

## Weber in Record: The Fight Against Corruption in Sport Is Far From Over

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**PRACTICES** Fraud, Abuse, and Compliance , Financial Services Investigations and Enforcement, Sports Law, White Collar and Investigations

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Haynes Boone Partner [Rich Weber](#), co-chair of the SIGA Permanent Committee on Anti-Corruption and Financial Integrity in Sport, authored an op-ed for SIGA's weekly opinion column in *Record*, Portugal's leading sports newspaper, explaining why vigilance, accountability and integrity remain essential to safeguarding the future of football and sport as a whole as the FIFA World Cup kicks off this week.

Read an excerpt below.

As the FIFA World Cup kicks off once again, the world turns its eyes to the beautiful game. For billions of fans, the tournament represents the pinnacle of sporting competition — unity, passion, and fair play on the grandest stage. For me, the World Cup will always carry a deeper resonance. It was the investigation into corruption at the heart of FIFA, an investigation I had the privilege of leading as Chief of IRS Criminal Investigation, that became one of the defining chapters of my career and, I believe, a watershed moment for the global fight against corruption in sport.

A decade has passed since the first indictments were unsealed in the FIFA Gate case. What began as a painstaking financial investigation — following the money across continents, through shell companies, and into the bank accounts of some of the most powerful figures in international football — ultimately exposed a breathtaking culture of bribery, fraud, and money laundering at the highest levels of the sport's governing bodies. The case demonstrated something that many had long suspected but few had been able to prove: that the corruption was not incidental but systemic, woven into the very fabric of how broadcasting rights were sold, how tournaments were awarded, and how the business of football was conducted.

I am immensely proud of the work that IRS-CI agents and our law enforcement partners accomplished. We proved that no institution is above the law and that financial investigators, armed with determination and the right tools, can unravel even the most sophisticated schemes. The skills honed in pursuing tax fraud, money laundering, and transnational financial crime proved to be exactly what was needed to hold corrupt sports officials accountable.

That is precisely why recent developments — including the dismissal of certain indictments connected to the broader FIFA investigation — are cause for serious reflection. While each legal proceeding has its own facts and procedural history, and the justice system must be respected, we should be clear-eyed about the message that any retreat from accountability can send. When cases that took years to build and involved cooperation from authorities around the world are set aside, it risks signaling to bad actors that patience and delay can outlast the pursuit of justice. It risks telling the next generation of sports administrators that corruption, if sufficiently complex or politically insulated, may ultimately go unpunished. That is a message we cannot afford to send.

The integrity challenges facing football and global sport today remain formidable. Match-fixing, illicit gambling, opaque financial flows, conflicts of interest in governance, and the exploitation of athletes continue to threaten the credibility of competition. New risks have emerged as well — from the intersection of cryptocurrency and sports sponsorship to the governance questions surrounding rapidly expanding competitions and commercial ventures. The landscape has evolved, but the fundamental vulnerability remains the same: wherever vast sums of money flow with insufficient oversight, corruption will follow.

And yet, there has been genuine progress. FIFA itself has undertaken governance reforms. Law enforcement agencies around the world have developed greater expertise in sports-related financial crime. Perhaps most importantly, organizations dedicated to safeguarding the integrity of sport have emerged and matured. Among them, SIGA — the Sport Integrity Global Alliance — deserves particular recognition and gratitude. SIGA has been a tireless advocate for transparency, accountability, and good governance across the sporting world. Its work in establishing universal standards for sport integrity, in convening stakeholders from government, sport, and the private sector, and in keeping the spotlight on these critical issues has been invaluable. I want to thank SIGA and its leadership for their continued commitment to this cause.

To read the full op-ed from *Record*, click [here](#).