

Warne facing legal action

AFP, Melbourne

Shane Warne was facing legal action Tuesday after a cyclist involved in a road rage incident with the Australian cricket great said he plans to sue for damages to his bike.

Web designer Mathew Hollingsworth, 28, is launching a civil claim in the Melbourne Magistrates Court seeking 1,575 Australian dollars for repairs to his hi-tech bicycle plus damages, interest and costs.

His lawyer George Defteros told Melbourne local radio that Warne's very public outburst on Twitter about the incident was partly why his client decided to take action.

"I think in a way it was brought on by Twitter more than anything else," he said. "There's an incident and then all of a sudden it's out there in the public domain very, very quickly. "I'm not saying that anyone's at fault for this coming out the way it has but, be that as it may, it has come out so we want to put our version of events across really."

Hollingsworth alleges Warne drove his sports car into him after a robust exchange of words in peak-hour traffic in Melbourne on January 17.

The Herald Sun newspaper said that in a statutory declaration, Hollingsworth claimed Warne lurched his car forward striking him on the leg.

"Once I was on the footpath, a young brunette woman in business clothing approached me offering assistance and asked, 'Are you okay? Are you going to follow it up? I have the rego [registration]," he said in the declaration.

"I said, 'No, it should be okay. It was Shane Warne.' She seemed as surprised as me."

Warne has denied any wrongdoing, using a series of Tweets on the evening of the incident to detail his version of events and lash out at "antagonistic" cyclists.

The spin king claimed a cyclist grabbed on to the back of his car as he headed home from a training session at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Then at a change of traffic lights, he alleged the man rode past and hit the bonnet with his hand. He said the bike rider then pulled up in front of his car, halting traffic, and abused him.

Warne, 42 is one of Australia's greatest cricketers and has come out of retirement to play with the Melbourne Stars in Australia's Twenty20 Big Bash League.

Many

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badly in the Fed Cup and they are not expected to do much better in the league. Sheikh Russel, semifinalists in the Fed Cup, are a force to be reckoned with and with Maruful Haque at the helm, a top three finish is very much on the cards.

The rest -- Brothers Union, Rahmatganj MFS, Farashangj SC, Arambagh KS and Soccer Club Feni (the only side from outside the capital) -- have the potential to cause a few upsets on their way to finding a mid-to-low table finish in the league.

Apart from the team's performances, one thing that has the potential to take away the limelight from the game is the spectre of match-fixing. Having been kept under the carpet for a long time, the match-fixing scandal came to the fore last year and marred much of the competitive atmosphere of the league. But thankfully it worked as a wakeup call for the authorities who have vowed to take some stringent measures this time around. Although seeming to take a bold stand against match-fixing, the authorities still appear unsure on the issue of the foreign player quota. While the jury is still out on whether foreign player participation should be decreased, it is undeniable that the foreigners will be the major factor in deciding who takes home the title.

Bangladesh U-19s take series



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 bounced back strongly in the sixth one-dayer to seal the series victory against the visiting England Under-19 yesterday.

The home team took an unassailable 4-2 lead in the seven-match series, riding on two half-centuries from Soumya Sarker and Mosaddek Hossain to secure a comfortable six-wicket victory in the sixth game at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

The visitors returned to contention in the series by winning the fifth game but a strong batting display from the local boys after left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed's four-wicket haul helped them clinch the series with a match in hand.

England Under-19 made a solid start after being put in to bat first when Daniel Bell and Sam Kelsall shared a 72-run opening stand, but they eventually managed a below-par 206 in 50 overs. Left-arm spinner Nasum bowling brilliantly to take four wickets conceding only 34 runs in his ten-over spell while Asif Ahmed picked up two wickets for 25 in ten overs.

MS ready to step down

First T20I against Australia today



REUTERS, Sydney

Mahendra Singh Dhoni would readily step aside as India captain if there was a suitable replacement available, the under-fire skipper said on Tuesday.

"It's not something I want to hold on to or stick on to. If there's a better replacement, it's a very open thing, he can come in," Dhoni said on the eve of India's first Twenty20 International against Australia here on Wednesday.

"At the end of the day, you want India to perform. If there is someone who can do a better job, then it's a place that should be given to him. It's not something you have to cling on to," he said.

"It's not a position that belongs to anyone. The responsibility was given to me three-and-half years back and I have been trying to fit into the shoes, trying to get along with the team and perform well wherever we play."

Under Dhoni, India won the Twenty20

Bell top-scored with 51 runs while Kelsall added 31.

In reply, the home side got off to a flying start courtesy of Soumya and Anamul Haque before the latter was trapped leg before wicket by Craig Overton. Salman Hossain then joined Soumya to share 97 runs for the third wicket.

Man-of-the-match Soumya scored 86 off 98 balls, an innings that featured ten fours and a six while Salman chipped in with a 64-ball 30 with three boundaries. But it was Mosaddek Hossain who made things easy for the home team during his unbeaten 40-ball 51 that contained nine fours and a six.

Overton captured two wickets conceding 41 runs in five overs.

The seventh and final one-dayer will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on February 4.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND UNDER-19s: 206-8 in 50 overs (Bell 51, Kelsall 31, Singh 28, Ball 25 not out, Hutton 26 not out; Nasum 4-34, Asif 2-25)
BANGLADESH UNDER-19s: 211-4 in 42.5 overs (Soumya 86, Salman 30, Mosaddek 51 not out; Overton 2-41)

Result: Bangladesh Under-19 won by six wickets.

(2007) and 50-over World Cups (2011) and became the top-ranked Test nation before the team's spectacular decline started in England last year.

The team did not win a single match on that tour, losing the Test series 4-0, and further humiliation awaited them in Australia, where they succumbed to their second successive whitewash abroad.

Dhoni missed the last Test in Adelaide, having incurred a one-match ban for the team's slow over rate in Perth, but his leadership was as much criticised as the senior batsmen's failure in the 4-0 series loss in Australia.

Dhoni did not endear himself to the fans and former cricketers either by hinting he might quit Tests to focus on 2015 World Cup.

"I definitely feel that Dhoni does not enjoy Test cricket," his former captain Sourav Ganguly recently told AajTak channel.

"His performance in Test and one-day cricket are poles apart and by making such a statement, he has also perhaps explained his complete disinterest in the longer format of the game," Ganguly added.

'IPL destroying India'



AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan cricket legend Imran Khan has blamed the lucrative Twenty20 Indian Premier League (IPL) for India's recent dismal Test showing, saying the focus should be on the game's longer format.

India were humiliated 4-0 in the recent series away to Michael Clarke's Australians to record eight successive overseas Test defeats following a similar hammering in England last year.

"I can only use one word to describe India's form... consistent. To lose eight Test matches in a row overseas is an achievement," Imran, the former Pakistan captain, said in the first annual Tiger Pataudi Memorial Lecture in Kolkata on Monday night.

"It's a wake-up call for Indian cricket. A team that won the World Cup and was number one in Tests a few months back is in the doldrums.

"If you want to be the leaders you can't keep losing. If you pay so much emphasis on Twenty20 cricket, you've got to pay hugely."

The annual IPL tournament revolutionised cricket when it burst on to the scene in 2008 with a high-octane blend of international star players, short matches and Bollywood glamour.

Imran, who led Pakistan to their only World Cup triumph in 1992, said Test cricket should always be the top priority, as it is the

greatest examination of players' temperament and technique.

"India has to decide soon whether it prefers glamour, Bollywood and money to Test cricket," he said. "In my 20 years of cricket, I never made so much money as a mediocre player in T20 does today.

"The connoisseurs will rate a player by his Test record and not what he's done in T20s. Test cricket is the ultimate test of a player and that's the reason Test records carry value.

"Talent can excel in one-dayers, but in Test cricket, your temperament and technique is tested besides the talent."

Imran also said India needed to overhaul their domestic cricket to make it more competitive.

"In India and Pakistan, there's a huge jump from first-class cricket to international cricket," he said.

Imran -- now an increasingly influential politician in Pakistan -- also paid glowing tribute to former India captain Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, who died in September of a lung infection aged 70.

Nicknamed "The Tiger" for his brilliant fielding, Pataudi quit Tests in 1975 with 2,793 runs in 46 matches and six centuries despite losing the sight in his right eye in a car accident in England.

"If Tiger hadn't lost an eye, he would have broken all records," said Imran. "His quality of strokes was amazing. Mere mortals couldn't play them."

shaken. But player-of-the-tournament, Anton Tudu, fired two in the back of the net but it failed to win them the cup. The victorious Charbaria had an army of parents and teachers to celebrate their glory. But teachers moaned about how they almost pulled out of the tournament in the last minute. One of them said of their school's success, "Last year it was such a hassle coming all the way with so many youngsters that we considered not participating this year. This was written in fate. We wouldn't have come this far and won if it wasn't for the push we got from our community."

Haddin knows what it means

AFP, Sydney

Australia wicketkeeper Brad Haddin said Tuesday he has been dropped, not rested, from the one-day squad to face India and Sri Lanka and conceded it will be tough for him to win back his place.

Selectors said they had left Haddin out of the 14-man squad for the first three games of the tri-nation series to give him a rest after the 4-0 Test whitewash of India, but the 34-year-old had a different take.

"I think any time you're out of the Australian cricket team I think you're dropped," he told Sky Sports Radio.

"You give another guy an opportunity to take your spot and you've got to look if they do well, you could find it hard to get back in the team.

"But that's the way it is and I've just got to deal with that and make sure I'm ready to play."

Haddin's place has been taken by Matthew Wade, who is 10 years younger and says he plans to make the most of it.

"I'm looking to take my chance and see what happens from there," Wade told reporters.

"I'm just hoping to do my best, I'm not sure what the selectors have got in mind after these three games but I'll be doing my best to make it a hard decision to remove me."

Haddin has been under pressure all summer over his performances at Test level and Wade has been touted as his likely replacement should selectors decide to make a change.

Australia and India start the one-day series on February 5 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Victoria, DOHS

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top-scorer with 87. Suleman smote three sixes and five fours to make 60 in 40 balls while Jubayer was the other notable scorer with an unbeaten 30.

In reply, Prime Doleshwar lacked fire in their batting as they compiled a tame 202 for 9 in 50 overs.

Nadif Chowdhury made the team-highest 39.

Rashid Hanif picked up three wickets for 36 runs while Robul Islam took two for 37 runs.

Charbaria

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But the initiative by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education was praised by many as the school kids are getting the opportunity to take part in sports as well as gathering knowledge from travelling to different places.

Surjo Torun

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situation, the CCDM will take it up for discussion.

Saad informed that the club would appeal the decision in the next few days.

Surjo Torun's next scheduled game is against Cricket Coaching School on February 3 at Mirpur.

Kamal's anxious hours

ICC Board meeting starts in Dubai



AFP, Dubai

A two-day high-powered meeting of cricket's governing body which began here Tuesday will consider the nomination of their next vice-president who will take over in two years time.

The Executive Board of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in their first of four meetings annually will also be presented with the independent governance review of the ICC by Lord Woolf, the former chief justice of England and Wales.

"The ICC Board will consider the nomination received from the Bangladesh Cricket Board [BCB] and the Pakistan Cricket Board [PCB] for the next ICC vice-president who will succeed Alan Isaac as the ICC president in 2014," said ICC.

Isaac, from New Zealand, will take over from India's Sharad Pawar in June this year.

There has been media speculation that Mustafa Kamal's nomination will be rejected, but the reigning BCB president has shown confidence his nomination will be approved.

The ICC governance review was launched last year.

"In April 2011, the ICC had adopted a new strategic plan which identified the need for

an independent governance review as one of the key initiatives to build a bigger, better global game," said the ICC.

Lord Woolf was appointed to conduct the review in August 2011.

"The governance review is intended to help the ICC's aspiration to be a well governed and leading global sporting organisation," said the ICC.

Following an interim report presented by Lord Woolf during October 2011, the ICC Executive Board will now receive a final report with recommendations, the ICC said.

The scope of the review also includes the nomination and election process of ICC president, currently done on a rotational basis from region to region.

Some member countries had objected to the procedure, saying appointment should be made through open candidature.

The ICC will also consider whether to increase incentives for Test matches, which is in danger from the more popular Twenty20 brand of cricket.

"The ICC Board will consider a proposal to increase incentives in the form of prize money to promote Test match cricket in the period before the ICC Test Championship event in 2017," the ICC said.

The ICC Test Championship originally scheduled for 2013 was last year postponed until 2017.

Bell puts on a brave face



AFP, Dubai

Out-of-form batsman Ian Bell Tuesday vowed England will look for improvement in the third and final Test after their abject surrender in the first two matches, saying defeats provide great time to learn.

The 29-year-old Bell was among the top-order batsmen who failed miserably in England's ten wicket defeat in the first Test in Dubai and then in the 72-run loss in the second in Abu Dhabi -- giving Pakistan an unassail-

able 2-0 lead.

Pakistani spinners Saeed Aijmal with 17 wickets and Abdul Rehman with 12 have destroyed the England batsmen in the two Tests, with Bell managing just 36 runs with a best of 29 in four innings.

Bell, who scored four hundreds with a best of 235 in the seven Tests at home last season, said everyone was looking for improvement in the third and final Test starting from February 3.

"We have had two bad Tests - and, of course, people are going to be asking questions. We have been in and out of form, and need to stay

together and work hard. It's a great time to learn and show improvement," said Bell.

Bell stressed England, bowled out for 72 in the last innings of the Abu Dhabi Test after set a tricky 145-run target, will perform better.

"We are looking at areas we can improve mentally and technically. We are all hungry enough, and have scored runs in the sub-continent. So it's not just negative stuff. We are looking forward to a better performance," said Bell.

Bell admitted facing Pakistan in sub-continent conditions was a big challenge.

"Credit to the Pakistani spinners, they bowled exceptionally well, we knew they would be big challenge for us, we know that's gone now, the series has been lost and we got a really important last game," said Bell.

Bell said failure after scoring big last season was the most disappointing.

"It's been disappointing, but also that comes with cricket, you know you have good times and you have bad times, generally things get a little bit easier the longer you are there, unfortunately I've got some balls early that have got me out."

"I'm desperate as ever to get some big runs in this last Test and as I've said we will all be preparing and training as hard as possible to make sure we get it right," said Bell, who has so far scored 5,063 runs in 71 Tests.



England coach Andy Flower (R) gives instruction to Ian Bell during a practice session at the ICC Global Cricket Academy at Dubai Sports City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Mosque bigwig
5 Scale member
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12 Hardy cabbage
13 Commotion
14 World's fair
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18 Super-market section
19 Undergo without yielding
21 Exam format
24 Still, in verse
25 Make tea
28 Took to the skies
30 Festive
33 Actor Harrison
34 Animal stomachs
35 Away from WSW

36 Pump up the volume
37 Base runner's goal
38 Tosses in period
39 Historic
41 Venomous vipers
43 What to call an English nobleman
46 Puppeteer Lewis
50 Norway's capital
51 Atoned for
54 Coaster
55 Central
56 Fashion
57 Danson and Nugent
58 Eggs

59 Heroic verse
DOWN

- 1 Furniture store chain
2 Long skirt
3 Swiss peaks
4 Laid-back
5 Despondent
6 Rhyming tribute
7 Source of wealth
8 Crystal-lined rock
9 Obliterated
10 Mimic
11 Took the bus
16 "— the ramparts ..."
22 Frizzy coiffure
23 Camel's cousin
25 Bikini half
26 Sleep phenom
27 Kicked out of school
29 Rams fans?
31 Moreover
32 "Certainly"
34 Burn somewhat
38 Fats Domino's "Ain't That ..."
40 Crucifixes
42 Omega preceder
43 Lion's share
44 Capri, for one
45 Show-room sample
47 On
48 Start over
49 Mid-month date
52 Louis —
53 Blackberry, for ex.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A CAT'S STRAIGHT, DIRECT PATH FROM POINT A TO POINT B MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A FELINE BEELINE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals O