

Third umpire should perform role of appeal judge

TIME and again the cricket public has watched in horror as TV replays show a ground umpire's decision upholding or dismissing an appeal against a batsman to be in grave error.

But the hardest thing has been to see an injustice on TV replays and then to note in disbelief that the technology that detected the umpire's error is not being used to correct the error. Patently wrong umpiring decisions are allowed to stand because of the absence of a mechanism in the laws

of cricket to overturn them.

In the judicial system a dissatisfied litigant has the right of appeal against the decision of the judge to a higher court or a full bench. A similar principle of appeal should find expression in cricket rules and allow a dissatisfied captain to appeal against a ground umpire's decision to the third umpire.

Greater justice in umpiring decisions has been secured through the participation of the third umpire who, upon the request of a ground umpire, can

determine appeals for run-outs and stumpings.

This process should be extended, with the third umpire being required to perform an appellate role in respect to doubtful catches behind or in front of the wicket and run-outs and stumpings (which are not referred to the third umpire by a ground umpire).

Any objection that a two-tier appeal process would unduly protract or destabilise the game can be met by restricting the number of appeals against the

ground umpires' decisions to five per side per innings. This way some of the bad ground umpiring decisions, particularly in respect to appeals for "caught behind the wicket", could be corrected.

The use of the proposed appeal mechanism may also contribute in some way towards containing the unnecessary tension that flares from time to time between cricket-playing nations because of poor umpiring decisions.

SENAKA WEERARATNA
Malak, NT

Australian

MARCH 25,
1997

MAY 2, 1997

SPORT 49

to tighten safety

ccelerator



profound loss



tive, self-defensive culture that encourages introspection. All that matters in the pit lane is winning the next race and sustaining the small talk of petty politics. Mosley's obligation, to consider the wider ramifications of modifying the sport as a global commodity in a digital age, is, by its very nature, confrontational.

He envisages Formula One moving away from its European power base, with venues such as Malaysia, South Korea, China and India opening up unexplored audiences. His search for the right niche in the marketplace involves promoting perceived vices, such as the lack of overtaking manoeuvres on modern tracks, as potential virtues.

"It is true that it is too difficult to overtake, but that doesn't mean that it should be too frequent an experience," he said. "There is now a sense of significance when someone overtakes, a real sense of spectacle."

'A driver sees it as

SPORTS LETTERS

Limited appeal for fielders

From Mr Senaka Weeraratna

Sir, Time and again the cricket public has watched in horror as television replays show an umpire's decision, upholding or dismissing an appeal against a batsman, to be in grave error. But the hardest thing has been to see an injustice on television replays, and then to note that the technology that detected the umpire's error is not being used to correct the error. Patently wrong umpiring decisions are allowed to stand because of the absence of a mechanism in the laws of cricket to overturn them.

In the judicial system, a dissatisfied litigant has the right of appeal against a decision of a judge, to a higher court or a full bench. Likewise, a similar principle of appeal should find expression in cricket laws and allow a dissatisfied captain of a team to appeal against a ground umpire's decision to the third umpire.

Greater justice in umpiring decisions has been secured because of the participation of the third umpire, who, upon the request of a ground um-

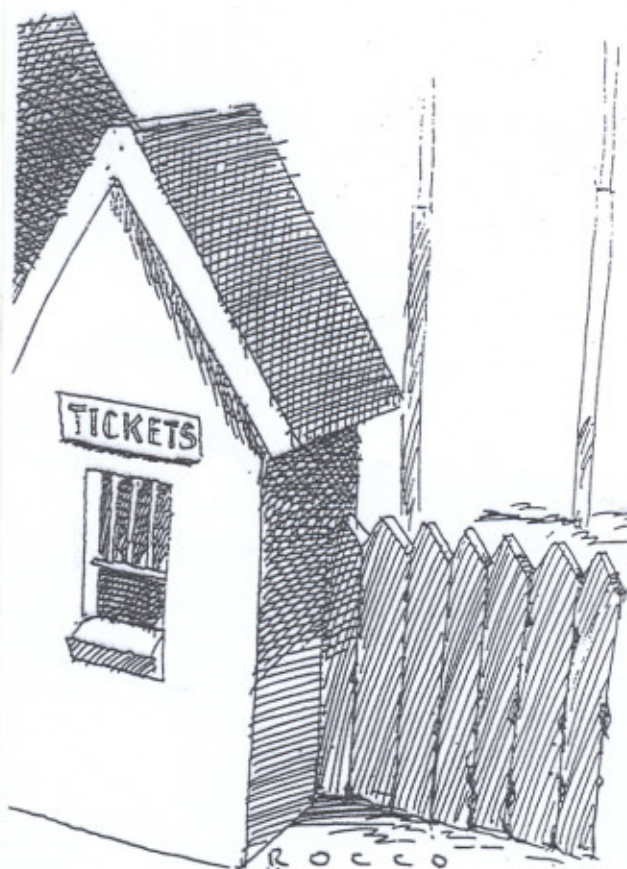
pire, can determine appeals for run-outs and stumpings. This process should be extended, with the third umpire being required to perform an appellate role in respect of doubtful catches, behind or in front of the wicket, and run-outs and stumpings (which are not referred to the third umpire by a ground umpire).

Any objection that a two-tier appeal process would unduly protract or destabilise the game can be met by restricting the number of appeals against the ground umpires' decisions to five per side per innings. This way, some of the bad ground umpiring decisions, particularly in respect of appeals for caught behind the wicket, could be corrected.

The use of the proposed appeal mechanism may also contribute in some way towards containing the unnecessary tension that flares from time to time between cricket playing nations because of poor umpiring decisions.

Yours faithfully,
SENAKA WEERARATNA,
40 Malak Crescent,
Darwin, NT 0812,
Australia.

to outer space



are creature — a lot merely a the- as soon accept a to a Spice Girls' ngwood-Carlton e fan. The type of ot merely res- g a 70,000 MCG 00 lock-out, but in extra 5000 on

accepted. The turnstile attendant wants to know if you have a reserved seat? A membership package? You tell him you just want to get into a three-quarters empty ground for the usual price, and he tells you it doesn't work like that any more. Reluctantly, you part with an extra \$12. For the first and last time.

The next day you read that Foots

things are done in the corporate world?

Besides, you are not a Foots ... ummm-Western supporter. You just wanted to go and see a good game of footy at the recommended retail price. And now you are fully aware that this particular pleasure — the spontaneous day at the footy — is soon to be a thing of the past.

But just how all this can be explained you are not quite sure. Why are only a certain number allowed in at the minimum price when there are thousands of empty seats? Surely this surcharge should apply only when demand is likely to exceed supply, or when an extra advantage is offered. Isn't that the type of logic the businessmen who run football clubs apply to their own goods and services?

The AFL had always liked to compare the price of its product to other forms of entertainment. OK, you compare two games last weekend to the movies. If Essendon v Carlton was the Saturday night "no free list" game, Foots ... ummm-Western v Fremantle was definitely the Tuesday "all tix \$6" show.

Which is why you are not particularly sympathetic to those who were locked out of the MCG blockbuster on Monday. The AFL likes to talk about economics in these matters, and at Carlton-Essendon the laws of demand and supply kick in. It had reserved seat written all over it.

But when you apply the same logic to a Foots ... ummm-Western-Fremantle game, the figures don't add up. Optus Oval holds about 35,000 people. About 9000 people attended the game. You remember your form-three economics. Why don't the clubs?

The Bulldogs at least apologised. They have reduced the prices and,

Mailbag

Let captains make appeals to third umpire

TIME and again the cricket public has watched in horror as TV replays have shown umpires to be in grave error. Patently wrong decisions are allowed to stand because of the absence of a mechanism in the laws of cricket to overturn them.

In the judicial system, a dissatisfied litigant has a right of appeal to a higher court or a full bench. A similar principle should find expression in cricket rules and allow a dissatisfied captain to appeal against a ground umpire's decision to the third umpire.

At present, the third umpire, upon a request of a ground umpire, determines appeals for run-outs and stumpings. This process should be extended. He should be required to rule on all run-outs and stumpings and perform an appellate role in respect of doubtful catches behind or in front of the wicket.

Any objection that a two-tier appeal process would unduly protract or destabilise the game can be met by restricting the number of appeals against the ground umpires' decisions to five a side per innings. In this way, some of the bad ground umpiring decisions, particularly on appeals for catches behind the wicket, could be corrected.

It might also contribute in some way towards containing the unnecessary tension that flares from time to time between cricket-playing nations because of poor umpiring.

Senaka Weeraratna
Darwin, NT



Year on the Web

'SUNDAY TIMES'
SRI LANKA

APRIL 6, 1997



Letters to the Editor

06th April 1997

Allow appeals to the Third Umpire

Time and again the cricket public has watched in horror TV replays showing a ground umpire's decision upholding or dismissing an appeal against a batsman, to be in grave error. But the hardest thing has been to see a manifest injustice on TV replays, and then to note in disbelief that the technology which detected the umpire's error was not being used to correct the error. Patently wrong umpiring decisions are allowed to stand because of the absence of a mechanism in the laws of cricket to overturn them.

In the judicial system, a dissatisfied litigant has a right of appeal against a decision of a judge, to a higher court or a full bench. Likewise a similar principle of appeal should find expression in cricket rules and allow a dissatisfied captain of a team to appeal against a ground umpire's decision, to the third umpire. Greater justice in umpiring decisions is now secured because of the participation of the third umpire, upon a request of a ground umpire, in determining appeals for run outs and stumpings. This process should be extended further with the third umpire being required to perform an appellate role in respect of doubtful catches behind or in front of the wicket, and run outs and stumpings (which are not referred to the third umpire by a ground umpire).

Any objection that a two tier appeal process would unduly protract or de-stabilise the game, can be met by restricting the number of appeals against the ground umpires' decisions, to five per each side per each innings. This way, some of the bad ground umpiring decisions, particularly in respect of appeals for 'caught behind the wicket', could be corrected.

The use of the proposed appeal mechanism may also contribute in some way towards containing the unnecessary tension which flares from time to time between cricket playing nations, because of poor umpiring decisions.

Senaka Weeraratna,

Darwin NT 0812,

Australia.

Cozier desperately seeking something new to say about it.

Umpires must be getting fed up to the back teeth listening to criticism from ex-players turned commentators who probably could not pass an umpire's examination if they tried.

Of course, the instant replay facility must be used, if only for line decisions for the umpire to decide on, but it is being blatantly abused and the game is not benefiting from it as it should. Umpires are becoming loathe to give a decision in the bowler's favour in case replays show them to be wrong. The time has come for the replay to be used only when the umpire asks for it.

DAVID HERDSON
Radcliffe, Lancs.

APPEAL MECHANISM

INCREASINGLY television replays are showing an umpire's decision to be in error. Patently wrong umpiring decisions are allowed to stand because of the absence of a mechanism in the laws of cricket to overturn them.

In the judicial system, a dissatisfied litigant has a right of appeal against a decision of a judge, to a higher court or a full bench. Likewise a similar principle of appeal should find expression in cricket rules and allow a dissatisfied captain of a team to appeal against a ground umpire's decision, to the third umpire. Through the participation of the third umpire greater justice in umpiring decisions is now secured. This process should be extended to doubtful catches and all unrefereed run-outs and stumpings.

Any objection that a two-tier appeal process would unduly protract or de-stabilise the game, can be met by restricting the number of appeals against the

ground umpires' decisions to five a side in each innings.

The use of the proposed appeal mechanism may also contribute in some way towards containing the unnecessary tension which flares from time to time between cricket-playing nations, because of poor umpiring decisions.

SENAKA WEERARATNA
Malak, Darwin, Australia.

'DEAR OLD THING'

REFERRING to Mr Andrew Godfrey's prize-winning letter in April's issue, I still have a vivid memory of an occasion 25 years ago when my husband Ben and I were in Corfu with four cricket teams we had taken there for the September Cricket Festival (which Ben and Lord Orr-Ewing had set up).

We were sitting round a table having a remarkably cheerful lunch with Blowers, Johnners, and Bill Edrich plus wives and girlfriends. Conversation was very merry and not about cricket. Suddenly a young Englishman in his early 30s felt his way to our table. He was blind and asked us if Henry Blofeld was there as he was sure he recognised his voice.

Blowers welcomed him with his usual warmth and 'dear old thing'. Our new friend then said he had gone blind in his early teens and that cricket had been his passion in life and he wanted to thank Blowers in particular for keeping it alive for him. He said it was wonderful to listen to his commentaries and to see the whole picture, to imagine the white seagull as it arrived on the ground, the red double-decker bus driving along St John's Wood Road, the green tree, the colourful flags, the aeroplane flying over Lord's and even to imagine his friends in the commentary box as they pulled each others' legs and munched

WHYTE & MACKAY LETTER OF THE MONTH



AS A youth coach I spend a lot of time trying to teach parents and young cricketers how to treat their new bats and, even more importantly, how to buy the right size of bat.

I was really pleased to see the statement in April's *Equipment Supplement* from cricket bat manufacturers about how to look after bats. I was, for a few seconds, even more pleased to see the Gunn & Moore sizing chart.

However, closer inspection of the photograph changed my mind. The bat the boy is 'modelling' stands almost up to his elbows. Further on, what looks like the same, 'size 2' boy is posing with Shane Warne with what looks like the same size of bat as the demon leg-spinner. In both cases the boy stands no chance of using a bat of that size to play cricket.

The size of a cricket bat is

dark brown chocolate cake. This was all part of the cricket scene.

It's all very well to have the cold commentary about each ball as it is played, but a bit of humour and colourful description of the scene can make a blind man's day a little brighter.

MRS B.M. BROCKLEHURST
Ashurst, Kent.

COMMENTARY BOX CAPERS

I MUST add my weight to the comments about the decline in *Test Match Special*.

Henry Blofeld is the master of irrelevance and his demise is not

vital. It is as important as wearing the right size of shoes. Far too many small sports shops have no idea about the size of bat that a boy needs. All too often they sell parents and children what they have left on their racks rather than what the child really needs.

To make matters worse, if you put together several different makes of child bat purporting to be of the same size, you will find that none of them are. They all vary. How can anyone make a proper choice until there is uniformity?

Can the bat manufacturers protect their customers by developing a uniform sizing policy for bats size 6 and under? Can they also give customers a promise that they will support them when so-called sports shops sell the wrong goods because of greed or ignorance?

Or are they just happy to make the sales to keep their profits up?

KEVIN BOARDMAN
Mildenhall, Suffolk.

Mr Boardman wins a bottle of Whyte & Mackay Scotch whisky.

mourned by those of us who prefer to hear about the cricket.

As a devotee of many years I could be accused of supporting the maxim of 'Arlott good: Agnew bad' (a dreadful Orwellian parody!) but I do feel that the flippant banter practised in today's commentary boxes does not give the listeners the respect they deserve. Brian Johnston, who was only a short head behind Arlott, always put cricket first and cake second. Sadly the modern broadcaster has jolly japes first and cricket second.

RAY CHAPMAN
Dorridge, W. Midlands.

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A spectator's appeal: reform cricket umpiring

THE regular umpiring errors that were vividly shown on video replays during the recent cricket season in Australia is a frustrating experience for both the participants and the followers of the game. This frustration is compounded when the adjudication errors are seen to distort the natural outcome of the contest.

In the drama-filled one-day match between England and Sri Lanka in Adelaide, Arjuna Ranatunga's verbal duel with umpire Ross Emerson overshadowed two significant

umpiring mistakes that enabled the reprieved two batsmen, Graeme Hick and Mahela Jayawardene, to score centuries.

These incidents raise significant questions. Why do cricket rules allow wrong umpiring decisions to stand? Why has full use not been made of video replays that can correct errors?

The answers to these questions lie in the outmoded approach to adjudication in cricket. The rule that the umpire's decision is final has become so entrenched in the philosophy of cricket that any

attempt to modify it is viewed as heresy.

Dissatisfied players should have the right of appeal against the decision of a field umpire to the third umpire. The third umpire's powers should be extended to enable him to perform an appellate role like an Appeal Court judge in respect of doubtful catches behind or in front of the wicket, run outs and stumpings that are not referred to the third umpire by a field umpire.

SENAKA WEERARATNA
Darwin

Age texts are pushing so hard for primitive labour, and equates minimising interventions with turning back the clock 100 years to a time of high maternal and foetal death rates.

Few experts contend that there is virtue in putting up with pain for pain's sake. Rather, the virtue, if any exists, is in eschewing interventions that carry risks. There is no known analgesic that is risk free for mother and baby. Pethidine, a narcotic, can depress the baby's breathing if taken within five hours of birth. Epidurals generally require the mother to push lying on her back — an unnatural posture which prolongs pushing and increases the need for other interventions, such as forceps and episiotomies.

Many interventions put one on the slippery slope of further interventions until the delivery ends in a caesarean section. This is major surgery, which by conservative estimates is performed approximately three times as often as necessary in Australia. As for denying the reality of the pain of childbirth, no one denies that childbirth is painful, but emphasising just how painful some find it, as she recommends, is about as useful as telling a uni student how much they'll want to just give up and go on the dole.

Ms Morey's blithe advocacy of interventions in childbirth does neither mothers nor their children any favours.

MARY MARGARET SCHUCK
Prospect, SA

ushes the boundaries of tolerance

ade by rape and keep prisoner a suit of 12-year-old girl, specifically after (3-14/2) priming her for that purpose, to an which he does for two years until her escape (sadly, into the anting arms of another paedophile and panned child pornographic film-maker);

it pub- (ii) his justification for continual lished sexual abuse of his stepdaughter; film is (iii) his desire to procure ve con- more victims via Lolita having more daughters by him.

of the The justification of his abuse by (i) that statements to the effect that he loves her and wants to care for her sounds a bit like Philip Bell's "hebephile" defence to 1 (step- me. When any adult loves and abduct, cares for a child, that's exactly what they do — not sexually

exploit them for their own deviant sexual gratification.

Mr Adams states the film is a depiction of "child sexuality". Isn't that the problem? This notion is used by paedophiles to justify their deviant behaviour. The term "child sexuality", in the context of Adams's comments on the film is in my view incongruous.

I have no objection to examining the serious issues relating to the abuse and exploitation of children for educative and preventative purposes. However, a film depicting the aforementioned in the genre of "film entertainment" is beyond the pale.

The most up-to-date research suggests that there are two things that paedophiles crave most: more children to sexually abuse and mainstream acceptance and sympathy for their activities. I do not wish to put a smile on a paedophile's face.

Mr Adams refers to covers of magazines with 14-year-old girls. Yes, sex sells, as does violence, particularly in videos, computer games and films, so how low, if we continue to push boundaries and lower the thresholds of tolerance, can we as a society go?

TRISH DRAPER
Federal Member for Makin
Modbury, SA

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TIME

JUNE 7, 1999

LETTERS



Cricket's New Wave

“Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar is a genius. He has taught us the value of dedication, determination, discipline and above all, humility.”

SUNIL SHIBAD
Bombay

ON THE CAMPUS AT THE SCHOOL WHERE I teach, students were literally fighting to grab a copy of *TIME* with Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar on the cover [May 17]. Such is the influence he has on the youth of this subcontinent. What sets him apart from other players is not just his ability to score runs with ease but his character. He is not boastful when he scores lots of runs. And he never shows a sign of frustration, even when he is out on the first ball. He is a quality sportsman.

JOSH B. NIRLAULA
Kathmandu

SACHIN TENDULKAR IS A GENIUS. HE HAS taught us the value of dedication, determination, discipline and, above all, humility. His style of batting has brought unadulterated joy to millions of Indians.

SUNIL SHIBAD
Bombay

SURELY CRICKET IS NOW ASIA'S GAME. IN fact, I believe the game ought to belong officially to the Pakistanis, Indians and Sri Lankans (perhaps even the Bengalis)!

As a die-hard cricket fan, I was delighted to see your report. People in this part of the world are looking forward to the matches.

SAADIA MALIK, 17
Lahore, Pakistan

YOUR WELL-RESEARCHED ARTICLE ON cricket's 1999 World Cup missed one name: Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar.

SHAKIL QASMI
Karachi

TELEVISION CRICKET MATCHES HAS WON the game millions of fans, but it has also alienated viewers. Time and again we watch in horror as video replays show that an umpire's decision is in grave error—and then in disbelief when the error we have seen goes unacknowledged and uncorrected. Cricket's outmoded adjudication practices are in urgent need of reform.

SENAKA WEERARATNA
Darwin, N.T.

ALTHOUGH I AM A CRICKET ENTHUSIAST, I only watch the sport during the World

Cup, when on-field decisions are made by neutral umpires.

S.A. VANLANGENBERG
Melbourne

Madeleine's War

TIME MANAGING EDITOR WALTER ISAACSON wrote a truly profound analysis of what motivates U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright [May 17], giving us insight into her childhood experiences and her resulting moral beliefs. But there are thousands of people who lived in Europe through the Nazi period or Stalinist domination who later became U.S. citizens and whose views are quite different from those of Albright. As a teenager, I lived for five years in Nazi-occupied Holland. Albright's experiences led to a naive morality that is not shared by many who lived under despots but recognize the complexities of a "just war."

CAROLYN M. VAN VLIET
Miami

AFTER MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, MARGARET Thatcher and Indira Gandhi, can we put to rest the idea that women in positions of power are less likely than their male counterparts to use violence?

JOHN M. BAKER
Pathum Thani, Thailand

IT IS NOW CLEAR WHOSE PERSONAL AMBITIONS and blindness are behind the Kosovo mess. I was stunned by Albright's challenge in 1993 to Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell: "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Albright does not realize that the point is



May 29, 1996

Mr Senaka Weeraratna.
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Dear Mr Weeraratna,

WHYTE & MACKAY LETTER OF THE MONTH

I am very pleased to inform you that your letter to *The Cricketer* of April 22 has won the Letter of the Month award in the June issue. The prize is a bottle of Whyte & Mackay scotch whisky, and Sandra McLoughlin of Whyte & Mackay will shortly be in touch with you to arrange for its consignment to you.

I hope you enjoy it. Congratulations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard A. Hutton', written over a horizontal line.

RICHARD A. HUTTON
Editorial Director

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**WHYTE
&
MACKAY
LETTER
OF THE
MONTH**



ARJUNA Ranatunga's call for neutral umpires in international cricket must be welcomed wholeheartedly. Whatever drawbacks there were in the World Cup, it was singularly free of umpiring controversies, unlike the recent Australia-Sri Lanka series.

The conduct of Australian umpires during that tour has critically strengthened the case for exclusive use of third-country umpires in international cricket. In three Tests and six One-Day Internationals 15 lbw decisions were given by the umpires. While 13 of these went against

Sri Lanka, only two were given against the Australian batsmen. Remarkably both these were given by the Pakistani umpire, Hayat.

The ratio against Sri Lanka of 6½:1 must be the highest ratio of lbw decisions recorded against a visiting team in cricket history.

In the past Australia repeatedly attacked the quality of umpiring in the Indian sub-continent, basing themselves primarily on a ratio of 3:1 lbw decisions given against them. Such critics would be hard pressed to defend the ratio against the Sri Lankan team. This might have been higher had the third-country umpire not given the two lbw decisions. It is, indeed, quite astonishing to note that none of the Australian umpires deemed it fit to give an Australian batsman out lbw in

the entire series despite numerous confident appeals against them.

Some of the cream of the Sri Lankan batsmen were dismissed at crucial moments of the game through the intervention of the umpires.

The case for exclusive use of third-country umpires in international cricket is strong and convincing. Even when mistakes are made by these umpires, they would at least be free from the perception of bias and partisanship. Moreover their participation would prevent pre-existing good relations between cricket playing nations from becoming unnecessarily strained by umpiring controversies.

SENAKA WEERARATNA
Clayton South, Victoria, Australia.

Senaka Weeraratna wins a bottle of Whyte & Mackay Scotch whisky.

in first-class cricket. Former Australian captain Kim Hughes also achieved this feat.

He scored 119 on his first-class debut for Western Australia at Perth in 1975/76 and on the Australian tour of the West Indies in 1977/78, he took a wicket with his first ball, against Guyana at Georgetown.

GRAHAM CLAYTON
NSW, Australia.

WHO CARES?

WHO cares about the state of English cricket? Who cares that over successive winters we have been humiliated by overseas opponents? Who cares that the products of our 'full-time' game cannot compete with overseas 'part-timers'? Who cares that we have talented players (do we?) that continually appear to under-achieve at international level? Who cares that we continue to allow our domestic game to be a training ground for our overseas opponents? Who cares that those who run cricket in Australia and South Africa can control the way their players participate in an English season, but those in charge of our national side cannot do the same?

Responses please to the TCCB, or is it now the ECB (different name, same people, same end-product!) or your local county club. It will have no impact, but sometimes it's good to get things off your chest if you do care about English cricket.

J. B. GILL
Summerbridge, Harrogate.

TWIN PEAKS

DURING a two-month stint working as a venue co-ordinator during the World Cup, travelling to and from such diverse stadia as Gujranwala's Jinnah Stadium, Peshawar's Arbab Niaz Stadium and the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, I thought I'd seen most of what Pakistan had to offer in terms of cricketing facilities. How wrong I was.

Enduring a bone-jarring, 18-hour bus ride from Rawalpindi to the Northern Territories, I braved the infamous Karakoram Highway that followed the old Silk route in connecting Pakistan with its northerly neighbour, China. Stopping in Karimabad, the capital of the Hunza Valley, I caught a glimpse of the scenery that was said to have been the inspiration for the imaginary paradise of Shangri-La, immortalised in James Hilton's classic novel *Lost Horizons*.

There at 6,000 feet I saw a high-school cricket match fought out amidst a backdrop of snow-

capped mountains. These natural sightcreens gave an impressive air of serenity to the scene, in stark contrast to the frantic proceedings on the bed of dust that served as the field of play.

Local rules weren't altogether unfamiliar to a foreigner well versed in the vagaries of back-yard cricket. A six-and-out rule governing balls that cleared the wall seen in the photograph seemed slightly harsh, particularly as the guilty party then had to make the considerable trek to reclaim the errant ball!

The huge crowd that had gathered for this alpine needle-match was a reassuring sight after the sparse crowds that had greeted most of the Group B matches that didn't involve the host country.

I recommend the Northern Territories as a rewarding detour for the intrepid cricket fan. I certainly won't forget it in a hurry.

WILLIAM SIL
London W14.



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The ICC's umpire review system

Umpire review system to be trialled in Sri Lanka-India Tests

Cricinfo staff
June 16, 2008

The proposed umpire review system will be trialled during India's three-Test series against Sri Lanka, beginning next month, the Indian board has said. Originally set to feature for the first time during South Africa's upcoming series against England, it was shelved after both boards failed to reach an agreement on the details.

The ICC Board, had, in March, approved the trial of the review system during a Test series in the current cricket calendar. It will now have to approve its Cricket Committee's recommendations before the Sri Lanka-India series begins. The main elements are:

- Umpires should still be permitted to refer line decisions or boundaries to the third umpire as normal without a player requesting him to refer that decision
- The players should be permitted to ask the on-field umpire to review any aspect of any other decision in consultation with the third umpire
- The process should take the form and order of: on-field umpire gives his decision; affected batsman or fielding side's captain asks the umpire to review that decision; the on-field umpire(s) and third umpire consult; the on-field umpire gives his final decision
- The committee recommended that Hawk-Eye technology could be used by the third umpire but only for the purposes of determining the actual path of the ball up until the point that it struck the batsman and not the predictor function of the technology

The BCCI press release said the following technology could be used by the third umpire while considering the review request:

- Slow motion replays from all available cameras
- Super slow motion replays from the cameras positioned at either end of the ground
- Ultra motion camera replays from the cameras positioned at either end of the ground
- Sound from the stump microphones with the replays at normal speed and slow motion
- Hawk-Eye for ball tracking purposes only (not for predicting the potential future trajectory of the ball)

According to the system, players will request reviews by making a 'T' sign; if the third umpire disagrees with the on-field umpire, the on-field umpire should revoke his previous decision before giving the new verdict. The review system will make its first appearance in the first Test in Colombo, which begins on July 23.

The system was first proposed back in 1997 by Senaka Weeraratne, a Sri Lankan lawyer, whose letter was published in several newspapers. It was then forwarded to Upali Dharmadasa, the then Sri Lankan board president, for further action.

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The Umpire's immunity limits accurate adjudication

The regular recurrence of umpiring errors that were vividly shown on video replays during the recent cricket season in Australia is a frustrating experience for both the participants and the followers of the game.

These incidents raise significant questions. Why do cricket rules allow wrong umpiring decisions to stand? Why have fuller use not been made of video replays that can correct the umpiring errors?

The answers to these questions lie in the outmoded approach to adjudication in cricket. The prevailing rules require a heavy reliance to be placed in the good faith of the umpires so much so that even when an umpire is wrong his decision has to be treated as right.

The rule that the umpire's decision is final has become so entrenched as a dominant paradigm in the philosophy of cricket that any attempt to modify this rule with a view to achieving fairness and accuracy in umpiring decisions, is viewed as heresy. Yet, the considerations of fairness that are paramount to the integrity of a sport, require such an approach to be adopted.

There are historically justifiable reasons for the rule that the umpire's decision is final. In the past there was no effective mechanism or technology to examine an umpire's decision.

The availability of modern technology today for review of a decision makes the unqualified adherence to the traditional principle morally unsustainable. To treat a wrong as a right without attempting to use the available resources to correct the wrong, is an unjust proposition. But this is exactly what the current adjudicating rules of cricket deliver.

The extraordinary immunity that the rules of cricket have conferred on the umpires is at variance with natural justice rules prevailing in many democratic institutions.

The right to challenge and have a decision reviewed is a basic norm in a democratic society.

Even the judges in courts of law do not enjoy such absolute immunity. Dissatisfied litigants have the right of appeal against the decision of a judge to a higher court or a full bench. The appellate procedure in the legal system is a mechanism that enables a judicial decision to be reviewed and corrected, if it is unsustainable. This procedure serves as a good precedent for an extension of the concept of review to cricket through a paradigm shift in approach to adjudication.

Dissatisfied players should have the right of appeal against the decision of a field umpire to the Third Umpire.

The Third Umpire's powers should be extended to enable him to perform an appellate role like an Appeal Court judge, in respect of doubtful catches in front of and behind the wicket including catches by the wicket keeper, run outs and stumpings (which are not referred to the Third Umpire by a field umpire).

This proposed two-tier appeal process incorporates the principle of correction that is lacking in the existing system of video arbitration, which is used purely as an aid by the field umpire.

Any objection that a two-tier appeal process would unduly protract or destabilise the game can be met by limiting the number of appeals against the field umpires' decisions to five per side per each innings. Such a restriction would prevent excessive appeals, by forcing the players to use this right of appeal sparingly. Nevertheless this would give a dissatisfied side a chance to have some of the significant field umpiring errors corrected by the Third Umpire.

The uncertainties of cricket have always added to the excitement and attraction of the game. But where adjudication is concerned, nothing but certainty in the accuracy of umpiring decisions would win player and public confidence.

Daily News 02 March 1999 **SENAKA WEERARATNE**
Australia

'Daily News' (Sri Lanka)

March 2, 1999

ICC to implement Lankan lawyer's concept?

By Sa'adi Thawfeeq

Following the spate of poor umpiring decisions which badly affected the second cricket Test between Australia and India at Sydney and soured relations between the two sides, the International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering changes to the rules by allowing players to challenge decisions made by on-field umpires.

An agency report quoting ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed last week said that the ICC wanted to carry out an experiment giving players the right to lodge appeals against contentious rulings and ask a third umpire to adjudicate with the aid of television replays. Speed also said that he wanted to try the idea in a one-day tournament before allowing the sport's member nations to decide whether it should be used in Test matches.

Now if that rule is implemented by the ICC even on an experimental basis credit for having initially come out with such a suggestion should go to Sri Lanka.

Senaka K. Weeraratna, a Sri Lankan lawyer suggested a method of minimizing umpiring errors after watching the infamous one-day international between Sri Lanka and England at Adelaide in 1999 where in the midst of the controversial no-balling of Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan by Australian umpire Ross Emerson, two century makers in the match England's Graeme Hick and Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene were given reprieves when the on-field umpires failed to make use of the third umpire facility.

Weeraratna's letter to the 'Weekend Australian' published on February 20, 1999 under the heading: 'A spectator's appeal: reform cricket umpiring' stated: "These incidents raise significant questions. Why do cricket rules allow wrong umpiring decisions to stand? Why has full use not been made of video replays that can correct errors?"

"The answer to these questions lies in the outmoded approach to adjudication in cricket. The rule that the umpire's decision is final has become so entrenched in the philosophy of cricket that any attempt to modify it is viewed as heresy."

"Dissatisfied players should have the right of appeal against the decision of a field umpire to the third umpire. The



'Players will have the right to lodge appeals against contentious rulings and ask a third umpire to adjudicate'

third umpire's powers should be extended to enable him to perform an appellate role like an Appeal Court Judge in respect of doubtful catches behind or in front of the wicket, run outs and stumpings that are not referred to the third umpire by a field umpire."

Weeraratna also had his point of view published in other prestigious publications as the 'Time' magazine, The Northern Territory News, the Daily News, the Sunday Island and the Sunday Times.

Ever since his school days at Royal College (he played for the school second XI), Weeraratna had an academic interest in cricket and has followed the game closely. He lived in Australia for 20 years since 1975 and is a qualified lawyer from the Sri Lanka Law Faculty and the Monash University. He was also a barrister and solicitor in Victoria and Northern Territories.

Weeraratne told *The Nation*: "I have always maintained that if you have the technology to detect an error (and show it vividly to the rest of the world to the great embarrassment of the field umpire) then common sense and justice

demands that the very same technology be applied to correct the error.

"The failure to use this simple principle has caused havoc in the cricket arena with explicit umpiring errors distorting the outcome of the game, and with constant repetition, souring relations between cricketing nations. The latest example is the rift between India and Australia over wrongful umpiring decisions."

Speaking further Weeraratna stated: "Accuracy in decision making, if possible, through use of technology should be given a high emphasis. This principle should enjoy greater priority than the immunity that cricket rules still confer on the decisions of the field umpires from challenge."

"It would be less embarrassing for a field umpire to have his wrong decision corrected then and there by use of technology with no adverse impact on the players and in the outcome of the game, than for his wrong decision to be allowed to stand in the interest of maintaining a hallowed tradition of not challenging the umpire's decision, with harmful consequences to the careers of affected players and the final outcome of the game."

"Any system that allows wrong decisions to stand without making use of available resources to correct errors is flawed. It is a sad dilemma for cricket since it was always associated from inception with the metaphors of fairness, integrity and uprightness."

"The turn of phrase 'it ain't cricket' was meant to convey that 'it isn't fair'. These presumptions can no longer be sustained in the light of gross umpiring errors that are allowed to stand without correction and thereby contributing to the diminution of public confidence in the overall fairness of the game of cricket," Weeraratna said.

"The mechanisms used in the courts such as appeal against the decision of a trial judge have validity beyond the field of the judicial system and can easily be transplanted to advantage in the adjudicatory mechanism of cricket."

It will have a profound impact in ensuring a higher degree of accurate decision making and overcome field umpiring errors stemming from negligence, incompetence, bias, malice, corruption and even pure and simple racism," he said. In this context Weeraratne has suggested that Sri Lanka Cricket may



Senaka K. Weeraratna

consider calling for the:

1. Application of new technology to review umpiring decisions
2. Call for allowing dissatisfied sides to appeal to the Third Umpire
3. Press for a limit to such appeals to five per innings in the interest of preventing protraction of the game through frivolous and unsustainable appeals
4. If such an appeal is upheld then there should not be a loss in the number of appeals granted.
5. Greater use of third country (presumably neutral) umpires in international cricket.

"I have sent my proposals to the Cricket Boards of several countries including the ICC in 1999, but nobody even bothered to acknowledge receipt of it," lamented Weeraratna. "I am pleased that the ICC is now giving serious consideration to a concept which I conceived in 1999 to reduce umpiring errors."

The danger is that the concept if implemented could be credited to the wrong source and not Weeraratna who originated it, unless Sri Lanka makes a strong case. A few years ago England's former coach Duncan Fletcher mentioned a similar concept in his book 'Ashes Regained - The Coach's Story' last year, and was claiming credit for having propounded the ICC's recommendation. It is a case for Sri Lanka Cricket's newly appointed interim chairman Arjuna Ranatunga to take up with the ICC and ensure that Sri Lanka is given credit where it is due. By doing so Sri Lanka can show the cricket world that it not only has players with skills to break world records on the field, but also individuals with cricket minds off it. To go one step further, if the rule is fully implemented it should like the rain rule credited to Messrs Duckworth and Lewis, be called the 'Weeraratna rule' which would not only give Sri Lanka cricket world wide recognition, but the entire country.

THE NATION

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