

**IN THE MATTER OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE A WORLD PROFESSIONAL BILLIARDS  
AND SNOOKER ASSOCIATION DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION**

**BEFORE:**

Ian Mill KC (Chair)  
Gordon Mckay  
Grace Cheng

**BETWEEN:**

**WORLD PROFESSIONAL BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER ASSOCIATION  
("WPBSA")**

World Governing Body

- and -

- (1) LIANG WENBO
- (2) LI HANG
- (3) LU NING
- (4) YAN BINGTAO
- (5) ZHAO XINTONG
- (6) ZHAO JIANBO
- (7) CHANG BINGYU
- (8) BAI LANGNING
- (9) CHEN ZIFAN
- (10) ZHANG JIANKANG

Respondents

---

**FINAL DECISION**

---

**A. Introduction**

**THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS**

1. This Final Decision follows the conclusion of the hearing of 27 charges brought by the WPBSA against 10 Chinese snooker players. These charges comprised serious allegations of match fixing and betting on matches on the World Snooker Tour.
2. The proceedings have been conducted in accordance with the WPBSA Conduct Regulations.
3. At the hearing, the WPBSA was represented by Louis Weston of counsel. In relation to the Respondent snooker players:
  - (1) Li Hang (“**Li**”) was represented by Eugene Weng of counsel.
  - (2) Zhao Xintong (“**Zhao XT**”) and Yan Bingtao (“**Yan**”) were represented by Mark Hovell and Phil Hutchinson respectively, both of Mills & Reeve Solicitors. Both players were also represented by Tom Horton of counsel.
  - (3) Lu Ning (“**Lu**”), Zhao Jianbo (“**Zhao JB**”), Chang Bingyu (“**Chang**”), Bai Langning (“**Bai**”), Chen Zifan (“**Chen**”) and Zhang Jiankang (“**Zhang**”) did not have legal representation. They represented themselves in the proceedings.
  - (4) Liang Wenbo (“**Liang**”) chose not to engage with the proceedings and consequently played no part in them.
  - (5) All of the Respondents had available to them assistance from Neil Tomkins, who is the WPBSA players’ association representative.

## **B. Procedural background**

4. Ian Mill KC was appointed to chair these proceedings, alongside Gordon Mackay and Grace Cheng, sitting as members of a WPBSA Disciplinary Commission (“**the Commission**”). There was no objection by any of the Respondents to the constitution of the Commission.
5. On 21 February 2023, the WPBSA issued a total of 31 charges against the Respondents (**the “Charges”**). Four of the Charges were subsequently withdrawn.

6. The hearing took place in London as a hybrid hearing, with the liability phase of the hearing (“**the Liability Hearing**”) being held on 24, 25 and 26 April 2023 and the sanctions phase of the hearing (“**the Sanctions Hearing**”) taking place on 3 May 2023. Save for Zhao XT who attended in person, the participating Respondents attended remotely from mainland China. Interpretation in the Chinese language (Mandarin) was available at both the Liability Hearing and the Sanctions Hearing.
7. At the Liability Hearing, the WPBSA called material evidence from Nigel Mawer (the WPBSA’s Head of Integrity) and from three Chinese snooker players against whom no Charges were brought (Cao Yupeng, Xu Si and Yuan Sijun). Five witnesses were also called to give evidence of irregular betting activities. Each of the Respondents was given the opportunity to cross-examine the WPBSA’s witnesses. Each participating Respondent then gave evidence in his own defence. No Respondent called any additional evidence.
8. Each of the Respondents (including Li, Yan and Zhao XT, who were legally represented) was given an opportunity to make closing submissions.
9. Following the Liability Hearing and in advance of (and for the purposes of) the Sanctions Hearing, the Commission issued its decision on 2 May 2023 on liability in relation to the Charges, with its reasons to follow. This Final Decision contains those reasons, as well as the Commission’s conclusions on sanction.
10. The Commission would like to record its thanks to all those who participated in the proceedings. Their cooperation and assistance with the process were invaluable, given the logistical difficulties involved.

### **C. Factual background**

11. The WPBSA is the world governing body for the sports of snooker and billiards.
12. The Respondents were at the relevant times professional snooker players, save for Zhao JB - an amateur player with the benefit of a wild card which permitted him to compete on the World Snooker Tour. They are all from mainland China. In advance

of, and in anticipation of, the issue of the Charges, they were suspended by the WPBSA from attending at or competing in events on the World Snooker Tour or any other WPBSA sanctioned event. Relevant details about the players include the following:

(1) Liang (d.o.b. – 25 March 1987) is aged 36; he was suspended on 27 October 2022.

(2) Li (d.o.b. – 4 October 1990) is aged 32; he was suspended on 7 December 2022.

(3) Lu (d.o.b. – 1 January 1994) is aged 29; he was suspended on 7 December 2022.

(4) Yan (d.o.b. – 16 February 2000) is aged 23; he was suspended on 12 December 2022.

(5) Zhao XT (d.o.b. – 3 April 1997) is aged 26; he was suspended on 2 January 2023.

(6) Zhao JB (d.o.b. – 27 August 2003) is aged 19; he was suspended on 8 December 2022.

(7) Chang (d.o.b. – 8 August 2002) is aged 20; he was suspended on 8 December 2022.

(8) Bai (d.o.b. – 17 April 2002) is aged 21; he was suspended on 7 December 2022.

(9) Chen (d.o.b. – 17 September 1995) is aged 27; he was suspended on 21 December 2022.

(10) Zhang (d.o.b. – 25 August 1998) is aged 24; he was suspended on 2 January 2023.

13. Save for Zhang who was based in Darlington, the Respondents were at the relevant times based in Sheffield - home to the Ding Junhui Snooker Academy and Victoria's Snooker Academy at which the Respondents trained. The Respondents who were based in Sheffield lived together or in close proximity to each other and were heavily reliant on each other socially and financially.

14. Due in large part to their shared background and culture and the isolation that many of them felt living in the UK due to issues of language, foreign norms and customs and (for part of the time) the impact of Covid-19, many of the Respondents spent a lot of time together - including time spent eating, going out for meals and playing cards. Similarly, when they travelled abroad to play at snooker tournaments, many of them lived together and spent time together. Since he was based in Darlington, Zhang was more physically distanced from the other Chinese players. However, when he visited Sheffield, he would sometimes eat with Li and go to the casino with him.
15. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Respondents were not able to return to their native China. Many of them felt lonely, bored and even more isolated in the UK during this time. Many of them also suffered on a continuing basis from financial difficulties, exacerbated by the pressures of living costs in the UK, the expenses of travelling to compete in snooker tournaments abroad and ill-judged gambling and betting habits. This set of circumstances made the youngsters among the Respondents particularly susceptible to influence and manipulation from the older Chinese snooker players, who took them under their wing. They were accorded respect by the youngsters, who looked to them for advice and guidance.
16. Liang is the oldest of the Respondents. On 31 October 2022, he announced his retirement and withdrawal from all tournaments organised by the WPBSA via a statement published on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform. Evidence was given at the hearing (more specifically considered below) that Liang reached out over time to a large number of Chinese snooker players to solicit or induce them to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker match, that he had made threats to at least two Chinese snooker players, that he was intimidating and that he was in the habit of putting pressure on young players facing financial difficulties to engage in match fixing activities.
17. Li, who is almost 10 years older than some of the other Respondents, was seen by them as an elder brother whom they respected and looked up to for advice and guidance, especially when first arriving in the UK. Li was a good poker player and had a betting account which he used to help the younger players to place bets,

including on snooker games. It was widely known by the Chinese snooker players that they could go to Li if they wished to place a bet on a snooker match or to get involved with match fixing.

18. Lu is a compulsive gambler who has bet on different sporting events, including snooker matches. Whilst living in the UK, Lu spent a lot of time with the other Chinese snooker players and did not have any other friends. He enjoyed a close relationship with Li who was his neighbour in the UK and was also close with Zhao JB. However, he did not have a good relationship with Liang.
19. Yan is a highly rated player, who was ranked 16 in the world at the time of the Liability Hearing. He is a close friend of Zhao XT, with whom he lived when he arrived in the UK. Previously, he also enjoyed a good relationship with Li and Lu and would spend a lot of time eating and playing cards with them. Li talked to Yan about betting and gave him access to sites to enable bets on a wide range of sports.
20. Zhao XT was ranked number 9 in the world at the time of the Liability Hearing. He has a longstanding friendship with Yan, whom he first met in Beijing at the age of 16 and whom he sees as a brother. They lived together in the UK, were both based at Victoria's Snooker Academy and used the same agent. Zhao XT was not approached by either Liang or Li to fix matches. Zhao XT had a two-year history of betting on snooker but did not have a betting account. He would go to Li to place bets.
21. Zhao JB is the youngest of the Respondents and is an amateur player who was offered a wild card to play on the World Snooker Tour. He previously lived with Li and Lu in the UK. He spent a lot of time with the other Chinese players and felt isolated and did not have other friends in the UK.
22. Chang is also one of the younger players and has suffered from financial difficulties. At the time of his investigation interview with Nigel Mawer of the WPBSA on 8 December 2022, he had less than £100 in his bank account and had borrowed money from friends. On 10 December 2022, he published a post on Weibo reporting being threatened by Liang. The post was subsequently taken down by Chang himself.

23. Bai is another of the younger players and, similarly, has suffered from financial difficulties. He would go to the casino with Li, who would lend money to him. At the time of his investigation interview with Mr Mawer on 7 December 2022, he had debts of approximately £15,000.
24. Chen has also suffered from financial difficulties. He did not know Liang and did not have a great relationship with Li.
25. Zhang was, alone among the Respondents, based in Darlington. When he travelled to Sheffield, he would occasionally eat and go to the casino with Li. Zhang used Li's account to bet on football and Li borrowed money from him. Zhang did not and does not have a good relationship with Liang, who owes him money.

#### **D. WPBSA Conduct Regulations**

26. The WPBSA has brought the Charges pursuant to the following provisions of the WPBSA Conduct Regulations:
- (1) *A Member shall not make or cause to be made any statement or commit or cause to be committed any act which in the reasonable view of the WPBSA is likely to bring into disrepute the games of snooker and/or billiards (Part 1, section 1, rule 1.3).*
  - (2) *Each Member shall co-operate with the WPBSA in any investigation carried out by the WPBSA under the provisions of these Rules including (but not limited to) ... attending to answer questions and provide such information at a time and place determined by the WPBSA (Part 1, section 1, rule 4.4.2).*
  - (3) *Each Member shall co-operate with the WPBSA in any investigation carried out by the WPBSA under the provisions of these Rules including (but not limited to) ... providing to the WPBSA upon its request any documents, information or any other material of any nature whatsoever held by the Member (Part 1, section 1, rule 4.4.3).*
  - (4) *Each Member shall co-operate with the WPBSA in any investigation carried out by the WPBSA under the provisions of these Rules including (but not limited to) ... providing the WPBSA with access to all records relating to the alleged breach. This includes, but is not limited to: betting accounts, bank records, telephone records, internet service records,*

*social media accounts, email and other records stored on phones, tablets, electronic devices, computer hard drives or otherwise. To facilitate this, the Member will surrender any such devices for examination by the WPBSA or its representative (Part 1, section 1, rule 4.4.5).*

- (5) *It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to ... place, accept, lay or otherwise make a Bet with any other person in relation to the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA or its affiliates (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.1.1.1).*
- (6) *It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to ... fix or contrive, or to be a party to any effort to fix or contrive, the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.1.2.1).*
- (7) *It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to ... solicit, induce, entice, persuade, encourage or facilitate any Member to breach any of the foregoing provisions of this paragraph 2.1.2 [including to fix or contrive, or to be a party to any effort to fix or contrive, the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match] (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.1.2.4).*
- (8) *It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to ... engage in any other conduct ... that is corrupt or fraudulent, or creates an actual or apparent conflict of interest for the Member, or otherwise risks impairing public confidence in the integrity and/or the honest and orderly conduct of the Tour and/or any Tournament or Match (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.1.4.1).*
- (9) *It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Member to ... authorise, cause, assist, encourage, aid, abet, or cover up, or otherwise to be complicit in any acts or omissions of the type described in paragraphs 2 to 2.1.5, committed by a person connected with the Member (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.1.5.2).*
- (10) *Any attempt or agreement (or intentional appearance of the same) shall be treated for purposes of these Rules as if a breach of the relevant provision(s) had been committed, whether or not such attempt or agreement (or intentional appearance of the same) in fact resulted in such breach (Part 1, section 2, rule 2.2).*



## E. The Decision on Liability

27. The Commission issued its Decision on Liability in relation to the Charges on 2 May 2023<sup>1</sup>. A copy of that Decision is attached at Annex 1 hereto for ease of reference. In the following section of this Final Decision, the Commission sets out its reasoning for its conclusion as to whether in each case the WPBSA proved the Charge.

## F. The Commission's Reasons

28. Save as otherwise specified below, the Respondents' evidence to which we refer in this section of our Decision was: (a) given in the course of interviews conducted by Mr Mawer on behalf of the WPBSA or orally during the hearing, and (b) was accepted by the Commission as truthful evidence. Most, but not all, of those who gave evidence were patently doing their best to assist by providing their genuine recollections of material events.

### (1) Liang Wenbo

29. **Charge 4(a).** Charge 4(a) provided: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played ... [o]n 24 July 2022 between Chen Zifan and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chen Zifan to contrive the outcome of that Match*".

30. Both Li and Chen admitted to having planned to fix or contrive the result of the snooker match played on 24 July 2022 between Chen and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester.

31. Li and Chen were also agreed on the amount that Chen would have received for fixing the match (roughly £5,000 or £6,000 or its RMB equivalent). The case against Liang is that the money would have been paid to Chen by Li on behalf of Liang. This was Chen's evidence and is supported by messages on WeChat between Chen and Li on 18 November 2022 in which Li states: "*It's like this, Fanfan, the money from Old*

---

<sup>1</sup> As noted in that Decision, the WPBSA withdrew Charges 1, 2, 3 and 28.

*Liang was never given. Normally I would have to give you half, but that money from Old Liang, he owes me a lot of money and still hasn't given it back ... Seriously, if I had any, I would transfer it to you, I don't mind at all ...".*

32. In the event, the plan to fix the match was called off one day before the match took place. Nonetheless, the Commission finds that Liang was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the match. The Charge is made out on the basis of Liang's involvement in the plan. Therefore, Charge 4(a) is proven.

33. **Charge 4(b)**. Charge 4(b) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played ... [o]n 9 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chen Zifan to contrive the outcome of that Match".*

34. Both Chen and Li admitted that the result of the snooker match played on 9 August 2022 between Chen and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan was fixed. Chen intentionally lost one frame to Mink Nutcharat.

35. In the course of being interviewed by Mr Mawer, Chen asserted that he was approached by Li about two days before the match and was offered £5,000 or £6,000 to fix the outcome, which was to be paid to him by Li on behalf of Liang. In the event, as Liang became under investigation, Chen had not been paid.

36. Li also admitted in interview that he had received about RMB 10,000 in relation to the fix and that Liang was also involved.

37. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 4(b) is proven.

38. **Charge 4(c)**. Charge 4(c) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played ... [o]n 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Zhao Jianbo to contrive the outcome of that Match".*

39. Zhao JB admitted that the result of the match played on 26 August 2022 between himself and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan was fixed.
40. Zhao JB gave evidence that he was approached by Liang at the Ding Junhui Snooker Academy about 5 to 10 days before the match and was offered £4,000 to fix the match on the basis that Zhao JB would not win more than two frames. The money was paid to him in cash through a friend of Liang following the match.
41. Li's evidence was that: (a) he had accompanied Zhao JB to the match as Zhao JB's English was not very good and also to provide him with moral support, and (b) that Liang had approached him and Lu asking them to persuade Zhao JB to fix the match.
42. Lu's evidence was that he came to suspect, while watching the match live that the match had been fixed. He called Li and asked him if this was so. Li confirmed this and that Liang was involved in the arrangement. At the end of the match, Liang approached Lu with "hush" money, which he gave to Lu in cash. Since Lu owed money to Zhao JB, he paid this to Zhao JB.
43. As a result of the match fixing that took place, profits of £30,000 were generated which were split as follows: £9,000 paid to one of Liang's friends; £5,000 for Liang; £5,000 for Li; £3,000 for Lu and £8,000 for Zhao JB.
44. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Liang fixed or contrived and/or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 4(c) is proven.
45. **Charge 4(d)**. Charge 4(d) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 September 2022 between Zhao Xintong and Bai Langning in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Bai Langning to contrive the outcome of that Match*".
46. Bai admitted to fixing or contriving, and/or being a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of the match played between himself and Zhao XT on 26 September 2022 in the British Open in Milton Keynes.

47. His account in interview was that he had agreed with Liang that he would receive RMB 60,000 for fixing the match. Liang had given him RMB 30,000 in advance. However, before the match began, Li became concerned that irregular betting patterns on the match might be identified and urged Bai to abandon the fix. Bai did so, in agreement with Liang and paid the money back to Liang.
48. Zhao XT's evidence was that, after the match, Bai told him that Liang had approached Bai to fix the result.
49. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Liang was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 4(d) is proven.
50. **Charge 4(e)**. Charge 4(e) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 28 September 2022 between Chang Bingyu and Jamie Jones in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chang Bingyu to contrive the outcome of that Match*"<sup>2</sup>.
51. Chang admitted to fixing or contriving, and/or being a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of the match played between himself and Jamie Jones on 28 September 2022 in the British Open in Milton Keynes.
52. Chang's evidence was that Liang called him at around 8am or 9am on the morning of the match and asked if he wanted to fix the match. He was afraid of Liang and of possible repercussions if he did not go along with him. He therefore went ahead with the fix. Although he was offered RMB 50,000 by Liang, he never received this money.
53. On 10 December 2022, Chang published a post on Weibo, which he subsequently took down, in which he admitted to fixing the match and stated that "*...[o]n the morning of the match day, Liang Wenbo called me with a threatening tone and told me that he had placed a lot of money on his bet without my knowledge, for my match with Jamie Jones that evening. He then asked me to lose 4-1 to my opponent. I was afraid that he had bet so much money and if I refused, he would cause trouble for*

---

<sup>2</sup> The Charge itself referred erroneously to Bai Langning, rather than Chang Bingyu.

*me, so I reluctantly agreed. He said he would give me the money afterward. Due to my fear, I ended up losing the game 4-1 as planned...".*

54. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Liang fixed or contrived the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 4(e) is proven.

55. **Charge 5(a)**. Charge 5(a) provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Yan Bingtao in respect of the Match on 25 November 2021 between Yan Bingtao and Ng On Lee in the UK Championship in York*".

56. In interview, Yan asserted that he had received an anonymous phone call to fix the match from someone who introduced himself on the phone as being a friend of Liang. Yan did not know that person and did not meet with him.

57. The Commission is not satisfied from the evidence available that the person whom Yan spoke with on the telephone was in fact associated with Liang or that, if he was, this contact amounted to an attempt by Liang to fix or contrive the outcome of the specified match. Therefore, Charge 5(a) is not proven.

58. **Charge 5(b)**. Charge 5(b) provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Chen Zifan in respect of the Match on 24 July 2022 between Chen Zifan and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester*".

59. The Commission refers to paragraphs 29 to 32 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang facilitated Chen to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 5(b) is proven.

60. **Charge 5(c)**. Charge 5(c) provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Chen Zifan in respect of the Match on 9 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan*".

61. The Commission refers to paragraphs 33 to 37 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang facilitated Chen to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 5(c) is proven.
62. **Charge 5(d)**. Charge 5(d) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ...Cao Yupeng in respect of the Match on 23 August 2022 between Cao Yupeng and Dylan Emery in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.
63. The WPBSA relied upon the evidence of the Chinese snooker player, Cao Yupeng. His evidence was that Liang contacted him on WeChat the night before the match specified in the Charge, asked if it was convenient to have a conversation and then asked for Cao Yupeng’s WhatsApp number. On WhatsApp, Liang then asked if Cao Yupeng would manipulate the specified match by allowing his opponent to win three frames. He would still be allowed to win the match. Cao Yupeng refused to fix the match and asked Liang not to request that he fix a match again.
64. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited and encouraged Cao Yupeng to fix or contrive the result of the match. Therefore, Charge 5(d) is proven.
65. **Charge 5(e)**. Charge 5(e) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match...Zhao Jianbo in respect of the Match on 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.
66. The Commission refers to paragraphs 38 to 44 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Zhao JB to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 5(e) is proven.
67. **Charge 5(f)**. Charge 5(f) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker

*Match ... Bai Langning in respect of the Match on 26 September 2022 between Zhao Xintong and Bai Langning and in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.*

68. Paragraphs 45 to 49 of this Decision are repeated. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Bai to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 5(f) is proven.

69. **Charge 5(g).** Charge 5(g) provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Lu Ning in respect of the Match on 27 September 2022 between Lu Ning and Zhou Yuelong in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.*

70. In interview, Lu’s evidence was that Liang approached him two weeks before the match specified in the Charge, while they were playing cards, and asked if he wanted to fix that match. The context was that Liang owed Lu money and Lu was seeking payment. Liang said he would protect Lu and make sure everything was fine. However, Lu refused.

71. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited and encouraged Lu to fix or contrive the result of the specified match. Therefore, Charge 5(g) is proven.

72. **Charge 5(h).** Charge 5(h) provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1. to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Chang Binyu in respect of the Match on 28 September 2022 between Chang Bingyu and Jamie Jones in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.*

73. The Commission refers to paragraphs 50 to 54 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Chang to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 5(h) is proven.

74. **Charge 5(i).** Charge 5(i) provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in*

*breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Yuan Sijun in respect of the Match on 29 September 2022 between Yan Sijun (sic) and Anthony Hamilton in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.*

75. The WPBSA relies, in support of this Charge, solely upon the evidence of the Chinese snooker player, Yuan Sijun. The Commission found him to be an unimpressive and unreliable witness generally. Specifically in relation to this Charge, he gave evidence that he was approached by a friend of Liang who asked him in person if he had any interest in match fixing. However, he went on to say that he had only met this person once, he did not know his name and he did not even know if Liang had sent him.

76. The Commission is not satisfied with the evidence of this witness and, accordingly, this Charge is not proven.

77. **Charge 5(j)**. Charge 5(j) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match ... Xu Si in respect of the Match on 29 September 2022 between Xi Si and Judd Trump in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.

78. The WPBSA’s case relied upon evidence from the Chinese snooker player, Xu Si. His evidence was that he received a message from Liang, asking him to add his number so that they could chat on WhatsApp. Liang then said that he wanted Xu Si to lose the match specified in the Charge by a particular margin and offered him RMB 50,000 in that regard, which Xu Si refused. The Commission was also provided with text messages which corroborated Xu Si’s account.

79. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited and encouraged Xu Si to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 5(j) is proven.

80. **Charge 5(k)**. Charge 5(k) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker



*Match ... Cao Yupeng in respect of the Match on 13 October 2022 between Cao Yupeng and Yuan Sijun in the Scottish Open Qualifier in Cannock*'.

81. Cao Yupeng's evidence was that he received a message from Liang on WhatsApp during the morning of the match specified in the Charge. At that time, his phone was in the possession of his wife, who knew about Liang's previous approach (see paragraph 63 above), as Cao Yupeng had told her about it. She became extremely angry when she saw Liang's message and deleted it. She told Liang not to approach them about match fixing again.

82. Both Lu and Li gave evidence corroborating this account.

83. The Commission accordingly finds that Liang solicited Cao Yupeng to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 5(k) is proven.

84. **Charge 6.** Charge 6 provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or Match in events sanctioned by WPBSA on multiple occasions*".

85. The Commission is satisfied there is ample evidence of Liang betting on the result and/or score of matches during the World Snooker Tour. In particular, at the heart of each of the match fixes referred to above, instigated by or at any rate involving Liang, was the intention of at least Liang to make money through bets placed in advance which reflected the agreed fix. Therefore, Charge 6 is proven.

86. **Charge 7(a).** Charge 7(a) provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.4.1. and/or Part 1 rule 1.3., between 1 September 2022 and 31 December 2022 you behaved in conduct that was corrupt and/or risked public confidence in the integrity and/or the honest and orderly conduct of the Tour by... [t]hreatening Chang Bingyu to seek to persuade him not to assist a WPBSA enquiry and to delete messages relating to Betting and Corruption misconduct from his mobile phone*".

87. Liang expressly denied this allegation. In an email sent to the WPBSA on 17 December 2022, Liang asserted that Chang was 'framing' him.

88. On 10 December 2022, Chang published a post on Weibo stating inter alia: “... *WPBSA began a collective investigation of the incident. The day before the investigation interview, Liang had a friend who I did not know come to me. He came in a car and parked downstairs at my house, and then told me to come down to the car to tell me something. When I got there, Liang's cue was in the back seat of the car. Then his friend called Liang and they told me to keep the situation between me and Liang secret at the interview the next day. He said that I should say I had never fixed a match before, or else I would be in trouble...*”. The Commission has been provided with text messages which corroborate Chang's account in this post, which is also consistent with the account given by Chang in interview and in evidence.
89. Chang also gave evidence that Liang had asked him to delete their conversations after the match that he played with Jamie Jones on 28 September 2022, and that Chang had in consequence done so.
90. Therefore, the Commission finds that Charge 7(a) is proven.
91. **Charge 7(b)**. Charge 7(b) provides: “[*t*]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.4.1 and/or Part 1 rule 1.3, between 1 September 2022 and 31 December 2022 you behaved in conduct that was corrupt and/or risked public confidence in the integrity and/or the honest and orderly conduct of the Tour by... [*t*]hreatening Xu Si to seek to persuade him not to assist a WPBSA enquiry”.
92. The WPBSA relied on evidence from Xu Si and also upon text messages that were said to relate to Xu Si's account. Xu Si's evidence was that Liang contacted him on WeChat one or two weeks after he had played Judd Trump on 29 September 2022 and threatened him by using impolite language, shouting at him and telling him to be careful over the next few days.
93. The text messages relied upon by the WPBSA were between Liang and Yuan Sijun (and not between Liang and Xu Si). In any event, they do not show threatening behaviour by Liang towards Xu Si. The Commission also considers that Xu Si's account of Liang's behaviour was vague and insufficiently specific to support the Charge.

94. Accordingly, the Commission is not satisfied that the Charge has been made out and it is, accordingly, not proven.
95. **Charge 8(a)**. Charge 8(a) provides: “*[t]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches ... of the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [d]eleting messages on your mobile phone and/or stored in the cloud*”.
96. The Commission refers to the evidence summarised in paragraphs 89 and 99 of this Decision.
97. The Commission accepts that the inevitable inference to be drawn from this evidence is that Liang would also have deleted messages on his own mobile phone and/or stored in the cloud – since otherwise the purpose behind the instructions to others would have been unfulfilled. Therefore, Charge 8(a) is proven.
98. **Charge 8(b)**. Charge 8(b) provides: “*[t]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches ... of the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [r]equesting that other Members deleted their messages on their mobile phones and/or stored in the cloud namely Bai Langning and Chang Bingyu*”.
99. Bai’s evidence was that Liang told him to delete all messages on his phone. As to Chang, the Commission refers to paragraphs 88 and 89 above.
100. Charge 8(b) is accordingly proven.
101. **Charge 9**. Charge 9 provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 1 rule 4.4.2 and 4.4.5 you have failed to attend three appointments for interview and/or provide such information as has been required by the WPBSA in its email to you via WPBSA Players of 16 December 2022 and letters dated 29 November 2022 and 4 January 2023*”.

102. On 16 December 2022, the WPBSA sent a letter to Liang confirming that he had previously agreed to attend a meeting with Mr Mawer on 7 December 2022 at 8am UK time to be interviewed as part of the WPBSA enquiry but had failed to attend. Liang was requested to attend an interview with Mr Mawer on 23 December 2022 at 11am UK time instead and was asked to confirm his attendance at this meeting by 19 December 2022.
103. On 4 January 2023, the WPBSA sent another letter to Liang confirming that Liang had refused to attend the interview scheduled for 23 December 2022. Liang was advised that the WPBSA still required him to attend an interview and was requested to provide dates when he would attend. In the same letter, Liang was also requested to provide the WPBSA within 14 days with bank statements showing all transactions from his China and UK bank accounts for the past 18 months.
104. Liang did not provide the WPBSA with any dates for a third interview. The Commission further finds that Liang did not provide the WPBSA with his bank statements as requested in the WPBSA's letter of 4 January 2023.
105. Accordingly, Charge 9 is proven.

## **(2) Li Hang**

106. Before turning to consider the specific Charges, there are two matters which require to be addressed:
- (1) The first of these is our view of Li as a witness. In short, we consider that he gave unsatisfactory evidence. In marked contrast to the other participating Respondents, Li did not give direct answers to questions and was evasive in his responses. In consequence, where Li's evidence differed from the evidence of other participating Respondents, we have accepted the evidence given by those others.
  - (2) The second is the criticism made of the WPBSA by Li's legal representative, Mr Weng. Mr Weng was critical of aspects of the WPBSA's interview process. He also saw fit to suggest, avowedly without any supporting evidence, that the WPBSA might have been guilty of discriminatory conduct, targeting players of

Chinese nationality. As to the first of these points, each of the other participating Respondents gave evidence which expressly confirmed or was consistent with the answers given by them during the interview process. The second point should not have been made and is not addressed further in this Decision.

107. **Charge 11(a)**. Charge 11(a) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 23 July 2022 between Lu Ning and Robert Milkins in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Lu Ning to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
108. Lu admitted to fixing or contriving, or being a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of the match specified in the Charge.
109. Li, however, denied the Charge against him in relation to this match, claiming that only Lu was involved. He accepted that he knew that the match was fixed, but he did not bet on, or profit from, the match.
110. Lu gave corroborative evidence - he had only told Li that the match fix had occurred after the event and Li did not provide any prior encouragement.
111. On the basis of this evidence, the Commission is not satisfied that the Charge has been made out. Accordingly, Charge 11(a) is not proven.
112. **Charge 11(b)**. Charge 11(b) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 24 July 2022 between Chen Zifan and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chen Zifan to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
113. The Commission refers to paragraphs 29 to 32 above. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li was a party to an agreement to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 11(b) is proven.
114. **Charge 11(c)**. Charge 11(c) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result

*or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 9 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chen Zifan to contrive the outcome of that Match”.*

115. The Commission refers to paragraphs 33 to 36 above. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li fixed or contrived the result of the match specified in the Charge. Therefore, Charge 11(c) is proven.
116. **Charge 11(d)**. Charge 11(d) provides: “*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 23 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Ng On Yee in the in the (sic) Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Chen Zifan to contrive the outcome of that Match”.*
117. Chen admitted to fixing or contriving, or being a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of the match specified in the Charge. Chen gave evidence that he had agreed with Li to fix the match but in the event did not go through with it. We were shown text messages between Li and Chen on the day of the match in which Li says to Chen “*Fan Fan, your handicap is not set yet... Let her win a frame after you lead 3-0. I don’t know if we can bet or not, because we won’t be notified. We will bet if we can. And if there’s no 3:0 lead, forget about it OK? We’ll see how much we can bet and share a little...*”, to which Chen replies “*OK*” at 0827 hours. At 0958 hours, Chen again sends a message to Li saying “*Let’s just forget about it this time. I will play fair. Maybe next time*”.
118. Li denied this charge, albeit that orally he admitted to having had discussions with Chen.
119. The Commission is satisfied, based on the evidence summarised in paragraph 117 above, that Li was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the specified match. Charge 11(d) is accordingly proven.
120. **Charge 11(e)**. Charge 11(e) provides: “*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo*

*and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Zhao Jianbo to contrive the outcome of that Match”.*

121. The Commission refers to paragraphs 38 to 42 of this Decision above. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Charge 11(e) is accordingly proven.
122. **Charge 11(f).** Charge 11(f) provides: “*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 September 2022 between Zhao Xintong and Bai Langning in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Bai Langning to contrive the outcome of that Match”.*
123. The Commission refers to paragraphs 45 to 48 above. Bai’s evidence was, additionally, that Liang and Li had both wanted the match to be fixed but were working independently of each other. Whilst Li wanted the match fixing to be carried out safely, Liang’s focus was on getting as much money as possible.
124. Li denied participating in fixing the specified match fixing. His evidence was that he had told Bai not to do it.
125. Bai’s evidence is corroborated by written messages between Liang and Li during which they discussed fixing the match concerned. There is also a voice message from Li to Bai on the day of the match in which Li says: “*You make it clear to Tong that you were framed. Liang bought that game for you and I asked you about that and you confessed to me. So that’s why I gave you the idea that you make it to two otherwise you will be banned. You make it clear to Tong and he will understand what it means... Just tell Tong this: you don’t need to win this game. If the game score is 3:0 or 3:1, you must make it to 2 and you should be fine. Then you give up the game spontaneously. If you naturally reach 2 then you just act normally and play the game. Just tell him that... You need to settle with Tong so you can make it to two”.*
126. The Commission accepts Bai’s evidence and finds that Li agreed with Bai to fix or contrive the result of the match specified in the Charge. Charge 11(f) is accordingly proven.

127. **Charge 11(g)**. Charge 11(g) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 28 September 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Andy Lee in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Yan Bingtao to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
128. Yan’s evidence was that Li had asked him to fix the match specified in the Charge, but that he (Yan) had refused to do so.
129. In interview, Li asserted that Yan and he had discussed fixing the match in question, with Yan winning but with a score of 4-2. He asserted that Yan had approached him, since Li was also placing bets on other sports. In oral evidence, Li claimed that they were not able to go through with the planned fix since Li himself had a match to play at the time when betting would have been occurring.
130. The Commission finds that Li did approach Yan to fix the specified match. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of that match. Charge 11(g) is therefore proven.
131. **Charge 11(h)**. Charge 11(h) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 29 September 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Jordan Brown in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Yan Bingtao to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
132. Yan admitted to fixing or contriving, or being a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of the match specified in the Charge.
133. Yan’s evidence was that Li had talked to him repeatedly during the British Open. The match referred to in the previous Charge had been his first in that tournament. The match against Jordan Brown was his third match in that tournament. Li told him that he had already bet on the match. Yan had a close relationship with Li and considered it offensive in Chinese culture to repeatedly turn down a close friend. Li convinced him it would be safe to lose the match against Jordan Brown deliberately. He therefore decided to agree to the proposed match fix.



134. Li's evidence was that Yan had approached him, since his money was held by his wife and he needed money. He had tried to stop Yan from match fixing but had failed and, therefore, had reluctantly helped Yan to bet on his match. Li relies on a voice note from Yan in which Yan said that he had approached Li. However, in his investigation interview, Yan denied that that was the case; he had said what Li wanted to hear since he was scared of him and did not want to get on the wrong side of him.
135. The Commission accepts the evidence of Yan. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li agreed with Yan to fix or contrive the result of the match in question. Charge 11(h) is therefore proven.
136. **Charge 12(a)**. Charge 12(a) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match...Lu Ning in respect of a (sic) the Match on 23 July 2022 between Lu Ning and Robert Milkins in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Lu Ning to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
137. The Commission refers to paragraphs 108 to 111 above. Accordingly, Charge 12(a) is not proven.
138. **Charge 12(b)**. Charge 12(b) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match...Chen Zifan in respect of the Match on 24 July 2022 between Chen Zifan and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester”.
139. The Commission refers to paragraphs 29 to 32 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Li solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Chen to fix the match. Charge 12(b) is therefore proven.
140. **Charge 12(c)**. Charge 12(c) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker

*Match... Chen Zifan in respect of the Match on 9 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan".*

141. The Commission refers to paragraphs 33 to 36 above. Accordingly, the Commission finds that Li solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Chen to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(c) is therefore proven.
142. **Charge 12(d)**. Charge 12(d) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Chen Zifan in respect of the Match on 23 August 2022 between Chen Zifan and Ng On Yee in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.
143. The Commission refers to paragraphs 117 to 118 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Li encouraged Chen to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(d) is therefore proven.
144. **Charge 12(e)**. Charge 12(e) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Yuan Sijun in respect of the Match on 25 August 2022 between Yan (sic) Sijun and Jimmy White in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.
145. Li denied this Charge. His case was that it was Yuan Sijun who had approached him; they had a discussion about whether Yuan Sijun could bet on the match but that did not occur.
146. Yuan Sijun’s evidence was that he had discussed the match with Li but their discussions had not concerned the result of the match. Li had advised him not to try to manipulate the outcome. In oral evidence, Yuan Sijun was adamant that he was the one who had approached Li; Li had not approached him.
147. The Commission refers to its conclusions as to Yuan Sijun as a witness, summarised in paragraph 75 above. Even if he had given evidence supportive of the Charge (which he did not), the Commission would not have regarded that as sufficient, absent corroboration. Accordingly, this Charge is not proven.

148. **Charge 12(f)**. Charge 12(f) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match...Zhao Jianbo in respect of the Match on 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.
149. The Commission refers to paragraphs 38 to 42 of this Decision above. Accordingly, we find that Li persuaded or at any rate encouraged Zhao JB to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(f) is therefore proven.
150. **Charge 12(g)**. Charge 12(g) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match...Bai Langning in respect of the Match on 26 September 2022 between Zhao Xintong and Bai Langning and in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.
151. The Commission refers to paragraphs 123 to 126 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Li solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Bai to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(g) is therefore proven.
152. **Charge 12(h)**. Charge 12(h) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Yan Bingtao in respect of the Match on 28 September 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Andy Lee in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.
153. The Commission refers to paragraphs 128 to 130 above. The Commission accordingly finds that Li solicited, induced, enticed and encouraged Yan to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(h) is therefore proven.
154. **Charge 12(i)**. Charge 12(i) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Yan Bingtao in respect of the Match on 29 September 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Jordan Brown in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.

155. The Commission refers to paragraphs 132 to 135 above and accordingly finds that Li solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded and encouraged Yan to fix the match specified in the Charge. Charge 12(i) is therefore proven.
156. **Charge 12(j)**. Charge 12(j) provides: “[*that in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Yan Bingtao in respect of a Match in the 2021 Home Nations Series between 10 October 2021 and 6 March 2022 in which Yan Bingtao played*”.
157. Li denied this Charge.
158. The WPBSA relied on the evidence of Yan. In his investigation interview, Yan recalled having been approached by Li ‘[a] *long, long time ago*’. He was unable to recall the competition or the date. He thought it was one of the Opens but could not remember if it was the English Open, the Welsh Open, the Scottish Open or the Northern Ireland Open. He was not able to remember who his opponent was, save that he was someone who was weak.
159. Yan’s recollection was, in our view, too vague and unspecific to support the Charge. The WPBSA was not able to point to any other evidence. Accordingly, Charge 12(j) is not proven.
160. **Charge 13**. Charge 13 provides: “[*that in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions*”.
161. The Commission is satisfied there is ample evidence (including in the evidence referred to above in this Decision) of Li betting on the result and/or score of matches during the World Snooker Tour. It was well known by the other participating Respondents that Li had a betting account and that he would place bets for younger players. Moreover, Li admitted to betting on multiple occasions. Therefore, Charge 13 is proven.

162. **Charge 14(a)**. Charge 14(a) provides: “[*f*]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches of ... the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [*d*]eleting messages on your mobile phone and/or stored in the cloud”.
163. In his response to this Charge, Li admitted to deleting messages with Liang regarding match fixing two to three months before his investigation interview. In oral evidence, Li confirmed that he had deleted some messages but denied deliberately covering up or interfering with the investigation.
164. The Commission is satisfied that Li’s deletion of messages on his mobile phone once he was aware of the WPBSA enquiry amounted to an attempt to cover up breaches of the Betting Rules by him and others. Accordingly, Charge 14(a) is proven.
165. **Charge 14(b)**. Charge 14(b) provides: “[*f*]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches of the breaches of the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [*r*]equesting that other Members deleted their messages on their mobile phones and/or stored in the cloud namely Yuan Sijun, Yan Bingtao, Bai Langning”.
166. Li gave particularly unsatisfactory evidence on this issue. He denied the charge on multiple occasions, including in oral evidence when he stated that he was 100% certain that he did not ask anyone to delete any messages and that they wanted to do so themselves. However, he also gave evidence admitting to having told other players to delete messages on their phones about match fixing.
167. As to the three players identified in the Charge:
- (1) In oral evidence, Yuan Sijun admitted to deleting messages but denied that Li had asked him to do so. The Commission, as previously stated, was unimpressed by this witness and would not have found his evidence (if uncorroborated) sufficient to prove the Charge, if it had been supportive of the Charge (which it was not).

(2) Yan's evidence was that Li asked him to delete the messages between them since *'it was very nerve-wracking situation'*.

(3) Bai also confirmed that Li had asked him to delete messages.

168. The Commission accordingly finds that Li requested Yan and Bai to delete messages on their mobile phones. Charge 14(b) is therefore proven to that extent (but not in respect of Yuan Sijun).

169. **Charge 15.** Charge 15 provides: "*[t]hat in breach of Part 1 rule 4.4.3 you have failed to provide to the WPBSA the details required by the WPBSA in respect of betting accounts operated by you in its letters to you of 4 January 2023*".

170. In a letter dated 4 January 2023, the WPBSA requested Li to provide access within seven days to his betting accounts.

171. Various usernames and passwords of his betting accounts were provided by Li in his Statement of Defence dated 19 March 2023. In cross examination, Li was asked about those passwords, which the WPBSA claimed that it had not been able to use to log into his accounts.

172. On the basis of the evidence relied upon by the WPBSA, the Commission is not satisfied that Li did not provide the WPBSA with the information requested. Charge 15 is therefore not proven.

### **(3) Lu Ning**

173. **Charge 16(a).** Charge 16(a) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 13 December 2014 between yourself and Oliver Lines in European Tour Event 5 in Lisbon by contriving or fixing the outcome of that Match*".

174. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 16(a) proven.

175. **Charge 16(b).** Charge 16(b) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result*

*or score of a snooker Match played... [b]y Lu Ning in the 2014/2015 season other than against Oliver Lines”.*

176. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 16(b) proven.
177. **Charge 16(c).** Charge 16(c) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [b]y Lu Ning in the 2014/2015 season other than against Oliver Lines and in the foregoing charge”.
178. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 16(c) proven.
179. **Charge 16(d).** Charge 16(d) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 23 July 2022 between yourself and Robert Milkins in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester by contriving or fixing the outcome of that Match”.
180. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 16(d) proven.
181. **Charge 16(e).** Charge 16(e) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Zhao Jianbo to contrive the outcome of that Match”.
182. Lu denied this charge.
183. The Commission refers to paragraphs 39 to 42 above. We found Lu to be an impressive witness, upon whose evidence we could place reliance. The Commission finds accordingly that Lu did not fix or contrive the match specified in the Charge, nor was he a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result of that match.
184. Charge 16(e) is therefore not proven.
185. **Charge 16(f).** Charge 16(f) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or

*score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 28 September 2022 between Chang Bingyu and Jamie Jones in the British Open in Milton Keynes by agreeing or making an effort to agree with [Chang Bingyu] to contrive the outcome of that Match”.*

186. The Commission refers to paragraphs 51 to 54 above.

187. Lu denied this Charge. Specifically, Lu denied fixing the match specified in the Charge. Chang had called him on the morning of the match. Since he did not have any cash on him, Lu had helped Chang to get a taxi to get to the match. Chang then asked Lu to help him place a bet but Lu refused when he realised that Chang wanted him to help him bet on his own match. In oral evidence, Chang confirmed that Lu did not initiate the idea of fixing the match.

188. Accordingly, Charge 16(f) is not proven.

189. **Charge 17(a)**. Charge 17(a) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Zhao Jianbo in respect of the Match on 26 August 2022 between Zhao Jianbo and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.

190. Lu denied this Charge.

191. The Commission refers to paragraphs 182 to 184 above. Accordingly, Charge 17(a) is not proven.

192. **Charge 17(b)**. Charge 17(b) provides: “[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.4. you solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated the Member named below, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match... Chang Binyu (sic) in respect of the Match on 28 September 2022 between Chang Bingyu and Jamie Jones in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.

193. Lu denied this Charge.

194. The Commission refers to paragraphs 186 to 188 above. Accordingly, Charge 17(b) is not proven.



195. **Charge 18.** Charge 18 provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions*”.
196. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 18 proven.
197. **Charge 19(a).** Charge 19(a) provides: “*[t]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches of the breaches (sic) of the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [d]eleting messages on your mobile phone and/or stored in the cloud*”.
198. Lu admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 19(a) proven.
199. **Charge 19(b).** Charge 19(b) provides: “*[t]hat on or after 1 September 2022 and once you were aware of the WBSA (sic) enquiry, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.2 and 2.1.5.2 you covered up, agreed or attempted to cover up the breaches of the breaches (sic) of the Betting Rules committed by you and others, by... [r]equesting that other Members deleted their messages on their mobile phones and/or stored in the cloud namely Yuan Sijun*”.
200. Lu denied this Charge. His evidence was that he had never requested other players to delete messages on their phones; there was no point in doing so since conversations could be restored, and he did not think there was any need to hide anything.
201. The WPBSA relied on the evidence of Yuan Sijun. In interview, Yuan Sijun stated that Li and Lu asked him to delete conversations with them. However, in oral evidence, Yuan Sijun directly contradicted himself. As previously made clear, we did not find him a credible witness.
202. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 19(b) not proven.

#### **(4) Yan Bingtao**

203. **Charge 20(a)**. Charge 20(a) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 29 August 2016 between yourself and Dominic Dale in the Paul Hunter Classic in Fürth, Germany and in which you contrived or fixed the outcome of that Match”.
204. Yan admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 20(a) proven.
205. **Charge 20(b)**. Charge 20(b) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 3 March 2022 between yourself and Ricky Walden in the Welsh Open in Newport by contriving or fixing the outcome of that Match”.
206. Yan admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 20(b) proven.
207. **Charge 20(c)**. Charge 20(c) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 11 March 2022 between yourself and Oliver Lines in the Turkish Masters in Antalya by contriving or fixing the outcome of that Match”.
208. Yan admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 20(c) proven.
209. **Charge 20(d)**. Charge 20(d) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 29 September 2022 between yourself and Jordan Brown in the British Open in Milton Keynes by contriving or fixing the outcome of that Match”.
210. Yan admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 20(d) proven.
211. **Charge 21**. Charge 21 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions”.

212. Yan admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 21 proven.

#### **(5) Zhao Xintong**

213. **Charge 22(a)**. Charge 22(a) (as amended) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 3 March 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Ricky Walden in the Welsh Open in Newport by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Yan Bingtao to contrive the outcome of that Match”.

214. Zhao XT admitted this Charge, as amended. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 22(a) proven.

215. **Charge 22(b)**. Charge 22(b) (as amended) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 11 March 2022 between Yan Bingtao and Oliver Lines in the Turkish Open in Antalya by agreeing or making an effort to agree with Yan Bingtao to contrive the outcome of that Match”.

216. Zhao XT admitted this Charge, as amended. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 22(b) proven.

217. **Charge 23**. Charge 23 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions”.

218. Zhao XT admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 23 proven.

#### **(6) Zhao Jianbo**

219. **Charge 24**. Charge 24 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 August 2022 between yourself and Aaron Hill in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan”.

220. Zhao JB admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 24 proven.

221. **Charge 25.** Charge 25 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on an occasion”.

222. Zhao JB admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 25 proven.

### **(7) Chang Bingyu**

223. **Charge 26.** Charge 26 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 28 September 2022 between yourself and Jamie Jones in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.

224. Chang admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 26 proven.

### **(8) Bai Langning**

225. **Charge 27.** Charge 27 provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 26 September 2022 between yourself and Zhao Xintong in the British Open in Milton Keynes”.

226. Bai admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 27 proven.

### **(9) Chen Zifan**

227. **Charge 29(a).** Charge 29(a) provides: “[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 24 July 2022 between yourself and Aaron Hill in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester”.

228. Chen denied this Charge. He did not challenge the Commission's findings as set out in paragraphs 30 to 32 above. His argument was one of construction of the Charge, on the basis that the plan to fix the match specified in the Charge was not in the event executed.

229. The Commission's conclusion on this issue is once a plan had been made to fix the match, then a participant in that plan would be a party to an *effort* to fix or contrive the result or score of that match irrespective of whether it was executed.

230. Charge 29(a) is accordingly proven.

231. **Charge 29(b)**. Charge 29(b) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 9 August 2022 between yourself and Mink Nutcharat in the British Open Qualifier in Wigan*".

232. Chen admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 29(b) proven.

233. **Charge 29(c)**. Charge 29(c) provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 23 August 2022 between yourself and Ng On Yee in the Northern Ireland Qualifier in Wigan*".

234. Chen denied this Charge on the same basis as set out in paragraph 228 above.

235. The Commission refers to paragraphs 117 to 119 above.

236. For the reason set out in paragraph 229 above, Charge 29(c) is therefore proven.

#### **(10) Zhang Jiankang**

237. **Charge 30**. Charge 30 provides: "*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rule 2.1.2.1 and rule 2.2 you fixed or contrived, or were a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker Match played... [o]n 22 July 2022 between yourself and Jack Liwoski in the European Masters Qualifier in Leicester*".

238. Zhang admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 30 proven.
239. **Charge 31(a)**. Charge 31(a) provides: “*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions including... [a] Match played between Ronnie O’Sullivan and Fan Zhengyi*”.
240. Zhang admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 31(a) proven.
241. **Charge 31(b)**. Charge 31(b) provides: “*[t]hat, in breach of Part 2 rules 2.1.1.1 between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022 you bet on the result score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or March (sic) in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions including... [a]nother Match in which Fan Zhengyi played*”.
242. Zhang admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 31(b) proven.
243. **Charge 32**. Charge 32 provides: “*[t]hat in breach of Part 1 rule 4.4.5 you have failed to provide such information as has been required by the WPBSA in its interview with you dated 2 January 2023 and by email dated 7 February 2023*”.
244. Zhang admitted this Charge. Accordingly, the Commission finds Charge 32 proven.

## **G. Sanctions**

245. Before turning to consider the appropriate sanctions to impose on each of the Respondents, there are a number of points of general application that require to be addressed.

### **(A) The length of a ban for match fixing**

246. There can be no doubt that, in a sufficiently serious case of match fixing, a lifetime

ban might be a proportionate sanction. Such an outcome would be consistent with a series of CAS decisions: e.g. *Kollerer v. ATP, et al.* (CAS 2011/A/2490), *Savic v. PTIOs* (CAS 2011/A/2621), and *Jakupovic v. TIU, et al.* (CAS 2016/A/4388).

247. The Panel in *Kollerer* determined that a lifetime ban was not only appropriate, but “*imperative*” for a professional tennis player who invited other tennis players to fix matches. The Panel emphasized the importance of such a ban in sending a zero-tolerance message to the tennis community regarding match fixing:

*“After careful deliberation, this Panel sees no option other than to confirm the lifetime ban imposed by the AHO. As explained in detail by the Governing Bodies, the sport of tennis is extremely vulnerable to corruption as a match-fixer only needs to corrupt one player (rather than a full team). It is therefore imperative that, once a Player gets caught, the Governing Bodies send out a clear signal to the entire tennis community that such actions are not tolerated (paragraph 66).”*

248. The observation of the Panel in *Kollerer* about the vulnerability of the sport of tennis to corruption has equal application in the context of the sport of snooker.

249. Subsequent CAS Panels in *Savic* (at 44, 45) and *Jakupovic* (at 96-99) endorsed the approach adopted in *Kollerer*.

250. Nonetheless, there will be a wide variety of circumstances pertaining to particular match fixing offences which clearly militate against the imposition of such a length of ban. So much is clear from past snooker Disciplinary Commission cases to which we have been referred, including the following:

- (1) **Stephen Lee (September 2013).** Lee was found to have breached the WPBSA’s rules against match fixing, in respect of seven matches all of which had taken place in 2008 or 2009. In the circumstances of that case, a 12-year suspension was imposed.

- (2) **John Sutton (May 2015).** Sutton was found to have engaged in an arrangement to fix the outcome of his match (or aspects of it) on one occasion in September 2014. At the time of the *Sutton* decision, the WPBSA Conduct Regulations included a Rule 1.2, which provided for a presumption of a lifetime ban – a presumption which was only displaced in exceptional circumstances. A 6-year ban was imposed, in circumstances where the player was found to have been subjected to coercion and pressure.
- (3) **Leo Fernandez (July 2016).** Fernandez was charged with manipulating, on one occasion, an aspect of a match that he played in April 2016. At the time of the decision, the WPBSA Conduct Regulations continued to include Rule 1.2. A 15-month ban was imposed which was calculated from the date of interim suspension. The willingness of Fernandez to assist with, and participate in, initiatives to stamp out corruption was regarded as giving rise to exceptional mitigating circumstances.

251. The presumption to which we have referred is no longer included within the WPBSA Conduct Regulations. The Commission regards this as a positive development. There should not be such a fetter upon the discretion of a decision-maker required to determine so significant an outcome.
252. More recent cases have referred to the decision in *Sutton* as setting a benchmark against which the circumstances in those subsequent cases could be assessed for the purposes of determining the length of the ban. We do not propose to follow this course, given that the 6-year ban in *Sutton* was arrived at by applying the exceptional circumstances provision under the presumptive lifetime ban regime. Had the Commission in that case had an unfettered discretion to determine the proportionate sanction, the result might have been different. In particular, in the absence of the presumption there might have been a shorter ban than that which was in fact imposed.
253. The WPBSA submitted that we should impose a longer ban than the previous snooker cases would suggest should be the case, on the basis that the extent of the wrongdoing evident in the present case demonstrates that the sanctions in



previous cases had proved to be an insufficient deterrent.

254. We do not accept that submission. The present case involved a close-knit group of Respondent players (including predominantly young professionals) who spoke the same language and shared a similar culture; the relevant events occurred largely during the Covid-19 pandemic when they were not able to travel back home to mainland China and felt isolated in the UK. We do not see in the present case any evidence of a wider culture of wrongdoing in snooker.

**(B) Credit for early admissions**

255. Most of the Respondent players materially assisted the WPBSA's investigation and the progress of these proceedings by admitting the misconduct with which they were charged at the earliest opportunity. This is important mitigation for those who so acted, and the question arises as to the extent of the credit that we should apply in consequence. The WPBSA's submission was that a one-third reduction in the length of the otherwise applicable ban was appropriate. We accept that submission, not only because it strikes us as achieving the correct overall outcome but because that is consistent with the extent of the credit given in similar circumstances in previous cases to which we have been referred. Counsel for Yan and Zhao XT invited us to apply a larger discount in relation to those Respondents. This submission appeared to be unsupported by any substantive justification. We have therefore declined that invitation.

**(C) Suspension**

256. In some of the previous snooker cases, the Disciplinary Commission suspended in part the operation of the ban. The WPBSA urged us not to adopt that approach, on the basis that: (a) only special circumstances would justify such a suspension, and (b) no such circumstances existed in the present case. We accept both limbs of that submission. That said, should any of the Respondent players consider at a future date that there has been a material change of circumstances such as would warrant the introduction of a suspension, then he would be at liberty to apply to this or another Commission in this respect.

## **(D) Individual Sanctions**

257. We now turn to consider the appropriate sanctions for each of the Respondent players, in the light of our factual findings and the points of general application in respect of which we have set out our views above. We start with the most important aspect - the period of their respective bans.

### **(1) Liang**

258. We have made the following findings against Liang:

- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on five occasions.
- (2) He solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated other snooker players (including some of the Respondent players) to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker match on nine occasions.
- (3) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.
- (4) He used threatening behaviour towards Chang with a view to persuading him not to assist a WPBSA inquiry and to delete messages relevant to that inquiry from his mobile phone.
- (5) Once he had become aware of the WPBSA inquiry, he deleted messages from his mobile phone and requested that Bai and Chang do the same.
- (6) He failed to attend appointments for interview with the WPBSA and to provide requested information.

259. We regard the conduct of Liang as particularly disgraceful. The pressure placed by him, a senior professional, on a large number of Chinese players, many of them young and impressionable, the threatening behaviour he displayed towards Chang and his failure to co-operate with the WPBSA inquiry clearly warrant and justify a sanction being imposed of the highest order.

260. We remind ourselves of the CAS jurisprudence which we have discussed in paragraphs 246 to 249 above. Accordingly, we have no hesitation in imposing a lifetime ban on Liang, thus permanently precluding him from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA.

## **(2) Li**

261. We have made the following findings against Li:

- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on seven occasions.
- (2) He solicited, induced, enticed, persuaded, encouraged or facilitated other snooker players (including some of the Respondent players) to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker match on seven occasions.
- (3) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.
- (4) Once he had become aware of the WPBSA inquiry, he deleted messages relevant to that inquiry from his mobile phone and requested that Yan and Bai do the same.

262. Like in the case of Liang, we regard the conduct of Li as utterly unacceptable. He used his influence as an older and established player to befriend younger impressionable Chinese players who were far from home and thereby encouraged and enticed them into match fixing for his own financial ends.

263. This conduct warrants and justifies a sanction being imposed of the highest order, as in the case of Liang. Therefore, a lifetime ban is also imposed on Li, thus permanently precluding him from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA.

### **(3) Lu**

264. We have made the following findings against Lu:

- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on four occasions.
- (2) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.
- (3) Once he became aware of the WPBSA inquiry, he deleted messages relevant to that inquiry from his mobile phone.

265. In respect of his involvement in match fixing, we note that: (a) he admitted each of the Charges against him; (b) apart from the Charge in relation to the match between Lu and Oliver Lines on 13 December 2014 (Charge 16(a)), the Charges in relation to matches that Lu fixed in the 2014/15 season were able to be brought as the result of information that Li volunteered to the WPBSA during his interview with Mr Mawer; (c) Lu was aged around 20 at the time of those early fixes; (d) his only other involvement in match fixing, in July 2022, took place during the Covid-19 pandemic when many of the Chinese players, including Lu, found themselves in financially difficult circumstances.

266. We have further found that when Lu was approached by Liang to fix a match on 27 September 2022, he declined to do so. Lu has shown genuine remorse for his actions. He admitted at the earliest opportunity all the Charges against him that have been proven.

267. In those circumstances, we consider that: (a) a ban of 7 years for match fixing is, subject to discount, appropriate; (b) a ban of 6 months is, subject to discount, to be imposed consecutively for each of the betting and concealment offences, and (c) Lu is entitled to a one-third discount to be applied to the total ban, otherwise applicable, of 8 years.

268. Therefore, a total ban of 5 years 4 months is imposed on Lu, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 6 April 2028. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was temporarily suspended by the WPBSA - 7 December 2022.

#### **(4) Yan**

269. We have made the following findings against Yan:

- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on four occasions.
- (2) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.

270. We take into account the following matters: (a) that at the time of the match between Yan and Dominic Dale on 29 August 2016 (Charge 20(a)) which was fixed, Yan was only 16 years old; (b) in respect of the fixing of the match between Yan and Jordan Brown on 29 September 2022, the mitigating aspects described in paragraphs 133 to 135 above, and (c) Yan's admission at the earliest opportunity of the Charges against him.

271. In those circumstances, we consider that: (a) a ban of 7 years for match fixing is, subject to discount, appropriate; (b) a ban of 6 months is, subject to discount, to be imposed consecutively for the betting offence, and (c) Yan is entitled to a one-third discount to be applied to the total ban, otherwise applicable, of 7 years and 6 months.

272. Therefore, a total ban of 5 years is imposed on Yan, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 11 December 2027. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 12 December 2022.

## **(5) Zhao XT**

273. We have made the following findings against Zhao XT:

- (1) He was a party to an effort to fix or contrive the result or score of a snooker match on two occasions.
- (2) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.

274. Zhao XT, alone among the Respondent players, did not himself fix any match. His involvement was limited to placing bets for Yan through Li, whereby he became liable as a party to the two match fixes. He is good friends with Yan, whom he has known since the age of 16. He attempted to dissuade Yan from match fixing on both occasions with no success. He felt he had no other option but to place the bets for Yan, as Yan had requested. He has shown genuine remorse for his actions.

275. The WPBSA submitted that the involvement of Zhao XT was significant and serious, because without it, Yan would not have proceeded with the fixes. We do not consider that the WPBSA has established this on the facts and accordingly reject that submission.

276. We consider a temporary ban of 1 year for each match fixing involvement by Zhao XT to be appropriate and 6 months for his betting offence, such periods to run consecutively. Zhao XT admitted the Charges against him at the earliest opportunity and a one-third discount is to be applied accordingly to the total otherwise applicable ban of 2 years 6 months. A ban of 1 year 8 months is accordingly imposed on Zhao XT, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 1 September 2024. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 2 January 2023.

## **(6) Zhao JB**

277. We have made the following findings against Zhao JB:

- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on one occasion.
- (2) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on multiple occasions.

278. We note that at the time that his match fixing took place, Zhao JB was aged 18 only. He was young and impressionable and under the influence of Liang and Li. He was also suffering financial difficulties, he was lonely and has shown genuine remorse for his actions. He admitted his offences at the earliest possible opportunity.

279. In the above circumstances, we consider that, subject to discount, a ban of 3 years 6 months for the match fixing offence would be appropriate. A ban of 6 months is imposed for Zhao JB's betting offence, which we have decided (in the particular circumstances set out above) should run concurrently with his match fixing ban, not consecutively. Zhao JB is entitled to have a one-third discount applied to the period of the otherwise applicable ban. A ban of 2 years 4 months is accordingly imposed on Zhao JB, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 7 April 2025. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 8 December 2022.

## **(7) Chang**

280. We have found that Chang fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on one occasion.

281. We note that, at the time that his match fixing took place, Chang was aged 20. He was young and impressionable and under the influence of Liang, of whom he was scared. Chang has given evidence that he thought Liang would take action against him if he did not comply with Liang's demands. We accept that, in all probability, Chang would not have offended absent that element of threat. He was also suffering

financial difficulties at the time, he has shown genuine remorse for his actions and he admitted his offence at the earliest opportunity. There is no suggestion that Chang committed any betting offence.

282. We consider that, in the above circumstances, a ban of 3 years for match fixing would be appropriate, subject to discount. Chang is entitled to have a one-third discount applied to the period of the otherwise applicable ban. A ban of 2 years is accordingly imposed on Chang, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 7 December 2024. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA - 8 December 2022.

#### **(8) Bai**

283. We have found that Bai fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on one occasion.

284. We note that at the time that the match fixing took place, Bai was aged 20. He too was young and impressionable and under the influence of Liang and Li. He was also suffering financial difficulties, has shown genuine remorse for his actions and admitted his offence at the earliest opportunity. There is no suggestion that Bai committed any betting offence.

285. We consider that, in the above circumstances, a ban of 4 years for match fixing would be appropriate, subject to discount. Bai is entitled to have a one-third discount applied to the period of the otherwise applicable ban. A ban of 2 years 8 months is accordingly imposed on Bai, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 6 August 2025. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 7 December 2022.

#### **(9) Chen**



286. We have found that Chen fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on three occasions.
287. We note that two of the fixes were planned but ultimately cancelled. We accept the WPBSA's submission that this should not result in a substantially reduced sanction, but consider that this should not be ignored altogether. Chen too was suffering financial difficulties at the relevant times.
288. We consider in the above circumstances that a ban of 7 years 6 months would be appropriate, subject to discount. Chen admitted the facts set out in the Charges against him at the earliest opportunity and a one-third discount is to be applied accordingly. We do not consider it relevant in this context that he argued unsuccessfully that he had not committed an offence in circumstances where the intended fix did not proceed. A ban of 5 years is accordingly imposed on Chen, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 20 December 2027. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 21 December 2022.

#### **(10) Zhang**

289. We have made the following findings against Zhang:
- (1) He fixed or contrived, or was a party to an effort to fix or contrive, the result or score of a snooker match on one occasion.
  - (2) Between 1 September 2019 and 31 December 2022, he bet on the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Tour or a match in events sanctioned by the WPBSA on two occasions.
  - (3) He failed to provide the WPBSA with requested information.
290. We consider that, subject to discount, consecutive bans of 4 years for the match fixing offence, 2 months for the betting offence and 3 months for the failure to provide information would be appropriate. Zhang admitted the Charges at the earliest

opportunity and a one-third discount is to be applied to the total ban of 4 years 5 months. A ban of 2 years 11 months is accordingly imposed on Zhang, who is therefore precluded from participating in any way (including but not limited to playing, coaching, officiating, management, organisation, administration and/or promotion) in activities or events recognised or organised by the WPBSA until 1 December 2025. This period is calculated as from the date on which he was suspended by the WPBSA – 2 January 2023.

## **H. Costs**

291. Under Rule 14.1, the Commission has a discretion to order that the Respondent players pay all or some of the costs of these proceedings. Rule 14.5 reiterates the importance of the regulatory function of the WPBSA and requires that to be considered.

292. The WPBSA has served a costs schedule. Unsurprisingly, given the significant number of players and Charges involved, its costs of the investigation and of the proceedings have been considerable. In addition, there are the costs of the Commission. The total sum is £146,888.30.

293. Findings have been made against each of the Respondents. In principle they should between them be responsible for the costs referred to above. However, all the Respondents save for Liang and Li assisted the process by their admissions and this has to be reflected in the allocation of liability for the costs incurred.

294. We accordingly order that the Respondent players should pay a contribution towards those costs, as follows:

(1) Liang – £43,000

(2) Li – £43,000

(3) Lu – £7,500

(4) Yan – £7,500

(5) Zhao XT – £7,500

(6) Zhao JB – £7,500

(7) Chang – £7,500

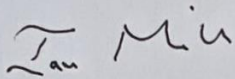
(8) Bai – £7,500

(9) Chen – £7,500

(10) Zhang – £7,500

## **I. Appeals**

295. Pursuant to Part 2 rule 10.1, this decision may be appealed to the Appeals Committee. In accordance with rule 10.4, the time for filing an appeal to the Appeals Committee is 14 days from the date of the final decision.



**Ian Mill KC**

**On behalf of the Disciplinary Commission**

**06 June 2023**

1 Paternoster Lane, St Paul's London EC4M 7BQ [resolve@sportresolutions.com](mailto:resolve@sportresolutions.com) 020 7036 1966

Company no: 03351039 Limited by guarantee in England and Wales  
Sport Resolutions is the trading name of Sports Dispute Resolution Panel Limited

[www.sportresolutions.com](http://www.sportresolutions.com)



**ENABLING FAIR PLAY**

## Annex 1

**IN THE MATTER OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE A WPBSA DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION  
("the Commission")**

**IAN MILL KC (Chair)  
GORDON MCKAY  
GRACE CHENG**

**Dated 2 May 2023**

**B E T W E E N:**

**WORLD PROFESSIONAL BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER ASSOCIATION ("the WPBSA")**

**- and -**

- (1) LIANG WENBO**
- (2) LI HANG**
- (3) LU NING**
- (4) YAN BINGTAO**
- (5) ZHAO XINTONG**
- (6) ZHAO JIANBO**
- (7) CHANG BINGYU**
- (8) BAI LANGNING**
- (9) CHEN ZIFAN**
- (10) ZHANG JIANKANG**

**Respondents**

---

**DECISION ON EACH OF THE CHARGES**

---

**THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS**

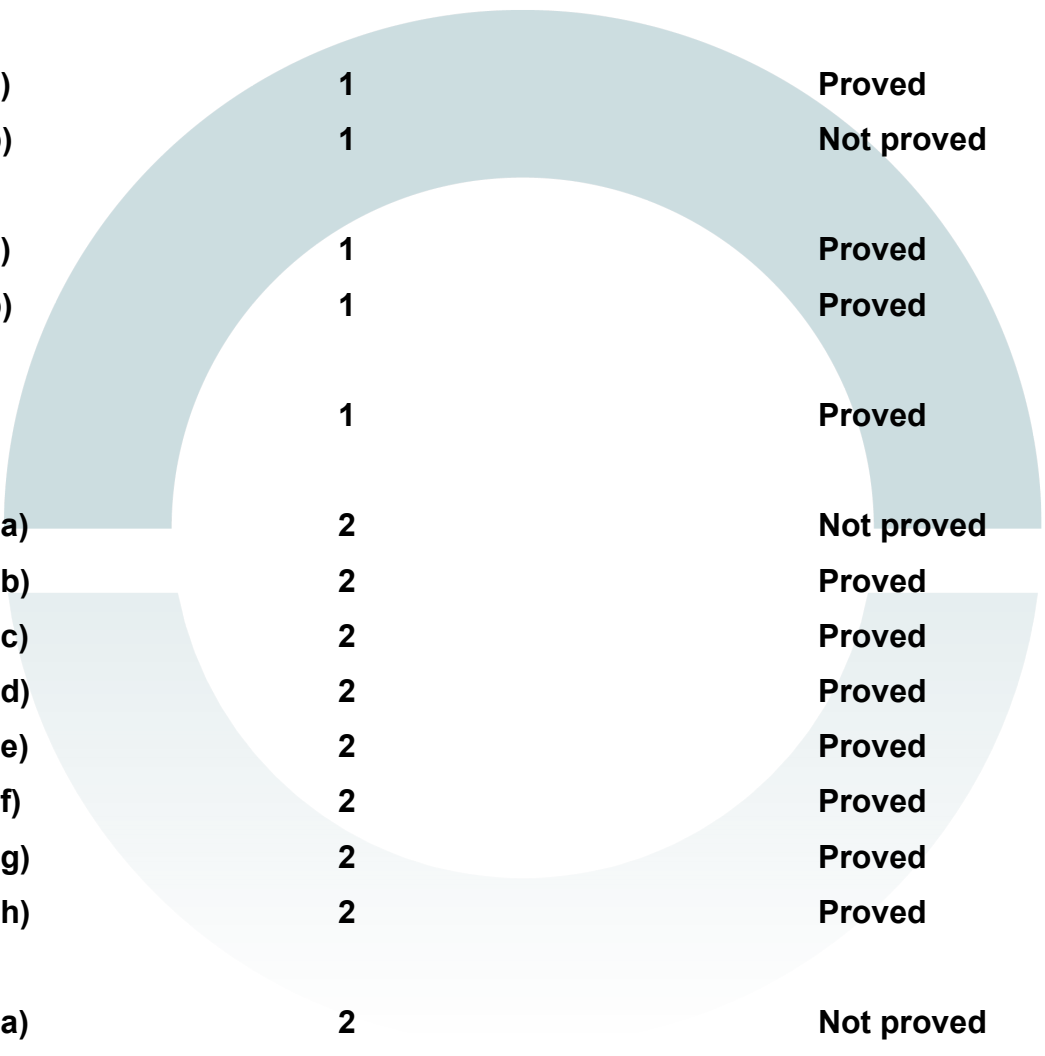
1. On 21 February 2023, the WPBSA issued Notices of a total of 31 Charges against the above 10 Respondents<sup>1</sup>. Thereafter, the WPBSA withdrew four of those Charges<sup>2</sup>. Evidence was given and received, and submissions were made, in relation to the remaining 27 Charges at a hybrid hearing before the Commission on 24, 25 and 26 April 2023. The Commission has reached its decision, in relation to each such Charge, as to whether the WPBSA has proved its case against the relevant Respondent (either on the basis of an admission by the relevant Respondent or on the basis of the evidence adduced). In due course, the Commission will deliver its written reasons for those decisions. In the meantime, and in advance of the parties' submissions on sanction which will be made and received at a further hybrid hearing, on 3 May 2023, the Commission is publishing (to the parties only) this summary Decision, for the purposes of assisting the parties in making those submissions.

2. The decisions made by the Commission are as follows:

<b>Charge number</b>	<b>Respondent number</b>	<b>Proved/Not Proved</b>
<b>4(a)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>4(b)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>4(c)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>4(d)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>4(e)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(a)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>5(b)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(c)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(d)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(e)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(f)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(g)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>

<sup>1</sup> Numbered 1-9 and 11-32. There is no Charge number 10.

<sup>2</sup> Those numbered 1, 2, 3 and 28.



<b>5(h)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(i)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>5(j)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>5(k)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>7(a)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>7(b)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>8(a)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>8(b)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(a)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>11(b)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(c)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(d)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(e)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(f)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(g)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>11(h)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(a)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>12(b)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(c)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(d)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(e)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>12(f)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(g)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(h)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>

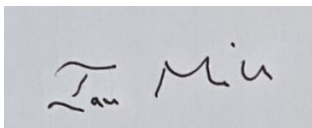
<b>12(i)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>12(j)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>14(a)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>14(b)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Proved<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>16(a)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>16(b)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>16(c)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>16(d)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>16(e)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>16(f)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>17(a)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>17(b)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>19(a)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>19(b)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Not proved</b>
<b>20(a)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>20(b)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>20(c)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>20(d)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proved</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Proved</b>

---

<sup>3</sup> Proved in respect of Yan Bingtao and Bai Langning only.



22(a) <sup>4</sup>	5	Proved
22(b) <sup>5</sup>	5	Proved
23	5	Proved
24	6	Proved
25	6	Proved
26	7	Proved
27	8	Proved
29(a)	9	Proved
29(b)	9	Proved
29(c)	9	Proved
30	10	Proved
31(a)	10	Proved
31(b)	10	Proved
32	10	Proved



**Ian Mill KC (Chair)**

**On behalf of the Disciplinary Committee**

<sup>4</sup> Amended after issue. Proved as amended.

<sup>5</sup> Footnote 4 above is repeated.



1 Paternoster Lane, St Paul's London EC4M 7BQ [resolve@sportresolutions.com](mailto:resolve@sportresolutions.com) 020 7036 1966

Company no: 03351039 Limited by guarantee in England and Wales  
Sport Resolutions is the trading name of Sports Dispute Resolution Panel Limited

[www.sportresolutions.com](http://www.sportresolutions.com)



ENABLING FAIR PLAY