
THE CHEESEMAN PAPERS - PART 5

THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF CONSOLIDATION OF ACU AND THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL BOWLING REVISITED

For the next few years, official records confirmed continuing progress was being made by ACU on all its fronts, albeit at a slower pace than formerly; i.e. with its growth in personal memberships; the number of affiliations made with local cricketing bodies, its activities and increasing influence made at those higher levels of the Cricket world where the most important decisions regarding the game's future were being made (e.g. The Cricket Council, TCCB, MCC and the Club Cricket Conference).

Two of the most pleasing affiliations to have taken place in the early months of 1956 were those of the Midlands CCC and the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs. Both of these organisations of long standing had very large numbers of Clubs affiliated to themselves in their own right and now their reciprocal union with ACU gave increased opportunities for all these bodies to work more closely together in the mutual interest of reaching and maintaining high standards of umpiring.

It would have been unrealistic to have expected the Association's pace of change to have continued as spectacularly as the massive wave of enthusiasm that had been generated in its first three years. Thus, secretarial reports of events occurring in the later 1950s tended to be inevitably repetitious in recording 'consolidation' of initiatives commenced some time before.

From time to time, however, news continued to be promulgated in "How's That!" of forward strides made in formerly virgin territory. Now that an official Association 'logo' illustrating the 'owl and balance' had been approved, new items of insignia began to make their appearance for purchase by members and these included cuff-links, tie holders, cravats, squares and car badges. In the interest of Full member security, the sale of the official ties and badges, displaying the coveted emblem, remained under the strict control of the Association through the good offices of Len Martin in his outfitters shop at Thurrock. The small profit made on each sale incrementally improved the Hon Treasurer's balance of credit on his annual financial statement of accounts and delayed the always unpopular necessity to consider increasing levels of members' subscriptions.

The first ever meeting of the new Council took place on a Sunday, the 25 March 1956, again with 'The Three Nuns' Hotel, Aldgate, as its venue. This approved of a small Emergency Committee, consisting of the President, the General Secretary, The Treasurer, plus Frank Carr and A.C. Cook, but happily it never had occasion to meet.

Throughout 1956, a Training Group, split into two sections (north and south London), had been meeting centrally with similar groups also active in Salisbury, Sevenoaks and Blackburn. The bulk of training activities at this time were organised during summer months to enable satisfactory arrangements to be made in assisting Associate Members

preparing for examination the following autumn. Candidates wishing to participate were invited to make application to Leslie Barnes, Secretary of the Examinations Committee.

David Smith, Chair of this same Committee, through the medium of the Newsletter, encouraged discussion at training meetings but urged all candidates to limit their considerations to hard facts of actual problems that were liable to crop up with almost unfailing regularity when umpiring, rather than to become bogged down with academic dialogue and theory on hypothetical events that may not occur in a lifetime. He nevertheless agreed that one should be prepared for all eventualities; further that the more unusual incidents were the ones most liable to catch officials unawares but he felt it would be unwise for members to become 'pain in the neck' theorists rather than practising umpires. He invited members to send him examples of unusual events from match play for discussion at future meetings.

By now, many applications were being received from intending candidates to take the examinations leading to Full Membership, with new entry records continually being broken, month upon month. The examination policy at this time was, firstly, to pass a fairly straightforward written paper on the knowledge of Cricket Law with which a person who did not normally do a great deal of writing would be able to cope.

Success in this written stage was then followed by a more searching oral test, in which details of an adroit field technique, individual personality and bearing was also assessed, in addition to a more comprehensive enlightenment of the Cricket Laws.

During the 1956 season, the South Australian Touring Team arrived in the United Kingdom and a dinner was arranged at Lord's in its honour. Tom Smith was greatly encouraged when Mr Wallace-Smith, the Tour Manager, informed him that the Touring Team had unanimously agreed that it had found the umpiring of cricket at club level in England to be of "a very high standard". It really seemed to the Association General Secretary that all the hard work undertaken by ACU over only three years had already produced positive results, bearing in mind that the Association's predominant objective was and, would remain, to continuously improve and maintain the standard of its members.

In Mr Wallace-Smith's opinion, the English County sides would be equivalent to the top teams in either the Sydney or Melbourne 1st Grade XIs – that is, they would include several players with Test-Match experience. The UK Minor Counties Cricket would be comparable to the top 2nd Grade Australian Teams, with the best 3rd Grade Cricket, as played in the major cities of Melbourne and Sydney, equivalent to the average Club Cricket XIs in the UK.

Responding to an invitation to write an article for "How's That!", Mr Wallace-Smith submitted the following interesting comparison of Club

Cricket in England and Australia which appeared in the 11th Edition of the Newsletter:

"Club Cricket conditions in Australia have changed since the late 1920s, when such players as Bradman and McCabe were put on the first rung of success by early achievement in this sphere. In those days, batsmen in Club Cricket invariably played on glazed concrete, a batting paradise, and so they developed strokes and the constant desire to be on the offensive. Although Australian Cricket can now boast of having graduated to turf wickets, it can no longer boast of producing international stars. It is my belief that the inferior turf that has resulted from this so-called advancement, is responsible for not producing some more bush – Bradmans and O'Reillys. I have seen two wonderful products of junior glazed competitions reach the stage of absolute despair on so-called 'senior turf'. The bowlers, likewise, get a false sense of values on these helpful pitches and variations, etc. need to be mastered for success. The reason for inferior turf pitches in Australia is largely climatical and only finance will alter it. The Club Cricketer in the UK is provided with a completely different set of circumstances. The square in Australia does not have the intensity of surface grass growth so that to achieve binding in a wicket, even for one afternoon, work should commence on a Monday for a Saturday match. Initially, a complete flooding is made of the turf to be used. Then, slowly the moisture is brought to the surface and at the same time it is compacted very hard by a heavy roller.

This long preparation never occurs over here (UK) with the result that groundsman's fees are not so large. You are in a much better position financially with bar returns etc., to pay your somewhat limited man-hour commitments more than we, who are obliged to pay out so much more, if we are to hope to have as good a wicket. During the summer months here in the UK, you have the surface-type grass thriving on your squares, which can resist the sun without any trouble and so perform a constant binding to and source of moisture for your turf or marl. This means for less work on the groundsman's part – he merely mows the binding grass short and rolls it.

This brings me to my third point of comparison – that is, the attitude with which the players approach the game. Because Club Cricket in Australia has largely no social side, the players strive to gain their principal enjoyment from the game itself. That is, if we don't succeed in someway during the afternoon's play, we consider the day is spoilt, but in this country some of my happiest days were when I had least success. This is because of the gentle summer sun (when it did come out!) and the charming scene which was everywhere about you. This has as its counterpart in Australia, heat, flies and scorched surroundings. Neither do we have the facilities for entertaining after the match, when indifferent performances are so quickly forgotten amongst a group congenial components. It would appear that most Club Cricketers in England join their Club because they think they can enjoy their Cricket with that Club but, perhaps, even more, as to make it the social centre of

the summer months. If we should develop that in Australia we would enjoy our cricket far more and ultimately have extra funds to spend on improvements which would ensure the happiness of players on the field.”

(Author's note: We have to remember that at the time Mr Wallace Smith was conducting this comparison it was in the mid-1950's, when limitations of the 'breathlyser' in the UK did not exist, and there was little deterrent for players to leave the pavilion very soon after the conclusion of a match. It is now the sad collective experience of many, that little or no social niceties in celebration remain i.e., such as the provision of a 'jug' of ale for all to participate in imbibing by the batsman who has put in a good performance (perhaps having made 50 or more runs), or 5 or more wickets being taken by a bowler. Nowadays, so seldom does the 'opposition' remain to socialise for any length of time once a match has been completed. which is a great pity).

“As it stands at the moment, the impression of Australians being ‘poker-faced’ on the sports field is correct and probably can be traced to intentness on success on the field, from whence comes the only enjoyment in our Club Cricket. However, if the Club cricketers in England were to come to Australia they would find that for special occasions the entertainment generally would be unequalled. Bob Bennett wrote in his book “The week-end Cricketer” a chapter entitled “Whither the British Club?” He infers in the closing paragraph that the basis upon which Club Cricket will be run in the future, rests in our hands and where the greatest happiness is, so should lie our decision regarding organisation.

Earlier in his book he suggested that according to the temperament of the area or country, it will be found necessary to make competitions a must (as in the north of England or Australia – *(Author's note, again: this comment was being made before the development of League Cricket in the UK Southern Counties)* – or non competitive for the more casual approach of the people in southern England. Although I applaud beyond all measure the virtues which follow in the train of non-competitive games, I am, as an Australian, very loath to see promising players retarded. The limitations that half or three-quarter day matches play on the development of young cricketers must be obvious. In Australia, we play a match on two separate afternoons. Naturally you expect Club Cricket to be a nursery for Test Cricket and yet, through limited time and lack of competition, the incentive is beginning to lag. You appear to be working hard towards the development of the Club Cricketer as large indoor schools reach completion, but it cannot be lost sight of that the best practice is long periods in the middle learning the art of building a foundation.

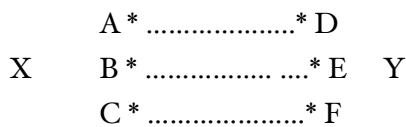
Finally, can I draw a very broad conclusion between the lot of the Club Cricketer in the two countries, taking the three principles of organisation, conditions and attitudes as our basis? At home we give the young Club Cricketer the time and incentive to develop into a good cricketer but can do little at the moment to help him as regards conditions and surroundings. You in the UK offer the reverse in that you provide the conditions, amenities and surroundings but

give little consideration as regards time (invariably one-day or afternoon matches) or incentive in the form of competition. I must not leave you with the impression that I think there is no place for casual Cricket, played at Club Cricket level. Indeed, I can think of no finer prospect than coming over here at the age of 35 and playing carefree and casual Cricket against fellows of my own age. But what I do advise is not to place the restriction on youthful development.”

(Authors note: As with the earlier comment in relation to the considerable foresight shown in the previously quoted Ken McCanlis article, more than a few home truths were outlined in the above words of wisdom penned by Mr Wallace-Smith as long ago as 1956 and for several years to come, on the English Club Cricket scene, much “catching-up” would remain the order of the day)

Issue No. 9 of the ACU Newsletter, “How's That!”, listed for the first-time the names of the 23 umpires appointed to stand in UK first-class fixtures, and the same issue also advised of the Special Regulations agreed by the First-Class Counties concerning when the provision of a new ball should become optional (after the score had reached 200 runs or 75 overs had been bowled). Hitherto – immediately post-war – the optional limit had been agreed as 65 overs. Another change introduced for the 1956 season that applied to first-class matches alone was that only one appeal would be allowed against the light by the batting side during each session of play. (No appeal at all had been allowed during the previous season).

Newsletter Issue No. 10 was memorable for interesting contributions from three overseas correspondents: Ray Lethbridge, (a first-class umpire in Western Australia and a Full member of ACU), W.J.C. Gwynne who stood in two Tests at Christchurch and Wellington and who gave interesting reviews of Cricket in New Zealand where the West Indies XI had been the previous season's tourists, and "S.B.", an otherwise unidentified correspondent from Australia, also gave the following explanation of the peculiar method of giving "guard" to Australian batsmen. To describe and understand it, the following diagram is helpful:



A.B.C. represents the wicket at the X umpire's end and D.E.F. represents the wicket at the Y umpire's end. Each* refers to an individual stump.

The Striker will request varying guards, such as "two centres" or "centre and centre", "leg and leg", "centre to leg" and so on.

From this it will be seen that the guard given in Australia is very mathematically and geometrically oriented. To us, it may be somewhat confusing at first, but the simple instruction is that the umpire is required to bend down so that his nose is level with the stump first nominated in the request, and in line with the stump so nominated secondly.

Thus, "two centres" or "centre and centre" is the line BE (UK "middle" or "centre"), "leg" and "leg" is C.F. our "leg" or "one" and so on.

At an "Open" Meeting at 'The Three Nuns', Aldgate on 19 October 1956, Vice-President, Frank Lee in his talk on Test Umpiring, not only gave a fascinating background to the 1956 Tests (England v Australia) but also recounted many incidents arising in his career that threw fresh light on various Cricket Laws. With considerable wit and several good stories interspersed, the audience of 160 was well entertained.

Frank Lee said that the Lord's Test, won by the Australians, was the finest in his experience. Tremendous catches were made and he had never stood behind finer fast bowling than Keith Miller's. A point for the serious consideration of all umpires was that Frank and his colleague, Emrys Davies, agreed before the match to work in the closest collaboration e.g. for possible catches in the leg-trap and other incidents in which the square-leg umpire might be better sighted to observe what happened than his colleague at the bowler's end. Although there had been no difficult decisions, nineteen of the dismissals had to be adjudicated by the umpires.

In this Test, there was an appeal for bad light with only two balls of an over left to be completed and it was considered no worse than twenty minutes previously, so play went on. Fred Trueman then proceeded to bowl two of the most fastest balls of the game, the first of which missed the wicket by only a fraction of an inch, after which play was suspended. The two umpires emerged from the pavilion to resume play to the accompaniment of booing from the crowd, who had not realised the necessary lapse of time for

the officials to get to the top of the pavilion, where they had gone to get a sufficiently good view of the surrounding sky to be able to judge when play could be safely resumed without fear of another early interruption.

Frank Lee said he believed the time might have arrived for the use of lightmeters and mentioned that he had seen two examples of simple design that seemed to be suitable. It was possible to penalise the batting side by going off for bad light. In the England v South Africa game at Nottingham in 1955 the light gradually worsened and rain began to fall. Tyson and Statham were bowling but the batsmen were middling the ball. The question seemed to be whether it was necessary to take the players off. Play was eventually suspended but as it turned out the batsmen said afterwards that they had been rather relieved when play had ceased. Regarding the controversial Manchester Test, Frank Lee said it was untrue that the wicket had been specially prepared for Lock and Laker, as had been suggested in some quarters. The groundsman had been new to Old Trafford the previous season and had left the covers on for two days prior to the Test, with the unexpected result that on the first day the colour of the middle was quite different to the outfield. The match was an education for any umpire, appeals being made on every conceivable basis.

Regarding an incident which had occurred in the previous season, when a batsman backing up too far was run out by the bowler, Frank Lee emphasised that it was not required by the Law to warn the non-striker, although in this case he had been.

Referring to the occasion when an appeal was made on a batsman taking longer than the stipulated two minutes to come in, Frank Lee pointed out that the umpires must be satisfied that a side could not, or would not, continue to play and that it was a question of awarding the match that arose according to Law 17, Note 1 (iii).

Frank recalled a time when batsmen had crossed for the third time after which there were four overthrows but only six runs were recorded to the wrong batsman. (Here, of course, the point arises of seeing that the scorers implicitly carry out the umpires instructions!)

He also mentioned an interesting LBW experiment a few years ago, when a line was drawn 4 feet in front of the popping crease at the batsman's end. Between this line and the popping crease was the area in which it was thought a good length ball should pitch. Three professional bowlers were asked to bowl, aiming to pitch the ball at the wicket within these lines. Fifty of eighty deliveries actually pitched between these lines of which only three went on to hit the stumps!

He also thought that four feet behind the wicket at the bowler's end was a good position for the umpire to take up his position, to fast bowlers particularly, as this obviated too many head and neck movements being made in determining the placement of the bowlers feet, the points of impact of the bowler's delivery on the pitch and the batsman's person and whether the subsequent trajectory of the ball would indicate it going on to hit the wicket. It was preferable to sight all these factors in a straight line which would negate the need

for a succession of neck and head movements.

With the advent of the New Year (1957) Tom Smith yet again defied the advice of many friends by arranging a second ("Open") meeting in central London on the Saturday evening of 16 January. His faith was again justified with the meeting being one of the most successful held so far by the Association, with Vice-President, John Arlott, literally holding an audience of 150+ spellbound. In his incomparable way, John reminisced, turning rapidly from one facet of Cricket to another. He spoke for one and a half hours without a note, completely "off the cuff" and for those fortunate to be present, the occasion was one that would never be forgotten.

Mr Arlott began by expressing his belief that despite statements to the contrary by the critics of low scoring, the average batsman pushed scores along to the best of his ability- certainly as much as tight bowling on the leg, to an equally tight leg trap would allow. On this theme, he also said that when we were asked to remember the Cricket seasons of 1954/55, we should certainly recall the performances of Trevor Bailey. He was, John said, a great player and Test Matches are won by great players and not merely good players.

Turning to great characters of the past, he instanced that, despite popular belief, names that were linked together were seldom at their best together. Hobbs and Sutcliffe, Tate and Larwood, for instance, were not really at their best together. He mentioned Tate as a great bowler and character who he was confident would have been

unplayable today under the present LBW Law.

He ended his address by raising some controversial points – advocating, especially, the wiping out of averages. He stressed the fallacy of these when bowlers could obtain a meritorious place in them – apparently – when most of their wickets consisted in dismissing "rabbits" after better bowlers had been bowling their hearts out trying to eliminate the better batsmen. Regarding batting statistics, he thought that the most vital ones were the individual top scores when the side as a whole had made a low total.

The second Annual Dinner of ACU was held in the Lord's Tavern on 1 February, 1957 and was no less enjoyable than the first. The President of MCC, Viscount Walter Monckton made a brilliant after-dinner speech and Mr Douglas Jardine, in the Chair, was again in ebullient form. The fourth AGM was soon to follow on Saturday, 9 March, and was particularly notable for the election of Tom Smith and Col. R.S. Rait-Kerr, to Hon. Life Membership.

Throughout the whole of the previous year, continued into the early months of 1957, these two had spent much time at Lord's working on the text of the first edition of the long-awaited textbook: "*Cricket Umpiring and Scoring*". Its published date was to be 18 April 1957, with its price nine shillings and sixpence.

In its foreword, Vice-President, John Arlott wrote: "This book is more important than any critic or reporter may write. It is the essential guide to a crucial office in the game, wherefore these good wishes are respectful, sincere and, I trust, unnecessary".

In giving his Annual Review, The General Secretary, Tom Smith, said that when the Association had been numerically small, it had been possible for the Committee and himself to handle administrative affairs of the Association within an individual proportion of "spare" time. The tremendous development of ACU had ended all that and, quite naturally and steadily, pressures had increased such that the administration, from time to time, had to be subdivided into sections of responsibility.

All this meant that more help would be needed as time marched on and Tom Smith appealed to any member who might feel that he would like to take up some form of work for the Association, he would be happy to record his name for future reference.

Tom was at pains, however, to stress that no service would be rendered either to ACU or to the member himself, unless from the outset, he would be willing to give a considerable amount of leisure and home life to Association affairs. Looking even further ahead, the General Secretary had no doubt that the time would come when the Association would be in a financial position to take permanent quarters and engage a full-time paid official.

On 8 April 1957, Frank Chester died at his home at Bushey, Hertfordshire, aged 61. This

created a grievous loss to ACU over a very short period. He will be remembered as the man who raised umpiring to a higher level than had ever been known before in the history of cricket. Douglas Jardine had 'volunteered' him to become the first Vice-President of the Association and he had remained one of its strong supporters since those earliest formative days. He retired at the end of the 1955 season, terminating a career in which he officiated in over 1,000 first-class fixtures, including 48 Tests Matches. His tremendous experience of 34 continuous years of umpiring in first-class Cricket would probably never be equalled.

Following the recent affiliation of the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs, a course of five lectures was given in the autumn of 1957 by ACU instructors at Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge, Eltham and Chatham. Similarly, a most comprehensive and successful course of lectures and practical demonstrations were provided for prospective umpires in Rochdale and Stockport in conjunction with the Central Council for Physical Recreation. This course had been unique in that nothing before on such a grand scale had ever been attempted before in this area and the response and attitudes of students had matched the enthusiasm of Major E. (Ted) Claridge who had been the ACU Instructor in charge of the course. Exceptionally good attendances and keenness were also features of an equally successful series of lectures given by Instructor, Major Prothero-Beynon to students at Pembroke, Stetton and Haverfordwest at the invitation of the Pembrokeshire County Cricket Club.

Tom concluded his Annual Report by expressing his appreciation to everyone who had demonstrated that they had the Association at heart in a practical way. Not least did he wish to record a vote of appreciation to the wives of officers and members. He was conscious that some of them, busy as they were, fulfilling their domestic duties, gave considerable help to ACU in so many ways, particularly by demonstrating their patience and tolerance for the amount of time spent away from home by their spouses. Without this help and co-operation, a good deal of Association activity would have been restricted.

Following the conclusion of official business of the AGM, an appreciative audience was entertained by a colour film of the most recent MCC Australasian Tour, with a supporting commentary given by Mr Eric Bedser.

One of the most interesting 'Open' meetings of ACU took place at the 'Three Nuns' on 28 September 1957, when some 100+ members heard the views of Mr. G. ("Gubby") Allen, Norman Preston (Editor of Wisden), Vice-President Frank Lee and Don Bennett of Middlesex CCC, on how new Experimental Laws (in first-class Cricket alone) had operated during the previous season. A collective feeling emerged from the meeting that, whilst a firm opinion on the new experiments were still in abeyance, no one was yet prepared to say that any one of them had been a failure. There could be no doubt that the discussion would be helpful to members, if and when, any or all of the experiments became permanent.

An important point was made by more than one speaker, that if the game were to be played in the proper spirit, there would be no necessity for new Laws at all. Mr G.O. Allen thoroughly agreed that it was a great pity that the necessity for Experimental Laws had arisen, but the MCC had been compelled to take notice of falling gates and of the fact that the Game was getting dull. If it was dull to those who appreciated the finer points of the game, how much more so must it have been to the ordinary spectator? Therefore, some effort had been made to make the game more interesting to the paying public. Mr Allen mentioned that the number of overs bowled in the hour was much higher in the 1930s than now.

Frank Lee said that he felt that County Captains had certainly effected some improvement in the direction of avoiding time wasting, although he felt that more time would have been saved if some bowlers took a shorter run-up. Shorter boundaries had been welcomed by both players and umpires – a point of view confirmed by Don Bennett, who said that this new feature had been specially appreciated at places like the Kennington Oval!

A year later, the 5th. AGM, held on 8 March 1958, was the first to take place without the familiar figure of Mr Jardine in the Chair. Unfortunately, he was very ill at this time and Vice-President, Frank Lee, very reluctantly took over as Chairman for the meeting, supported by the more experienced John Stewart.

In his Annual Report, Tom Smith said that the group of good friends in the UK had been further increased by the

affiliation of Bedfordshire ACU (with Ken McCanlis as its President). Overseas, the Association had also been joined by Umpires' Associations in New Zealand, Pakistan and by the Canadian Cricket Association.

Replying to a question from Mr Howard who asked for a clarification as to how the pathway of progression to Full membership was determined, The General Secretary replied that many applications for Full Membership were received. Once a first-stage, written test had been passed, it was not necessary to take it again. The next (second) stage was the 'Oral' which could only be taken if success had been achieved in the written paper. There were standard questions in this oral assessment and standard marks were awarded for replies which covered the desired points enumerated in model answers. Additional marks were also allotted for personality and the practical approach to the job of umpiring. Each candidate was then asked to nominate references to whom standard letters were sent inviting the return of confidential reports on the candidate's performances as a practical field umpire. This was by far an imperfect system of assessment but was the best that could be devised at present. It was by no means infrequent for referees to submit unfavourable reports.

This 5th AGM was concluded when an appreciative audience was entertained by a colour film of the most recent MCC Tour to South Africa, with a related informative commentary given by Alan Oakman and Frank Tyson.

(Author's note: Thus far, apart from minor deviations, this series of papers has been noteworthy for its general adherence to chronological references of events that have occurred both in Cricket and within ACU's development. An exception to this sequential pattern of reporting is now to take place to consider, as a separate issue, the spate of illegal bowling which was again variously revisited, worldwide, over the 14-year period 1952-1966).

ILLEGAL BOWLING REVISITED

Readers may recall (Paper No. 2 of this series refers) that there was ongoing controversy and conflict regarding the lawful nature of bowlers' deliveries from the times of the original under-arm lob, through to the round-arm nature of John Willes (1840s) and eventually to the high over-arm action of Edgar Wilsher (1862), leading to MCC eventually permitting the bowler's arm to climb to the vertical on 10 June 1864 – a decision carried by a majority vote of 27 to 20. With few exceptions, over the next 80 years, only a limited number of bowlers were 'called' by umpires for no-balling, largely because authority had made no clear definition of what amounted to an illegal delivery.

ESCUSA members will know that the fairness of any delivery is determined by a number of criteria, the two most important of which are (1) in regard to the position of the bowler's feet in relation to the creases and (2) the nature of the bowler's arm in deciding whether the ball has been 'thrown' or not.

Consideration will now be given to these two variables as follows: Position of the Bowler's feet and Consideration of the nature of the Bowler's arm in determination of what constitutes an illegal throw.

Prior to the introduction of Experimental Laws applicable to all grades of Cricket in the mid-'50s, for a delivery to be considered fair, some part of one foot – front or back – had to be placed behind the bowling crease and not touching any part of the return crease at the instant of delivery. The last three words were all important in that it will be appreciated that it is a physical impossibility for both the position of the bowler's feet (at ground level) and that of the hand at the time the ball is released (overhead) to be in the same line of sight of the bowler's end umpire simultaneously.

It did not take too long for some bowlers – particularly the pace men – to appreciate that a potential dilemma existed for the umpire in deciding which had the greater priority for his attention – the position of the bowler's feet or the overhead release of the ball from the hand at the instant of delivery.

In turn, this led to the bowler making things more difficult for the umpire's assessment by introducing an element of back foot "drag" in keeping it in contact with the ground before the ball is released from the hand, thereby effectively reducing the length of the pitch to the detriment of the striker in having less time to pick up the onward flight of the ball. (A photograph of the Australian, Rorke, bowling, showed that with his long drag, he was only 18 yards from the striker with the

ball still in hand). This action also led to greater damage being made to the pitch by the bowler.

More and more did this become a controversial issue as canny bowlers who "dragged" exploited the loophole in the "no ball" regulations then in force. This came to be regarded as "the back foot rule", because the fairness of any delivery was then determined by the position of one foot – invariably, the back – in relation to the bowling crease.

Some perceptive umpires (who predominantly officiated in the County II competition), of their own initiative, attempted to mitigate this problem by arbitrarily placing a white disc at some point behind the bowling crease and advised the bowler that he would consider a delivery to be illegal if the bowler's back foot was not placed behind this disc in the act of delivery. This was meant to offset the advantage the bowler would otherwise gain from "dragging". (To all intents, this was the introduction of a "special regulation" introduced by the individual umpire(s) which, in itself, at this time, was technically illegal in Law.)

Thus some change in Official Law, defining the position of the bowler's feet on delivery, was indicated but, because of varying opinions as to its detail – mainly between English and Australian Authorities – the recommended changes were at first only Experimental and introduced in the first-class game for a number of years before they became applicable to all grades of Cricket in the UK via the newly formed National Cricket Association. These new regulations were finally introduced into official Law in the revised Code of 1980.

This now defined a revised determination for the umpire – "in the Delivery stride" as opposed to the former "instant of delivery". The stride commenced when the bowler's back foot hit the ground and ended a split second later when the front foot hit the ground; nothing which happens before (or indeed, after) will constitute a "no ball".

The umpire now has to be satisfied that in this delivery stride : (a) that the bowlers back foot has landed within and not touching the Return Crease or its forward extension and (b) some part of the bowler's front foot, whether grounded or raised (in the air) is behind the Popping Crease. (This has commonly come to be regarded as "the front-foot ruling").

N.B. Thus, the retention of the description "Bowling Crease" – on which the wickets are pitched centrally and 22 yards apart – is now a historical anachronism, since it now forms no part in the assessment of the bowler's feet in determination of what constitutes a fair delivery).

For some supporters of the game, the change to the "front foot ruling" still remains controversial. Indeed, in 1999, Sir Donald Bradman submitted a paper outlining a personal plea for a return to the "back-foot ruling". An MCC sub-committee spoke against this proposal and was influenced by thoughts of Trevor Bailey who carried the day. Whilst it would be a brave decision to disregard anything argued by Sir Donald Bradman on the game of Cricket, there were a number of aspects of his paper with which Trevor could not agree, the main one being

that the call and signal of “no ball” is based on the position of the front foot and it was said that an umpire could not utter a call quickly enough to give the batsman the opportunity to take advantage of the unfair delivery. However, the Committee confirmed that the call and signal of “No Ball” is not, and never has been, to enable the striker to have a “free” hit to the boundary. The sole purpose of the “call” is to prevent the bowler being credited with a wicket from an unfair delivery. Trevor Bailey’s extremely important point was that in all other sports a line is drawn which the participant must not cross and the front foot ruling gives us that.

At this time, ACU canvassed its members for opinions and the greater number of replies received were against a return to the back-foot rule. The front foot rule requires that foot to be in a particular place at the moment of delivery (i.e., some part of it being behind the popping crease), whereas, formerly, the back-foot rule was bedeviled by the drag of the bowler’s rear foot.

With regard to consideration of the nature of the Bowler’s Arm in determination of what constitutes an illegal throw, following MCC’s eventual resolution (1864) of the original 19th century’s controversy regarding “throwing”, things became much quieter on the bowling front for the next 88 years. This is not to say that no one was “called” for throwing during this period but rather that neither Authority nor umpires were keen to shoulder responsibility for applying censure to such perceived illegal actions. However, with increasing competition (as the

emphasis on winning became paramount), an epidemic of illegal bowling reared its head again, notwithstanding that between the two World Wars, not a single bowler was “no-balled” for throwing in first-class Cricket. Thus it was something of a shock when in the summer of 1952, Cuan McCarthy (of Cambridge & South Africa) and Tony Lock (of Surrey & England) were “called” for throwing by umpires P. Corral and W. F. Price, respectively.

At this time, the 1947 version of the Law prevailed and read: “For a delivery to be fair, the ball must be bowled, not thrown or jerked. If either umpire be not entirely satisfied of the absolute fairness of a delivery in this respect, he shall call “No Ball” instantly upon delivery”.

Despite this official exhortation, as has already been seen by umpires generally, they have always been reluctant to take this extreme action. Not only did they dislike putting a player’s professional future in jeopardy, they also knew that they were unlikely to receive support from either spectators or the Cricket Authorities. Indeed, very soon after Tony Lock was “called” in a County match at the Oval, he was selected to play for England! Earlier (1951), the much respected Frank Chester found out that he would receive no official support if he “no-balled” McCarthy for throwing i.e. he was warned that, to do what he knew to be correct according to Cricket’s Law, there would be no guarantee that he would remain on the Test Match Panel. No English umpire up to this point had ever called a visiting bowler and the MCC was keen to maintain its ideal for Cricket as a

force for friendship among nations. Understandably, Chester was not prepared to chance such personal financial sacrifice and McCarthy continued unchecked in Test Cricket. Later, when the corollary came on Press comments made on the unfairness of McCarthy’s action, South Africans replied: “He satisfied Chester. What more do you want?”

Umpires habitually up to this time have had little support from authority and when they have been told to hold the Cricket Laws in abeyance, it is understandable why some have taken the easy way out and let things slide. After all, in England the living of first-class umpires is at stake and if authorities cannot find the necessary solutions to unpleasant problems, why should they throw themselves open to abuse and possible loss of earnings? That is a very real danger.

However, the Wisden Editorial of 1952 pulled no punches when it said: “It was stated that the umpires concerned, would report their beliefs to MCC, but so far there has been no indication that the rulers have carried the matter further.....I congratulate the umpires for their efforts to see the game is conducted properly.....Possibly a solution to the problems of dealing with throwing would be the appointment by the MCC before each season of a small panel to which umpires could report suspicious cases.”

If bowling was to be cleared once and for all from the stigma of unfair deliveries, some corrective action would need to be taken by the authorities, but it was a long time coming! In the winter of 1953/54, the MCC XI toured the

West Indies and in the first Test in Jamaica, Umpire Burke “no-balled” Lock. The following week he was again “called” by Umpire Harold Walcott in Barbados after a particular delivery had clean-bowled Garfield Sobers. After this sad experience, Lock saw a film of his action, ceased to bowl his faster delivery and was not “called” again, but his effectiveness was much reduced. Neither was he selected for the ensuing Test Series: England v Australia in 1954/55.

The MCC Touring Team under Peter May (in 1958/59) met Keith Slater and Ian Meckiff for the first time when the News Chronicle reporter, Crawford White, wrote: “Ian Meckiff, whose bowling arm is so kinked that I think he throws many deliveries.” This criticism was continued, following the Test at Brisbane, when he additionally wrote: “If Meckiff is not “no-balled” before this series is over, it will be a travesty of the Laws of Cricket”. Ian Peebles also picked up a comment from the crowd after one of Meckiff’s more erratic spells: “Put on (Neil) Harvey – at least he can bowl straight!” – a reference to his brilliance as a fielder in the covers.

The problem was further amplified in “The Sunday Times”: “On our side (England), we have the case of Lock whose fast ball has long been suspect for which he was eventually “called” in the West Indies. Since then he has voluntarily amended his action and has satisfied a great number of competent umpires. Here in Australia, we struck a very doubtful bent-arm action of Keith Slater at Perth. Victoria have Meckiff who, bluntly, “throws” and if the Law is to be more rigorously enforced, he will

have to modify his delivery. In New South Wales, Rorke is a splendid figure and a mighty bowler, but in his final heave is marred by the same bend and snap”.

England were soundly beaten in this series 4.1! All of its batsmen were sure that Meckiff threw, some of them to the extent that they developed a psychological blockage and could not cope with him. However, they did not make trouble about it while they were in Australia. The English Captain, Peter May, refrained from complaining and the Australian Umpires, with no pressure on them, did not call anyone for throwing. On returning to the UK, the England players lodged a protest with the MCC who urged Bradman to help solve the problem.

South Africa toured England in 1960 and brought with them Geoffrey Griffin who had already been “called” at home in the previous season. In the second game at Derby it was not Griffin who fell foul of the umpires but the Derby fast bowler, Harold Rhodes, who was “no-balled” by umpire Paul Gibb. Donald Carr decided to film Rhodes action and to forward the evidence to MCC for consideration.

Griffin was included in the following match v Essex at Ilford where the crowd called upon him to “bowl, not throw” but umpires John Langridge and Charles Elliot made no comment. However, Crawford White in the News Chronicle stated: “I must say in my view, and I watched him from several angles, this fair-headed youngster seemed to throw as blatantly as Australia’s Meckiff ever did. Perhaps our umpires, with a high degree of special courtesy, are giving the

benefit of doubt to our visitors. Or maybe the attitude is that until our own house is completely in order it would be indelicate to “call” a tourist.”

However he was again “no-balled” in the MCC match at Lords on 21 May for both dragging and throwing by Umpires John Langridge and Frank Lee and five times more during the match v Notts at Trent Bridge. Keith Miller, the former Australian all-rounder, now a cricket correspondent, wrote: “The more I see of the throwing row over Geoff Griffin, the more I see the funny side. He was in trouble again at Trent Bridge yesterday when he opened the South African bowling. The first over went through without incident. The Test Umpire, Jack Bartley, at square-leg, called him for throwing successive balls in the second over. Griffin bowled a second over – unchallenged – before Skipper Jackie McGlew took him off. I could not detect one solitary delivery different in action to any other Griffin bowled in the three overs. So how Bartley sifted out those so-called throws is beyond my cricketing knowledge. I say the umpire should either have called all the deliveries illegal or allowed them to pass – depending on how he interprets the controversial throwing law. To single out 2 deliveries in 18 is a joke.

The more I see of Griffin, the less I think he infringes this much discussed throwing law. In recent years I have seen such Australian shockers as Jimmy Burke and Ian Meckiff. Let’s be fair; I say that Meckiff’s faster one is a straight-out ‘chuck’. There is no question in my mind about it. But Griffin? – He’s a harmless bowler when I reflect back on the unchecked Aussies.”

Keith Miller had even more to say after the Lord's Test which followed. (It had resulted with England winning with an innings to spare with Frank Lee no-balling Griffin five times on the first day and a further six times on the second. It created a sensation as, sandwiched in between these two events, Griffin achieved the first hat-trick ever in a Test at cricket's HQ!) With the match finishing early on the Monday, the Captains agreed to amuse the crowd by playing an exhibition game and Keith Miller now wrote in the "Daily Express":

It's crazy ! Farcical! Unbelievable! Umpire Sid Buller calls Geoff Griffin for throwing in a carefree exhibition match here at Lord's Buller staggered even the most august MCC Members by calling Griffin who ambled up from a five-yard run and rolled his arm over at half-speed. "I can't believe it", they protested as Buller intimated to the cricketing world that Griffin threw.

Buller watched Griffin bowl one ball from square-leg and Griffin was not called. Buller then stationed himself at point. Again Griffin bowled unchecked. Buller then crossed back to square-leg and in the next delivery called Griffin for throwing. He repeated the call for the next two balls. Skipper Jackie McGlew hastened over from second slip to hear Buller suggest that Griffin complete his over with under-arm deliveries. Then Griffin bowled underarm and was called by Frank Lee because he had not notified the batsman that he intended to change his mode of delivery by bowling under-arm !

It was unfortunate that Sid Buller had become a central

figure in this trouble for he had earned an enviable reputation as being a strong and fearless umpire who had been on the Test Panel since 1956. It was noticeable in the Lord's Test itself – before the Exhibition match which followed – that the South African captain, Jackie McGlew, did not ask Griffin to bowl while Buller was standing at the striker's-end, notwithstanding that his partner, Frank Lee had frequently called Griffin for throwing!

The South African Authority decided that Griffin would not bowl again on the Tour.

The Australian Press almost unanimously condemned Buller with Lindsay Hassett stating : "Of the Lords's incident, I can say without hesitation that Umpire Buller's action in no-balling Griffin has no parallel in my memory for presumptuous ignorance of the Spirit of Cricket. Commonsense interpretation of Cricket Law is essential Those very words, in my opinion, debar Buller from ever again officiating at a first-class fixture."

With the South Africans raising a post-match objection, Buller did not officiate again in the series. Most people were furious that an umpire should suffer because he had attempted to carry out his duties conscientiously. Fortunately, in December, the County Captains showed their confidence in Buller and nominated him for the forthcoming Umpires' Test Panel against Australia in 1961. The fee he lost at the time for missing the last Test against South Africa was also paid to him.

General Secretary of ACU, Tom Smith now thought the time appropriate for him to take up

cudgels in helping to solve the unsavoury issue of "throwing". He made use of a "How's That !" Editorial to make his courageous and objective views more widely known. He wrote under the heading of "Throwing – the Umpires' View":

" As I write, throwing is very much in the news in England. Some journalists in looking for a whipping boy have found an easy target in Umpires. Over the past three years, exhortations and promises have brought things to a head. The continued calling of the young South African Bowler, Griffin, has finished his bowling career in Test Matches in England and, quite possibly altogether, unless a basic change in his delivery can be made. We all feel sorry for the unfortunate and likeable young Griffin but Umpires have received their share of vilification.

Amongst other charges, the most common is that it is impossible for umpires to call only a small number of balls as "throws" from a large number delivered. Every cricketer and umpire knows that it is only when the extra effort is made – that little additional 'zipp' – that a bowler will offend by foot fault and throw. The trouble is, of course, that too many people are ready to rush into print about things that are only partially understood.

Let no mistake be made about it, it is not a pleasant task for umpires to call bowlers for throwing and still less pleasant for them to learn that a player may be lost to the game as a result. Nevertheless, throwing must be stopped. Umpires must courageously carry out their duties, distasteful though they are. It is of no help for umpires to be charged on the one hand

for not taking strong enough action about throwing and, on the other hand, be blamed for taking action when the ball is thrown. What do the critics want?

The truth is that there are too many cricket writers looking for sensationalism. When this is accompanied by sketchy and incomplete cricket knowledge and complete failure to understand the umpire's problems, it is downright dishonourable. To attack and make 'Aunt Sallys' of umpires because they are performing the duty they have been exhorted to do, is grossly unfair.

Umpires are already aware that neither wrist movement nor a bent arm in delivery necessarily constitute a 'throw' and that 'calling' for an unfair delivery is very much left to their discretion. Camera shots – especially those in slow motion – can frequently be misleading, since these tend to exaggerate both perspective and foreshortening of deliveries and it is suggested that the Striker's-end umpire should be the one to watch the bowler's arm, be not afraid to consult his colleague, allowed to suggest to the fielding Captain to take a suspect bowler off and finally to make a report to the match Executive on what has taken place.

The remedy is in the hands of selectors and administrators; and it is a very simple one – Don't select bowlers with suspect actions – Only this and, this alone, will prevent embarrassment to players and umpires."

Bradman viewed films of 1959/60 contests and persuaded the Australian States to get rid of their bowlers with suspect actions, whom he was now

convinced were absolute chuckers. It was a relief for English Umpires when, in 1961, the Australian Tourists came to the UK with a team which did not include four suspect bowlers and there was no controversy in any of the Test Matches. However, the notable Ian Meckiff lasted domestically until 1963, when Umpire Colin Egar ended his career by 'calling' him at Brisbane.

By now, the epidemic of throwing was all but finished with only the occasional bowler being called for throwing e.g. Charlie Griffiths in the West Indies (in 1961/62 and again in 1966), Ian Redpath (1964) and Harold Rhodes (again by Buller in 1965.)

This led to the following note being added to the Law concerning no-balling for throwing (in 1967):

"A ball shall be deemed to have been thrown if, in the opinion of either umpire the process of straightening the bowling arm, whether it be partial or complete, takes place during that part of the delivery swing which directly precedes the ball leaving the hand." This note was retained when the Laws were redrafted as the 1980 Code.

Slowly, cricket administration had come to realise the harm to be done by worrying more about the result and so-called prestige than about the way Cricket should be played. Only by complete sincerity and a determination by everyone to keep trouble and trouble-makers out of the game would Cricket lift its head once more.

(Author's note: With the above digression concerning the return of a bowling controversy which plagued Cricket over a period of years – from

the early 1950s to late 1960s – now completed, the chronological order of domestic issues which highlighted the subsequent development of ACU from 1958 onwards is to be resumed in the next presentation – the 6th paper in this series – as a further contribution to the ESCUSA Newsletter)

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