

Aussies bat for formalising 'Pre-DRS'



If there is technology to get technology right, we must use it: Steve Smith

BENGALURU, MAR 10: While Indian captain Virat Kohli minced no words about what he thought of his Australian counterpart Steve Smith looking in the direction of his team's dressing room on whether to opt for DRS or not after he was adjudged out in the second innings of the Bengaluru Test, the Australian camp, for their part, found nothing amiss in Smith's action and have described Smith's action as: "Pre-DRS".

The Australian media have quoted coach Darren Lehmann as saying that Smith was well within his rights to look in the direction of his team's dressing room for instructions to go for DRS or not. "DRS is essentially there for reducing mistakes on the field. Smith's actions were just an extension. We would think he was just trying to minimise errors in opting for DRS. There is not much room to quibble over that. At the end of the day, it only makes the game more interesting and less error-prone".

Lehmann added: "What Smith attempted was 'Pre-DRS', a step which helps the players to arrive at the right decision on DRS, which itself helps umpires to arrive at the right decision. It is pretty logical only".

"What is available to the umpires should be available to the players too. It is in the spirit of the game".

Steve Smith, who described his actions as brain-fade at the post-match presser, was himself later quoted as saying "if there is technology to get technology right, I think cricket should wholeheartedly embrace it".

Meanwhile, Australian media also had an unnamed spokesperson from Cricket Australia saying that Cricket Australia would impress upon the ICC the need to formally incorporate 'Pre-DRS' (PDRS) as part of the rules governing the game. "What is wrong in players trying to get the help of their dressing room think-tank? As it is, much of the game's strategy is decided by the dressing room thinktank. In future, the game itself will be played by dressing room staff on their laptops."

All things considered, Cricket Australia may soon appoint a PDRS Coach (any former player who is not Shane Watson) to be part of the Aussie support staff and help the team arrive at the right strategy for DRS.

If and when the PDRS comes into vogue, this is what will happen to the DRS setup:

Current Method

Step 1: On-field umpire hands a decision.

Step 2: Batsman/Fielding team, unhappy with the verdict, seeks a review of the same, with a patented gesture of pushing all the fingers, including the middle one, 'up'.

Step 3: The on-field umpire, in turn, signals for the Third Umpire to wake up.

Step 4: The Third Umpire, with the help of modern technology and precision gadgets, gets it wrong, or by sheer luck, gets its right.

Step 5: It doesn't matter what the verdict is, a controversy is already on the interwebs.

Step 6: ICC is blamed. (This step is the only redeemable aspect of the whole setup)

The new arrangement

Step 1: On-field players signal to their respective dressing rooms on whether to opt for DRS or not. If they get an affirmative signal, they signal to the on-field umpire.

Step 2: Controversy already erupts on social media platforms.

Rest of the steps: Repeat as above.

As you can see, there is no major shift in the process, except the fact there will be more fun and more time to waste for all, which if you get it down, is the essential purpose of cricket.

Depending on the success of this plan, Cricket Australia may also impress upon the ICC to go the whole hog and allow the dressing room think-tank to unilaterally step in and order the players to opt for DRS as and when the need arises for the same. The fun is never going to stop.

CA also clarified that PDRS will not slow down the game any more than when Steve Bucknor was adjudicating in the middle.

Elsewhere, the ICC said there was no proposal to back the on-field umpires by arming them with more powers and authority and simply allow them to get on with the game.

'To be sure, it will cut down on a lot of controversies. But it's too radical a plan. The world cricket is not ready for such a revolution wherein the on-field umpire's word is final', the ICC said in a statement.