

Selvarajan Letchuman pleaded guilty to fixing a match between LionsXII and Sarawak FA to ensure that the Lions won by at least three goals. ST PHOTO: WONG KWAI CHOW



30 months' jail for fixing LionsXII match

He conspired with referee and ex-Malaysian footballer to cheat S'pore Pools of \$20,625

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Court Correspondent

A former project manager offered a bribe to a Malaysian referee to ensure that the LionsXII beat Sarawak FA by at least three goals in a Malay-

sia Super League football match.

A few days later, Selvarajan Letchuman, 52, placed bets at Singapore Pools, which was deceived into paying him a total of \$20,625. He hid the fact that arrangements had been made to fix the match in a conspiracy with part-time Malaysian

referee Shokri Nor, 50, and former Malaysian national footballer Thanasegar S. Sinniah, 40.

Selvarajan was sentenced to 30 months' jail yesterday after he admitted to one charge of corruption and two cheating charges involving \$15,500.

On May 19, 2012, he offered RM15,000 to Shokri to fix the May 22 match to be played in Singapore.

LionsXII won 3-0.

Thanasegar is now serving two

years' jail for his part; Shokri is still at large.

Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Loh Hui Min told the court that on May 18, 2012, Selvarajan was in Singapore when he spoke to Thanasegar in Kedah. They discussed the match, and Selvarajan told Thanasegar he would be in Penang the next day.

In his hotel room in Penang, Selvarajan and Shokri agreed that LionsXII should beat Sarawak FA by three goals or more. Selvarajan said he would be betting on the result of the match and that Shokri would get RM15,000 from the payout of the bets placed. Thanasegar would also get a cut.

On the day of the match, Selvarajan met Thanasegar and a mutual friend at the airport. On their way to Orchard Hotel, Selvarajan stopped at two Singapore Pools outlets to place several bets on the match.

Pressing for a stiff sentence, DPP Nicholas Khoo highlighted several aggravating factors.

He said Selvarajan was heavily involved in planning the match-fixing compared to Thanasegar, the middleman.

He added that this was the first case where match-fixers have been prosecuted for cheating Singapore Pools by using the public institution to monetise their illegal fix.

"A strong message must be sent to the accused and potential match-fixers that Singapore has zero tolerance towards criminals monetising their fixes through our legal betting operator."

Selvarajan, who has two unrelated convictions, had his sentence backdated to Nov 17 last year. He could have been fined up to \$100,000 and jailed for up to five years for corruption; and jailed up to two and a half years and fined for each charge of cheating.