis (Tukey's honestly significant difference test [Tukey's HSD] p < .01) and basketball (Tukey's HSD p < .001). Additionally, the people involved in tennis estimate the risk of match-fixing in their sport significantly higher than do the actors in basketball (Tukey's HSD p < .05). As shown in the second column of Table 2, a significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding the estimation of whether they could be approached themselves for a match-fixing proposal (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = 13.476, p < .001, η_p^2 = .028). The people involved in basketball believe that there is a much lower chance that they could be confronted with proposals to fix a match than is the case with those involved in football (Tukey's HSD p < .001) and tennis (Tukey's HSD p < .01). Moreover, no significant difference was found between the people involved in football and tennis (Tukey's HSD p > .10) when it comes to the estimation of whether or not they could be approached themselves for a match-fixing proposal.

Table 3: Uncomfortable feelings about others who have been involved in match-fixing (n = 938)

	"I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone in my sporting environment has been involved in **sporting-related match-fixing**. (e.g. to avoid relegation of his / her team)"	"I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone in my sporting environment has been involved in **betting-related match-fixing**."
Sport discipline	(M ± SD)	(M ± SD)
Football (n = 793)	5,6 ± 1,5	5,7 ± 1,5
Tennis (n = 70)	5,8 ± 1,4	5,8 ± 1,2
Basketball (n = 75)	6,0 ± 1,0	5,8 ± 1,4

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

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No significant difference is noticed between the three sport disciplines regarding the statements (a) "I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone in my sporting environment has been involved in sporting-related match-fixing. (e.g. to avoid relegation of his / her team)," and (b) "I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone in my sporting environment has been involved in betting-related match-fixing" (one-way MANOVA: Wilks' λ = .995, F (4, 1868) = 1.153, p > .10, η_p^2 = .002). As shown in the first column of Table 3, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding uncomfortable feelings when hearing about others that have been involved in sporting-related match-fixing (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = 1.907, p > .10, η_p^2 = .004). As shown in the second column of Table 3, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding uncomfortable feelings when hearing about others that have been involved in betting-related match-fixing (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = .535, p > .10, η_p^2 = .001).

Table 4: Uncomfortable feelings about others who have not been punished for match-fixing (n = 938)

	"I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone has not been punished for engaging in **sporting-related match-fixing**."	"I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone has not been punished for engaging in **betting-related match-fixing**."
Sport discipline	(M ± SD)	(M ± SD)
Football (n = 793)	5,8 ± 1,5	5,6 ± 1,7
Tennis (n = 70)	5,9 ± 1,1	5,7 ± 1,4
Basketball (n = 75)	5,9 ± 1,4	5,9 ± 1,1

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

No significant difference is noticed between the three sport disciplines regarding the statements (a) "I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone has not been punished for engaging in sporting-related match-fixing," and (b) "I feel somewhat uncomfortable when I hear that someone has not been punished for engaging in betting-related match-fixing" (one-way MANOVA: Wilks' λ = .998, F (4, 1868) = .528, p > .10, η_p^2 = .001). As shown in the first column of Table 4, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding uncomfortable feelings when hearing about others who have not been punished for engaging in sporting-related match-fixing (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = .083, p > .10, η_p^2 = .000). As shown in the second column of Table 4, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding uncomfortable feelings when hearing about others who have not been punished for engaging in betting-related match-fixing (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = .892, p > .10, η_p^2 = .002).

Table 5: Acceptability of match-fixing (n = 938)

	"Participating in match-fixing to avoid relegation of my team, is acceptable."	"Participating in match-fixing to make money through **betting**, is acceptable."
Sport discipline	(M ± SD)	(M ± SD)
Football (n = 793)	1,7 ± 1,3	1,4 ± 0,9
Tennis (n = 70)	1,5 ± 1,0	1,4 ± 1,0
Basketball (n = 75)	1,6 ± 1,0	1,2 ± 0,5

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

No significant difference is noticed between the three sport disciplines regarding the statements (a) "Participating in match-fixing to avoid relegation of my team, is acceptable," and (b) "Participating in

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match-fixing to make money through betting, is acceptable" (one-way MANOVA: Wilks' λ = .994, F (4, 1868) = 1.319, p > .10, η_p^2 = .003). As shown in the first column of Table 5, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding the acceptability of match-fixing to avoid relegation of his / her team (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = .807, p > .10, η_p^2 = .002). As shown in the second column of Table 5, no significant difference is noticed between the sport disciplines regarding the acceptability of match-fixing to make money through the betting market (univariate effect: F (2, 935) = 1.566, p > .10, η_p^2 = .003).

To end the statements section, respondents were asked to answer two statements about gambling and betting. **The statements in Table 6 give an indication about the respondents' gambling and betting experiences, BUT are not related to the prevalence of match-fixing!**

Table 6: Two statements about gambling and betting (n = 938)

	"I gambled during the past year."		"I have already bet on a match in which I was personally involved."	
Sport discipline	True	False	True	False
Football (n = 793)	29,5%	70,5%	1,4%	98,6%
Tennis (n = 70)	18,6%	81,4%	2,9%	97,1%
Basketball (n = 75)	28,0%	72,0%	2,7%	97,3%

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6 PREVALENCE OF MATCH-FIXING

6.1 Do you personally know anyone who has been approached to fix a game / match?

Respondents were asked whether they personally knew anyone who has been approached to fix a game / match. As shown in Table 7, **323 respondents** indicated that they personally knew one or more persons who had been approached to fix a game / match.

Table 7: Respondents who personally knew someone who had been approached for match-fixing (n = 960)

	"Do you personally know anyone who has been approached to fix a game / match?"
Yes, I know one person	152
Yes, I know two persons	42
Yes, I know three or more persons	129
No	637

When they thought of the approached person they knew best, they indicated that:

Figure 1: Gender of the approached person they knew best (n = 321)

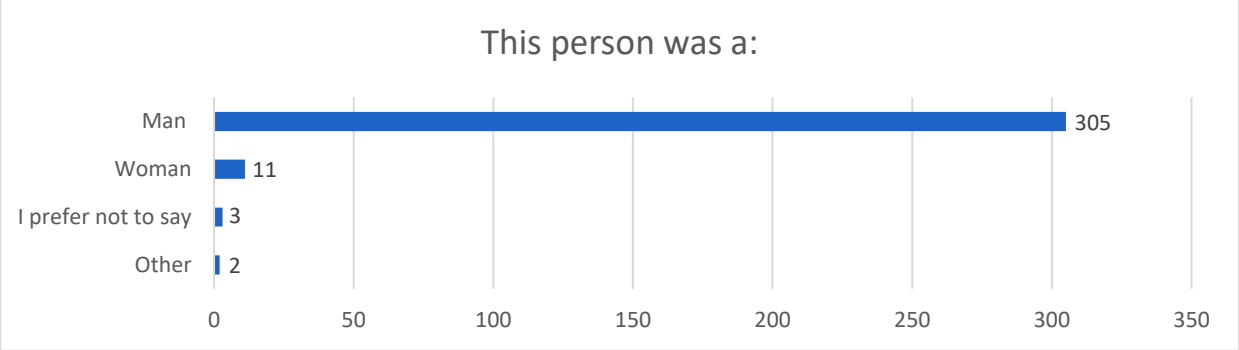
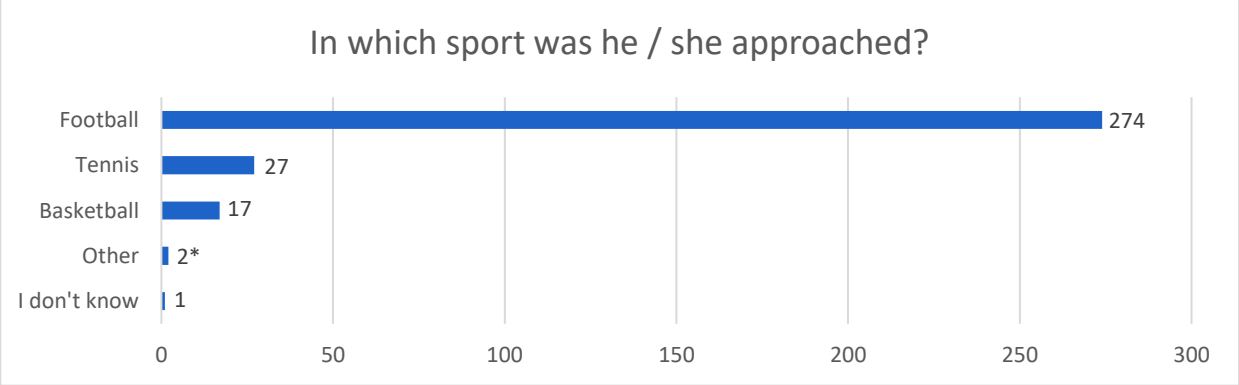


Figure 2: Sport discipline of the approached person they knew best (n = 321)



*The two respondents who indicated that the person they knew best was involved in "another sport discipline," both specified that this person was involved in cycling.

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Figure 3: Way of involvement of the approached person they knew best (n = 320)

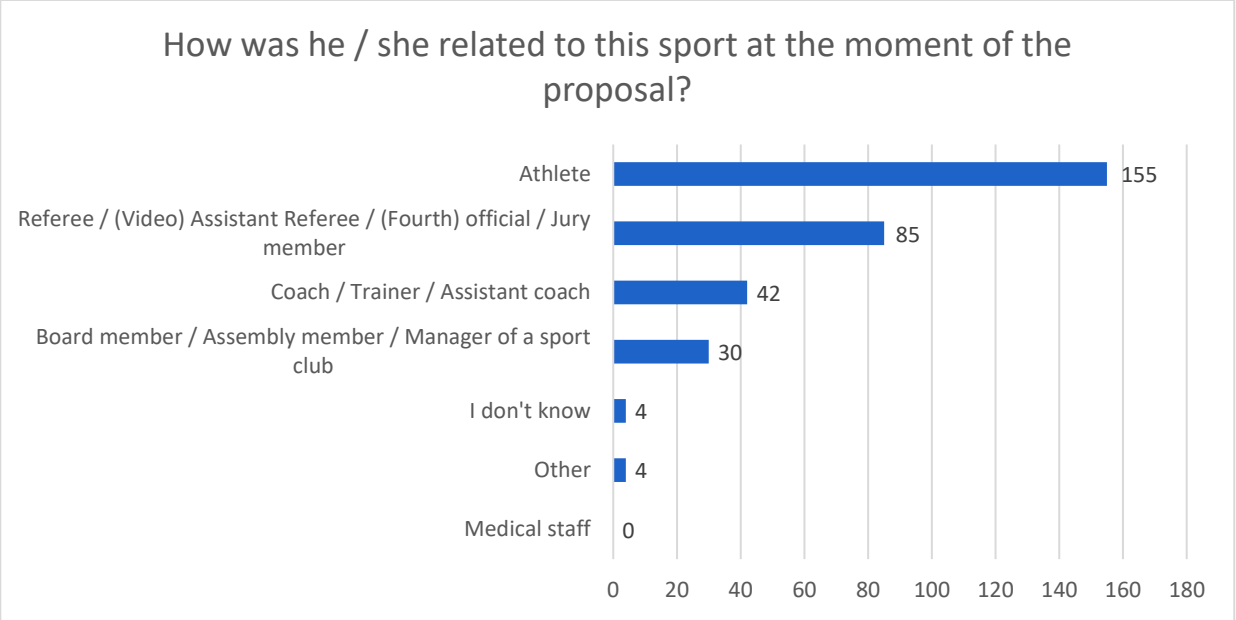
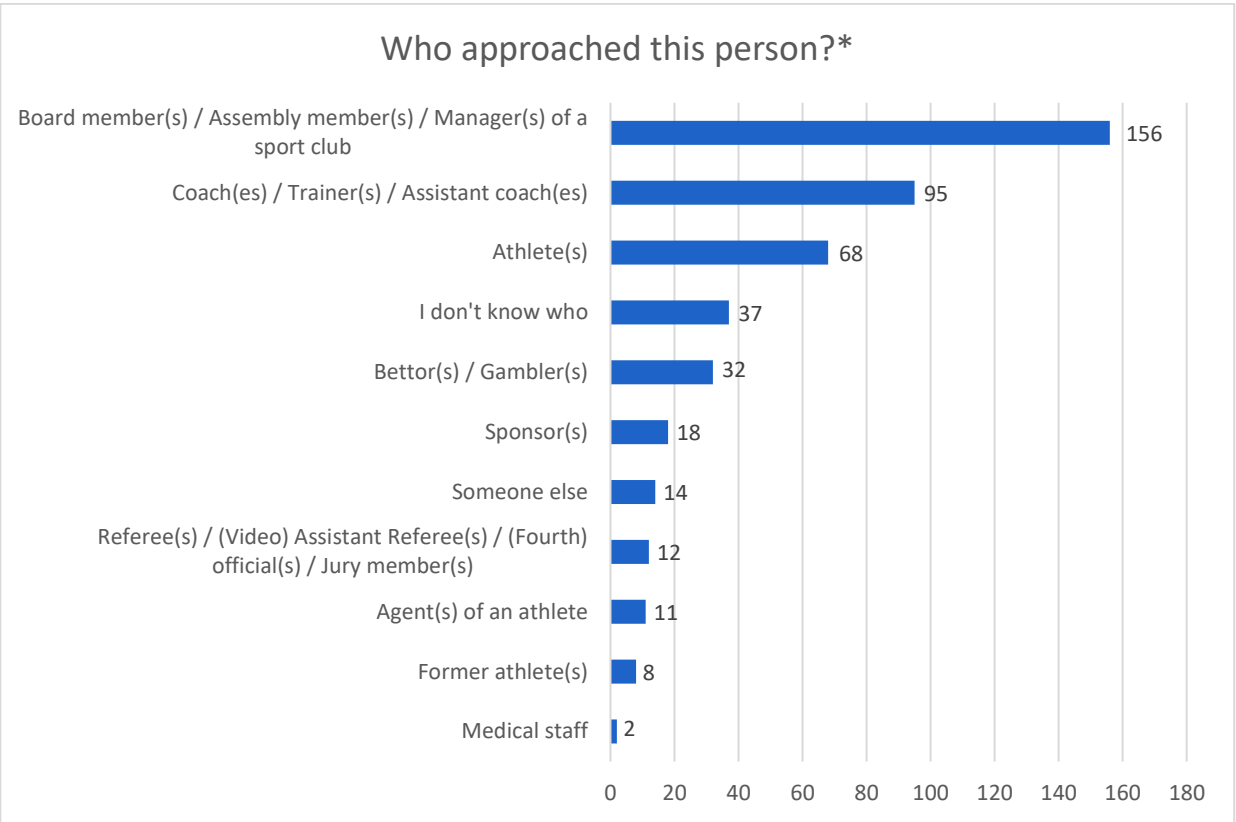


Figure 4: The people who approached the person they knew best (n = 321)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 321, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

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6.2 Have you yourself ever been approached to fix a game / match?

6.2.1 Match-fixing cases in general

Respondents were asked whether they had already been approached personally for a match-fixing proposal. Table 8 depicts an overview of the number of match-fixing cases, reported by the respondents in the questionnaire.

Table 8: Cases of having been approached themselves in the Belgian sample (n = 958)

	"Have you yourself ever been approached to fix a game / match?"	
Sport discipline	No	Yes
Football (n = 792)	648	144 (18,2%)
Tennis (n = 69)	61	8 (11,6%)
Basketball (n = 75)	68	7 (9,3%)
Other (n = 22)	18	4 (18,2%)

To get a better understanding of the abovementioned figures, we can compare the Belgian figures with the number of match-fixing cases per sport discipline in the total sample (see Table 9).

Table 9: Match-fixing cases per sport discipline in the total sample (n = 3950)

	"Have you yourself ever been approached to fix a game / match?"
Sport discipline	Yes
Football (n = 2944)	278 (9,4%)
Tennis (n = 745)	64 (8,6%)
Basketball (n = 261)	16 (6,1%)

The prevalence of match-fixing in the Belgian football sample is almost as twice as large (18,2%) than the prevalence of match-fixing in the total football sample (9,4%). **However, these results need to be put into perspective.** Given the heterogeneity of the Belgian and total project sample, it is difficult to make explicit comparisons between sport disciplines (and countries). The majority of the Belgian football sample, for instance, consisted of actors who are / were mainly involved on an amateur level. As such, one can argue that this is why so many non-betting-related match-fixing cases were reported in the Belgian survey (see Table 10). Moreover, compared to the total project sample, a large number of referees (mainly involved in football) participated in the Belgian survey. Since referees can be expected to be more aware of match-fixing, this could also explain the higher prevalence figures in the Belgian sample. On the other hand, the fact that the prevalence figures for football in Belgium are higher than the prevalence figures in the total football sample could also be explained by the presence of more awareness raising initiatives against match-fixing in Belgian football (compared to other countries in the project). Furthermore, recent scandals in Belgian football (e.g., the Clean Hands operation) may also have raised awareness among Belgian football actors, which may have resulted in higher reporting in the survey. After all, (higher) awareness of match-fixing may result in higher self-

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reported prevalence figures, as you are only able to report about personal match-fixing approaches if you know what match-fixing entails.

When it comes to the prevalence figures for tennis and basketball, the prevalence figures are slightly higher in Belgium, compared to the prevalence figures in the total samples for tennis and basketball. In the same vein as described above, differences may be due to sample heterogeneity or the presence of awareness raising initiatives against match-fixing (especially in the case of tennis).

Further details about the Belgian match-fixing cases show that 80 respondents indicated that they had only been approached once. At the moment of their **only** approach (n = 80), they were 29,1 years old on average (standard deviation 10,6).

Additionally, 52 respondents indicated that they had been approached two to three times to fix a match, and 29 persons indicated that they had been approached more than 3 times to fix a match. The average age of the first time (n = 80) they were approached to fix a match was 26,7 years old (standard deviation 9,6). The average age of the **last time** (n = 81) they were approached to fix a match was 36,1 years old (standard deviation 11,6).

6.2.2 Betting- and non-betting-related match-fixing cases

Regarding the **last (or only) time** they were approached to fix a match, 3 respondents revealed that they were only approached for a betting-related proposal (see Table 10). On the other hand, 121 respondents indicated that they were only approached for a non-betting-related proposal.
More specifically, in the case that only a non-betting-related proposal took place, the respondents indicated:

- 73 times that the proposal was made to prevent relegation of a specific club or player.
- 51 times that the proposal was made to enable a specific club or player to win the championship,
- 8 times that the proposal was made to determine who the next-round opponent would be, and
- 6 times that the proposal aimed to make the competition or tournament more exciting.

Table 10: Motive of the match-fixing cases (n = 159)

	Total (n = 159)	**Football** (n = 140)	**Tennis** (n = 8)	**Basketball** (n = 7)	**Other** (n = 4)
What was the motive of the people who approached you?					
Only betting-related match-fixing	3	2	0	1	0
Both betting- and non-betting-related match-fixing	1	1	0	0	0
Only non-betting-related match-fixing	121	110	4	6	1
Both non-betting-related and “other motive”*	4	3	1	0	0
Other motive*	27	22	2	0	3
I don’t know	3	2	1	0	0

*The exact “other motive” could not be identified due to a software bug.

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6.2.2.1 Only non-betting-related (or sporting-related) proposals

The group of 121 respondents who revealed that they were **only approached for a non-betting-related or "sporting-related" match-fixing proposal**, indicated the following:

Figure 5: Gender of the respondents who have been approached (n = 121)

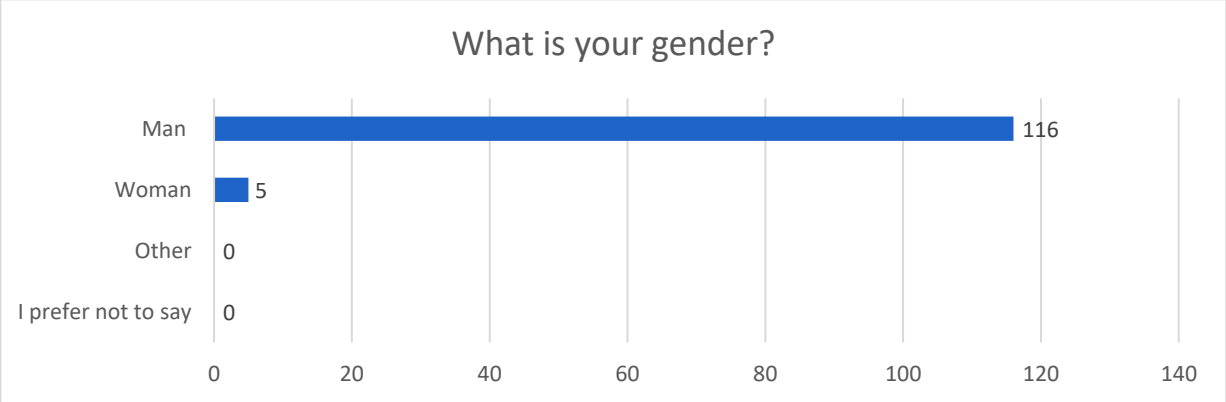


Figure 6: Main sport discipline of the respondents who have been approached (n = 121)

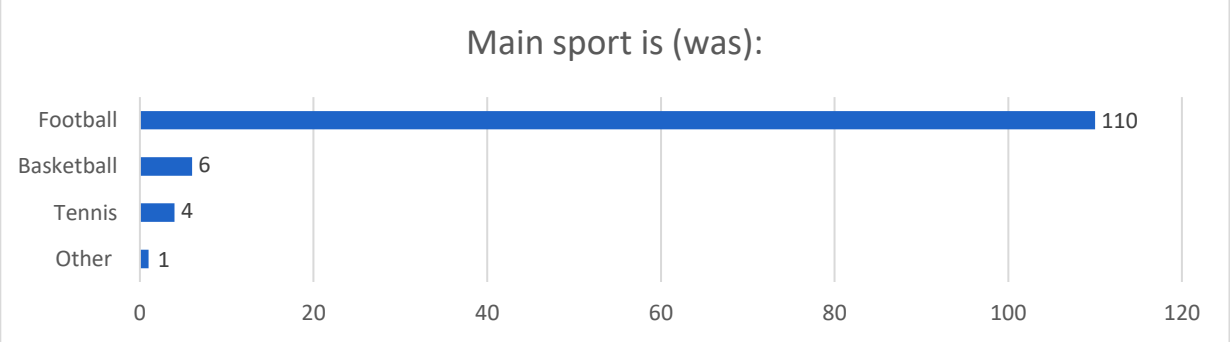
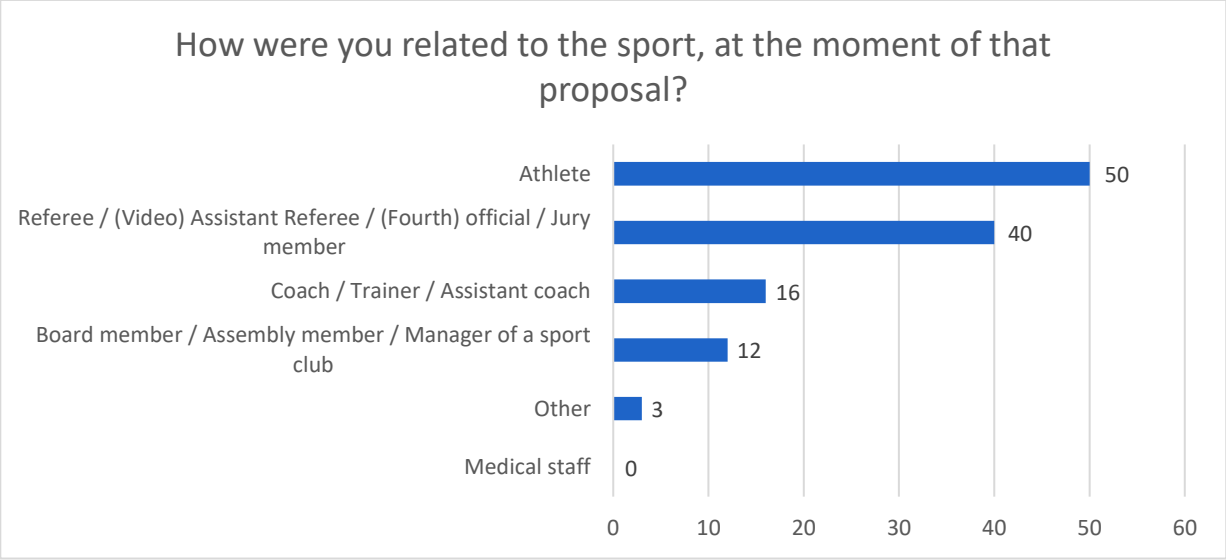


Figure 7: Way of involvement at the moment of the proposal (n = 121)



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Figure 8: Level of the respondents at the moment of the proposal (n = 121)

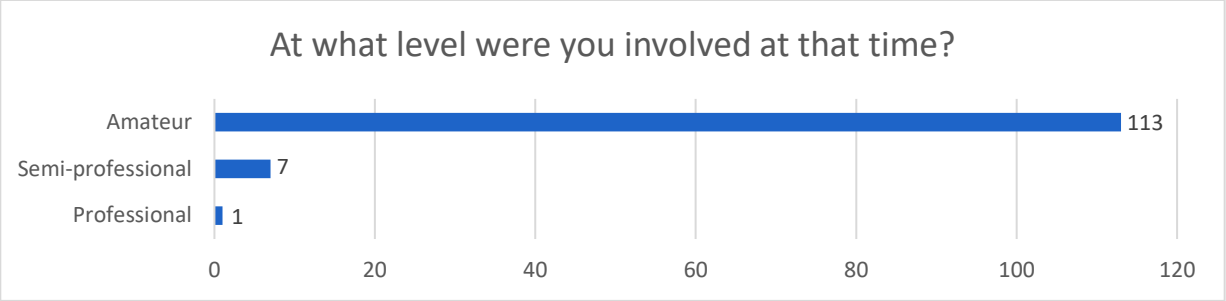


Figure 9: Playing level of the respondents at the moment of the proposal (n = 121)

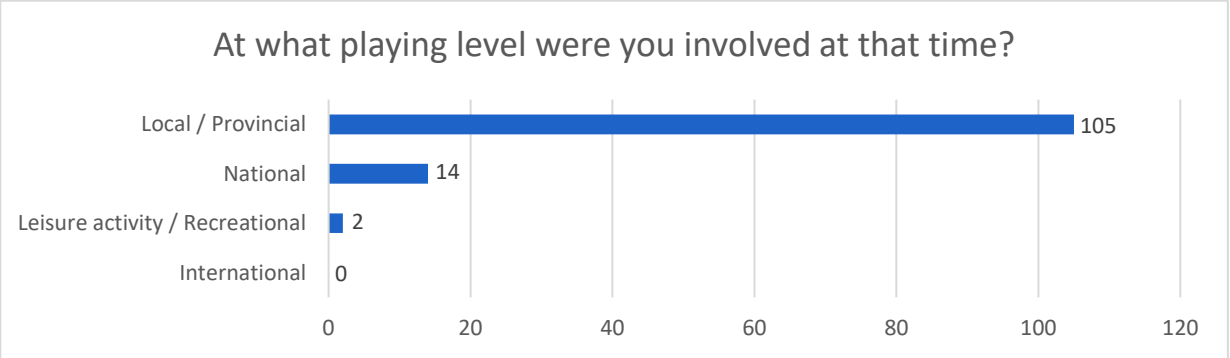
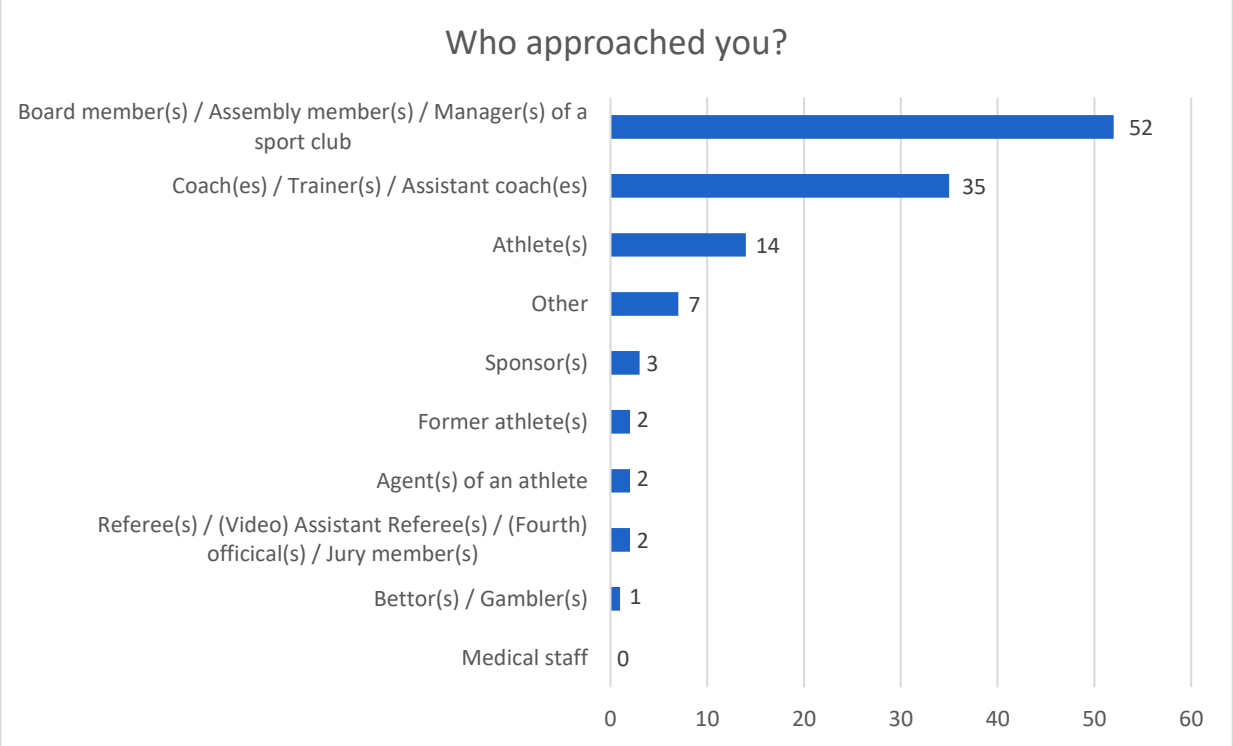


Figure 10: The people who approached the respondents at the moment of the proposal (n = 118)



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Figure 11: Details about the people who approached the respondents (n = 118)

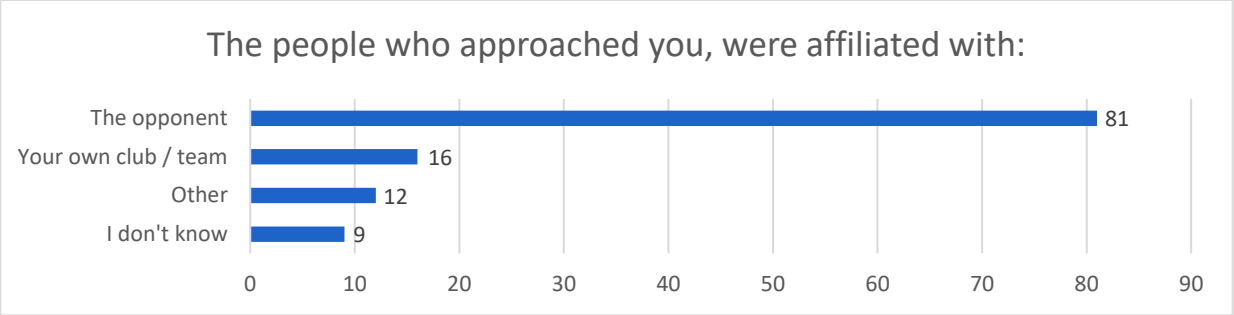
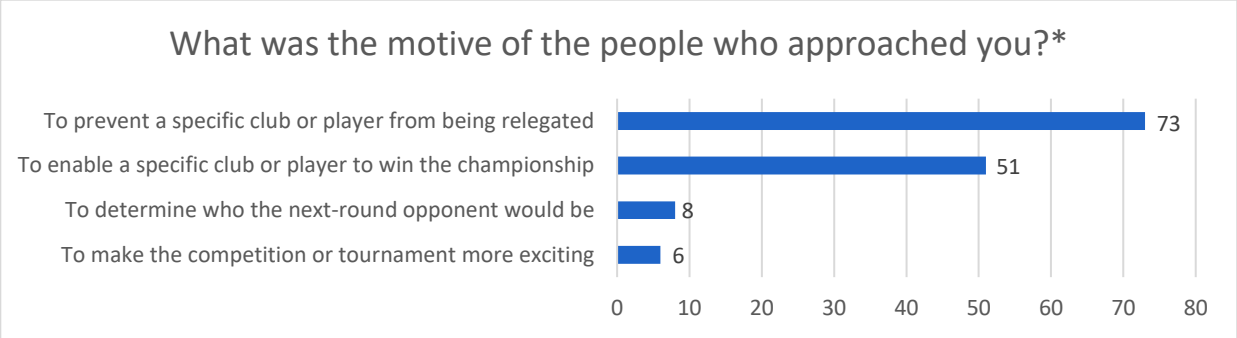
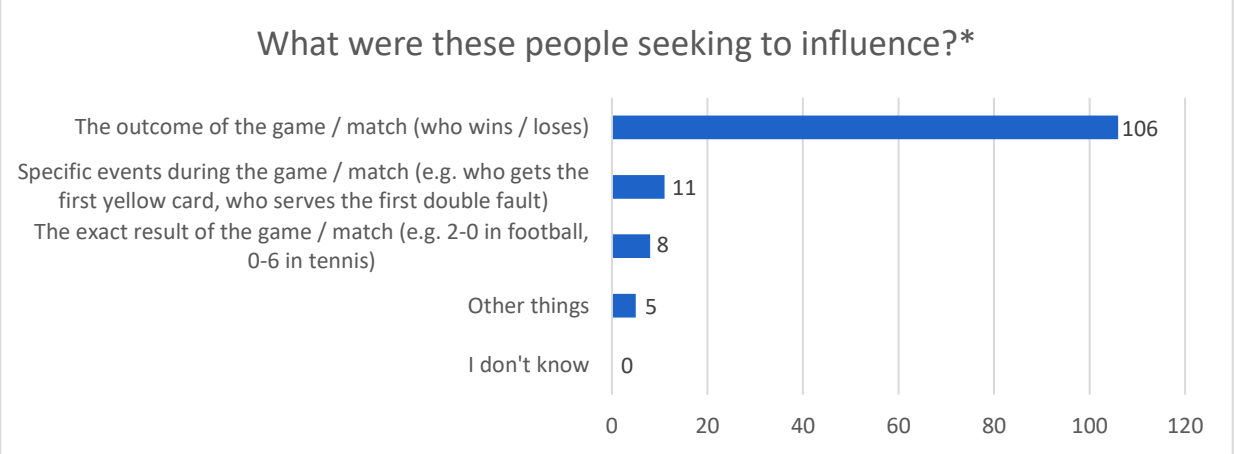


Figure 12: The motive of the people who approached the respondents (n = 121)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 121, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

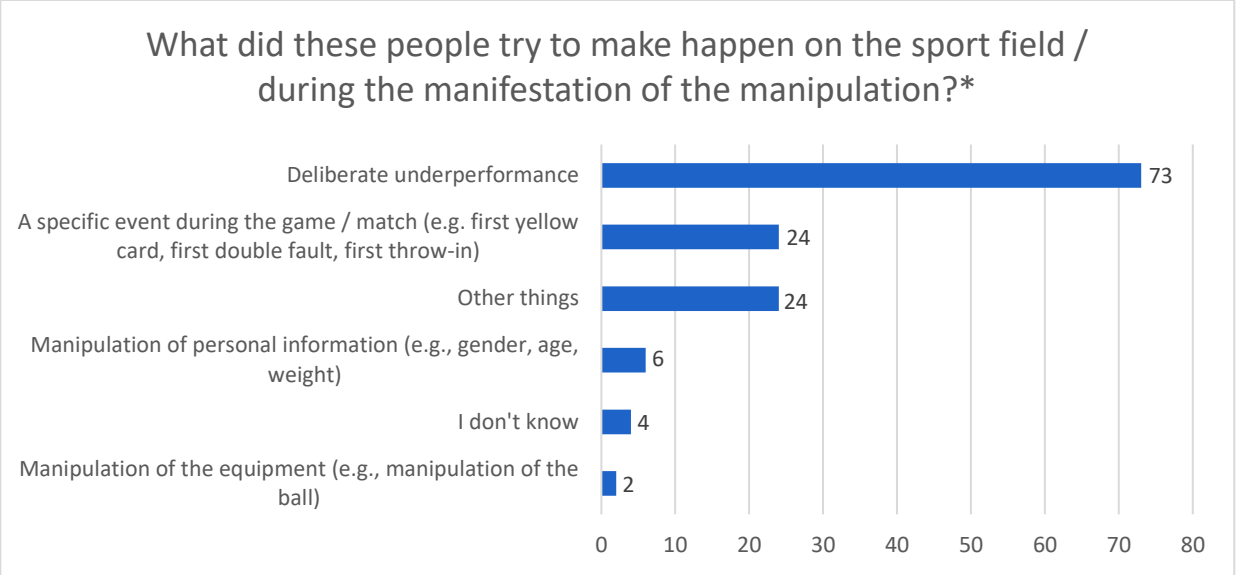
Figure 13: What they were trying to influence (n = 121)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 121, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

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Figure 14: What did they try to make happen during the manifestation of the manipulation (n = 121)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 121, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

Figure 15: Place of the proposal (n = 121)

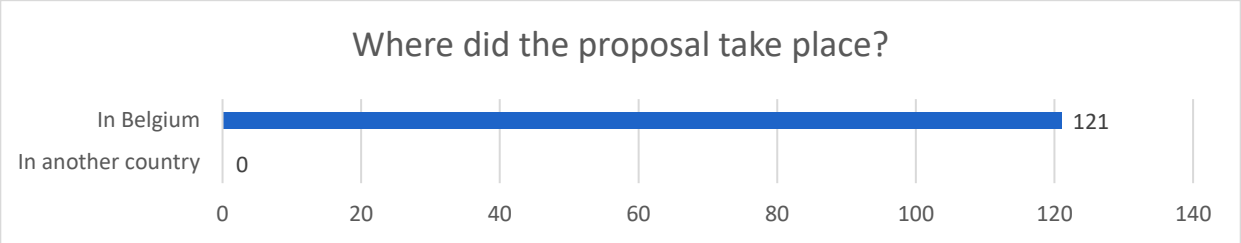
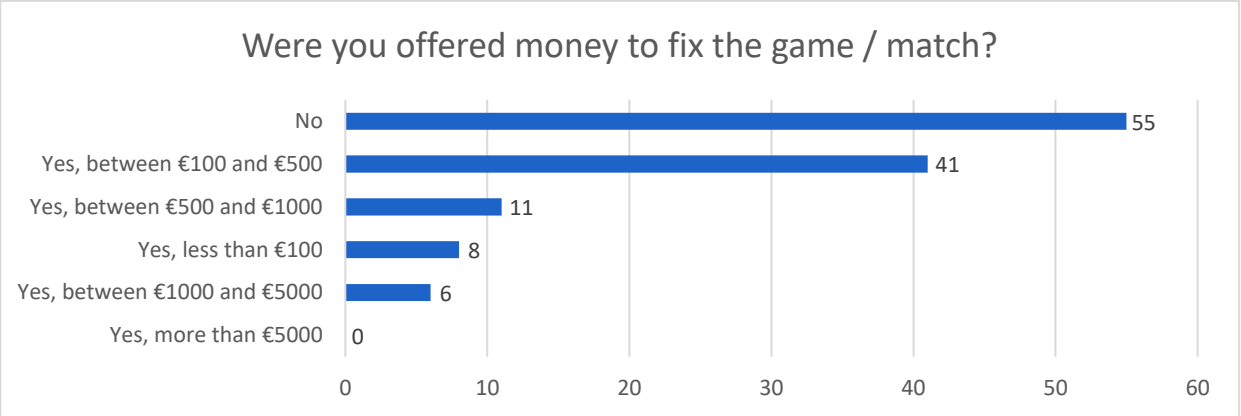
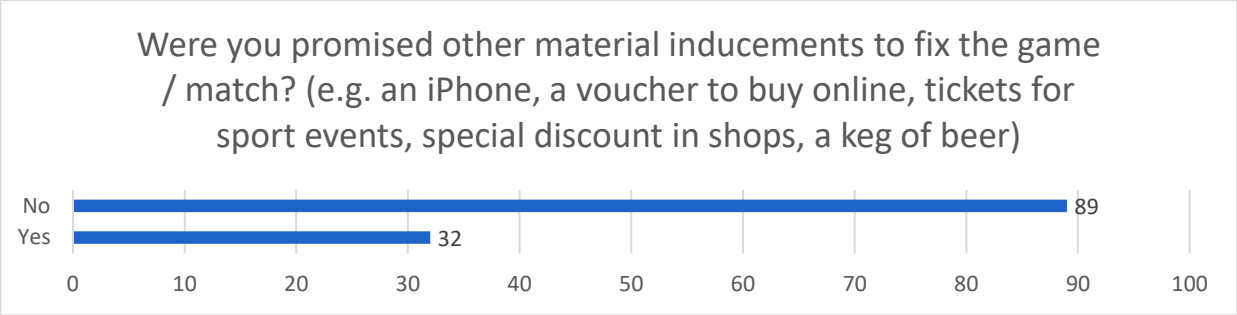


Figure 16: Offered money at the moment of the proposal (n = 121)



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Figure 17: Promised other material inducements (n = 121)



Which inducements were you promised?

- A keg / kegs of beer, a crate / crates of beer, free beer, drinks, etc.
- Footlunch (i.e. a lunch before a football match), a diner
- A good reception (unlimited food and drinks)
- A double premium, match bonuses
- Online voucher
- A watch
- Sport equipment at a cheap price, jerseys, discount on equipment
- A weekend for the team, a trip / holiday
- A car
- Other materials

Figure 18: Threatened or pressured at the moment of the proposal (n = 120)

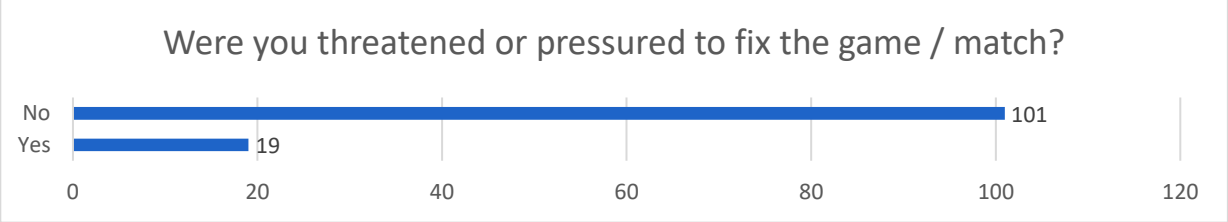
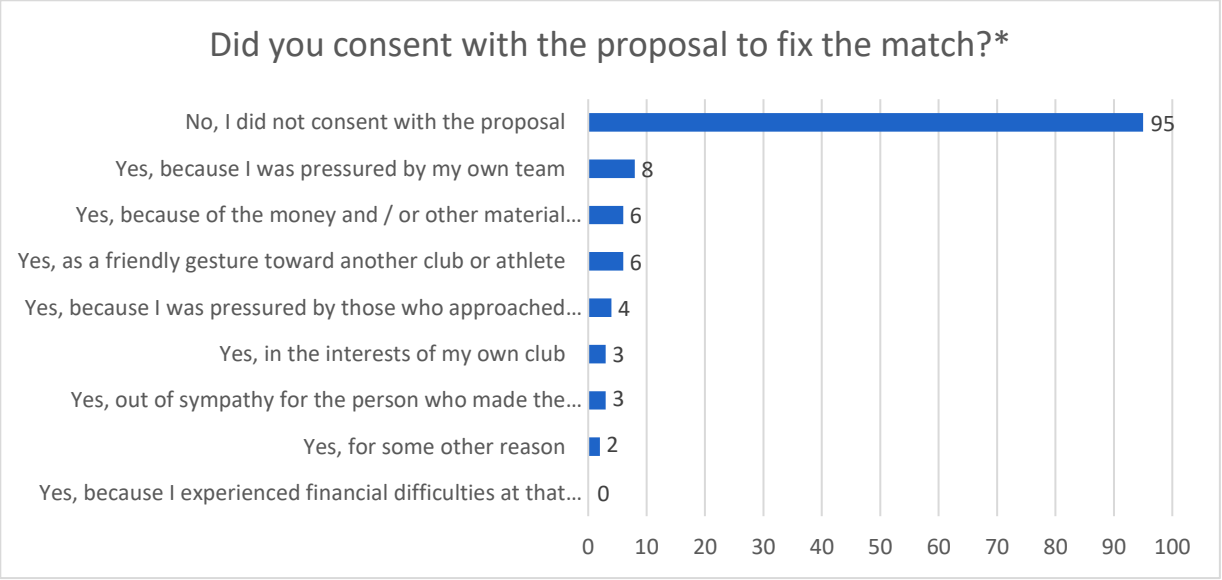


Figure 19: Consent with the proposal or not (n = 120)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 120, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

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6.2.2.2 Only betting-related proposals

The three respondents who revealed that they were only approached for a betting-related proposal, were involved in football and basketball. At the moment of the proposal, the person (gender is not specified to ensure confidentiality) involved in basketball was involved as a board member, assembly member, or manager of a sport club on an amateur and national level. One of the persons involved in football, was involved as referee, VAR, or (fourth) official on an amateur and national level (at the moment of the proposal), whereas the other person was involved as an athlete on a professional and national level (at the moment of the proposal).

The first person involved in basketball indicated that (s)he was approached by bettor(s) / gambler (s), and specified that these people were affiliated with the Eastern European gambling circuit. Moreover, (s)he indicated that they tried to influence the outcome, the exact result and specific events during the game / match. Additionally, (s)he revealed that the proposal took place in Belgium. (S)he was not offered money, but (s)he specified that they indicated that “it would be repeated in the longer term and that (s)he would benefit from it.” Furthermore, (s)he indicated that (s)he was threatened or pressured to fix. However, (s)he did not consent to the proposal.

The person who was involved as referee, VAR, or (fourth) official in football on an amateur and national level at the moment of the proposal, indicated that (s)he was approached by bettor(s) / gambler(s). However, (s)he did not know with whom these people were affiliated. Moreover, (s)he indicated that they tried to influence the outcome (who wins / loses) and specific events during the game / match. However, (s)he did not know what they exactly tried to make happen on the sport field / during the manifestation of the manipulation. Additionally, (s)he revealed that the proposal took place in Belgium, and that (s)he was not offered money, nor other inducements. Furthermore, (s)he indicated that (s)he was not threatened or pressured to fix. Eventually, (s)he did not consent to the proposal.

The person who was involved as an athlete on a professional and national level in football at the moment of the proposal, indicated that (s)he was approached by board member(s), assembly member(s), or manager(s) of a sport club who were affiliated with her / his own club or team. They tried to influence the outcome (who wins / loses) and expected a deliberate underperformance. The proposal took place in Belgium and (s)he was offered more than €5000, but no other inducements. (S)he was not threatened or pressured and did not consent to the proposal.

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7 REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR EXPERIENCES OF MATCH-FIXING

Taking into account the figures of sections 6.1 and 6.2, Figure 20 depicts an overview of the (proposed) match-fixing incidents.

Figure 20: (Proposed) match-fixing incidents



Of the **347** respondents who indicated (proposed) match-fixing incidents, **177** respondents (51,0%) had never reported their suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to anyone.
On the other hand, **166** respondents (47,8%) had reported their suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to someone (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Reporting suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to anyone (n = 166)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 166, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

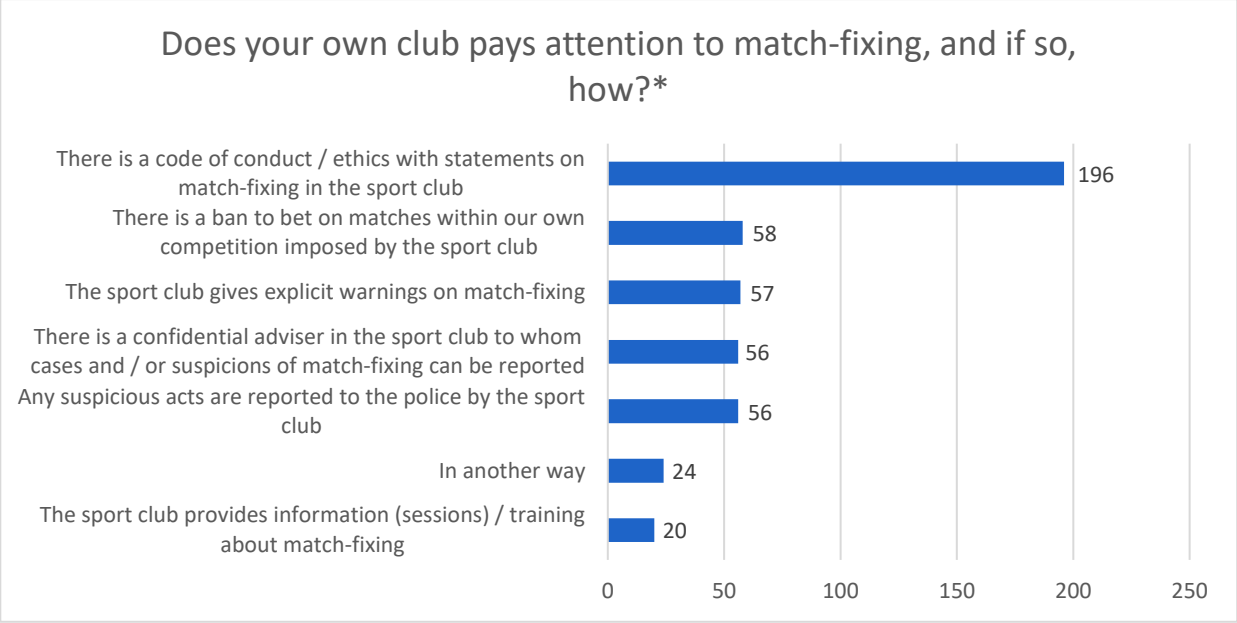
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8 MATCH-FIXING PREVENTION IN SPORT CLUBS

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked whether their sport club pays attention to match-fixing or not. Of the **802** respondents who indicated that they were still involved in a sport club, **202** respondents (25,2%) indicated that their sport club does not pay attention to match-fixing and **327** respondents (40,8%) indicated that they don't know if their sport club pays attention to match-fixing.

On the other hand, **272** respondents **(33,9%)** indicated that their sport club pays attention to match-fixing. As shown in Figure 22, respondents mainly indicated that their sport club has a code of conduct / ethics with statements on match-fixing.

Figure 22: Match-fixing prevention in sport clubs (n = 272)



*The sum of the figures exceeds 272, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

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9 CONCLUSION

This report showed that 17,0% of the respondents indicated that they had been approached personally for a match-fixing proposal, and that 33,6% of the respondents knew one or more persons who had been approached to fix a game / match. Compared to the initial Flemish study (see Van Der Hoeven et al., 2020)[1], which was the incentive for the EPOSM project, these figures are quite high. The study of Van Der Hoeven et al. (2020) revealed that 6,3% of the respondents had been approached personally in regard to match-fixing, and that 17,8% knew someone who had been approached for match-fixing. **As previously mentioned in this report, the EPOSM results need to be put into perspective.**

The higher prevalence figures in this report, compared to the initial study in Flanders, could be explained by a number of arguments. First of all, the EPOSM sample included current and former actors who are or were involved in one of the three main sport disciplines in Belgium, whereas the Flemish study only focused on actors who were currently involved in the sport. As past cases could also be reported in the EPOSM survey, it could be expected that the figures in this report would be higher than in the initial Flemish study. Moreover, the Flemish study only focused on athletes, coaches, and referees, whereas the EPOSM survey was also open to medical staff, board members, and others. In addition, the data of the Flemish study were collected before operation “Clean Hands,” which exposed a large-scale match-fixing scandal in Belgian professional football. After the disclosure of this scandal, match-fixing received more attention in the media. Together with this scandal, awareness raising initiatives (and possibly also the initial Flemish survey) may have raised awareness among actors involved in Flemish (and Belgian) sports in recent years. Taking all these arguments into account, it could be expected that the figures in this report would be higher than the figures in the initial Flemish study.

Higher reporting of match-fixing, thus, reflects two things: 1) a high number of match-fixing cases; 2) a higher degree of disclosure of match-fixing cases. However, there are no reasons to expect an increase in the number of match-fixing cases in the last years, and hence, we strongly believe that awareness has significantly increased resulting in a higher level of disclosure of cases, which is an important step in the prevention of match-fixing.

When it comes to the prevalence of sporting-related match-fixing, the results in this report are in line with Van Der Hoeven et al.’s (2020) finding that **most match-fixing cases are non-betting-related or “sporting-related.”** More specifically, of the 163 respondents who indicated that they had been approached for match-fixing (in this report), 121 respondents indicated that they had only been approached for a non-betting-related or “sporting-related” match-fixing proposal. The majority of the respondents who had been approached for a sporting-related match-fixing proposal were involved as athletes on an amateur level in football (at the moment of the proposal). For more details, see p. 12-16. Although we had small samples for tennis and basketball, and consequently very small groups of people who had been approached for match-fixing in these two sport disciplines, sporting-related match-fixing was also most frequent in these sport disciplines (see Table 10). As such, the results in

[1] Van Der Hoeven, S., De Waegeneer, E., Constandt, B., & Willem, A. (2020). Match-fixing: Moral challenges for those involved. *Ethics & Behavior*, *30*(6), 425–443.

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this report emphasize that sporting-related match-fixing poses a threat to (Belgian) sport that should not be underestimated!

Additionally, the statements about match-fixing (see p. 5-7) indicated that people involved in football assessed the risk of match-fixing in their sport in Belgium significantly higher than did the actors in tennis and basketball. As previously mentioned, this could be explained by the recent match-fixing scandals in Belgian football and / or by the fact that several awareness raising initiatives are present in this sport. The people involved in tennis also estimated the risk of match-fixing in their sport higher than the actors in basketball. After all, tennis has also suffered from a large number of (international) match-fixing scandals and awareness raising initiatives are also in place. The people involved in basketball, on the contrary, believed that there is a much lower chance that they could be confronted with proposals to fix a match than is the case with those involved in football and tennis. Although these figures showed that the awareness of match-fixing is (slightly) higher in football and tennis (compared to basketball), awareness of the dangers of match-fixing still has to be increased (in general). As such, these findings advocate for more awareness raising initiatives.

Moreover, our results showed that only 47,8% of the respondents, who indicated (proposed) match-fixing incidents (see p. 18), had reported their suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to anyone. When they revealed their suspicions or experiences, this was in most cases to teammates, board members of the sport club, or the coach / trainer / assistant coach. On the contrary, suspicions or experiences were least reported to the police, an anonymous reporting line, or the sport federation. As such, respondents preferred informal and close contacts in their sport club to report suspicions or experiences to, rather than formal ways to report their suspicions or experiences.

Furthermore, this report also showed that only 33.9% of the respondents, who were still involved in a sport club, indicated that their sport club pays attention to match-fixing. The majority of these respondents indicated that their sport club has a code of conduct / ethics with statements on match-fixing (see p. 19). As such, these findings demonstrate that the prevention against match-fixing in Belgian football, tennis, and basketball clubs is fairly low, or that at least the initiatives do not sufficiently reach the actors within the sport club.