

= John the bookmaker controversy =

" John " or " John the bookmaker " is the name given to an Indian bookmaker who in 1994 ? 95 gave money to Australian cricketers Mark Waugh and Shane Warne , in return for pitch and weather information .

According to the players , they refused to divulge more strategic material , such as team tactics and player selection policies . One of the most publicised of a series of betting controversies in cricket in the 1990s , the matter was initially covered up by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) , which decided that it was sufficient to privately fine the players . The ACB concluded that , since Waugh and Warne had previously accused Pakistani cricket captain Saleem Malik of attempting to bribe them to lose matches , their credibility as witnesses would be damaged if their own involvement with John was publicised . The ACB reported the matter to the International Cricket Council , and there the matter ended .

When the issue was uncovered by the media in late 1998 , the two players were widely condemned by the press and public , as was the ACB for their cover @-@ up . Waugh received a hostile reaction from Australian spectators when he walked out to bat during a Test match immediately after the news broke . On the other hand , the sports community was generally supportive of the players . The ACB appointed Rob O 'Regan QC to conduct an independent inquiry into the matter . O 'Regan concluded that the fines were inadequate and wrote that a suspension for a " significant time " would have been a more appropriate penalty . He strongly condemned the players ' behaviour and their failure as role models for young fans . O 'Regan further added that players needed to be better informed about the dangers of gambling and unauthorised bookmakers .

The controversy prompted Pakistan to ask the two Australian players to appear in front of their own judicial inquiry into corruption ; Australia responded by granting the Pakistanis permission to hold hearings in Australia with full privileges . The players were questioned about their accusations against Malik , and whether their dealings with John detracted from their credibility . Both Waugh and Warne denied any suggestions they played with less determination in the matches in question , stating that they were among the leading players in those games .

= = Involvement with bookmaker = =

During the Singer World Series tournament in Sri Lanka in September 1994 , which involved India , Sri Lanka , Pakistan and Australia , the Australian team stayed at the Oberoi Hotel in the capital Colombo . There was a casino in close proximity to the hotel , which Waugh and Warne visited . Team manager Colin Egar had advised Warne that he had been told that the venue was unsavoury , but he was vague in his comments , and at the time , casinos were not perceived as trouble spots or traps for unwary cricketers .

Waugh was approached at the Oberoi by an Indian man , who was also staying at the hotel . The man called himself " John " and gave no surname . John said he was a man who had won money betting on cricket and asked Waugh to provide pitch and weather information ; he also asked the Australian to reveal inside knowledge about the team , such as tactics and player selections , in exchange for US \$ 4 @,@ 000 . Waugh accepted the money and agreed to provide information about the pitch and weather , but he refused to divulge the tactics that the Australians intended to use against their opposition , or information on which players would play and what their role would be . Information on pitch conditions provides an insight into the strategies that the team might adopt and which players might be used , and teams will field different players depending on the pitch , as their skills are suited to different conditions . The arrangement with John remained in place until the end of the 1994 ? 95 Australian summer . Waugh later said that at the time , he did not see anything wrong with his actions , reasoning that the agreement was similar to a player speculating about their form and the playing conditions in a pre @-@ match media interview .

Waugh also agreed to introduce John to Warne . The meeting occurred at the casino near the team hotel . The trio chatted as Warne was playing roulette ; he had a bad night and lost US \$ 5 @,@ 000 . John introduced himself to Warne as a person who bet on cricket matches . The next day he

invited Warne to his hotel room and , describing himself as a big fan , flattered Warne 's leg spinning abilities . Warne accepted a US \$ 5 @, @ 000 gift , with " no strings attached " , which covered his gambling losses . Warne reported that he initially rejected the gift , but accepted the offer at the insistence of John , who said that he would be offended if the offer was declined . Warne later lost this money at the casino . Warne wrote in his autobiography that John told him that he was a wealthy man and that the payment was a token of his appreciation ? he had made money by betting on Australian victories in the past .

The two players did not tell their teammates or management about the deal , feeling that their interactions with bookmakers would meet with disapproval . They said that they did not feel that their liaisons were harming their team 's chances in any way . They remained silent even after they reported Pakistan captain Saleem Malik for attempting to bribe them during the team 's subsequent tour of Pakistan . Australian coach Bob Simpson later said that he was unaware of these events , asserting that his anti @-@ betting attitude would have deterred any players from discussing their involvement in such matters with him .

Both players kept in contact with John throughout the 1994 ? 95 Australian summer , when England toured for five Tests . Warne spoke with John three times during the season , while Waugh continued to deliver pitch and weather conditions . An inquiry conducted by Rob O 'Regan QC in late @-@ 1998 and early @-@ 1999 concluded the following :

Mark Waugh had been warned in 1994 by a senior player rooming with him that providing information over the telephone about conditions , games and teams was unwise as it was likely to come back and haunt him later in his career .

= = Secretly punished = =

In early 1995 , snippets of information about the world of cricket betting and match @-@ fixing began to be reported by the media . Phil Wilkins of The Sydney Morning Herald reported that an unnamed Pakistani player had attempted to bribe Tim May , Warne and Waugh during Australia 's tour of the country in late @-@ 1994 , immediately after the Singer Trophy . The player was later identified as Saleem Malik , and it was revealed that the Australian trio had privately reported him for offering them money to throw matches .

As a result of the media interest , the ACB privately launched an investigation to determine if any Australian players had been involved with bookmakers . Journalists told officials about speculation that an Australian player was having financial dealings with bookmakers , after Mark Ray of the Sunday Age received an anonymous letter alleging that Waugh and Warne were being paid by a bookmaker for information . Following a private investigation opened by team manager Ian McDonald , Waugh and Warne wrote unsigned handwritten statements on 20 February 1995 , acknowledging their involvement . The statements were faxed and sent to Graham Halbish , the CEO of the ACB . Warne and Waugh were called to Sydney for an interview with ACB chairman Alan Crompton at the team hotel , where the Australians had assembled before departing for a tour of the West Indies . The pair admitted their involvement with the bookmaker and were fined A \$ 10 @, @ 000 and A \$ 8 @, @ 000 respectively ; at the time , these were the highest fines ever imposed on Australian cricketers .

The report compiled by Halbish and Crompton was privately forwarded to the ACB 's remaining directors and the International Cricket Council (ICC) . The ICC was not informed directly ; the ACB delivered the news to their chairman Clyde Walcott and chief executive David Richards . Crompton and Halbish did not consult the other board members before making their decision and effectively handed them a fait accompli ; they failed to inform their colleagues until the players had left for the West Indies tour .

The other board members were told about the matter at the end of the meeting . The minutes of the meeting read :

The chairman and chief executive officer reported on a further matter that had come to their attention and been dealt with by them in a manner considered appropriate . The actions of the chairman and the chief executive were approved by the directors present . It was resolved that

details should be provided to ICC on a private and confidential basis .

Some board members were uncomfortable with the way the matter was handled . Bob Merriman said that the other board members were " absolutely puzzled [angry] . I don 't know what the vote was because there was nobody there " . Malcolm Gray said that " it was disgraceful that the Board hadn 't been informed before " . Damien Mullins said he thought " it was poor and unsatisfactory " .

Crompton and Halbish knew that if the involvement of Waugh and Warne with bookmakers was revealed , the credibility of the two players as witnesses against the Pakistani captain Malik would be severely questioned , as they too were involved in activities associated with unregistered gambling . There would be significant pressure on the ACB to ban the players , so they decided to cover up the matter . Board member Cam Battersby said , " The only way he [Malik] was ever going to be convicted was if our evidence was credible ... Revealing the information ... would provide an excuse for Pakistan to do nothing " . The ACB prepared a press release in case the matter was leaked . The ACB 's legal adviser Graeme Johnson later said that he had told Crompton that they were not obliged to tell the press about the matter .

Initially , coach Simpson was not informed ; when he found out , he was angry that the ACB had not trusted him enough to tell him what his players had done . Captain Mark Taylor was also aware of the issue by the time he took the team to the West Indies , as were vice @-@ captain Ian Healy and Waugh 's brother Steve .

= = Aftermath = =

In December 1998 , before the Third Test between Australia and England at the Adelaide Oval , the journalist Malcolm Conn of The Australian uncovered the story of John . His report on the matter won him a Walkley Award for journalism . On 8 December , three days before the start of the Test , Conn informed Malcolm Speed ? the CEO of the ACB ? that he was going to reveal the details of a cover @-@ up of the fines that were imposed on Waugh . At the time , Conn was unaware of Warne 's involvement . The ACB responded by pre @-@ emptying Conn and releasing a statement , revealing that two unnamed players had been fined in 1994 ? 95 for having financial dealings with bookmakers . Later that evening , former Test cricketer David Hookes , who was then a sports broadcaster , named Waugh and Warne on the Melbourne radio station 3AW . The next day , Conn 's story was released on the front page , with the headline " Cricket 's Betting Scandal " . The article was accompanied by a picture of Waugh with his hand on his head .

On the morning of the publication of Conn 's article , the managers of Warne and Waugh organised a media conference after Australia 's training session . Both players faced a room packed with media and read prepared statements . Both said they had been " naive and stupid " . Waugh concluded :

I regret [it] entirely and wish to restate in the strongest possible manner that I have always given my best for my country in every match I have played and I believe my record , particularly in the last three years , fully supports this statement . I must emphasise that I have never been involved in match @-@ fixing or bribery on cricket matches in any stage of my career .

Much to their discontent , the media were not allowed to ask questions . Patrick Smith of The Age said , " To deliver such bland explanations to the world media as they did yesterday and then not accept questions was contemptuous of the Australian public they have let down so badly . " The press attention was so intense that when Waugh attempted to relax with a round of golf at a local course , media helicopters flew overhead .

The players were widely condemned by the media and public ; Prime Minister John Howard stated that he felt an " intense feeling of disappointment " , while former player Neil Harvey called for bans . Malik , whom Warne and Waugh had accused of attempting to bribe them , said that he was delighted at the revelation . The Pakistani player said that the revelations discredited his accusers and vindicated his protestations of innocence . On the preceding tour of Pakistan a few months earlier , Waugh had appeared before a Pakistan Cricket Board judicial inquiry in Lahore to present his claims against Malik ; the inquiry questioned the credibility of both Australian players and asked them to return to Pakistan to re @-@ present their accounts of the events .

The sports community strongly supported the players . May , the President of the Australian Cricketers ' Association , and co @-@ accuser of Malik , pledged his organisation 's support for the players , whom he described as " outstanding servants of Australian cricket " . Waugh received similar statements of support from sports identities . Warne 's first Australian captain , Allan Border , defended him , as did former captain and leading commentator Richie Benaud . Sir Don Bradman , widely regarded as the greatest batsman of all time , and former ACB chairman , said that Warne was one of the best influences on Australian cricket for generations , and that the dealings with John did not change this .

Media and public opinion was more hostile . The Sydney Morning Herald ran the headline " Baggy Green Shame " while The Australian wrote of the " \$ 11 @,@ 000 price of disgrace " . Many newspaper columns and letters to the editor attacked the players . The editorial of The Australian stated that " Waugh and Warne said yesterday they had been naïve and stupid . Put the emphasis on the second adjective ? and add greedy . " Readers called for the players to be banned from playing for Australia as well as the sacking of the ACB officials who had kept the matter secret ; some said that the players should never be appointed to leadership roles in the cricket community . In the Weekend Australian of 12 December , Warwick Hadfield and Brian Woodley editorialised that " Warne is in need of some good advice , but not from business managers and PR folk too happy to tell him how wonderful he is in order to flog a few more videos , books , pairs of duds , sports shoes or anti @-@ smoking ads " . Warne 's major sponsors reviewed their partnerships with him , and three newspapers , the Daily Mirror of the United Kingdom , The Age of Melbourne and the Sydney Morning Herald severed their ties with him .

A few days later , in the wake of the scandal , Waugh was widely jeered by an Australian crowd when he walked out to bat on the first day of the Test . In what he described as the toughest day of his career , Waugh gave an unconvincing and hesitant performance . Waugh managed only seven runs in 36 minutes before being removed by Peter Such , caught and bowled . The cricket writer Peter Roebuck opined that it was the worst home crowd reception for an Australian player that he could remember . Warne was injured at the time and did not play , so he did not have to face the hostile crowd .

= = Later inquiries = =

On 8 January 1999 , Pakistan 's Judicial Commission held a hearing in Melbourne into bribery and match @-@ fixing . The commission had originally summoned Waugh and Warne to Pakistan but the ACB instead decided to offer them court privileges in Australia . Both Warne and Waugh gave evidence at the public hearing . Waugh seemed nervous and uncertain , whereas Warne appeared assured and confident . They were questioned for approximately 80 and 45 minutes respectively . The Pakistani investigators attempted to link the Australians ' dealings with John to various games between Pakistan and Australia in 1994 , over which they had suspicions of match @-@ fixing .

Immediately after Warne and Waugh had met John in Colombo , Australia defeated Pakistan in a one @-@ day match , scoring 7 / 179 and restricting Pakistan to 9 / 151 in reply . There were suspicions that the Pakistanis had thrown the game by batting slowly , although Warne said he had genuinely tried his best , pointing out that he was named man @-@ of @-@ the @-@ match . Warne and May had alleged that Malik offered them money to bowl badly on the final day of the First Test in Karachi . Australia then reduced Pakistan from 3 / 157 to 9 / 258 , and appeared set for victory , but a last @-@ wicket partnership took them to the target of 314 . The win was registered when wicket @-@ keeper Ian Healy missed a stumping chance from Warne and the ball went for four byes . Warne denied that he had thrown the match , again pointing out he was named man @-@ of @-@ the @-@ match . Waugh had alleged that Malik offered him money to help Australia lose a one @-@ day match during the same tour . He denied the allegation that he did so . Waugh scored an unbeaten 121 , but it was not enough to prevent Australia from suffering a nine @-@ wicket defeat .

Waugh denied betting on cricket , but said he had given John information " about ten times " , contradicting his earlier statement that the pair had only talked on " a handful " of occasions . Warne

testified that he gave pitch and weather information to John before matches three times ? a one @-@ day international against England at the Sydney Cricket Ground in December 1994 , the Second Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Fifth Test at the WACA Ground .

Crompton was the last witness . He said that Warne and Waugh 's actions " amounted to a breach of the players ' contract in that it brought the game of cricket into disrepute " . He said that it was normal for off @-@ field disciplinary breaches to be dealt with in private , while the fallout of on @-@ field incidents was made public . Compton parried Pakistani accusations that he had covered @-@ up the affair . He said that if the matter had been made public , it would have been confused with bribery . The front @-@ page headline in the Melbourne tabloid Herald Sun subsequently read " MATCH FIX " , accompanied by pictures of Warne and Waugh . The players responded that " the matter [of the headline] was in the hands of their lawyers " . The next day , the headline read " INNOCENT " .

Following the public outcry over the suppression of the incident , the ACB appointed Rob O 'Regan QC to head up a Player Conduct Inquiry . His assistants conducted 60 preliminary interviews and O 'Regan made ten himself . O 'Regan released his report on 28 February 1999 . He described the fines as " inadequate " as their size " did not reflect the seriousness of what they had done " . He suggested that a " suspension for a significant time " was more appropriate .

They must have known that it is wrong to accept money from , and supply information to , a bookmaker whom they also knew as someone who betted on cricket . Otherwise they would have reported the incident to team management long ago before they were found out in February 1995 . In behaving as they did they failed lamentably to set the sort of example one might expect from senior players and role models for many young cricketers .

O 'Regan said that Australian players were not prepared for playing cricket in Asia , as they were not aware of the dangers of bookmakers and betting on the Indian subcontinent . He recommended that every new player should be warned of the dangers of becoming involved with bookmakers , and the penalties that it entails . The ICC announced that no further action would be taken against Waugh and Warne as they could not be tried twice for the same offence .