FIFA scandal: The failure of sports journalism

Andreas Selliaas
Session: Focus on journalism: How to raise standards in times of twittering.
Play the Game, 27 October 2015
”It seems to me that many editors – who takes great care about accuracy at the sharp end – don’t care about the soft end – as long as the sports reporters get the football scores correct.”

Andrew Jennings 1998
”In 2010 we found out that very little was written about FIFA”

Jonathan Calvert, The Sunday Times
A few good men

- Investigative journalists and lonesome sports journalists
  - Declan Hill – one of few digging into match-fixing
  - Torgeir Krokfjord/Espen Sandli – Jack Warner ticket scandal 2010
  - Andrew Jennings – excluded from FIFA 2003
  - Jens Weinreich – danger to German sports editors
  - Jonathan Calvert/Heidi Blake – involved through whistleblower

- (David Walsh/Paul Kimmage)

- How many of them sports journalists?
- Play the Game one of few arenas to present their research and give them support
A few good reads

- **FOUL! The Secret World of FIFA: Bribes, Vote Rigging and Ticket Scandals**
  - Andrew Jennings

- **The Ugly Game**
  - Heidi Blake & Jonathan Calvert

[Image of book covers]
Andrew Jennings
THE DIRTY GAME
UNCOVERING THE SCANDAL AT
FIFA
BY THE INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTER WHO BROUGHT
DOWN SEPP BLATTER
What’s the problem?

- FIFA versus journalists?
- PR companies versus journalists?
- Different standards between sports and news desk?

- Moral of sports journalists?
  - ”Everybody knew FIFA was corrupt, but”
  - Little support to those few risking job and network to uncover corruption in FIFA
  - Not worth the risk?
  - Don’t care?

- Relates heavily on external experts
”Find out why the lying bastards are lying!”

Louis Heren, Deputy Editor of The Times of London