

Tennis summary

I have been working in a consultancy capacity for the ATP and WTA since August 2007, primarily analysing Betfair betting accounts.

It is quite clear from the results of my analysis that the ATP, and to a much lesser degree the WTA, have a problem with their players 'throwing' matches and as a result that information is being received by a number of different groups of Betfair customers who then profit from laying (backing to lose) that player or backing the other player to win.

I have only been privy to the betting accounts of Betfair customers but have little doubt that given access to traditional fixed odds bookmakers' accounts I would find similar suspicious betting patterns.

Three main groups of bettors have been identified as of concern:

1. 'Russian'
2. 'Northern Italian'
3. 'Sicilian'

All 3 groups have created suspicious betting patterns on many matches over the past 4 years. They have all backed or laid players at odds far removed from what they actually should have been.

There are also smaller groups of Argentinean and French account holders whose accounts I have yet to thoroughly analyse.

The Russian Group

There are 11 accounts of concern in the Russian group, all based either in Moscow or St Petersburg and linked by computer sharing and betting patterns. The main match of concern is the Davydenko v Vassallo Arguello match of 02/08/07. There are 4 other matches (all ATP) involving Russian players that appear from the betting patterns to be suspicious. All the matches listed below were deemed by the Betfair integrity team to be suspicious

The following matches were all played in 2007 and 3 were 2nd round matches and one was a quarter final:

████████████████████: 5 of the linked Russian accounts backed Davydenko and laid ██████████ to win a total of £47,347.

████████████████████: 3 of the linked accounts won a total of £55,002 by laying ██████████ and backing ██████████; £6,917 of the total profit was won by the accounts backing ██████████ to win 2-0 in sets.

████████████████████: 7 of the linked accounts won a total of £102,892 by laying ██████████ and backing ██████████.

████████████████████: 8 of the accounts laid ██████████ and backed ██████████ for a combined profit of £66,724; £10,587 of the total came from backing ██████████ to win by 2 sets to love.

The accounts primarily bet 'in play' – when the match is in progress.

The WTA match between ██████████ and ██████████ played on ██████████ is also highly suspicious when looked at in detail.

When 3 or more of the Russian accounts trade on the same match there is a pattern of at least one Russian player being involved.

There is no doubt in my mind that these accounts are in receipt of inside information, at the very least, regarding Russian players.

These accounts are unsophisticated in the way they bet on suspect matches as they are happy to take all prices available, regardless of how the match is progressing, and at times it appears that the suspect accounts are almost fighting with each other to get their money down.

As a result of enquiries conducted by Investigators into the Russian Betfair account holders the following was found;

Betfair were not happy with the contact we made and sought to prevent enquiries taking place. Of the account holders who were contacted the enquiries were inconclusive. Some denied knowing others even where there was clear evidence of computer sharing on the betting. This creates even greater suspicion to their activity.

The Northern Italian Group

There are 6 main accounts of concern in this group. The group favour matches involving Argentinean and/or Spanish players. The most profitable match for this group was the Vassallo Arguello v [REDACTED] match from [REDACTED] and there are at least 28 other matches that appear, from the initial betting patterns, to warrant further investigation. Most of the 29 were 1st round matches in non high profile ATP tournaments.

This group usually bet into the set betting markets as well as the straight win market.

There is also a pattern of the player who goes on to win the match losing the 1st set.

The following matches all featured suspicious betting patterns (the player in **bold** being the losing player):

[REDACTED] – Vassallo Arguello v [REDACTED]: profit made by linked Northern Italian accounts - £73,889.

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £61,443

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £54,962

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £54,942

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £35,033

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £32,310

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £32,290

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £30,130

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED] v [REDACTED] - combined profit: £28,352

██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £27,791
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £25,643
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £24,928
██████████ - ██████████ v Vassallo Arguello - combined profit: £24,005
██████████ - ██████████ v Vassallo Arguello: combined profit: £22,441
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £20,556
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £17,796
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £16,737
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £16,719
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £15,932
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £15,887
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £14,980
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £13,889
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £12,726
██████████ - Starace v ██████████ - combined profit: £11,802
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £11,120
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £11,087
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £10,774
██████████ - ██████████ v ██████████ - combined profit: £10,393

There is only one suspect WTA match to add to the list. This was when ██████████ lost to ██████████ on ██████████.

This group of accounts are more sophisticated than the Russian group when it comes to betting on suspect matches but although this group appear to be much more organised than the Russians they still heavily skew the Betfair markets when trading on suspect matches.

The way these accounts traded on some of the suspect matches would strongly suggest that both players in the match were involved in the conspiracy.

The players that stand out in the list and in my opinion should definitely be investigated are:

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The Sicilian Group

There are 10 main accounts of concern in this group all based in and around ██████████ Sicily. The accounts are linked and are believed to have placed bets through computers at the ██████████ where an ATP tournament was held in recent years.

There are 12 matches involving this group that I believe warrant further investigation. The top match in the list being Vassallo Arguello v ██████████, played at the ██████████ on ██████████ where the accounts won a combined total of £257,988. Of the 12 matches, 9 were 1st round, 2 were in the 2nd round and one was a quarter final match.

The betting patterns on some of these matches are nothing short of remarkable, for example when ██████████ beat ██████████ by 3 sets to love on ██████████ the suspect accounts backed the odds of ██████████ to win 3-0 into a shorter price than that of ██████████ just to win the match. This is completely unheard of and is akin to a football team being a shorter price to win a match 2-0 than to just win the match.

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that these Betfair account holders knew the result of this, and many other matches before a ball had been struck.

In the ██████████ v Vassallo and ██████████ v Vassallo matches the accounts appeared to know exactly how games would pan out and backed the winning players at odds so far short of where they should have been that it made the betting markets on the matches completely farcical and obvious to anyone with any betting analysis experience that the result was almost certainly a foregone conclusion.

This group also plays on the set betting markets. There are no suspicious WTA matches in the list of 12.

