

《Tennis embroiled in new match-fixing scandal as Australian O》

MELBOURNE - An exhaustive investigation into tennis match fixing by two prominent media organizations has revealed evidence that 16 professional players have been caught up in the scandal.

The findings of the investigation, by BuzzFeed News and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), were revealed on the same day the 2016 Australian Open tennis grand slam began at Melbourne Park.

Of the 16 players under suspicion, eight will take to the court at the Australian Open over the next fortnight.

Authors of the report devised an algorithm to analyse gambling patterns on professional tennis matches over the past seven years. The investigation uncovered a bundle of leaked internal documents and analysis of betting on 26,000 tennis matches.

The secret files uncovering evidence of widespread match fixing, released by the BBC and BuzzFeed on Monday, found:

A US Open champion and doubles winners at Wimbledon were among a core group of 16 players who had continually been reported for losing games when highly suspicious bets have been placed against them.

One top-50 ranked player competing in the Australian Open is suspected of repeatedly fixing his first set of a match.

Players were being targeted in hotel rooms at major tournaments and offered \$50,000 or more for each fix by corrupt gamblers.

Gambling syndicates in Russia and Italy have made hundreds of thousands of pounds placing highly suspicious bets on scores of matches, including at Wimbledon and the French Open.

The names of over 70 players appear on nine leaked lists of suspected fixers who have been identified to world tennis authorities over the past decade without being sanctioned.

Four players also showed highly unusual patterns which raised concerns as they had lost nearly all of the matches they were involved in where betting was largely one-sided. Given the initial odds, the chances that the players would perform so poorly were - the report said - less than one in 1,000.

Despite repeated warnings that a group of players was reportedly involved in match fixing, tennis authorities have taken no action to stamp out the corrupt behaviour.

The Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) head Nigel Willerton told BuzzFeed the sport adopted "a zero-tolerance approach to all aspects of betting-related corruption" and that "all credible information received by the TIU is analysed, assessed and investigated by highly experienced former law-enforcement investigators".

The ATP Tour and Tennis Australia officials are expected to respond to the allegations on Monday afternoon.