

JD Sports slapped with £1.5 million fine for price fixing

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[JD Sports](#) has been slapped with a £1.5 million fine from the UK competition watchdog after being accused of price-fixing [Rangers](#) FC clothing at its stores.

The [Competition and Markets Authority](#) said JD agreed to raise the prices of Rangers replica kits after reaching “an understanding” with Rangers and the shirt’s manufacturers, Elite Sports, between September 2018 and July 2019.

Elite Sports was also handed a fine of £459,000, while Rangers was fined £225,000. The CMA said the penalties had been discounted to reflect the fact that all three organisations had admitted to acting illegally, which sped up its investigation.

Michael Grenfell, Executive Director of Enforcement at the CMA, said: “At a time when many people are worried about the rising cost of living, it is important that football fans are able to benefit from competitively priced merchandise. Instead, Elite, JD Sports and, to some extent, Rangers, worked together to keep prices high.”

“Today’s decision sends a clear message to football clubs and other businesses that illegal anti-competitive collusion will not be tolerated.”

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It's the latest in a series of embarrassing debacles for JD Sports. Executive chairman Peter Cowgill quit the company in May after it was [fined £4.3 million by the CMA](#) over reports of covert meetings between Cowgill and Footasylum boss Barry Bown while the watchdog was investigating a proposed merger between the two companies. The CMA had issued an interim order while investigating the merger, prohibiting members of the two companies from exchanging commercial information. Earlier this month, the company announced the creation of a new "Disclosure Committee" in a bid to rebuild trust with shareholders and regulators.

In a statement, the sports retailer said: "JD has co-operated fully with the CMA throughout this investigation, including taking swift steps to apply for leniency and agreeing to settle the investigation."

JD said it would not be appealing against the penalty.