



## Game, Set & Match Monthly

*Gaming and Sports Law Newsletter (September 2025)*

## GAMING NEWS UPDATE

### 1. CENTRE TO FRAME RULES FOR ONLINE GAMING ACT

The Central Government informed the Delhi High Court that a regulatory body and rules under the new Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, will soon be established, as the Act has been signed but not yet brought into force. The Solicitor General clarified that no implementation will begin until official notification and the formation of an authority. The court noted that concerns were premature as the authority and rules have not yet been framed and set the next hearing for eight weeks later. Bagheera Carrom (OPC) Pvt. Ltd., an online e-sports platform, has challenged the Act in the Delhi High Court, arguing that it imposes a blanket ban on all money-based online games without distinguishing between skill and chance, despite Carrom being recognized as a skill game by Indian courts. The company contends the law is vague, was enacted without adequate stakeholder consultation, and puts legitimate, skill-based businesses at risk due to overbroad provisions.

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### 2. MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT ISSUES NOTICE TO CENTRE ON BLANKET BAN ON REAL-MONEY GAMING

The Madhya Pradesh High Court issued notice to the Central Government regarding a petition challenging the new law that bans all real-money online games, allowing four weeks for a government response and setting October 28, 2025 as the next hearing date. The petition, filed by Clubboom11 Sports & Entertainment (operator of Boom11), marks the third major legal challenge to the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, following similar challenges in Karnataka and Delhi High Courts. The petitioner argued that fantasy sports have been recognized by multiple courts as legitimate skill-based activity, and contended that a regulatory approach, not prohibition, is appropriate for the sector. The petition also cited the IT Rules, 2021, which acknowledge permissible online games, and asked the court to declare the legislation arbitrary and unconstitutional, specifically calling out violations of Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution regarding penal provisions against "online money gaming," including fantasy sports. Senior Advocate Gopal Jain emphasized the need for stakeholder consultations and a regulatory framework for legitimate skill gaming businesses, highlighting inconsistencies with the Act's stated objectives.

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### 3. GST COUNCIL HIKES TAX ON MONEY GAMING TO 40%

At its 56th meeting, the GST Council raised the tax on casinos, race clubs, lotteries, betting, and online real-money gaming from 28% to 40%, reclassifying these services as "sin goods" under the GST framework, which intensifies the crisis for India's RMG sector. This follows Parliament's passage of the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, banning online money games while exempting esports and casual games. Industry leaders warn that even if legal challenges to PROGA succeed, the 40% GST makes viable operations impossible. The Supreme Court has reserved judgment in a ₹2.5 lakh crore retrospective GST case involving major gaming platforms, but the financial and regulatory "double attack" leaves the sector struggling. Casinos, race clubs, and events like IPL, alongside online platforms, will all be taxed under this new regime. In contrast, recreational games such as chess, carrom, and ludo now face just 5% GST, revealing a policy effort to separate casual gaming from money-based activities. The government's stance, prohibition coupled with steep taxation, signals an uncertain future for an industry once heralded as a digital economy driver.

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### 4. SUPREME COURT TRANSFERS ONLINE GAMING ACT CASES TO ITSELF

On September 8, 2025, the Supreme Court allowed the Centre's petition to transfer three cases challenging the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 (PROGA) pending in the Delhi, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh High Courts to the apex court. Headed by Justice J.B. Pardiwala, the Bench directed the respective High Courts to send the case records to the Supreme Court. The Centre argued that multiple proceedings could create conflicting verdicts and that an authoritative ruling on constitutional questions, such as violations of the right to equality, freedom of expression, and federalism, as well as the distinction between skill and chance games, was necessary to settle the law. PROGA bans online money gaming along with related banking services and advertisements. The Supreme Court has fixed October 7, 2025, for hearing a set of petitions contesting the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025.

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## SPORTS NEWS UPDATE

### 1. SUPREME COURT ORDERS AIFF TO RATIFY NEW CONSTITUTION AND SETS GOVERNANCE REFORMS

The Supreme Court has directed the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to convene a general body meeting and adopt its long-pending draft Constitution within four weeks, warning that any delay could risk international sanctions. Prepared initially by a court-appointed Committee of Administrators in 2022 and later refined under retired Justice L. Nageswara Rao, the document aligns the federation's governance with the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, and FIFA-AFC requirements. A Bench of Justices P. S. Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi confirmed that the current office bearers, headed by AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, will remain in charge until their term ends in 2026, after which fresh elections will be held. Only minimal tweaks are required to bring the draft fully in line with the new national sports law. Key reforms include a 12-year cumulative cap on any individual's tenure, limited to two four-year terms with a mandatory cooling-off period, and an age ceiling of 70 years for candidates. These measures respond to long-standing criticisms that AIFF's earlier statutes violated the 2011 National Sports Code and fell short of FIFA-AFC standards. Last month, FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation jointly warned India of possible suspension if the Constitution was not ratified by October 30, 2025.

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### 2. HIL STEPS IN AFTER UP RUDRAS' SUDDEN EXIT, WAIVES FEES TO EASE FRANCHISES' BURDEN

The Hockey India League (HIL) was thrown into turmoil when UP Rudras abruptly withdrew just two days before the 2026 mini auction, citing financial unsustainability. Their pullout left marquee players such as India vice-captain Hardik Singh and Olympic medallist Lalit Upadhyay without a team and cast doubt over the auction's credibility. Minutes before bidding began, Hockey India announced that its governing council would "adopt" the franchise for the upcoming season, guaranteeing the players' participation and maintaining competitive balance. The council will run the team until a new owner is found, with officials assuring full operational support. In a major relief to all franchises, Hockey India is also expected to waive the steep participation fees, ₹7 crore for men's teams and ₹3 crore

for women's, starting from the league's third edition and continuing for three seasons. This move aims to reduce financial strain after the league's costly restart following a seven-year hiatus.

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### 3. UEFA APPEALS BODY REDUCES SANCTIONS ON FK ARSENAL TIVAT AND DUŠAN PULETIĆ IN MATCH-FIXING CASE

On September 24, 2025, the UEFA Appeals Body issued two decisions in the anti-match-fixing proceedings against Montenegrin club FK Arsenal Tivat and the proceedings against goalkeeper Dušan Puletić. The case arose from the UEFA Conference League first-round qualifier on July 20, 2023, against Alashkert FC (Armenia), where UEFA identified match-fixing concerns. The UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body (CEDB) had originally imposed a € 500,000 fine and a 10-year ban from UEFA competitions, requesting FIFA to extend the sanction worldwide. On appeal, the Appeals Body reduced the club's ban to 7 years (*i.e.*, up to and including the 2031/32 season) and cut the fine to € 400,000 (access the decision [here](#)). Separately, Dušan Puletić, who had received a 10-year suspension from all football-related activities, had his ban annulled after his individual appeal was upheld (access the decision [here](#)).

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### 4. PGTI SUSPENSION ROW: 17 GOLFERS CHALLENGE GOVERNING BODY'S AUTHORITY

The Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) has suspended 17 professional golfers, including top names such as Asian Tour winner and Olympian Gaganjeet Bhullar, Aman Raj, Harendra Gupta, Karandeep Kochhar, and Sachin Baisoya, for participating in the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) Invitational Tournament held at Jaypee Greens, Greater Noida, from September 17 to 19. PGTI rules require prior approval for playing outside its tour, and its five-member Disciplinary Action Committee (DAC) issued show-cause notices alongside interim suspensions. Critics, however, argue that the DAC exceeded its mandate by imposing suspensions before a full inquiry and point to inconsistencies in enforcement. Players note they were not on the entry or waiting list for the simultaneous Chennai Open and therefore believe the action is "unfair and selective." Several suspended golfers, including Ranjeet Singh and Kapil Kumar, have approached the Delhi High Court, with more legal challenges expected. They allege that PGTI members

themselves participated in another unsanctioned event in Pune during a PGTI tournament, highlighting what they see as double standards.

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#### **5. BWF TO TRIAL 25-SECOND TIME CLOCK TO SPEED UP BADMINTON MATCHES**

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) will introduce a 25-second time-clock system to quicken the pace of play, with formal enforcement trials beginning November 18–23, 2025, at select BWF World Tour events and expanding throughout 2026. Approved at the BWF Council meeting on August 29, 2025, the rule requires players to be ready for the next rally within 25 seconds of the previous point's completion. Under the new regulations, the clock starts when the umpire updates the score. The server must be prepared before the 25-second limit ends, and the receiver must be in position when the server is set. Umpires may grant extra time only for special circumstances such as medical needs or significant court maintenance. Players can still towel off, hydrate, or apply cold spray without seeking umpire permission, provided they remain within the time limit. BWF data from hundreds of major matches showed an average 22-second gap between rallies and nine-second rally lengths, leading officials to conclude that 25 seconds balances recovery with continuous play. Preliminary, non-enforced trials have already tested clock placement and visibility for players, coaches, and officials. To refine implementation, BWF has invited national federations to run internal tests and is collecting stakeholder feedback through an online survey closing September 19, 2025. The full rollout in 2026 aims to enhance the sport's pace and spectator appeal while maintaining fairness for athletes.

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#### **6. UNODC UNVEILS ANTI-CORRUPTION PLAN FOR 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP AND LA 2028 OLYMPICS**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has introduced a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy aimed at safeguarding the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games from match-fixing and related criminal activity. Drawing on the G20's High-Level Principles on Tackling Corruption in Sport, the plan urges host nations to review their legal and regulatory systems, empower investigators and prosecutors, and conduct national and local workshops to strengthen enforcement capacity. Highlighting the rising threat of illegal betting,

the UNODC emphasized the need for inter-agency collaboration among national and international anti-corruption bodies and sports organizations. It also called on private-sector betting companies, especially in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, to actively monitor markets for suspicious activity. The International Betting Integrity Agency reported 63 cases of potentially suspicious betting in the first quarter of 2025, a slight quarter-on-quarter dip but an 11% increase year-over-year. Football and tennis accounted for most incidents, with table tennis showing a return to typical levels after a late-2024 spike. This coordinated plan is intended to help prevent match-fixing and illegal betting during these major global sporting events.

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#### **7. CAS REJECTS REQUEST TO SUSPEND CONTESTED DECISION IN APPEAL BY IMANE KHELIF**

On 5 August 2025, Algerian boxer Imane Khelif filed an appeal before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against World Boxing, contesting a decision that barred her from "participating in the Box Cup in Eindhoven, nor in any World Boxing event until she had undergone genetic sex testing" and requesting CAS to declare Imane Khelif eligible to participate in the 2025 World Boxing Championships. As per a media release dated September 1, 2025, CAS rejected her request to suspend the contested decision until the case is heard. This case underscores evolving tensions around eligibility regulations for female athletes and the use of genetic testing in sport. A ruling in Khelif's favour could influence future policy frameworks within boxing and broader gender-access rules in international sport.

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#### **8. UEFA WEIGHS SUSPENSION OF ISRAEL AMID GAZA WAR, FACES GLOBAL POLITICAL CROSSCURRENTS**

European soccer's governing body UEFA is moving toward a potentially historic vote to suspend Israel from international competitions as global criticism of the Gaza war intensifies. According to sources cited by the Associated Press, a majority of UEFA's 20-member executive committee is likely to support a ban, which would bar Israeli national and club teams from tournaments including next year's World Cup qualifiers. Israel's men's side is scheduled to face Norway and Italy in two weeks, but their participation now hangs in the balance.

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