

With Australian cricket in freefall after the ball-tampering scandal, accusations of hypocrisy are being thrown around

By James Maasdorp

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PHOTO: Steve Smith marched out on day four having been stood down as captain. (AP: Halden Krog)

The Australian ball-tampering scandal has opened Australian cricket to global accusations of hypocrisy given the team's actions throughout the damaging series in South Africa.

Australia was humiliated in the fourth Test in Cape Town overnight, losing 10 wickets in a single session under stand-in skipper Tim Paine.

With the Australian game in crisis, more scrutiny is now being put on the team's conduct in this series and in the summer's Ashes contests with England.

They principally centre on the Australian team hitting out at abuse from South Africa's crowds.

South Africa's team and cricketing administration has not emerged from this series without scars. Cricket South Africa (CSA) officials posing with fans donning Sonny Bill Williams masks after David Warner's clash with Quinton de Kock proved a low point.

But following Warner's confrontation with a South African fan as he walked back to the pavilion

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following his dismissal in Cape Town, Cricket Australia filed a complaint with CSA, with coach Darren Lehmann labelling local crowds "disgraceful", adding he had never heard crowd behaviour get so vile.

"Not on this level," he said.

"It's been disgraceful. You're talking about abuse of various players and their families and personal abuse.

"It shouldn't happen. Banter, that's fine. Banter is good-natured fun by crowds but they've gone too far here ... it's been poor."



VIDEO: [Cameron Bancroft is seen holding a yellow object.](#) (ABC News)

But English observers have been quick to point out how Lehmann seems to have changed his tune since the 2013 Ashes series.

In 2013, Lehmann said his players had called English paceman Stuart Broad "everything under the sun", and hoped the Australian public would share the burden.

"I hope the Australian public give it to him right from the word go," Lehmann said. "And I hope he cries and goes home."

Asked if he thought Lehmann was now being hypocritical complaining about South African crowds, Broad responded: "That's your word not mine but I would agree with you.

"You look at the quotes from that 2013 interview, where he basically asks a country to send an opposition player home crying. I didn't — we lost the series but it didn't make me cry.

"I then can't understand why you'd come out and moan about a different country and what they're saying to their players.

"I don't know. I've always been a believer that if someone wants to take you on verbally and they've started that fight, you're allowed to say something back. Just from the outside it looks like Australia have started a lot of fights and then are moaning when someone comes back."

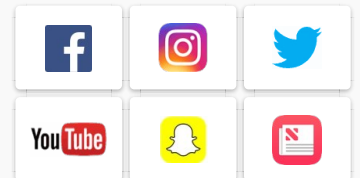


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'Sugar in pocket' video surfaces

The controversy has also brought to light footage of Cameron Bancroft apparently pouring sugar into his trouser pockets during the Sydney Ashes Test, as the sporting world highlights several hypocrisies in Australian cricket.

External Link: [David Coverdale tweets Here's Cameron Bancroft appearing to put sugar in his pocket against England in January...](#)

Video on social media showed Bancroft seeming to take a spoon of sugar in the Australian changing rooms and pour it into his left pocket during the fifth and final Ashes Test in January.

It is not known what the sugar could be used for. But given the recent controversy of Faf du Plessis using his sugary saliva from sucking on mints to coat the ball during South Africa's 2016 tour of Australia, the connotations of Bancroft's actions are not good.

Hypothetically, sugar could be used in a similar manner to du Plessis' mints, or applied to a ball for its rough texture.

'That made my blood boil': Richardson hits out at hypocrisy

Even the shoulder nudge between South Africa's Kagiso Rabada and Smith was up for grabs from the world's pundits.



PHOTO: [Kagiso Rabada escaped suspension for making contact with Steve Smith in Port Elizabeth.](#) (Reuters: Mike Hutchings)

Rabada appeared to make contact with his shoulder on the Australian captain in Port Elizabeth, with the pacer narrowly escaping match censure after a marathon hearing with cricket authorities.

At the time, Smith hit out at the reversed decision, saying: "When you've got someone out you've already won the battle. There's no need to go over the top."

It put former New Zealand opening batsman Mark Richardson in a lather on his television program The AM Show.

"How many of your players give send-offs?" Richardson said.

"That grab from Steve Smith just illustrates why the world cannot stand Australian cricketers at all.

"That made my blood boil, listening to that. He really did. He just doesn't realise how much of a hypocrite him and his team are."

Can Warner and company 'hold their heads high' now?

Perhaps the cricketing quote that has aged the worst in this whole sorry mess are Warner's remarks in the aftermath of the du Plessis mints controversy.

[External Link: The Cricketer tweets Yeah... about that, Dave. #SAvAUS](#)

Backing the ICC charging du Plessis for ball tampering over his use of mints in the mouth, saying Australia's players could hold their heads high.

"I won't comment on the way they've been behaving, I just know from an Australian cricket perspective, we hold our heads high.

"I'd be very disappointed if one of our team members did that and how they were reacting. For us it's about controlling what we can do, that's playing the best cricket we can and let them worry about what they're doing.

"The rules are in place for a reason, if you're not going to use them, why bother having them?"



PHOTO: Australian cricket has lost its moral high ground following the team's antics in Cape Town. (AP: Halden Krog)

"That's just the fortunate thing these days, they've got the rules and they're going to stand by their decisions. I think that's a good thing. We've all been on the back end of them from time to time.

"Now that they're cracking down on it and especially with the points system, we as players know the guidelines now. So if you're going to overstep the mark, prepare to get fined and miss Test matches."

Fast forward to the Cape Town Test, and the tables are turned completely. To their credit, Smith and Bancroft were quick to own up and apologise in their press conference, but the enormous damage is done.

Australia's fans will have to grin and bear taunts from touring fans for many years. The idea that Australia's players were somehow above the shadowy antics of other teams is now in tatters, and opposing teams will relish Australia's loss of the moral high ground.

Steve Smith 'embarrassed' again



The Australian cricket captain has admitted he is embarrassed about ball tampering, but it's not the first time he's said those words, writes Geoff Lemon.

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How ball tampering unfolded

Cameron Bancroft has been charged with ball tampering and Steve Smith could yet lose the captaincy — here's how the dark day for Australian cricket unfolded.



Cricket greats react to ball tampering

Former cricketers slam Australian captain Steve Smith and senior players for hatching a plan to tamper with the ball during the third Test against South Africa.



'You are regrettable indeed, Mr Smith'

Australian cricket fans are ashamed of their team and articulate in their criticism.

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