

Jonathan Agnew



It promises to be a busy week in the bookshops with two high-profile and potentially explosive autobiographies hitting the shelves on the same day. Roy Keane, the former Republic of Ireland footballer, is expected to deliver some much-awaited and typically combative insight into

his stormy relationship with Sir Alex Ferguson in *The Second Half*, while Kevin Pietersen will take aim at the England cricket management following the decision to drop him. Which to read first?

Both are outspoken characters with plenty of previous when it comes to falling out with authorities and coaches. Keane had a furious row with Mick McCarthy before the 2002 World Cup in which he told the Irish boss that he didn't rate him as a player or manager. McCarthy sent him home. Pietersen attempted to have Peter Moores and Andy Flower removed from the coaching staff shortly after becoming England captain in 2008. Pietersen was sacked. Moores also lost his job as head coach and was replaced by Flower, who is expected to bear the brunt of Pietersen's criticism in *KP The Autobiography*.

To this theme we might add US golfer Phil Mickelson who launched a scathing attack on his Ryder Cup captain, Tom Watson, immediately following last week's defeat to Europe. Nick Faldo commented: 'He threw his captain right under the bus.' It's fair to say that none of these fine sports-

men has much to lose from letting rip at their superiors. Mickelson will never have to play under Watson's captaincy again, Keane is now in football management himself and although Flower is no longer coach, Pietersen and England appear to be well and truly divorced.

I'd be surprised, though, if KP burns his boats completely. Most important in his book will be his explanation for sending 'provocative' text messages to the South African captain, Andrew Strauss, for regardless of events in Australia last winter, that incident two years ago is key. It was the moment that the England team lost its trust in its lead-

ing batsman. Ironically, it was Flower who subsequently brought him back into the fold, but the players never really forgave KP for what they believed was a serious breach of loyalty.

But with Pietersen's version of events finally aired, is it possible that such an unhappy and divisive episode in English cricket can now be laid to rest? Some hope.

'Keane and Pietersen have previous when it comes to falling out with authorities'