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Underarm Incident: outraged fans insist that it’s simply not cricket!

Tactic is “one of the worst things I have ever seen done on a cricket field,” says Benaud

BY OUR CRICKET STAFF,
Melbourne, 2 February 1981

AN EXTRAORDINARY row broke out in the cricketing world yesterday as fans booed the Australian team off the pitch, after their last-minute use of underhand tactics brought them victory in the latest one-day match against New Zealand.

Australian bowler Trevor Chappell rolled an unorthodox underarm bowl across the ground to the New Zealand batsman, Brian McKechnie, meaning there was no way he could possibly attempt to score the six runs needed to draw the game. Fans from both sides were unanimous in their disdain for the Australian team’s appalling and unsportsmanlike behaviour.

The underarm bowl, which was once common in cricket, was phased out in the nineteenth century and has not seen widespread use since. But while underarm bowling is not currently

against the rules in cricket, it is rare and considered bad practice, especially when the umpire is not informed of the bowler’s intentions in advance. In this particular case, the bowl was used as a certain and, it seems to cricket fans, dishonest method to prevent New Zealand from attempting a draw.

The infamous bowl – dubbed the Underarm Incident – came at the end of an otherwise thrilling match. New Zealand needed six more runs to tie and there was one bowl remaining. The only way the New Zealand batsman Brian McKechnie might secure a draw was from a high bouncing delivery, off which he could strike the ball high up into the sky for a six.

Just moments before the final bowl of the day, Captain Greg Chappell spoke privately to his younger brother Trevor, telling him to use the underarm tactic. Knowing that it was all but impossible to score a six from an underarm bowl, this would ensure Australia a victory.



As soon as Trevor Chappell rolled the ball on to the cricket field, Mr McKechnie blocked the ball before throwing his bat down in frustration.

Despite this incident handing a victory to Australia for the second time in the final of this series, the team had no chance to celebrate as the crowd booed in disapproval of their tactics. Even the television commentator Ian Chappell, the brother of Greg and Trevor Chappell, was visibly shocked.

Robert Muldoon, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, said it was “the most disgusting incident I can recall in the history of cricket”.

Richie Benaud, commentator and former Australian captain, was similarly outraged, describing the Australian team’s tactics as “one of the worst things I have ever seen done on a cricket field”.

It is thought that yesterday’s incident may provoke a revision of the rules.

Johnson admits to being a drugs cheat

BEN JOHNSON, branded the biggest cheat in the history of sport, has finally admitted taking drugs after months of denials and lame excuses.

Mr Johnson, a Canadian sprinter who broke the world record while ‘winning’ the 100m gold medal at the Olympic Games in Seoul in September last year, has been taking steroids for years, he has revealed to a Canadian government inquiry.

Mr Johnson’s doctor revealed that twenty-six days before the Olympics, the runner took a compound of drugs normally used to fatten cattle before they are sent to market. He was sent home from South Korea in disgrace two days after winning, having tested positive for stanozolol, a steroid.

After being disqualified, Mr Johnson lost his medal, his world record of 9.79 seconds was declared invalid, and he was banned from all kinds of competition for two years.

BY OUR CANADA CORRESPONDENT,
Montreal, 13 June 1989



Mr Johnson was inspired throughout his career by his rivalry with Carl Lewis, the great American athlete. Two years ago, when Mr Johnson first broke the world record in Rome, Mr Lewis said, “There are gold medallists at this meet who are on drugs.”

Other athletes were also suspicious of Mr Johnson, giving him the nickname ‘Benoid’ because they were so sure he was on steroids.

After the Seoul Olympics Mr Johnson blamed the doctor who mixed his energy drinks for his drugs test failure, declaring: “I’ll pay back whoever did this to me. I never took anything. I have never, ever, knowingly taken illegal drugs.”

But, as revealed by his confession to this inquiry, those words were lies. Mr Johnson is also on record as saying, back in 1985, “Drugs are demeaning and despicable. When people are caught they should be thrown out of the sport for good.”

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Senna dead in tragic crash

Fans mourn as world-famous Brazilian racing driver is killed in controversial Grand Prix

BY OUR MOTOR-RACING EDITOR,
San Marino, 2 May 1994

AYRTON SENNA, the world’s most famous racing driver, was killed yesterday in a tragic high-speed crash at the San Marino Grand Prix. The three-times Formula One champion was rushed to hospital in nearby Bologna but died a couple of hours later.

The race did not get off to a smooth start. A collision at the starting line caused several minor injuries in the crowd from flying debris. Competitors had to follow a safety car slowly around the San Marino course for several laps while the track was cleared.

Once the race had properly begun, Senna was in the lead until he came off the track at a sweeping corner during his seventh lap. Travelling at 135mph, he hit a concrete wall to the side of the

racetrack. Pieces of his car littered the tarmac, while aerial shots revealed that he was clearly not moving.

Medical staff quickly pulled him from his vehicle as race organisers waved red flags to signal other drivers to stop. Senna had suffered serious blood loss and head injuries. The duty doctor recommended that he be immediately airlifted to hospital, but even there medical professionals were unable to save him.

Senna had reported previously that the car was handling strangely. Safety concerns were also weighing heavily on his mind after the death of Austrian driver Roland Ratzenburger during Saturday’s qualifying sessions.

Murray Walker, the famous veteran BBC motor-racing commentator, said the loss to Formula One was almost impossible to imagine and hard to put into words.



“This is the blackest day for Grand Prix racing that I can remember in the many, many years I have been covering the sport,” he said. “For there to be two casualties on successive days is quite appalling – and that arguably one of

them should be that of the greatest driver that has ever lived in the history of Grand Prix racing makes it doubly so.” As one of the most respected names in motor racing, Ayrton Senna will be missed by fans and professionals alike.

Usain Bolt is fastest in history

USAIN BOLT, the Jamaican sprinter, has lived up to all the pre-Games hype by winning three gold medals, all in world-record times, at the Beijing Olympics, *writes our correspondent from China on 23 August 2008*.

The new fastest man on the planet reached a blistering speed of more than 27mph during the second half of the 100m final, nearly a third faster than the famous Jesse Owens in 1936.

Mr Bolt won the 100m in 9.69 seconds, beating his own world record

by 0.03 seconds, taking just forty-one strides from start to finish. According to scientists who have analysed the race, had he not started celebrating before crossing the line he might have run it in 9.55 seconds.

Mr Bolt also won the 200m in 19.30 seconds, beating Michael Johnson’s 1996 record by 0.02 seconds, and he ran the third leg of the sprint relay, won by Jamaica in 37.10 seconds, another world best. Now everyone is wondering – can he run even faster in London in 2012?



Olympic champ sent home for kicking ref

AN OLYMPIC GOLD medallist has been sent home from Beijing in disgrace and banned from his sport for life after an extraordinary attack on a referee, *writes our Olympics correspondent from Beijing on 24 August 2008*.

Ángel Valodia Matos, from Cuba – who was a winner at Sydney in 2000 – was disqualified from yesterday’s taekwondo bronze medal match for taking too much time over an injury. A furious Mr Matos reacted by pushing the Swedish referee and viciously kicking him in the face, before spitting on the floor.

