

Steve Smith and David Warner's ball-tampering bans are up, but will they slot back into Australia's line-up?

By Offsiders columnist [Richard Hinds](#)
 Posted March 29, 2019 06:12:53



PHOTO: The World Cup squad looks strong even without David Warner (left) and Steve Smith (right). (AAP/SNPA: Martin Hunter)

As former captain Steve Smith and never-to-be-captain David Warner served their 12-month bans, there were all sorts of relevant questions about their looming repatriation.

MAP: [Australia](#)

[How would they be greeted by their teammates](#) in what seemed, after the events of Cape Town, an unhappy, even acrimonious and deeply divided dressing room?

What toll would the hostile reaction of the English crowds and media during the back-to-back World Cup and Ashes series take on the pair as they attempted to restore their reputations?

Would two erstwhile alpha dogs come to heel under the leadership of limited-overs skipper Aaron Finch and Test captain Tim Paine, or would they sit broodingly on the back bench in the manner of the deposed Tony Abbott?

In the case of Smith, words of contrition have been reassuring — albeit some of those were compromised by the commercial transaction that inspired them.



UNSUPPORTED BROWSER

The browser you are using to view this page is no longer supported by ABC News. We recommend you update to a more modern browser.

[Find out more](#)

TOP SPORT STORIES >

[The ball-tampering ban is up, but how do Smith and Warner slot into Australia's line-up?](#)

[Magpies power past Tigers for convincing AFL win](#)

[Adelaide Oval box office staff told 'not to sell tickets to any more Aboriginal people' at NAIDOC week game](#)

TOP STORIES

- Labor would scrap negative gearing for new investors by January 1
- Tax policy changes you need to know ahead of the federal election
- Australia's richest and poorest postcodes revealed
- **SPORT Opinion:** The ball-tampering ban is up, but how do Smith and Warner slot into Australia's line-up?
- Hannah Gadsby premieres new show to rapturous home crowd
- 'Our only crime is to be born Chinese': Why new foreign influence laws are sparking anger
- Adelaide Oval box office staff told 'not to sell tickets to any more Aboriginal people' at NAIDOC week game
- The \$850,000 drug that will change Australian children's lives
- ABC News quiz: Ahoy there! You're in for some rough sailing across this week's headlines
- Sweet and sour cane toad — MONA cookbook goes to extremes in name of sustainability
- 'Avoiding germs': Pope Francis clears up 'ring-kissing' incident
- Does 'I don't want' mean no? The call to reform Queensland consent laws
- Scandals, internal divisions, cashed-up Labor blamed for Greens' disastrous poll
- Budget airline declares bankruptcy, stranding passengers at airports
- Bystanders inspecting fatal car crash in Guatemala killed by

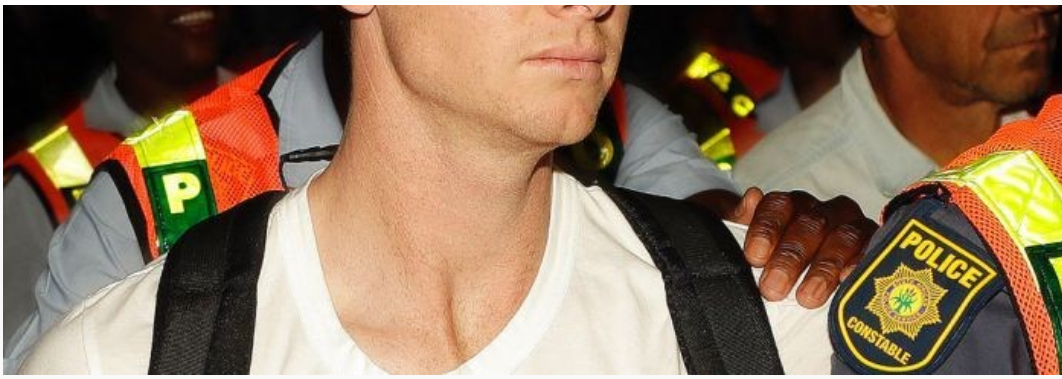


PHOTO: The controversy in South Africa saw Steve Smith plummet from world cricket's golden boy to pariah status. (AP: Themba Hadebe)

Self-inflicted wounds or not, it would be a flint-hearted observer who did not appreciate the enormous plunge Smith has taken from golden boy to pariah and the profound impact this had on him.

From Warner, silence has been golden. Rather than swing wildly at lucrative offers to tell his tale he has, against apparent instinct, raised his bat and served his time with frankly unexpected dignity.

This approach might not completely satisfy those who believe Warner was a bit too late coming clean on his personal role in the sandpaper affair and consequently made it even more difficult for Cricket Australia to control the damage created during Smith and Cameron Bancroft's bungled press conference.

Yet Warner's disciplined silence and apparent dedication to regaining his place in the Australian team flies in the face of the initial assumption that he would cash in on the current affair show circuit and resume cricketering life as a Chris Gayle-style T20 gun for hire.

And so Smith and Warner are fit and eligible, which raises another question no-one predicted when their bans were imposed: How do you squeeze them into the Australian line-up?

Twelve months — even three months — ago, Australia's batting stocks seemed so thin that picking Warner and Smith was as problematic as finding a place for LeBron James and James Harden in a C-grade midweek basketball team.

But after [ODI series wins in India](#) and [against Pakistan](#), suddenly an Australian limited-overs team that was considered no certainty in its opening World Cup game against Afghanistan is being talked about as a title contender.

The most vulnerable member of that team was out-of-form captain Aaron Finch, whose leadership seemed to have strayed into Theresa May territory, especially with a like-for-like replacement opener about to be released from ball-tampering prison.








PHOTO: With so many incumbent batsmen performing so well for Australia's ODI team, can the returning stars even fit into a

semi-trailer

- Taiwan urges Australia, US and Japan to unite to push back against China in the Pacific 🇦🇺
- Household wealth drops \$260b in just three months as debt hits a record 200pc of income
- This woman doesn't feel pain — and it has researchers excited
- Thailand's pro-army party wins popular vote but who will govern remains unclear
- William Tyrrell's parents hid him from authorities before putting him in foster care, court hears
- 'A beautiful dream ... then the bill arrives': Fake heiress took New York for a ride, court told
- **SPORT** Magpies power past Tigers for convincing AFL win 🇦🇺

Get the headlines to your mobile. NEWS on Messenger 

CONNECT WITH ABC NEWS

News Podcasts Catch up with ABC News programs. 

GOT A NEWS TIP? >
If you have inside knowledge of a topic in the news, [contact the ABC](#).

NEWS IN YOUR INBOX
Top headlines, analysis, breaking alerts

ABC BACKSTORY >
ABC teams share the story behind the story and insights into the making of digital, TV and radio content.

EDITORIAL POLICIES >
Read about our editorial guiding principles and the enforceable standard our journalists follow.

How Australian cricket turned toxic



After Don Bradman said playing cricket was a moral lesson, and Allan Border demanded toughness but also integrity, when did things turn toxic?

Yet in his last six ODI innings Finch has made 93, 0, 27, 116, 153 and 90, Australia has won every time and confidence in both the Victorian opener and his leadership is suddenly Jacinda Ardern safe.

So even after [Warner smashed 86 off 53 balls for the Sunrisers Hyderabad in his first Indian Premier League game](#), where does he fit into the Australian World Cup line-up?

Opening in place of Usman Khawaja who is thriving in that role? In the middle order where Shaun Marsh's handy form and experience, Peter Handscomb's strong performances and Glenn Maxwell's match-winning capability have created a queue?

And that is not allowing for the return of Smith, who is also vying with those well-performed incumbents for a spot. Or, perhaps, hoping the selectors give Handscomb the gloves in the place of Alex Carey and create another place for a specialist batsman.

These are not quite the sort of problems the Australian selectors expected to encounter when they lost two batsmen consistently ranked inside the world's top five.

It is a dilemma certainly more pleasant than the other presented upon Smith, Warner and (earlier) Bancroft's return — the lingering question about how deeply the ball-tampering culture was embedded in the Australian team before its semi-comedic exposure in Bancroft's undies.

The issue buried deeply beneath Cricket Australia's cultural review was exhumed by Ian Chappell, Mark Taylor and Ian Healy in a discussion on Nine's Wide World of Sport to mark the anniversary of the scandal.

Across the cricketing world, Australia's shame and the unusually harsh punishments meted out have, it at least seems, driven ball tampering from undergarments to underground.

The lack of late swing produced by Australia — and, it should be noted, the South Africans in their home series defeat to Sri Lanka — begged the obvious question of what was being done to manipulate the ball in previous Tests when it was dipping and diving?

Five key recommendations for CA



[The Ethics Centre made 41 recommendations in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal. Here are five of the key recommendations and how Cricket Australia responded.](#)

How the ball-tampering incident unfolded



[The ball-tampering plot was planned during a lunch break in Cape Town. This is how it played out.](#)



PHOTO: [Despite Warner and Smith serving their time, questions surrounding ball tampering in cricket remain unresolved.](#)
(Reuters: Rogan Ward)

As Chappell, Taylor and Healy surmised, you don't go straight from a pointy fingernail to sandpaper. What

happened before and who knew about it? And, for that matter, as a then-serving Cricket Australia board member, how much responsibility does Taylor accept?

The return of Smith and Warner will eventually answer the pertinent questions about their personal futures and their roles within the Australian team.

But while they have served their time, the extent of ball tampering during and before Cape Town remains both awkward and unresolved.

More on this story on ABC TV's *Offsiders* with Kelli Underwood at 10:00am Sunday.

Topics: [cricket](#), [sport](#), [australia](#)

FEATURES



Internet war diary

The ABC's Malcolm Sutton chronicles his battle to remain connected to the internet via rat-infested infrastructure while also trying to gain access to the NBN.



Plastic crystals could keep us and the planet cool in the future

The race is on to find greener ways to keep us and our food cool in the future. Scientists say a new type of plastic crystal has the potential to do just that.



How Hanson forced Morrison's hand

Several MPs in the Liberal Party say they are disappointed it has taken so long for the party to put One Nation behind Labor. But instead of blaming Morrison, they point the finger at the Queensland LNP who they say had to be dragged kicking and screaming to this position.



Fraser in bed

It was a photo five years in the making that made Bob Hawke so envious he wanted to dress up as Santa in response. Here's how it happened, and why it will never happen again.

TOP STORIES

- [Labor would scrap negative gearing for new investors by January 1](#)
- [Tax policy changes you need to know ahead of the federal election](#)
- [Australia's richest and poorest postcodes revealed](#)
- [Opinion: The ball-tampering ban is up, but how do Smith and Warner slot into Australia's line-up?](#)
- [Hannah Gadsby premieres new show to rapturous home crowd](#)
- ['Our only crime is to be born Chinese': Why new foreign influence laws are sparking anger](#)
- [Adelaide Oval box office staff told 'not to sell tickets to any more Aboriginal people' at NAIDOC week game](#)
- [The \\$850,000 drug that will change Australian children's lives](#)
- [ABC News quiz: Ahoy there! You're in for some rough sailing across this week's headlines](#)
- [Sweet and sour cane toad — MONA cookbook goes to extremes in name of sustainability](#)

JUST IN

- [Six-six-six proves the devil's number for McGovern as new rule stifles play](#)
- [Wall St rises on US-China trade optimism despite economic slowdown](#)
- [Internet war diary details rat attacks and an NBN missing in action](#)
- [Calls to relax Canberra's drug-driving laws as the ACT looks to legalise cannabis](#)
- [Ethiopian Airlines crash victim's family takes Boeing to court](#)
- [Foster care provider says it can't afford to sign up to redress scheme, faces funding cut](#)
- [The \\$850,000 drug that will change Australian children's lives](#)
- [The northern cattle game is facing a lot more challenges than just the weather](#)
- [Conservationists push to save critically endangered regent honeyeater's only known breeding site from development](#)
- [ABC News quiz: Ahoy there! You're in for some rough sailing across this week's headlines](#)

MOST POPULAR

- [Train passengers 'in hysterics' as busker is mistaken for terrorist](#)
- [Why we'll never see a photo like this in politics again](#)
- [Defence chiefs desert Christopher Pyne in awkward press conference](#)
- [South African bottled water company's name angers Chinese consumers](#)
- ['A beautiful dream ... then the bill arrives': Fake heiress took New York for a ride, court told](#)
- ['Pleading for his life': Police paint grisly picture of Sydney teen's final hours](#)
- ['You're a fool': Hanson criticises PM's preferencing move, defends her staffers](#)
- [Liberals to preference Labor before One Nation after Hanson comments](#)
- [The long list of allegations that followed this Australian surgeon](#)
- [British MPs reject eight Brexit scenarios after May's offer to resign](#)

ANALYSIS & OPINION

- [The northern cattle game is facing a lot more challenges than just the weather](#)
- [The ball-tampering ban is up, but how do Smith and Warner slot into Australia's line-up?](#)
- [An ace for the men, a fault for the women in Hopman Cup's demise](#)
- [Racist trolls are undermining AFL. Here's how we fight back](#)
- [How Hanson forced Morrison's hand on a decision some in his party wish he hadn't made](#)
- [How Australia went from 'Strikes, Strikes, Strikes' to wages stagnation in a generation](#)
- [Gun laws aren't the only American import Australians are worried about](#)
- [One Nation duo's response to NRA sting gives us a rare look into the secretive party](#)
- [Punters tip Labor across WA as bookies' data shows key Liberal seats set to fall](#)
- [Why I decided to infiltrate One Nation and the NRA](#)

SITE MAP

Sections	Local Weather	Local News	Media	Subscribe	Connect
ABC News	Sydney Weather	Sydney News	Video	Podcasts	Upload
Just In	Melbourne Weather	Melbourne News	Audio	NewsMail	Contact Us
World	Adelaide Weather	Adelaide News	Photos		
Business	Brisbane Weather	Brisbane News			
Health	Perth Weather	Perth News			
Entertainment	Hobart Weather	Hobart News			
Sport	Darwin Weather	Darwin News			
Analysis & Opinion	Canberra Weather	Canberra News			
Weather					
Topics					

