

Crime and punishment

Everything was going fine for Australian cricket until the third day of the third Test at Newlands in Cape Town, just before lunch. South Africa was going strong with over a hundred runs on the board for the loss of just one wicket. At that point, Australian captain [Steve Smith and his men decided to cheat](#). The task of tampering with the ball for reverse swing was assigned to eight-Test-old Cameron Bancroft.

Ball tampering scandal: 'It's all my fault and it's killing me'

The baggy green was tarnished as Smith, Bancroft, and vice-captain David Warner admitted their guilt publicly. While the International Cricket Council (ICC) slapped Smith with a one-Test match ban and fined him 100% of his match fee, Bancroft was let off relatively lightly with a fine of 75% of his match fee. Both players got the maximum punishment possible under the rules of the ICC, yet the cricket community at large was disappointed that a tougher line was not taken. Cricket Australia (CA), operating to a different standard, banned Smith and Warner for a year. Additionally, Smith and Bancroft were suspended from captaining Australia for at least two years. Warner will not be considered for any team leadership positions in the future.

The ripple effect of this event has certainly not missed India, where a large section demanded that Smith and Warner be axed from the Indian Premier League (IPL). Their argument was that these "cheats" would tarnish the image of the IPL and could pollute the minds of young, budding cricketers. Under considerable pressure, two IPL franchises, the Rajasthan Royals and the Sunrisers Hyderabad, respectively, dropped Smith and Warner for this season. However, the question remains, can the IPL franchise owners take the moral high ground on this issue and axe players when the IPL itself was earlier marred by corruption charges?

IPL ban on Smith, Warner a welcome sign: Ian Chappell

The ugly episode of spot-fixing and betting in IPL 2013 had completely tarnished the image of this league. The suspension of Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings for two years revealed the ugly truth behind the glamour of the annual mega spectacle. Despite the arrests of S. Sreesanth, Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan on charges of spot-fixing, many believe that the big fish escaped.

One argument in this regard is that for many, the IPL is nothing more than an entertainment channel. This viewpoint would suggest that banning Smith and Warner for a season may be harsh as the viewers of the IPL don't watch the tournament for the display of gentlemanly spirit of the game, but for pure entertainment.

Both cricketers have already been provided the maximum punishment by CA. The extent of the punishment was decided not only in response to the severity of the crime but for hurting the pride of the nation. Unlike CA, the IPL does not have much to lose. The biggest losers, of course, are those who cheated.

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The India-Japan economic relationship remains underwhelming in relation to strategic ties

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