

EP SM

EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION OF SPORTING-RELATED MATCH-FIXING

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RESULTS CROATIA

Coordinator



Project partner



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1 INTRODUCTION

USKOK is the Croatian abbreviation for the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime. The Office is a special state attorney office specialised for the prosecution of corruption and organised crime. Its seat is in Zagreb and it is competent for the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia

USKOK was established in 2001 by the Act on the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime. The Act entered into force on 19 October 2001, and the Office began to work on 3 December 2001.

By establishing USKOK, Croatia also fulfilled the obligations assumed by the ratification of Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (Official Gazette-International Agreements 11/00) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (Official Gazette-International Agreements 14/02 published 13/03) which, in accordance with the Constitution of Republic of Croatia became part of the national legal system in Croatia.

USKOK has competence over corruption and organised crime in all sectors on the territory of the Republic of Croatia, including the sport sector.

According to the information provided by USKOK, a competent state attorney's office in criminal cases acted against 61 perpetrator of criminal offenses in the field of manipulation of sport competitions. The 6 criminal case proceedings ended in final judgements against 48 perpetrators of criminal offenses in the field of manipulation of sport competitions.

The information provided by USKOK indicates that the manipulation of sport competitions is a serious issue that requires appropriate attention and action by all relevant actors. To contribute to the awareness-raising and to the preventive actions in this matter, the Croatian Olympic Committee has undertaken the work on a two-year project entitled 'Evidence-based Prevention of Sporting-related Match-fixing' (the EPOSM project).

The EPOSM project has enabled the Croatian Olympic Committee to create an evidence-base for a better cooperation with relevant stakeholders and for concrete action related to the prevention of manipulation of sport competitions in Croatia.

The Croatian Olympic Committee has established a stronger cooperation with the Croatian Football Federation, the Croatian Basketball Federation, and the Croatian Tennis Association by preparing and conducting a survey on manipulation of sport competitions in football, basketball and tennis. Data collection was supported by the previously mentioned National Federations. Upon completion of the survey and analysis of the survey results, the Croatian Olympic Committee together with the National Federations developed and agreed on a joint action plan entitled 'Action plan for strengthening measures against the manipulation of sport competitions 2022-2025'. This document presents the survey results, which were used as the evidence-based information for the awareness-raising activities and the creation of the joint action plan, and they will be recommended as the evidence-base to the relevant public institutions, policy-makers and other relevant actors in the public and private sectors.



2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

2.1 Sampling method

The data was collected on the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia.

The target groups to whom the questionnaire was disseminated were all sport clubs in three selected sports: football, basketball and tennis.

The decision to select football, basketball and tennis as sports that were going to be researched was made on the basis of the agreement with the project coordinator who has determined the main two sports to be surveyed, and the third was decided upon by the leadership of the Croatian Olympic Committee.

2.2 Contact method

Target groups were contacted by various means and through all available channels, e.g. by sending emails to sport clubs, through online platforms, by publishing a public call to take part in the survey on the official website of the Croatian Olympic Committee, by raising awareness about the survey on social media channels, and most importantly, through cooperation with the Croatian Football Federation, the Croatian Basketball Federation, and the Croatian Tennis Association. The National Federations have used their channels to invite their members to take part in the survey, too.

2.3 Reminders

The reminders to complete the survey were sent frequently to all target groups. As is the case with most research activities in the sport sector, the capacity of the sport stakeholders to take part in such activities is very limited due to the lack of resources such as time and people. Therefore, constant reminders by emails, phone calls and personal contact were required. As such, the process was rather demanding for the Croatian Olympic Committee, especially because only one person was dealing with all the work on the EPOSM project, without any help or assistance from anyone else.



3 RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

	Total (n = 468)	Football (n = 301)	Tennis (n = 78)	Basketball (n = 84)	Other (n = 5)
Language					
Croatian	99,6%	100%	97,4%	100%	100%
English	0,4%	0,0%	2,6%	0,0%	0,0%
Gender					
Man	89,5%	95,0%	66,7%	91,7%	80,0%
Woman	9,4%	3,7%	32,1%	8,3%	20,0%
Other	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
I prefer not to say	1,1%	1,3%	1,3%	0,0%	0,0%
Age: M (SD)*	34,2 (10,8)	31,3 (7,9)	34,2 (12,4)	43,6 (12,2)	44,0 (12,6)
How long have you been involved in this sport (in years)? M (SD)*	20,1 (9,7)	18,2 (8,2)	20,7 (9,7)	26,0 (12,2)	27,6 (9,6)
How are (were) you mainly related to this sport?					
Athlete	26,1%	18,3%	67,9%	15,5%	20,0%
Coach / Trainer / Assistant coach	7,1%	5,0%	12,8%	8,3%	20,0%
Medical staff	0,2%	0,0%	1,3%	0,0%	0,0%
Referee / (Video) Assistant Referee / (Fourth) official / Jury member	55,1%	70,4%	1,3%	51,2%	40,0%
Board member / Assembly member / Manager of a sport club	5,1%	2,3%	9,0%	11,9%	0,0%
Other	6,2%	4,0%	7,7%	11,9%	20,0%
At what level are (were) you mainly involved?					
Professional	25,2%	18,3%	46,2%	29,8%	40,0%
Semi-professional	33,8%	34,6%	26,9%	38,1%	20,0%
Amateur	41,0%	47,2%	26,9%	32,1%	40,0%
At what playing level are (were) you mainly involved?					
International	23,1%	14,0%	55,1%	26,2%	20,0%
National	50,4%	53,2%	29,5%	60,7%	40,0%
Local	24,4%	31,6%	9,0%	13,1%	20,0%
Leisure activity / Recreational	2,1%	1,3%	6,4%	0,0%	20,0%

*M = mean, SD = standard deviation



4 STATEMENTS

4.1 Match-fixing: its seriousness, and risks

The mean results for the sport disciplines are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, whereby “1” means “strongly disagree,” and “7” means “strongly agree.”

	“Match-fixing is a real problem in my sport discipline in Croatia.”	“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	3,7 ± 1,8	3,3 ± 2,0
Tennis	3,9 ± 1,8	2,8 ± 2,1
Basketball	3,0 ± 1,7	2,8 ± 1,8
Other	3,2 ± 2,7	2,2 ± 1,6

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

4.2 Moral sensitivity about match-fixing

The mean results for the sport disciplines are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, whereby “1” means “strongly disagree,” and “7” means “strongly agree.”

	“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	5,8 ± 1,4	5,8 ± 1,3
Tennis	5,8 ± 1,4	5,7 ± 1,5
Basketball	5,8 ± 1,3	5,8 ± 1,5
Other	4,0 ± 2,3	5,4 ± 1,5

M = mean, SD = standard deviation



4.3 Moral judgement about match-fixing

The mean results for the sport disciplines are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, whereby “1” means “strongly disagree,” and “7” means “strongly agree.”

	“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	5,7 ± 1,5	5,7 ± 1,4
Tennis	5,6 ± 1,7	5,6 ± 1,4
Basketball	5,8 ± 1,6	5,9 ± 1,4
Other	5,2 ± 2,2	6,0 ± 1,0

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

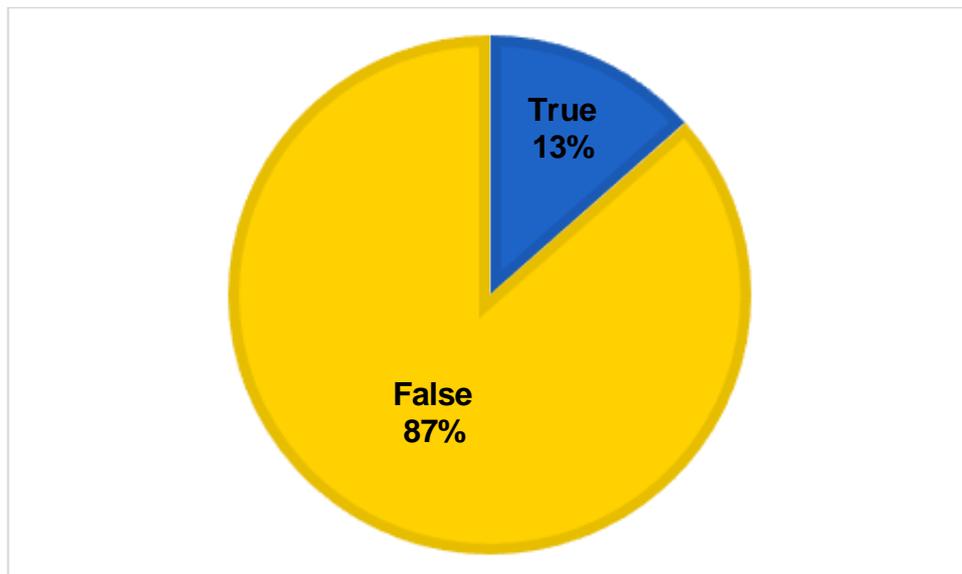
	“Participating in match-fixing to avoid relegation of my team, is acceptable.”	“Participating in match-fixing to make money through betting , is acceptable.”
Sport discipline	(M ± SD)	(M ± SD)
Football	1,5 ± 0,8	1,4 ± 0,8
Tennis	1,5 ± 0,8	1,4 ± 0,8
Basketball	1,4 ± 0,7	1,3 ± 0,6
Other	2,0 ± 1,7	1,2 ± 0,4

M = mean, SD = standard deviation

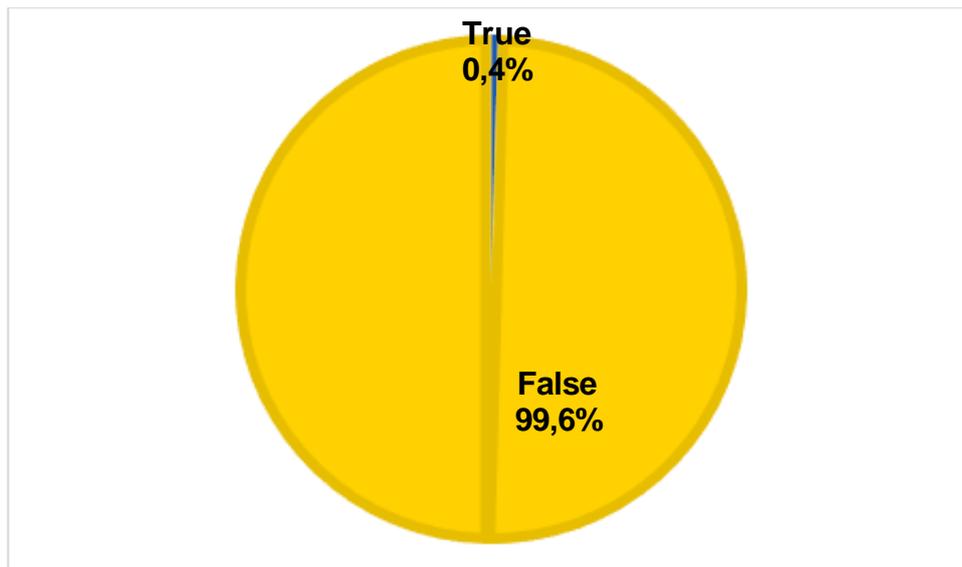


4.4 Gambling/betting

I gambled during the past year.



I have already bet on a match in which I was personally involved.





5 PREVALENCE OF MATCH-FIXING

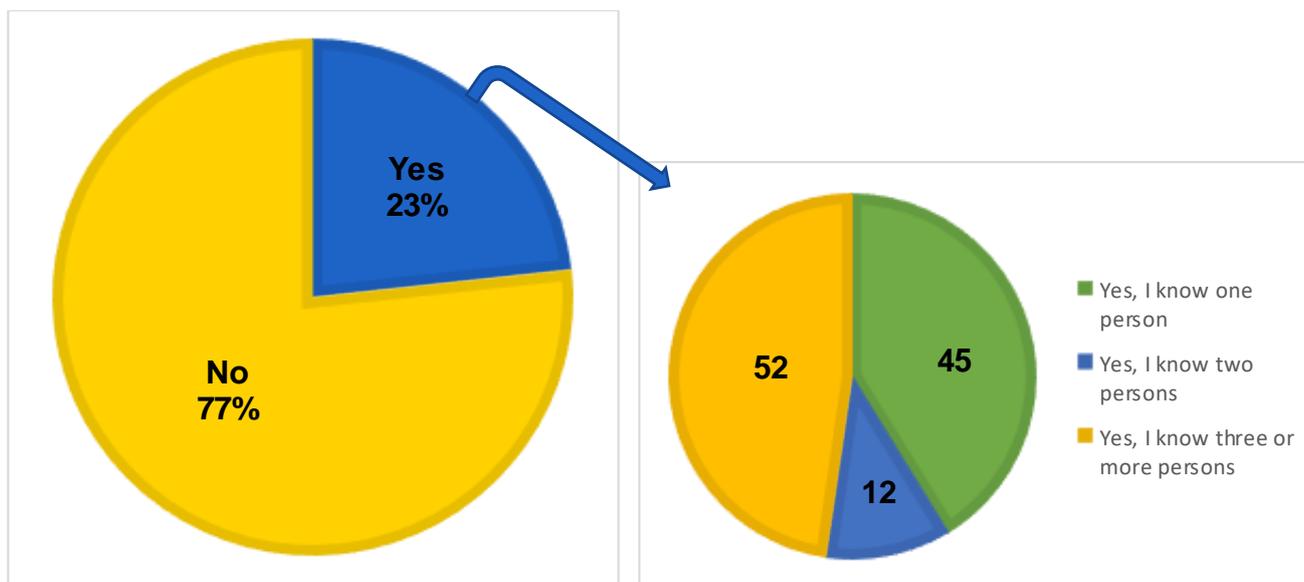
125 respondents reported
(proposed) match-fixing incidents

75 respondents knew one or more persons (not themselves) who had been approached for match-fixing

34 respondents knew one or more persons who had been approached for match-fixing & acknowledged to have been approached personally for match-fixing

16 respondents indicated to have been approached personally for match-fixing without knowing of anyone else who had also been approached

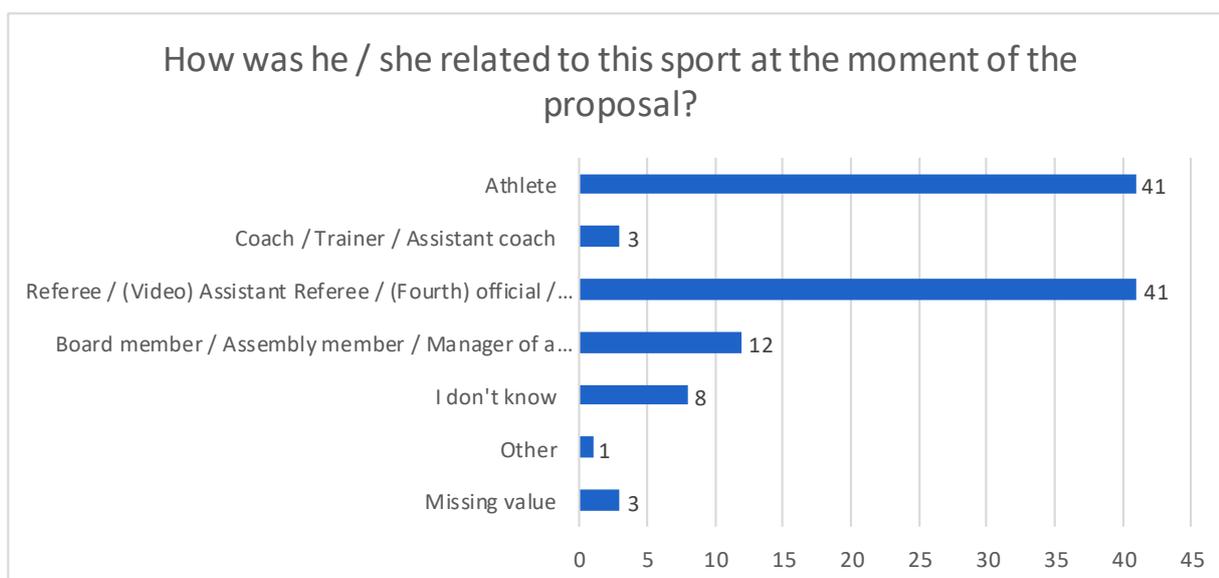
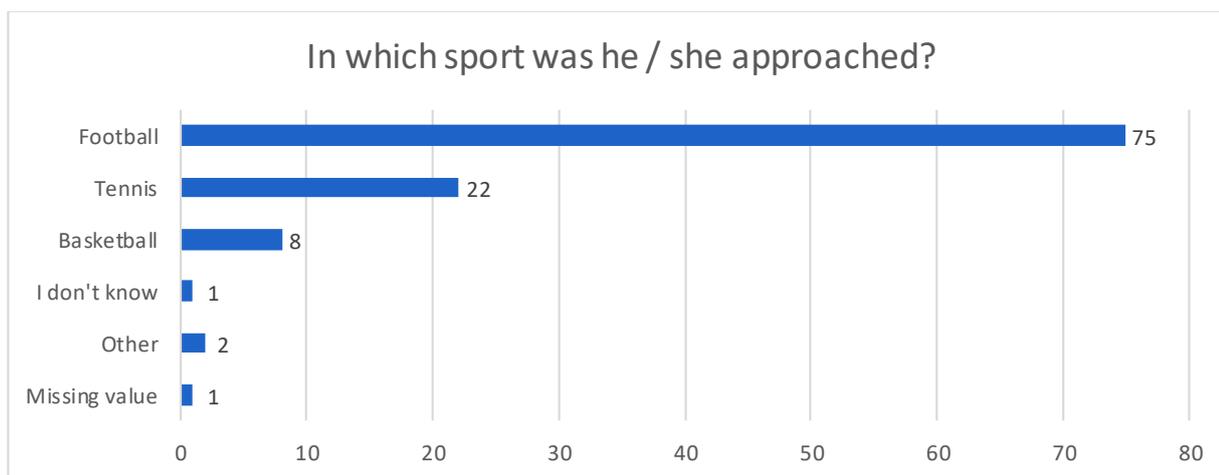
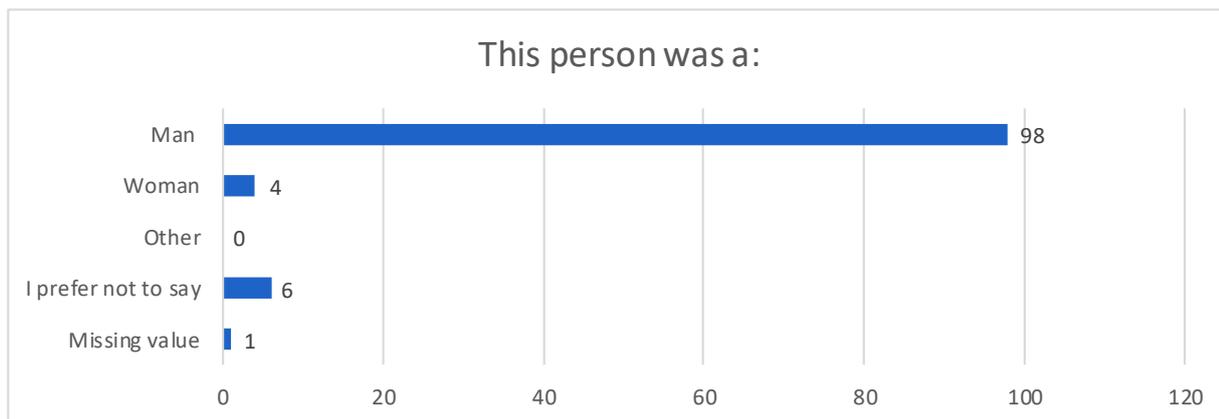
5.1 Do you personally know anyone who has been approached to fix a game/match?

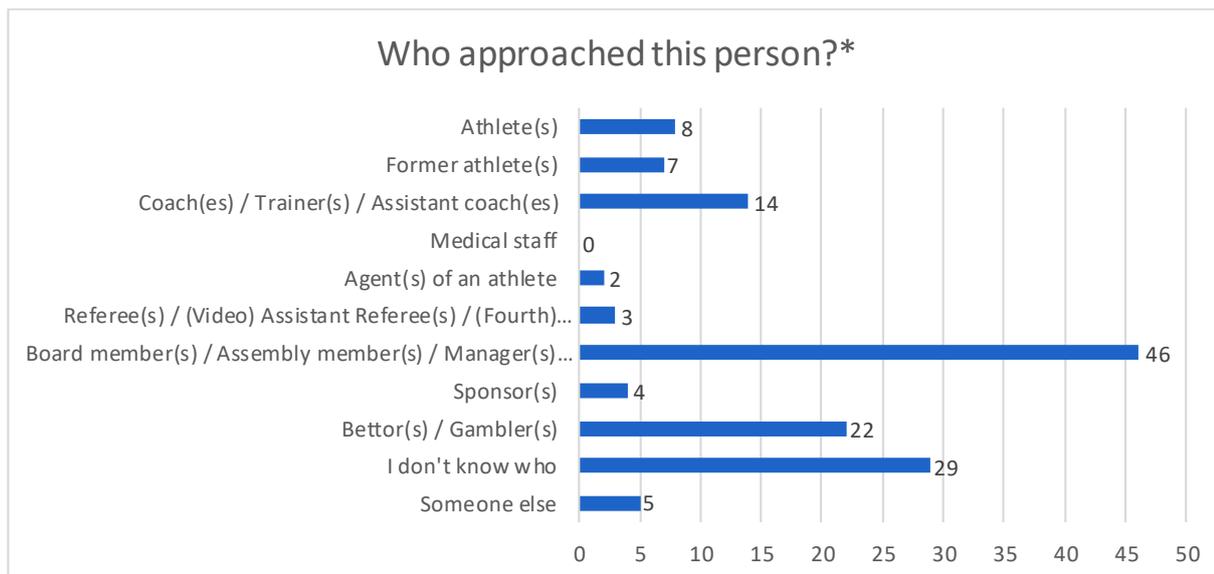


As such, **109 respondents** indicated that they personally know one or more persons who had been approached to fix a game/match.



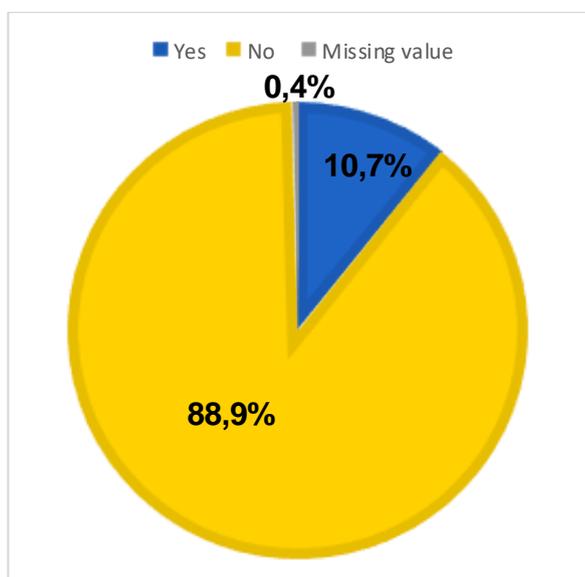
When they thought of the approached person they knew best, they indicated that:





*The sum of the figures exceeds 109, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

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



50 respondents indicated that they had already been approached to fix a game/match.

23 respondents indicated that they had only been approached once. 15 respondents indicated that they had been approached two to three times to fix a match, and 10 persons indicated that they had been approached more than 3 times to fix a match. Furthermore, there were two missing values.

The average age of the first (or only) time they were approached to fix a match was 24,9 years old (standard deviation 7,2). The average age of the last time they were approached to fix a match was 28,6 years old (standard deviation 7,6).



Regarding the last (or only) time they were approached to fix a match, 5 respondents revealed that they were only approached for a betting-related proposal (see table below). On the other hand, 28 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:

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

Furthermore, 6 respondents reported that they were only approached for another motive. The exact “other motive” could not be identified due to a software bug.

	Total (n = 50)	Football (n = 28)	Tennis (n = 15)	Basketball (n = 7)
What was the motive of the people who approached you?				
Only betting-related match-fixing	10,0% (n = 5)	3,6% (n = 1)	26,7% (n = 4)	0,0% (n = 0)
Both betting- and non-betting-related match-fixing	2,0% (n = 1)	3,6% (n = 1)	0,0% (n = 0)	0,0% (n = 0)
Only non-betting-related match-fixing	56,0% (n = 28)	75,0% (n = 21)	20,0% (n = 3)	57,1% (n = 4)
Both non-betting-related and “other motive”	2,0% (n = 1)	3,6% (n = 1)	0,0% (n = 0)	0,0% (n = 0)
Other motive	12,0% (n = 6)	3,6% (n = 1)	26,7% (n = 4)	14,3% (n = 1)
I don't know	12,0% (n = 6)	7,1% (n = 2)	20,0% (n = 3)	14,3% (n = 1)
Missing value	6,0% (n = 3)	3,6% (n = 1)	6,7% (n = 1)	14,3% (n = 1)

Only betting-related proposals

The five respondents who revealed that they were only approached for a betting-related proposal, were one man involved in football, and one woman and three men involved in tennis. At the moment of the proposal, the first man was involved as a professional athlete on an international level in football. The woman involved in tennis, was involved as a professional athlete on an international level at the moment of the proposal. Furthermore, the three other men involved in tennis, were respectively involved as a semi-professional athlete on an international level, a professional athlete on a national level, and a professional athlete on an international level (at the moment of the proposal).

The man who was involved in football indicated that he was approached by bettor(s) / gambler(s), and specified that these people were affiliated with an independent bookmaker. Moreover, he indicated that they tried to influence the outcome (who wins / loses) and the exact result of the game / match. Additionally, he revealed that they expected a deliberate underperformance. However, he did not indicate where the proposal took place. Furthermore, he was offered more than €5000, but no other



inducements. He indicated that he was not threatened or pressured to fix. Eventually, he did not consent to the proposal.

The woman who was involved in tennis, indicated that she was approached by bettor(s) / gambler(s). However, she did not know with whom these people were affiliated. Moreover, she revealed that they tried to influence specific events during the game / match. She did not indicate where the proposal took place, but explained that she was not offered money or other material inducements. Furthermore, she indicated that she was not threatened or pressured to fix. Eventually, she did not consent to the proposal.

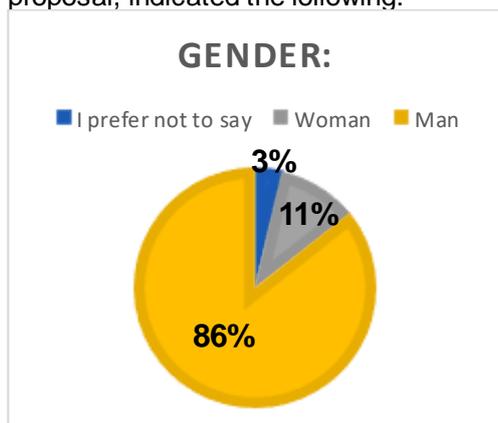
The man who was involved as a semi-professional athlete on an international level in tennis (at the moment of the proposal), did not indicate who approached him. However, he indicated that those who approached him, tried to influence the outcome of the game / match (who wins / loses). Moreover, he revealed that they expected a deliberate underperformance and that the proposal took place in Croatia. Furthermore, he indicated that he was offered more than €5000, but no other material inducements. He was not threatened or pressured, and eventually did not consent to the proposal.

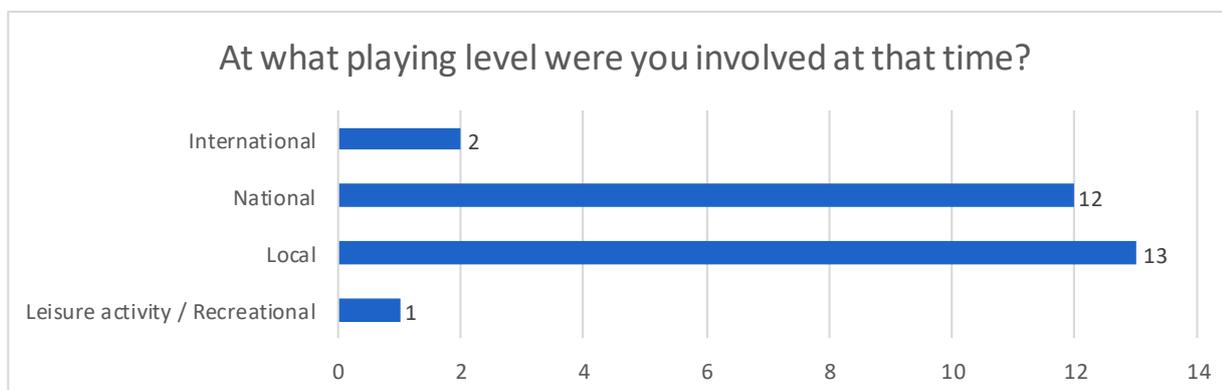
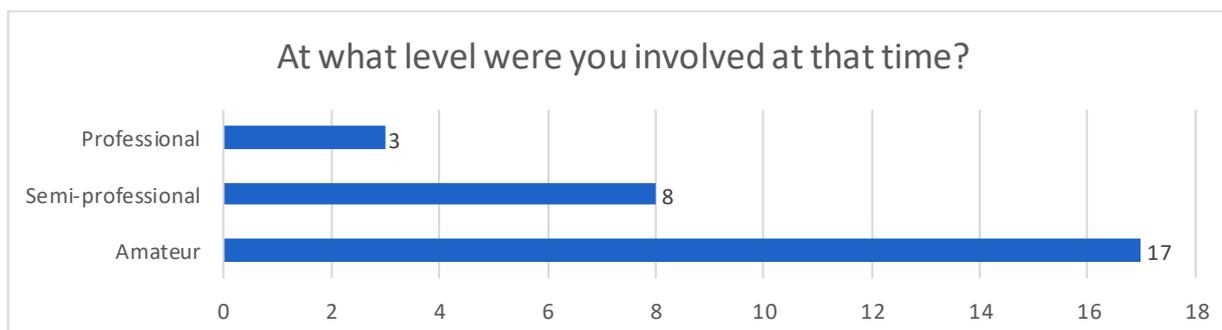
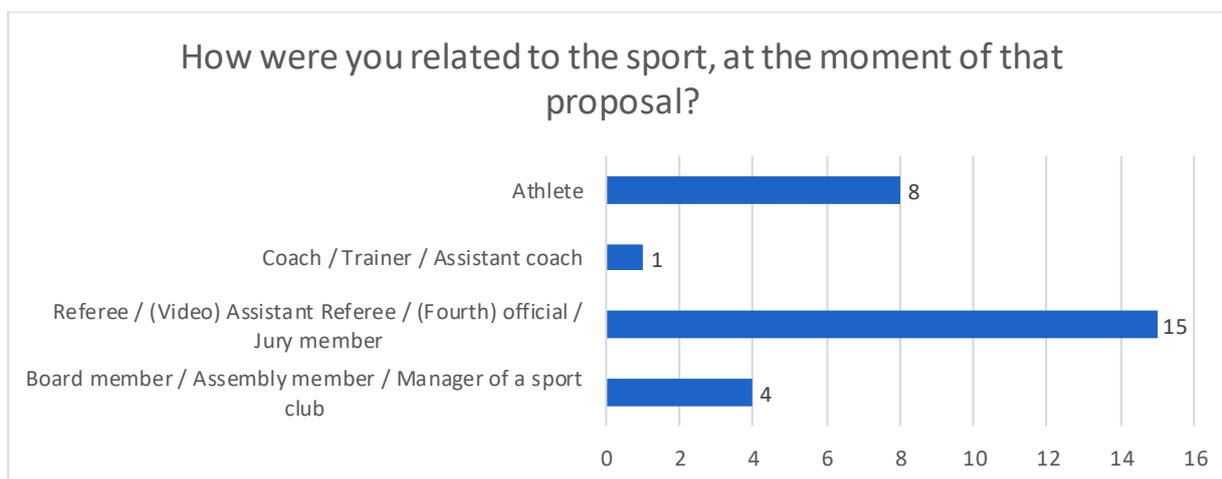
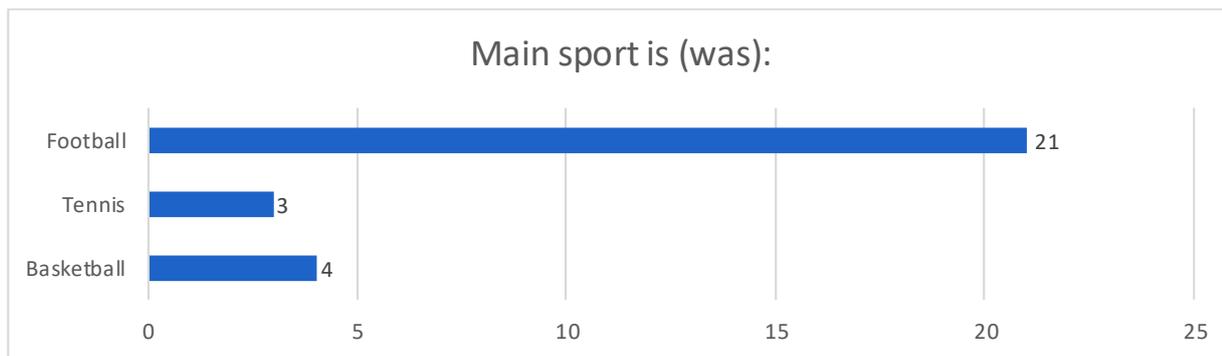
The man who was involved as a professional athlete on a national level in tennis (at the moment of the proposal), did not indicate who approached him. However, he clarified that those who approached him were affiliated with the opponent. Moreover, he indicated that they tried to influence the outcome of the game / match (who wins / loses), and that they expected a deliberate underperformance. Additionally, he revealed that the proposal took place in Croatia, and that he was offered between €100 and €500. Furthermore, he indicated that he was not offered other material inducements, and that he was not threatened or pressured to fix the match. Eventually, he did not consent to the proposal.

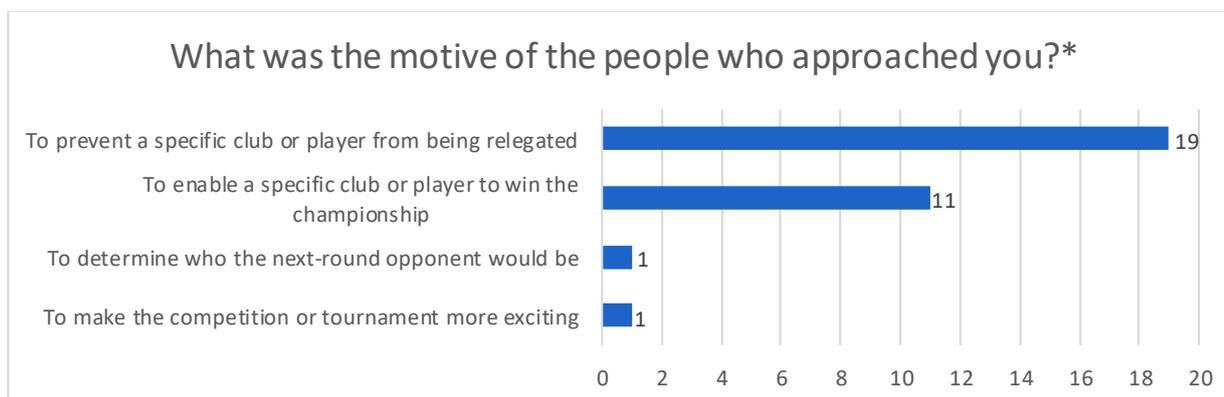
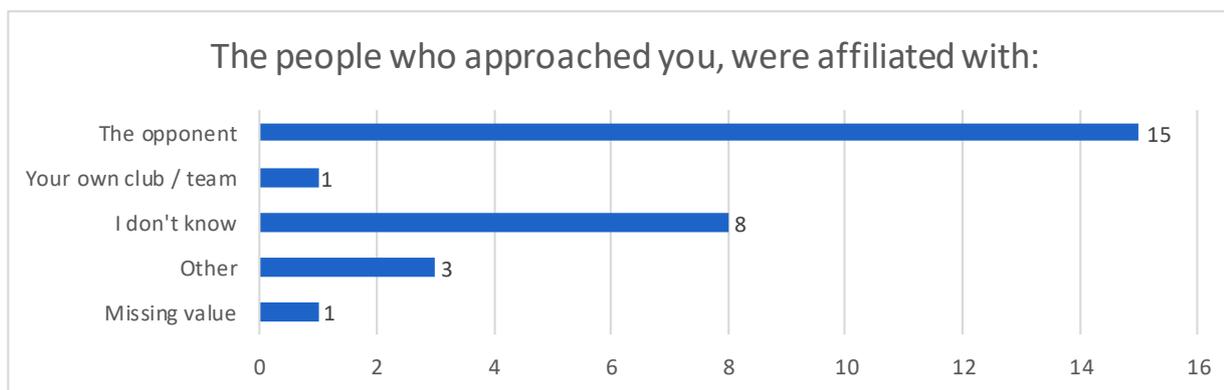
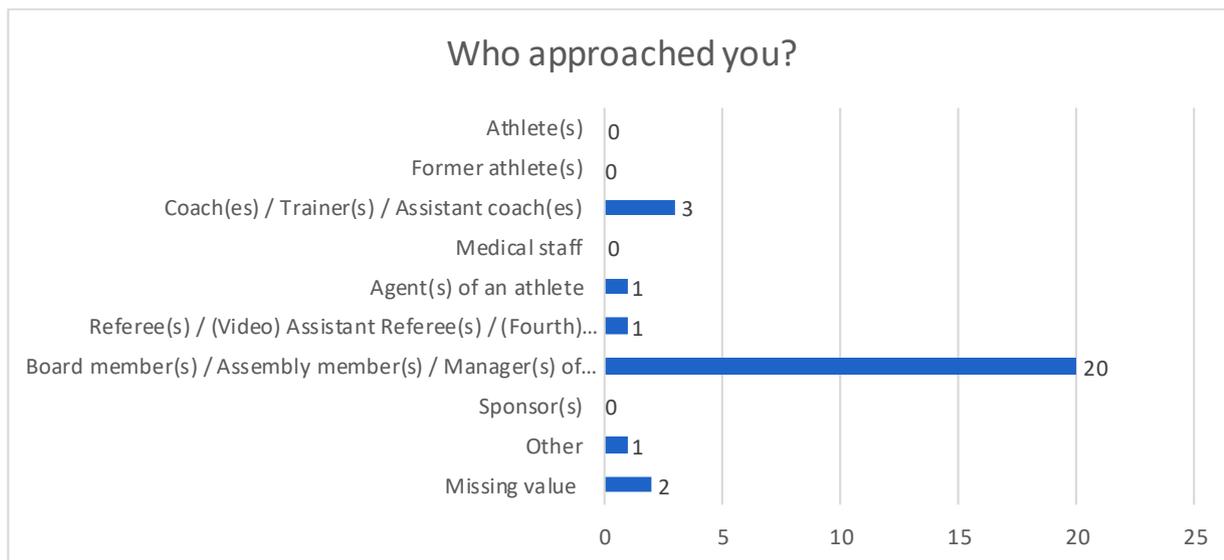
The man who was involved as a professional athlete on an international level in tennis (at the moment of the proposal), did not indicate who approached him. Moreover, he indicated that those who approached him tried to influence the exact result of the game / match, and that a deliberated underperformance was expected from him. Additionally, he did not indicate where the proposal took place, but stated that he was offered between €1000 and €5000. Furthermore, he revealed that he was not offered other material inducements and that he was not threatened or pressured to fix. Eventually, he did not consent to the proposal.

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

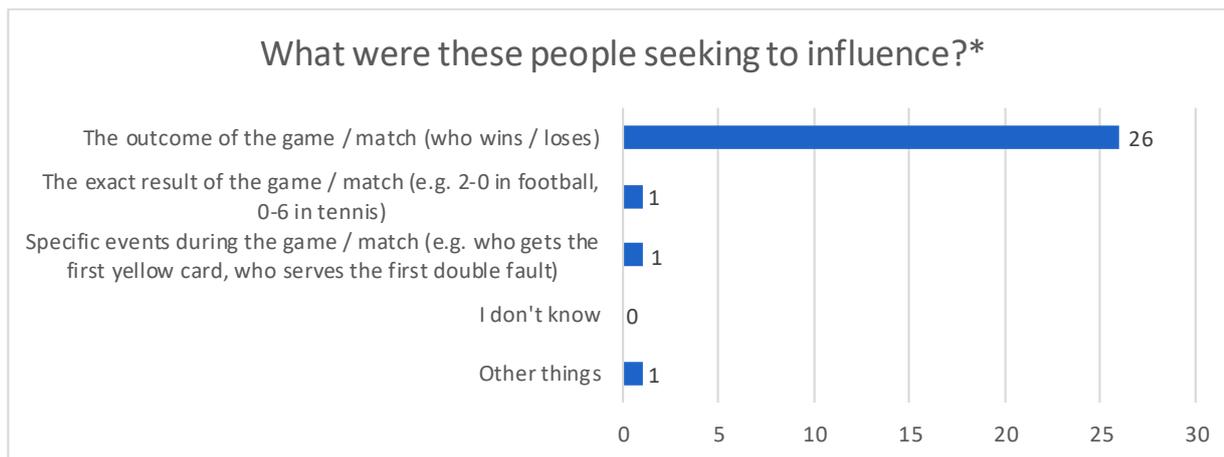
The group of 28 respondents who revealed that they were only approached for a sporting-related proposal, indicated the following:



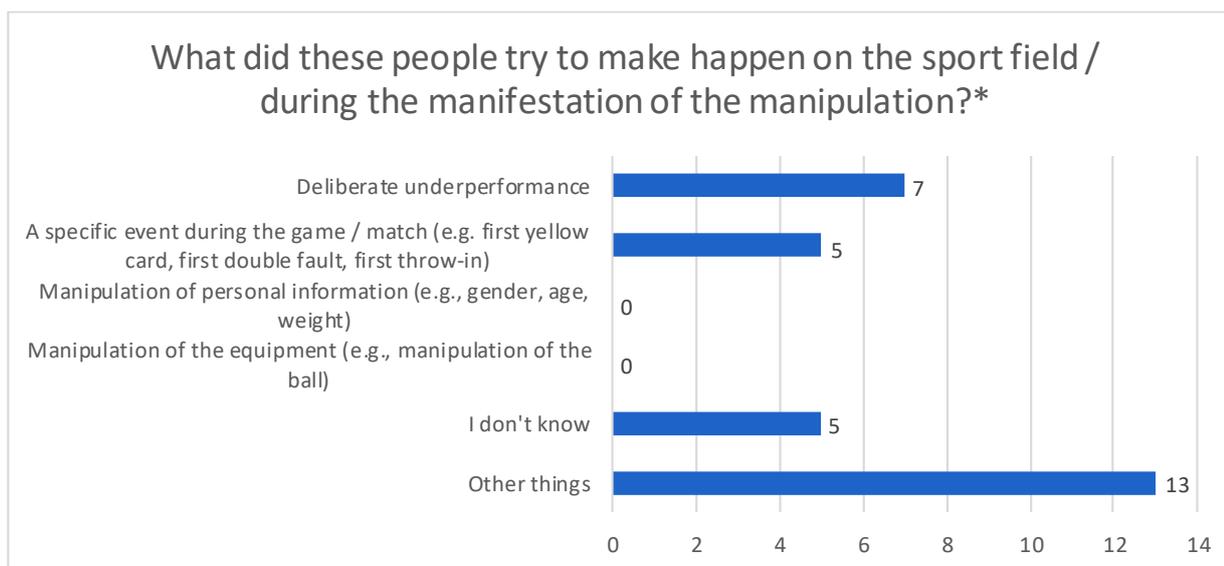




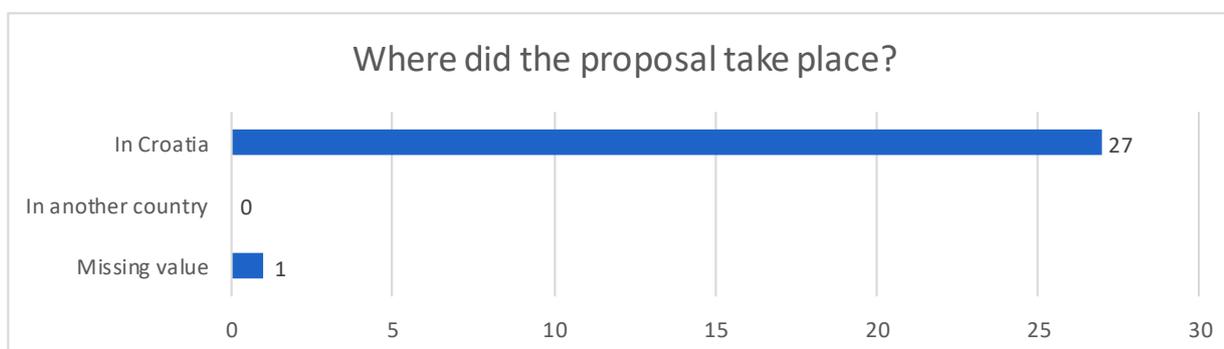
*The sum of the figures exceeds 28, because multiple answers were possible to the question.



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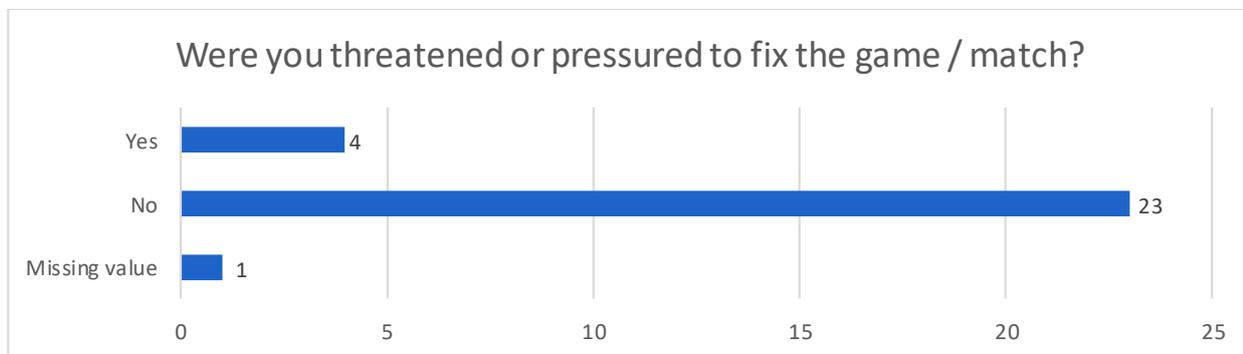
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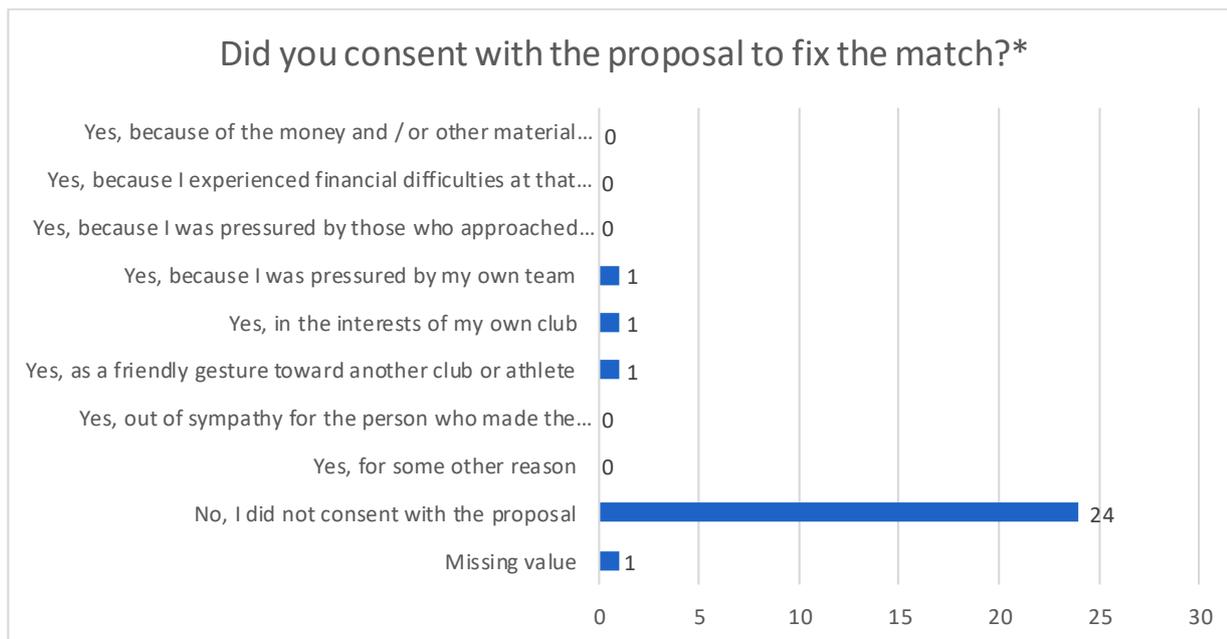




Which inducements were you promised?

- Excursion and socializing with food and drinks
- Use of a terrain
- A material benefit for the club
- A fair trial next season
- A dinner, and progress



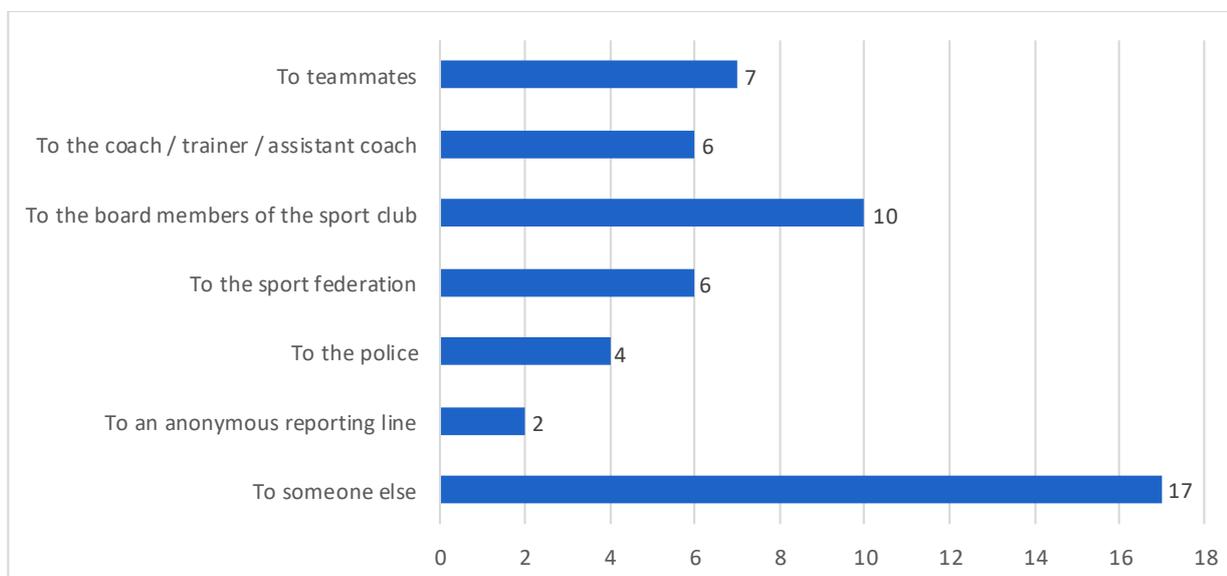


*The sum of the figures might exceed 28, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

6 REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR EXPERIENCES OF MATCH-FIXING

Of the **125** respondents who indicated (proposed) match-fixing incidents, **83** respondents (66,4%) had never reported their suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to anyone.

On the other hand, **40** respondents (32,0%) had reported their suspicions or experiences of match-fixing to:



*The sum of the figures exceeds 40, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

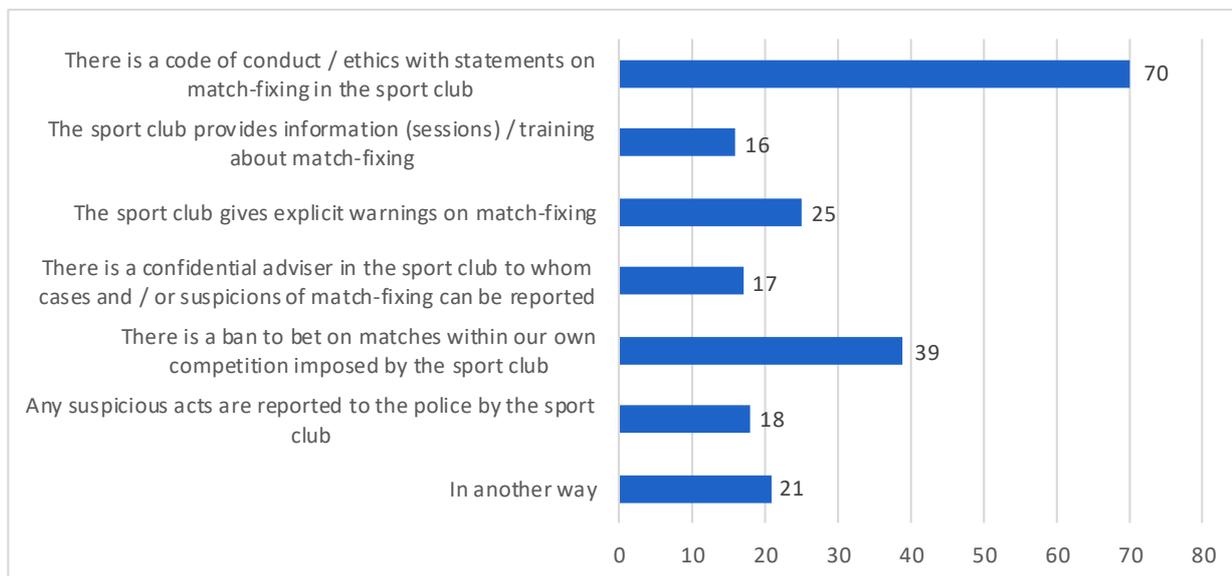
Furthermore, **2** missing values were noticed.



7 MATCH-FIXING PREVENTION IN SPORT CLUBS

Of the **202** respondents who indicated that they were still involved in a sport club, **29** respondents (14,4%) indicated that their sport club does not pay attention to match-fixing and **57** respondents (28,2%) indicated that they don't know if their sport club pays attention to match-fixing.

On the other hand, **115** respondents (**56,9%**) indicated that their sport club pays attention to match-fixing. More specifically, when the sport club pays attention to match-fixing, this is in the form of:



*The sum of the figures exceeds 115, because multiple answers were possible to the question.

Furthermore, 1 missing value was noticed.



8 CONCLUSION

Manipulation of sport competitions is a serious problem in Croatia. It is, however, a type of problem that knows no borders and therefore requires an international approach and cooperation. The Croatian Olympic Committee has nominated the Single Point of Contact for Integrity in Sport (the SPOC) in cooperation with relevant international actors such as the International Olympic Committee, the European Olympic Committees, INTERPOL, etc. The person who has undertaken the responsibilities of the SPOC is the same person who worked on the EPOSM project – Alma Papić. This survey has contributed, as has the EPOSM project in its entirety, to the awareness-raising activities and to the building of evidence base for future action. Most of all, it has helped create the cooperation between actors that was not in place before the EPOSM project began, which has an added value to everyone involved due to the greater visibility and impact of individual action taken against the manipulation of sport competitions.

The evidence provided by this survey has raised awareness about the sporting-related manipulation of sport competitions that was previously not in focus due to the overwhelming information in public media related to gambling. The survey results have indicated, however, that the prevalence of one of the two types of match-fixing is non-existent, meaning that both need to be in focus equally.

Survey results may, and hopefully they will serve to promote a better cooperation not only within the sport sector but among other relevant actors in Croatia, both in the public and in the private sector.

A special thanks for the success in conducting the survey goes to the men and women who have put many hours of work into convincing people to take the little of the valuable time that they have and spend it on completing the questionnaire. They are:

- Miroslav Marković, Commissioner for Security and Integrity, Croatian Football Federation,
- Darko Kolesarić, Integrity Officer, Croatian Football Federation,
- Željka Pongračić, Expert Associate, Croatian Tennis Association,
- Marko Stipanović, Associate, Croatian Basketball Federation, and
- Domagoj Šimunović, Coordinator of the Office for National Teams, Croatian Basketball Federation.