

# Betting on Football

Mr P wishes to place a bet that a certain football club will lose a match. He goes to his local bookie.

- I want to bet that Club X will lose their next match, he says.
- Sure, says his bookie, let me see if I can find someone to take that bet.
- The bookie makes a few calls and finds little interest.
- We need someone to scrutinize the team, says the agent. It will help in finding the other side of the bet.

Enter Mr R whom the agent has found to scrub down the team. At some stage, with the involvement of Mr R as an independent party in scrutinizing the team, the agent finds Mr Q who is willing to bet that Club X will win their next match.

Club X promptly loses their next match.

- Wait a minute, who arranged this bet? The football association says?
- We did, says the agent.
- You didn't tell Mr Q that the bet was initiated by Mr P. This is fraud. See you in court. Says the regulator.
- Wait a minute. Mr Q knew what the bet was about. He has been betting for years. We didn't force him to take the bet. And since when did it matter who was on the other side of a bet? Says the agent.
- Don't be ridiculous. We all know that Mr P is one of the best punters in the game. It is not wise to bet against him. Says the regulator.
- Not before this bet no you didn't know that. So, you're saying you would bet that Club X would win as long as Mr P was not betting that Club X would lose. Says the agent.
- That's right, says the football regulator. You have to

identify both punters. If you did, Mr Q would not have taken the bet. Says the regulator.

- But what you are then saying by implication is that Mr P can influence the outcome of the match. Are you investigating Mr P?
- Well, no, says the regulator.

▪ Are you saying that Mr P can either:

1. Choose the players in the team?
2. Coerce the players to throw the match?

You need both conditions to be true to be able to influence the outcome. You see, choosing the players is one thing, but Mr Q is fully aware of the line up before the bet is made. So on the second point, are you saying that Mr P can influence how the players play? Says the bookie.

- Mr P could choose the players, says the regulator. This is clearly a conflict. The players were terrible.
- But Mr R had the final say in who plays. And by the way, Mr R knows full well that Mr P was proposing the players. Mr R still had the final say. Says the agent.
- But not that Mr P was betting against the team, says the regulator. You said that Mr P would be betting that Club X would win. That's misrepresentation. Says the regulator.
- How is this relevant? Asks the agent.
- If Mr P was betting on Club X to win, he would hardly also bet on Club X to lose would he?
- No, of course not.
- So what is Mr P doing in all this? Asks the regulator.
- You tell me. Mr R never asked. How is this relevant? Says the agent. Mr R had ultimate say over the team. In fact, Mr R placed a bet on Club X to win.
- Because they thought that Mr P was also betting on Club

X to win. You knew that Mr P was betting they would lose. Says the regulator.

- But the team might have won. Mr P might have been wrong. Would you be suing us then? Heck, we placed a small bet on Club X to win ourselves.