



Zimbabwe Cricket president Peter Chingoka (C) poses for a group picture with Cricket Australia chairman Creagh O'Connor (R) and Cricket Kenya chairman Samir Inamdar at a hotel in Dubai yesterday.

Samuels ban on

West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels's two-year corruption ban has been endorsed by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the global governing body said in a statement issued after a board meeting here on Thursday.

Samuels, 27, was allegedly caught on tape by police passing match-related information on to a bookmaker during a series in India in February last year.

The disciplinary committee of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) found Samuels guilty of offence C 4 (x) of the ICC code of conduct, in that he "received any money, benefit or other reward (whether financial or otherwise) which could bring him or the game of cricket into disrepute".

An ICC statement Thursday stressed: "The penalty for being found guilty of this offence is a minimum two-year ban."

Leading British sports lawyer Michael Beloff, the chairman of the ICC's code of conduct commission, led an inquiry into the WICB's procedures.

According to the ICC's statement, this found "both the process and punishment imposed were in keeping with ICC regulations".

Samuels was charged with receiving the benefit of the provision of hotel accommodation to the value of 1,238 dollars from Mukesh Kochhar, a suspected bookmaker, or his associates which could bring him or the game of cricket into disrepute under the ICC code.

But he was cleared of another charge of passing to the bookmaker confidential team information regarding the West Indies opening bowlers in the first one-day International against India on January 21, 2007 in Nagpur.

Jamaica's Samuels was disciplined for breaking a team curfew in 2002 and has also been suspended from bowling in internationals due to a suspect action.

Roy makes Sir Vivian happy

INTERNET, undated

West Indies great Sir Vivian Richards is used to receiving accolades, but even he admits he still feels pleased to be told by the likes of Andrew Symonds that he remains a source of inspiration.

The Australia all-rounder presented his childhood cricketing hero with a signed shirt during Australia's one-day matches in Grenada last weekend, with Richards saying the admiration was very much mutual.

"He's definitely one of the players I most enjoy watching," Richards said of the electrifying Queenslander.

"I was chuffed when he came and said thank you so much for the inspiration and said you were one of my heroes."

"What more can you say when someone in the present game still believes that someone in the past can still be a mentor, because there's a lot of folks who think that what went by, is dead."

Nothing is concrete

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The four interviewees added that apart from grouping, lack of commitment and the coach's inability to control things also played parts in the catastrophe.

"The team's performance in Bangkok in the warm-up game was commendable but it was absent in Colombo. I think the footballers' lack of commitment was behind this," said one of the interviewees seeking anonymity. "I have also heard about the groupings and if something like this really happened, the persons involved should be punished."

One complained that Yusuf, although he trained the team for long, could not get with the booters. "He had no control over players. That is why he could not

Shoaib ban

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confirmed Friday's decision.

"Akhtar's appeal to stay the ban was upheld, which means he is temporarily allowed to play until the petition is heard, but he will have to give the fine," Pakistan Cricket Board lawyer Taffazul Rizvi told AFP.

Chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed said Akhtar's place in the Pakistan team "will depend on his fitness."

Pakistan, playing Bangladesh in their last Asia Cup league match here on Friday, have no assignments until their three-match home series against New Zealand in August.

No stopping Sanath

Cricket

HARSHA BHOGLE

Sanath Jayasuriya is 39 and not yet doing all those things that cricketers look down upon while playing. He is not putting on a tie and selling real estate, searching for coaching assignments, walking into commentary boxes or indeed playing county cricket.

It's funny how your view of the world changes once you stop playing. But Jayasuriya hasn't stopped playing even though there are some in his country who believe he should. Instead, he is still taking attacks apart and thrilling his legion of admirers. One of them is writing this article.

He must enjoy it. That must seem a strange statement because surely everyone enjoys playing cricket. Not quite true. Often time dulls the instinct, selectors and administrators take the fun away, children tug at the heart, training becomes a chore, injuries seem to hurt a bit more and muscles take longer to recover. It is a battle most people lose by the time they are 39. And while Jayasuriya has had a few arrows aimed at him, he is still up and around, taking on young kids, sometimes closer to half his age. Yes, he must enjoy it.

I watched him closely this year when he turned up to play for the Mumbai Indians. There was still the

twinkle in the eye, still the excitement of a challenge before him, the satisfaction of an innings thrillingly played; youngsters are still bowling short and wide and fetching the ball from the point boundary, they are still feeding the pick up shot that makes boundaries seem much smaller than they are. He hit a couple on the roof of the Wankhede this year and whether he plays in the IPL or for Sri Lanka, his is the wicket that is still the most sought.

Maybe that is why he is still playing, maybe there is another peak to be conquered, maybe a point to be proved, maybe just the fear of it being all over one day. But his body is holding up to the challenge, he is still turning quickly for the second and charging from point. That is the key. When the body starts complaining, it isn't fun anymore.

Only twice in recent times have I wondered at the wisdom of continuing. In Australia he seemed to be a fraction late against Brett Lee and in the IPL, young Ishant Sharma had him bowled playing late. Against the quickest maybe the eye is a touch slow in sending signals to the brain. But those are occasional moments. In Mumbai this year the crowds wanted him to go on. "Suryaaaaa, Surya" they chanted and he blushed shyly in the dressing room as he often does. There is little sign of the arrogance that can sometimes visit those that achieve much.

But for some reason he is putting catches down. Not the tough

India have others to show

AFF, New Delhi

India travel to the Olympics without their trademark field hockey team, but determined to prove they will not compete at Beijing just to make up the numbers.

The hockey stars, India's flag-bearers at past Olympics despite winning the last of their eight gold medals way back in 1980, have fallen on such hard times that they failed to qualify for the first time.

But officials are confident Indian hockey's absence in Beijing will be made up by a promising display from other competitors like shooters, archers, boxers and tennis players.

"The Olympic world knows India for its hockey, but this is a good chance to prove there is more to our sport than that," said the country's senior Olympic official Randhir Singh.

India, a growing economy with ambitions to host the Olympics, has just four individual medals to show for its efforts at the four-yearly Games, the first one a bronze

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by wrestler Khasaba Jadhav at Helsinki in 1952.

The last three Games produced a medal each with tennis star Leander Paes winning a bronze at Atlanta, women's weightlifter Karnam Malleswari a bronze in Sydney and shooter Rajjvardhan Rathore a silver at Athens.

"No one gave them a chance, but they proved everyone wrong," said Singh, who also serves as the secretary-general of the Olympic Council of Asia.

"There is no reason to be pessimistic."

The shooters remain the country's best bet with army officer Rathore hoping to relive his Athens moment of glory in the double trap, despite inconsistent performances at the World Cup.

Officials also have great hopes on rifle shooters Gagan Narang and Abhinav Bindra, both among the top 10 in the world, pistol ace Samareesh Jung and trap shooter Manavjit Sandhu.

The seventh-ranked Narang, 25, returns to the Beijing shooting ranges where he won the air rifle gold medal at the World Cup in 2006 and followed that with a bronze at a similar event in April this year.

get the best out of them," added another interviewee.

Manager Aslam, who had allegedly interfered in the team selection, claimed himself clean. "I did not do anything. Rather I'd say the team selection had always been wrong. It was not clear what type of training the team received in the two months before the SAFF Championship," told Aslam.

BFF member and ex-general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal told yesterday that they have yet to get anything concrete from the discussions so far.

The committee will interview the coach, assistant coach and the National Team Management Committee chairman Badal Roy, also the vice-president of the BFF, next Wednesday.

"It helps to have competed at the Olympic ranges," said Narang. "I have the picture of the range in my mind and it is part of my mental training for Beijing."

In tennis, Paes rubbished suggestions that his on-off partnership with Mahesh Bhupathi had hurt the three-time Grand Slam winners' chances of winning a doubles medal.

Paes and Bhupathi, who parted ways in 2000, differ on most matters and reunite only to represent India at the Davis Cup, Olympics or Asian Games.

It, however, needed Indian tennis officials to broker a peace deal at the French Open in Paris for the duo to agree to team up in Beijing after Bhupathi had flatly refused to play with his erstwhile partner.

Tennis queen Sania Mirza, making a comeback after a wrist surgery, faces a tough field at Beijing, but India is counting on the archers and boxers to spring surprises.

Archer Mangal Singh, picked up from a remote village by steel baron Lakshmi Mittal's sports foundation in 2006, helped India win the men's recurve team event in the World Cup in Turkey in May.

Boxing officials have pinned their hopes on Commonwealth Games 54kg champion Akhil Kumar and Vijender Singh, who recently beat Olympic champion Bakhtiyar Artayev of Uzbekistan in the 75kg category.

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

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Ahmed, Sohail Tanveer, Saeed Ajmal, Abdur Rauf.	
Bowler	O M R W
Mortaza	3 0 9 0
Shahadat	7 0 40 0
Razzak	7 0 42 0
Mahmudullah	2 0 15 0
Reza	0 4 5 0

Result: Pakistan won by ten wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Abdur Rauf.

Toss: Bangladesh.

Umpires: Tony Hill (NZL), Ian Gould (ENG).

CHAMPIONS TROPHY Pakistan still safe to host

AFF, Dubai

Pakistan will host September's Champions Trophy as scheduled "at this stage", the International Cricket Council (ICC) said following a board meeting here Thursday.

The year's biggest one-day tournament featuring the top eight Test nations -- Australia, South Africa, England, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and the West Indies -- is due to be held in Pakistan from September 11 to 28.

But touring Pakistan has been a security concern for several foreign teams, especially Australia which postponed its March-April visit this year after a series of suicide bomb blasts.

In a statement Thursday, the global governing body said: "The ICC board received an interim, oral report from security consultants on the security arrangements for the Asia Cup, the last multi-team event in Pakistan ahead of September's ICC Champions Trophy.

"A final report will be provided to the ICC in due course following the conclusion of the ongoing tournament. At this stage the ICC Champions Trophy will proceed as scheduled."

With Sri Lanka, the alternate venue, in the midst of heavy fighting between government forces and Tamil Tiger rebels, South Africa have come into the reckoning as possible hosts an ICC source told AFP.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has said he does not yet know if his side will travel to Pakistan and raised the prospect of individual withdrawals even if the title-holders do decide to send a team.

"We don't know if we're going. And if we do go, we don't know if individuals are going to pull out," Ponting was quoted as saying in Australian newspapers.

"It just won't be Australian players. There will be a few other teams who will be thinking long and hard if the tour does go ahead."

Pakistan officials have dismissed security concerns, hoping the ongoing Asia Cup will dispel any doubts over their ability to host the Champions Trophy.

Worcs cannot afford Nehra

AFF, London

Worcestershire confirmed Friday they have dropped their bid to sign Indian paceman Ashish Nehra for the second half of the season after he demanded more money to move to New Road.

Nehra was lined up as a replacement for West Indian quick Fidel Edwards, who was forced to withdraw through injury, and had agreed terms but now the deal has been called off.

"The deal had been cleared with the Indian Cricket Board and we were expecting him to come and join us pretty much straight away," said Worcestershire chief executive Mark Newton.

"But then he came back to us asking for more money and saying the deal started too soon. As a result, I can confirm he will not be joining us."

Newton believes the huge financial rewards available in the Indian Premier League have made it more difficult for counties to sign overseas players.

"It has been extremely difficult to find a suitable overseas player," he said.

"The Indian Premier League has changed everything. Prices have gone through the roof."

Decisions

FROM PAGE 17

is delayed or interrupted, the Umpires will reduce the length of the interval.

"In the event of time being lost (playing time lost less any extra time provided) up to and including 60 minutes in aggregate, the length of the interval shall be reduced from 45 to 30 minutes. In the event of more than 60 minutes being lost in aggregate, the duration of the interval shall be agreed mutually by the Umpires and both Captains subject to no interval being of more than 30 minutes' duration. In the event of disagreement, the length of the interval shall be determined by the ICC Match Referee."

LLOYD REPLACES GAVASKAR

The ICC Board selected former West Indies captain and ex-ICC match referee Clive Lloyd as the new Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee.

Mr Lloyd was selected ahead of the other nominee for the role, the former Pakistan captain Majid Khan. Mr Lloyd replaces Sunil Gavaskar, the ex-Indian captain, who stood down in May after eight years in the role.

Oval Test drawn

Cricket

AFF, Dubai

The change is from an England win as a result of Pakistan's refusal to play to the match being termed abandoned as a draw.

It added: "The board's decision is based on the view that in light of the unique set of circumstances the original result was felt to be inappropriate."

The match, which came to its controversial climax after tea on the fourth day, was the fourth and final Test of the series.

The ICC added that its decision to change the match result also had implications for the series: "This means the series result is altered from 3-0 to England to 2-0."

However, their statement also said: "All players' performances in the match are unaffected."

An ICC spokesman told AFP that the change of result would have some effect on their Test championship. The table is due to be updated soon with results from the last two years still counting towards the current standings.

As the Oval match falls within

Return thrills Simon

BBC ONLINE, undated

Simon Jones has said it is "brilliant" to be back in international cricket after being named in England's 30-man provisional ICC Champions Trophy squad.

Welsh paceman Jones, 29, has not played for England since suffering a series of injuries first picked up in the 2-1 Test victory over Australia in 2005.

"I've worked very hard to get back to where I was," he told BBC Wales.

"The season has gone very well and the new lease of life at Worcestershire has brought a new spark to my game."

Since switching counties from Glamorgan to Worcestershire in October last year Jones' career has been revitalised and he has taken 26 first-class wickets this season.

Jones had to overcome a six-

Inzamy refused to take the field after tea on the fourth day in protest over the umpires' decision to endorse five penalty runs over the incident.

England were then awarded the Test on forfeit, the first such instance in Test cricket's 131-year history.

"Pakistan was cleared of tampering so the decision of forfeit was wrong because we objected to allegations of tampering and the decision to change the result proves it was wrong," said Inzamam who retired last year.

The ICC executive committee's decision means England won the four-match series 2-0 instead of 3-0.

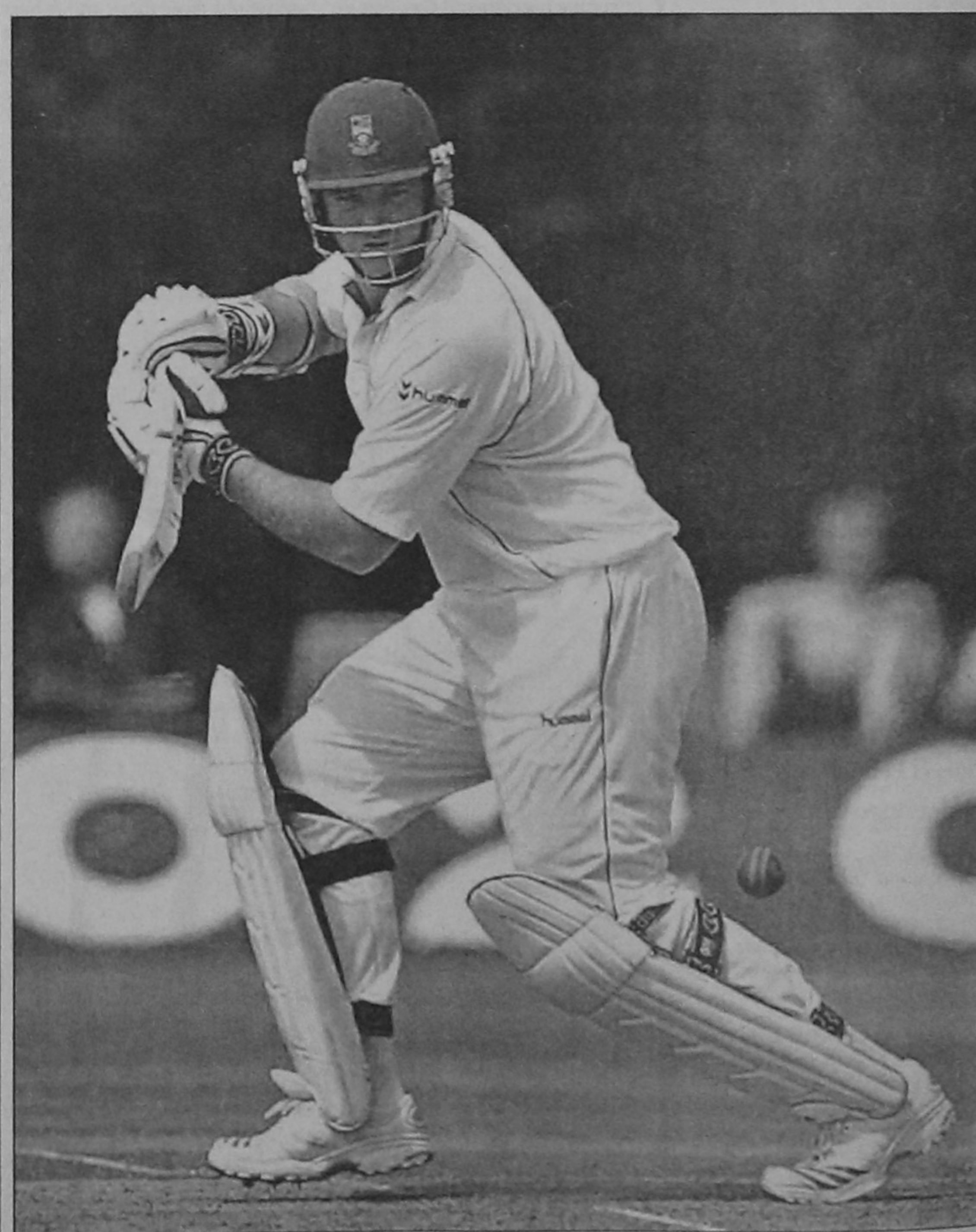
Following the Oval Test, an International Cricket Council (ICC) disciplinary committee banned Inzamam for four one-day matches on charges of disrespecting the game with his protest.

Umpire Hair was later banned from the ICC elite umpire's panel. The Australian only returned after completing a "rehabilitation programme" last September -- a reinstatement Inzamam still protests.

"I think Hair, being the central figure in that Oval case, should not have been allowed to umpire at international level. He has returned to international cricket which is not correct," said Inzamam.

PCB chairman Dr Nasim Ashraf said the decision showed there was respect for Pakistan among the ICC members.

"It was unheard of before that the result of a match is changed after two years," Ashraf told AFP. "We are thankful to all member boards especially England and Wales Cricket Board who did not object to the decision."



South Africa captain Graeme Smith guides the ball backward of point in the warm-up match against Middlesex at the Uxbridge Cricket Club ground yesterday.