

Bern, 12 March 2026

# Competition manipulation – National Platform report 2025

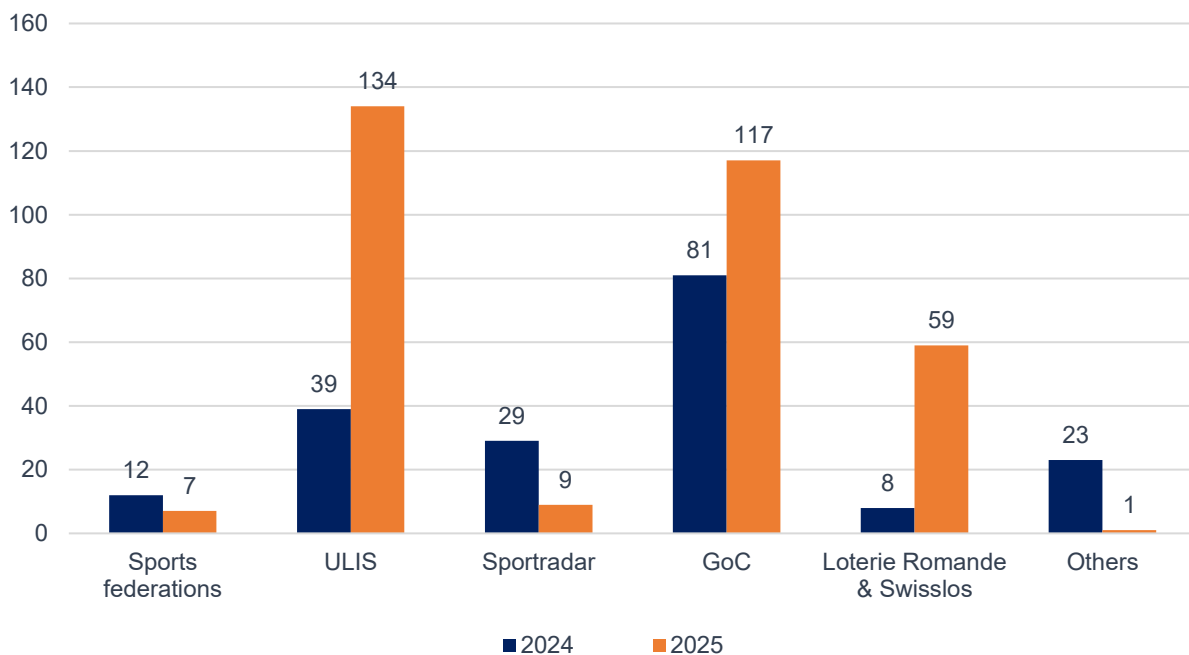


## News

In 2025, Gespa, in its role as “Swiss National Platform” and reporting centre for suspected cases, was once again the focal point for the exchange of information between sports stakeholders, sports betting operators, the institutions of the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention), other international partners and law enforcement authorities in Switzerland – and can once again present official data on the subject of match-fixing in light of its legal mandate.

These figures are intended to create transparency but must be placed in the context of the regulatory environment. In Switzerland, sports betting may not be offered on events where there is an increased risk of sports competition manipulation. This means that bets on sports, leagues and, consequently, all sports competitions where it is known or, based on Gespa's assessment, can be assumed that there is a significant risk of manipulation, are not approved by Gespa in the first place. The various stakeholders are obliged to report suspicious cases to Gespa if bets may be placed on the competition in question in Switzerland – or if the competition takes place in Switzerland. Therefore, if stakeholders based in Switzerland report to Gespa, this usually concerns sports and leagues that are considered to be basically integer.

### Where did the reports come from?

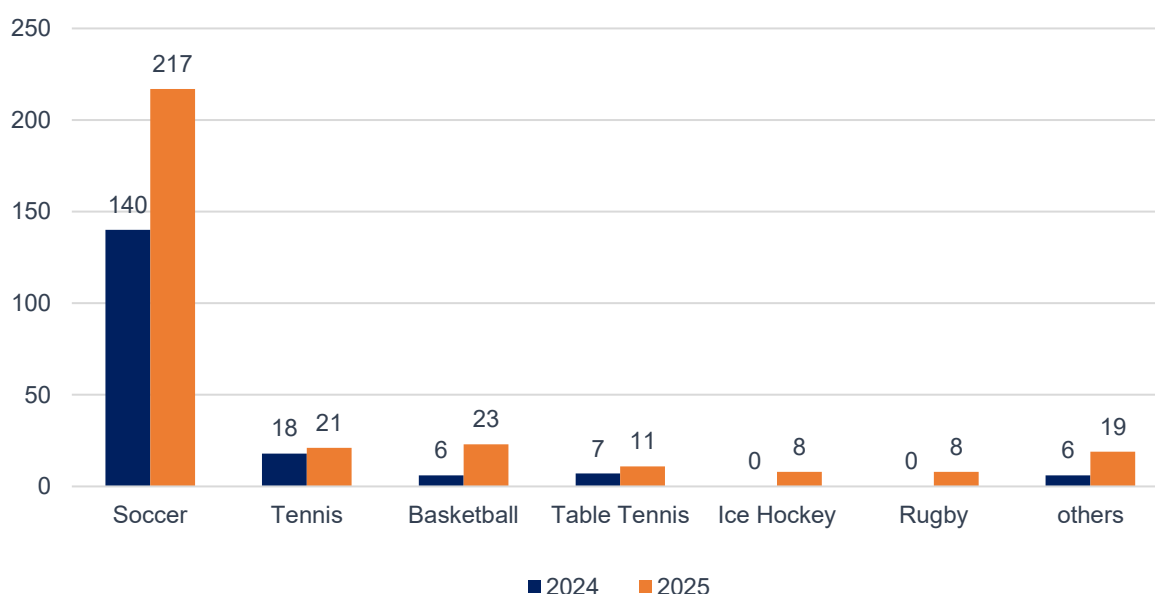


As in the previous years, alerts were received about sporting competitions in several countries on several continents. The number of reports from the Group of Copenhagen, the network of national platforms, rose further in the reporting year and once again accounted for the largest share. This is an encouraging sign of the growing importance of the Macolin architecture.

Further reports were received from ULIS<sup>1</sup> and Sportradar, organisational units specialising in the detection of manipulation cases. These two organisations report consistently and transparently, as far as can be ascertained, and cooperation is constructive. Due to changes in the reporting system (in the past, the fulfilment of the reporting obligation was partly delegated to external organisations), more reports were again received directly from Loterie Romande and Swisslos in the reporting year.

Among the sports organisations, it was once again UEFA that reported suspected cases. Cooperation with UEFA in reporting specific cases was efficient, transparent and fruitful at all times. No reports were received directly this year from the other two members of the "big three" (which we consider to be FIFA, the IOC and UEFA) of the international sports associations based in Switzerland, even though the issue of combating match-fixing is of considerable importance in the public opinion management of both organisations.

### Which sports are affected?



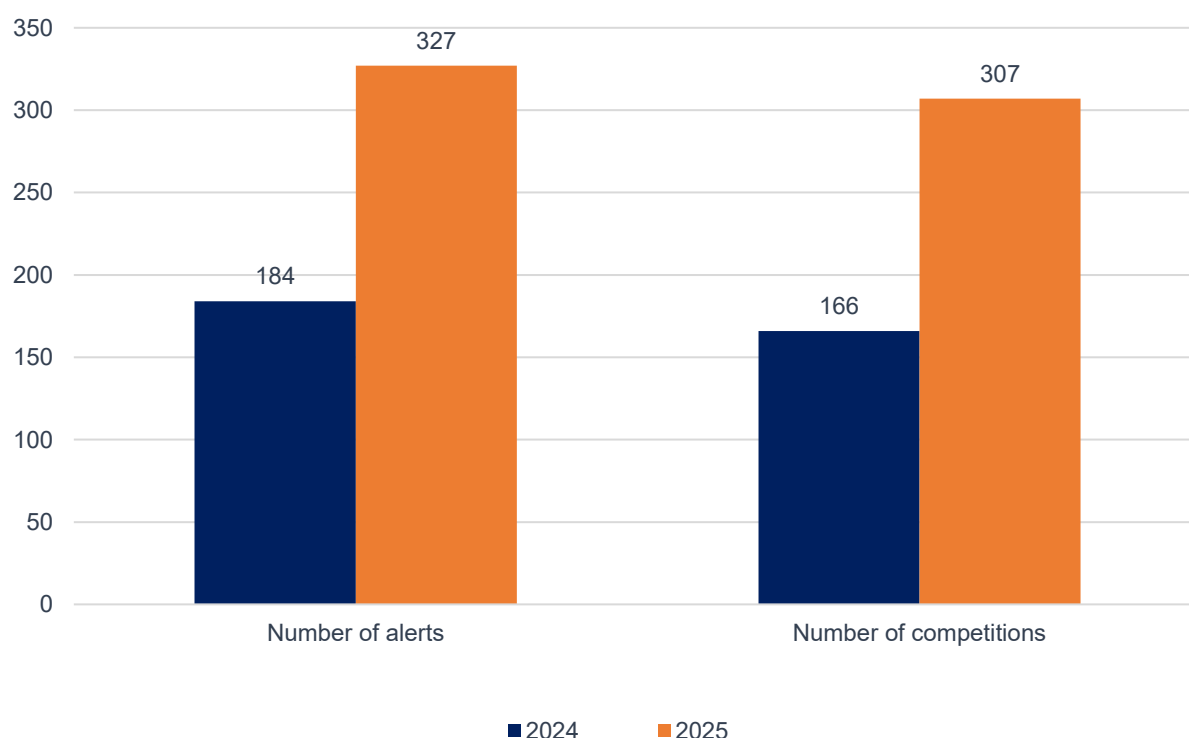
Once again, the reports mainly concerned football, which also generates by far the largest betting volumes. The number of reported football matches has risen again compared to the previous year. On the one hand, this increase is due to technical reasons relating to the reporting system.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> According to statistics, reports through ULIS more than tripled in the reporting year. This increase is due to the fact that the reporting system was temporarily automated (with significantly more sensitive criteria) in cooperation with ULIS. After a test phase lasting several weeks, the system was switched back to the selective reporting procedure, which is significantly more specific. The increase in quantity is therefore only temporary and has only minor material relevance.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1 above.

the increase can also be explained in part by the fact that football continues to be susceptible to manipulation, but at the same time irregularities are being detected more and more frequently and the flow of information between the various players is being continuously expanded and improved. As a result, a higher number of suspected cases are being identified and reported. As in previous years, it should be remembered in this context that changing figures – regardless of whether they are rising or falling – always require careful analysis. An increase in alerts may well be an indication of a rising number of manipulations in a particular area. At the same time, an increase in reports may also be due to intensified detection efforts – which is to be welcomed. Finally, given the manageable number of competitions affected, the factor of chance should not be neglected. The graph above shows how many competitions the reports received by Gespa related to. The number of competitions is lower than the total number of reports from the various actors above, as alerts from two or more sources are received for certain events (see also the graph immediately below under "Summary").

### Summary



Although the increase in reports and reported competitions to Gespa is primarily due to technical reasons (see above), developments in cross-border cooperation are positive. The number of countries that have ratified the Macolin Convention has risen to 15. The increasing dissemination and acceptance of the Convention go hand in hand with growing awareness and increased use of resources in the various countries.

However, the importance of continuing efforts to combat match-fixing was repeatedly highlighted during the reporting year. Betting scandals involving Turkish football, investigations into suspected manipulation in the North American Basketball League NBA, and illegal betting activities surrounding Finnish floorball are just three examples that show that sport and betting markets remain vulnerable to irregularities and undesirable developments.

Even though Gespa has received hardly any reports with a specific reference to Swiss sport in recent years, it plays an important role in the overall system. A large number of international sports organisations and several organisations responsible for monitoring the international sports betting market are based in Switzerland. In combination with the reporting obligation stipulated by federal law, Gespa receives and can forward many suspected cases – information that foreign platforms would not always have access to otherwise and which enables further investigations of suspicious incidents in these countries.

## The situation in Switzerland

As mentioned above, reports with a clear connection to Switzerland remain rare. The reports submitted to Gespa in the reporting year did not reveal any evidence of criminal behaviour in Switzerland. As far as can be ascertained, there were again no convictions for match-fixing in Switzerland in 2025.

Swiss regulations generally allow anonymous betting in the land-based market – for example, when placing bets at a kiosk – and also allow winnings to be paid out anonymously directly at the point of sale if certain thresholds are not reached. These thresholds can be circumvented to a certain extent by means of "splitting", i.e. placing several individual bets with low stakes on a specific event instead of one bet with a correspondingly higher stake. It is therefore often difficult or impossible to trace the stakes in suspicious cases. The two licensed sports betting operators in Switzerland, Loterie Romande and Swisslos, have introduced restrictions in recent years that partially alleviate the problem. However, it has not been eliminated. Since in many cases only very limited usable data is available from the outset, it is all the more important that the two lottery companies pay due attention to any irregularities and report suspicious cases to the Gespa promptly and comprehensively.

When it comes to combating match-fixing, the focus is not only on the secure operation of sports betting, but also on protecting the integrity of sport. Swiss sport is undoubtedly not immune to manipulation either. The criminal provisions, reporting obligations, powers and associated international networking introduced by the Macolin Convention and its implementation in federal law will not be able to prevent all cases of manipulation. When we talk about combating match-fixing in sport, it is therefore not just a question of repression. Efforts around prevention are no less important. In Switzerland, responsibility for this area lies with the Federal Office of Sport (FOSPO). Effective training and awareness-raising can have a direct impact on the behaviour of athletes and other stakeholders in the world of sport – and tackle the problem at its root, at least at the national level.

## Focus topic: Illegal sports betting and match-fixing

When talking about illegal sports betting, the first question that arises is: what exactly is illegal?

Today, there is broad consensus that sports betting is always illegal if it is not explicitly permitted in the consumer's country, i.e. if the betting operator does not have an explicit license to offer sports betting in that country<sup>3</sup>. This means that providers based and licensed in offshore countries are operating illegally if they also accept customers from countries where they do not have a license. The long-held narrative that these providers are not really operating illegally because they have a license in their country of residence has thus been overtaken by reality.

The Macolin Convention devotes an entire article to combating illegal sports betting. This is no coincidence. Illegal operators often evade state controls completely. Or they are subject to the less than trustworthy supervision of regulatory authorities in offshore countries – authorities which, as said, tolerate, among other things, operators offering illegal services in third countries. It stands to reason that this limited or non-existent state control attracts criminal circles and is a breeding ground for money laundering and match-fixing. The less control there is over the operators, the greater the risk that they will collaborate directly with criminal networks or even be part of them – and profit from manipulation through insider knowledge and non-transparent odds setting.

Gespa works with law enforcement agencies to combat illegal land-based gambling in Switzerland. Foreign online sports betting providers operating illegally in Switzerland must expect Gespa to block access to their websites. This so-called access block sends an important signal and provides valuable information to consumers, but it can be circumvented relatively easily using technical means.

Against this background, it is regrettable that even large sports organisations based in Switzerland do not shy away from cooperating with controversial sports betting operators. For example, UEFA has entered into a multi-year sponsorship agreement with bet365, while FIBA has done the same with the sports betting operator 1xbet. Whereas bet365 operates in Switzerland without a license (thus illegal) – and is therefore also on Gespa's official blacklist – 1xbet is associated with illegal activities in several countries, amongst others on the African continent. There are also suspicions that in the past 1xbet has offered bets on thousands of self-organised and sometimes fake amateur games, with minors allegedly participating in the teams. The fact that two large sports organisations, which are heavily involved in the fight against match-fixing in other areas, are entering into such partnerships does not help the credibility of the efforts to combat match-fixing.

Even if such sponsorship agreements may seem undesirable, it should be emphasised that they are not prohibited per se from a gambling law perspective. However, Gespa was in contact with both UEFA and FIBA in this regard during the reporting year and pointed out to them that their cooperation partners do not have Swiss licenses and therefore may not be actively advertised at events in Switzerland.

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<sup>3</sup> This is also the definition in Art. 3 para. 5 lit. a of the Macolin Convention. In this context, reference should also be made to a recent civil law ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) of 15 January 2026 (C-77/24; Wunner). This case concerned a claim by a player for compensation for losses incurred as a result of participating in online gambling offered by a company in an EU country where it did not have the required licenses. The ruling is based on the assumption that the relevant contract is void. In such cases, losses should in principle be recoverable under the tort law of the player's country of habitual residence. It remains to be seen to what extent the ruling (which is of course to be welcomed from a public law and regulatory perspective and is likely to have far-reaching consequences within the EU) will also influence court practice in Switzerland.