

# BIG THREE'S REVISED DRAFT Unanimous support misleading

CRICINFO, Dubai

After days of hectic lobbying and bargaining the ICC board settled for a period of consultation and discussion over a set of principles which, if approved, will grant the BCCI, the ECB and CA a bigger share of cricket's global revenues and a bigger control of the game's governance.

An ICC press release announced a set of principles which were described as "unanimously supported." There were concessions granted to the other seven member nations, in the shape of the abolition of the two-tier concept which would have relegated Bangladesh and Zimbabwe to the lower division, the expansion of the proposed Executive Committee from four to five and money from a newly-created Test Match Fund expanded to include South Africa, unlike in the draft proposal which had left them out.

However, hours after the ICC's press release, four boards sought to clarify their stance in the light of the statement about "unanimous support" for the principles.

One official, representing one of the other seven boards, said the term "unanimous" support was a "misleading" one. "We were offered amended terms and we will take them back to our Board and discuss it - there is nothing more to our position."

The list of principles presented during the meeting for discussion covered each of the five "resolution" areas originally meant to be distributed among the seven member nations. These included the introduction of "meritocracy, a reworking of the FTP, the ICC's corporate structure, constitutional amendments, as well as changes in governance."

According to one insider, none of the Big Three pressed for voting, "since they knew that a vote wouldn't be feasible", adding: "The next round of negotiations, read bargaining, begins now." A follow-up meeting will be held to discuss the proposals again next month.

A few hours after the ICC sent its press release, the PCB issued a statement saying, "no decision with regard to any proposed changes as per the Position Paper submitted by BCCI, CA and ECB have been made in today's ICC Board meeting. The PCB clearly stated at the meeting that the guiding principles were subject to PCB's Governing Board's approval. These matters will be placed before the BOG (board of governors) and thereafter PCB will take its position at the next ICC Board meeting."

CSA also sent out a release to "clarify" the ICC's statement, and said its board would meet soon to discuss the principles. "The support is subject to the approval of the respective Boards of the member countries after which a final decision will be taken at a follow-up ICC Board meeting on February 8," the release said.

In a statement from the BCB, acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said, "We have communicated to the ICC Board that the BCB will not endorse any proposal that compromises Bangladesh's full member rights in terms of status and participation. We respect the views of the member countries who have expressed similar sentiments."

Sri Lanka Cricket's statement followed shortly after, which said, that at the meeting, "revised position papers were forwarded taking into deliberation the concerns faced by the member nations, for the consideration of ICC as opposed to the original position paper circulated among the full member nations." SLC president, Jayantha Dharmadasa, it said, had "informed the ICC (of) the need for further discussions on the matter pertaining to the revised position papers with the (SLC's) Executive Committee prior to arriving at a decision in this regard."

Another official from one of the seven boards was pleased a final decision was deferred. "It is a big thing that we managed to have the resolution to not go through."

## CHANGES FROM ORIGINAL PROPOSALS

**1. Original:** Two-tiers with promotion and relegation of Nos 9 & 10 ranked team, with BCCI, CA & ECB exempt from relegation.

**New principle:** There will be an opportunity for all Members to play all formats of cricket on merit, with participation based on meritocracy; no immunity to any country, and no change to membership status.

**2. Original:** Creation of a Test Cricket fund to be distributed among BCB, ZC, NZC, SLC, PCB and WICB.

**New principle:** Test Cricket fund money to be available to South Africa as well

**3. Original:** An Executive Committee (ExCo) to have four members, include three permanent representatives from CSA, BCCI and ECB who would share an annual rotating chairmanship.

**New principle:** The establishment of an ExCo and Financial & Commercial Affairs Committee (F&CA) to provide leadership at an operational level, with five members, including BCCI, CA and



Manchester United striker Robin Van Persie (R) celebrates opening the scoresheet against Cardiff City with their new signing Juan Mata at Old Trafford yesterday

PHOTO: AFP

# Winning start for Mata

AFP, London



Manchester United's record signing Juan Mata enjoyed a winning debut on Tuesday as his new club recorded a 2-0 victory at home to Cardiff City in the Premier League.

Leaders Arsenal, meanwhile, spurned an opportunity to move four points clear after drawing 2-2 at Southampton, but Liverpool tightened their grip on fourth place with a superb 4-0 defeat of derby rivals Everton.

Mata started at Old Trafford, three days after making a £37.1 million (\$61.2 million, 44.8 million euros) move from Chelsea, as former United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer returned to his old stomping ground as Cardiff manager.

Last season's top scorer Robin van Persie was also included in

United's starting line-up, after seven weeks out with a thigh strain, and the Dutch striker broke the deadlock in the sixth minute.

Mata found Ashley Young with a raking pass and when his cross was headed against the bar by Antonio Valencia, Van Persie headed in at the second attempt after his initial header was parried by goalkeeper David Marshall.

Young added a fine second in the 59th minute, cutting in from the left flank and arrowing a drive into the bottom-right corner, before Wayne Rooney made his return from injury as a substitute for Van Persie.

United, who had lost three of their previous five home league games, remain six points below the Champions League places, but they inched to within 12 points of Arsenal after the London club's slip-up at St Mary's.

Bidding to move four points clear of second-place Manchester City,

Arsenal fell behind in the 21st minute when centre-back Jose Fonte headed in a left-wing cross from Luke Shaw.

The visitors sprang to life early in the second half, equalising through Olivier Giroud's deft back-heel and going ahead when Santi Cazorla drilled home, only for Adam Lallana to sweep in an equaliser two minutes later.

Arsenal's push for a late winner was undermined when midfielder Mathieu Flamini was sent off for a studs-up lunge at Morgan Schneiderlin.

Arsene Wenger's side are now at risk from City, who will take over at the top if they win at Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday, while Chelsea could draw level with Arsenal if they win at home to West Ham United.

Liverpool moved three points clear of fifth-place Spurs and four points above sixth-place Everton

with a memorable 4-0 victory in a one-sided Merseyside derby at Anfield.

Steven Gerrard's 21st-minute header from Luis Suarez's corner broke the deadlock and a quick-fire brace from Daniel Sturridge made the game safe before half-time.

The England striker finished coolly from Philippe Coutinho's through ball in the 33rd minute before deftly lobbing Everton goalkeeper Tim Howard from the edge of the area two minutes later.

Suarez raced clear to add a fourth early in the second half, before Sturridge squandered an opportunity to complete his hat-trick by blazing a penalty over the crossbar.

France midfielder Yohan Cabaye, who is reported to be on the verge of a move to Paris Saint-Germain, was absent for Newcastle United as Alan Pardew's side recorded a 0-0 draw at Norwich City.

# Mash to lead Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER

Following his return to the longer version cricket this year by playing in the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) earlier this month, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's potential return to Test cricket took a step further when he was named captain of the Khulna Division in this year's National Cricket League, which begins from today.

The eight teams will face off in Khulna, Rajshahi, Bogra and Fatullah in the first round. Chittagong's Nafees Iqbal, Rajshahi's Forhad Reza, Dhaka's Mohammad Sharif, Dhaka Metro's Mehrah Hossain Jr, Rangpur's Naeem Islam, Sylhet's Alok Kapali and Barisal's Shahriar Nafees are the rest of the captains.

Khulna were the champions in the last edition of the tournament.

# Mashrafe testifies

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza appeared before the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) anti-corruption tribunal yesterday.

The full hearing into the alleged match-fixing and spot-fixing during the 2013 BPL began this month.

Mashrafe, who was called as a witness, said that he was there for twenty minutes but he was not ready to reveal details.

There were huge suspicions over the match between Dhaka Gladiators and Chittagong Kings on February 2, 2013 at Chittagong. In that match the Dhaka Gladiators management had dropped their regular captain Mashrafe, citing a back injury, but the 'Narail Express' himself later said that he was fit to play that match.

# Real in last four

REUTERS, Madrid



Real Madrid set up a King's Cup semi-final against holders Atletico Madrid or Athletic Bilbao when they beat Espanyol 1-0 in their quarter-final, second leg on Tuesday for a 2-0 aggregate success.

Real lost 2-1 to Atletico at their own Bernabeu stadium in last year's final and will be keen to avenge that bitter defeat, which meant they ended the season without any silverware, if they face their city rivals in the last four.

Atletico have a 1-0 advantage over Bilbao from last week's first leg at the Calderon and play at the Basque club's new San Mames arena on Wednesday.

Real were quickly into their stride on a chilly night in the Spanish capital and their Spain playmaker Xabi Alonso unlocked the Espanyol defence with a magisterial seventh-minute pass.

Forward Jese sped clear before clipping a clinical effort into the net past goalkeeper Kiko Casilla from a tight angle.

Casilla made several fine saves to deny Cristiano Ronaldo but any faint hope

Espanyol had of getting back into the tie disappeared when midfielder Victor Sanchez earned a second yellow card and was sent off 13 minutes from time.

Real keeper and captain Iker Casillas barely touched the ball and Carlo Ancelotti's side have now gone eight matches without conceding a goal, a club record.

Casillas also set a new club best of 682 minutes without conceding a goal, overtaking the record set by Paco Buyo, who played for Real in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Real have come into form in recent weeks but have some difficult games coming up, including Sunday's La Liga visit to fourth-placed Bilbao and the two-legged Cup semi-final which takes place next week and the week after.

"It's a very tough calendar for us but I think we are on the right path," centre back Nacho Fernandez told reporters.

"It's key that we are keeping so many clean sheets," added the 24-year-old, whose younger brother Alex featured in midfield for Espanyol.

"We knew that we were playing against the best club in the world and it would be very tough," Alex, who played with Nacho in Real's B team before joining Espanyol, told Canal Plus.

# Transfer market sees growth

AFP, Geneva



The value of the international player transfer market jumped by 41 percent to 2.7bn euros last year, driven by a four-percent rise in the volume of sales, FIFA said on Wednesday.

Global football's governing body said that its Transfer Matching System handled a total of 12,309 cross-border deals involving male professional players, underlining the rosiness of the market.

The data was gathered in FIFA's Global Transfer Market report, which is now into its third edition.

With a total of 1,402 transfers, Brazil remained the most active market for both incoming and outgoing players.

Last year was marked by Real Madrid's September purchase of Wales international Gareth Bale from English club Tottenham for a reported world record fee of over 100 million euros.

That beat the previous record, also set by Real when they bought Cristiano Ronaldo from Manchester United for 94 million euros in 2009.

But despite Real's outlay for 24-year-old Bale, it was English clubs that spent the most on transfers in 2013, with their combined USD 913 million representing a quarter of the total.

# Abahani retain lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani retained the lead in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a 2-1 win over Sonali Bank at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pushkor Khisha Mimo struck both goals for Abahani to confirm his side's lead in the seven-team table with their fifth straight win wins while Masum pulled one goal back for Sonali Bank, who have now four points from five matches.

In the day's other match, Ajax SC blanked Azad SC 4-0.

# Bundesliga booms

REUTERS, Berlin



Bundesliga turnover rose by more than four percent in the 2012-13 season to 2.17 billion euros as it posted record figures for the ninth straight year, officials said on Tuesday.

Seventeen of the 18 clubs were profitable, up from 14 the previous fiscal year. Only seven registered a profit in the 2009-10 season and 12 did so in 2010-11.

Turnover grew by 4.4 percent while operating profit also reached a record high of 383.5 million euros, the German football league (DFL) said.

"It (the Bundesliga) remains the second biggest league in Europe per turnover," said DFL president Reinhard Rauball in a news release, referring to the English Premier League.

"The clubs have acted with good finan-

cial sense and with the aim of tight cost control."

Media revenue rose sharply by more than 70 million euros, up to 619 million from 546 million, boosted by increased interest from outside Germany.

It surpassed advertising as the biggest single revenue stream with 28.53 percent.

Merchandising grew by about 30 percent from 93.8 million euros to 120.3 million while advertising revenue was up to 578 million from 553 million, accounting for 26.6 percent of turnover.

The 36 clubs in the top two divisions also posted their ninth straight turnover record with a combined figure of 2.59 billion euros.

The second division broke the 400 million euros turnover mark for the first time.

The Bundesliga remained the best attended in the world but the average crowd per game dropped by more than 2,000 to 41,914 from 44,293.

# Nadal has no plans to rest

AFP, Madrid

World number one Rafael Nadal doesn't intend to make any changes to his schedule, despite being hampered by a back injury in losing the Australian Open final to Stanislas Wawrinka last weekend.

The 13-time Grand Slam champion received extensive treatment for the injury during the four-set encounter against the Swiss in Melbourne on Sunday.

However, after undergoing tests on his return to Spain, a spokesman for Nadal confirmed he will continue his planned tour of the Americas in the coming weeks.

# Aus win T20 opener

AFP, Hobart



England lost the opening Twenty20 international in Hobart on Wednesday after narrowly failing to chase down Australia's massive 214-run target.

The Australians were always in the box seats, with the tourists on 176 for nine with an over left.

But some prodigious late hitting by Ravi Bopara got England to within 13 runs of the target at the finish.

Bopara smashed seven sixes and two fours in his unbeaten 65 off 27 balls but paceman Nathan Coulter-Nile bowled the Australians to victory with four for 30 off his four overs.

Joe Root scored 32 off 24 balls and opener Alex Hales hit 22 off 12 balls for the beaten tourists, who have only won one limited-over international on their hapless tour of Australia. Australia won the Ashes Test series 5-0

and the ODI series 4-1 before the three-game T20 series began.

Cameron White was named man-of-the-match for his 75 off 43 balls as Australia set England 214 to win.

England's previous highest T20 run chase was 181 against India in 2012 so their 200 for nine was their highest score in the format.

White, recalled by Australia for the first time since 2012, smashed six boundaries and four sixes to set the platform for the home side's 213 for four after they won the toss.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** 213 for 4 in 20 overs (White 75, Finch 52, Maxwell 20, Lynn 37 not out; Broad 1-25, Bopara 1-26)

**ENGLAND:** 200 for 9 in 20 overs (Hales 22, Root 32, Buttler 20, Bopara 65 not out; Coulter-Nile 4-30, Henriques 2-36)

Result: Australia won by 13 runs.  
**Player-of-the-match:** Cameron White