

Strong laws to check betting rackets in tennis

Sweeping measures to stamp out match fixing and betting in professional tennis will be announced Monday, coinciding with the beginning of Wimbledon Championships 2008.

Total ban on tennis betting, hefty fines, bans and even disqualification of players and tighter security around locker rooms are some of the steps mooted. Tennis bodies will also create an anti-corruption unit in London by this year. Players will be compelled to reveal match-fixing or betting scam approaches within 48 hours.

Tennis authorities have come up with these laws after revelations that professional tournaments are rife with match-fixing and betting.

The new anti-corruption rules will be revealed at a board meeting of the Association of Tennis Professionals Monday, according to The Independent.

The reforms will be the biggest change in the sport since drug-testing laws were agreed in 2004.

The International Tennis Federation, the Women's Tennis Association and the Grand Slam Committee are expected to back the moves at meetings during this year's Wimbledon Championships.

Stephen Busey, one of the lawyers behind the proposals, said: 'The intent reflects a common intention among governing bodies to come down hard on wagering by players and people associated with tennis.'

A recent probe by Scotland Yard has reportedly revealed that 45 matches played in recent years are suspect and that some international professionals are involved. The investigation was ordered following tip offs on a betting match at the Polish Open last August.

Nikolay Davydenko, then ranked number 4 in the world, retired hurt and lost to Martin Vassallo Arguello, ranked 86. The investigation continues, but Davydenko's lawyer has protested his client's innocence, insisting he retired with a genuine injury

Suspect matches show substantial spikes in the amount of money wagered on them. A large number of current and former top players told investigators they 'knew of' opponents who had been invited to throw matches.

Matches played since 2002 have come under the scanner. Eight Wimbledon matches, four of them from last year's men's singles competition, are among those singled out for scrutiny.

Five losing players from the eight Wimbledon matches are playing in this year's men's singles competition. It is suspected they are involved in suspect matches at other tournaments.

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