

FIFA bans Warner for life

Four years after stepping down in disgrace, former FIFA vice president Jack Warner was banned from football for life yesterday accused of repeated acts of bribery related to World Cup-bidding votes.

Warner, a long-time ally of President Sepp Blatter, who was allowed to resign from FIFA in 2011 with his "presumption of innocence" maintained, is currently fighting extradition from Trinidad and Tobago on US charges of racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering. The decision by the FIFA ethics committee shows that judge Hans-Joachim Eckert will pursue officials long after they have left their jobs. A more pressing case for the ethics body is an investigation into Blatter, who was interrogated by Swiss prosecutors on Friday, in part, over allegations he undervalued the awarding of World Cup television rights to Warner. Blatter, who denies wrongdoing, is at risk of being suspended by his own organisation. Warner's lifetime FIFA ban stems from Eckert's report on the bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. "I do not believe, however, that this will serve as the distraction to the FIFA's present problems as the FIFA wishes it to be," Warner said. "Given what is happening in Zurich with Sepp Blatter, I guess that there is no such thing as a coincidence." As leader of the CONCACAF region, from 1990-2011, Warner gained considerable influence in World Cup votes by the FIFA executive committee and now the extent of his wrongdoing has been reinforced by Eckert. "Mr Warner was found to have committed many and various acts of misconduct, continuously and repeatedly. during his time as an official in different high-ranking and influential positions at FIFA and CONCACAF," the FIFA statement said. "In his positions as a football official, he was a key player in schemes involving the offer, acceptance and receipt of undisclosed and illegal payments, as well as other money-making schemes." "In his positions as a football official, he was a key player in schemes involving the offer, acceptance and receipt of undisclosed and illegal payments."