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Who would want to be the captain of the England cricket team? The scrutiny on one of the most prestigious roles within British sport has reached unprecedented levels this summer with, for the first time, social media adding greatly to the debate about the

direction of English cricket, and the suitability of Alastair Cook to remain at the helm.

The role of the England cricket captain is more far reaching than in any other sport. The recent World Cup football campaign was nothing short of disastrous, but Steven Gerrard is not held responsible for that. It is the manager that carries the can. The England rugby captain is rather more hands on when it comes to tactical decisions on the field, and can be a truly inspirational figure such as Martin Johnson who led England to win the 2003 World Cup. But even that pales into insignificance when compared to the man in whites who runs the game for up to six hours per day, is responsible for every bowling change and minute alteration to the field - and then has to go out to bat.

The best example of the relationship between the cricket captain and the team coach was provided by Bob Woolmer who, when coach of South Africa, attempted to communicate with his on-field captain, Hansie Cronje, via an earpiece. The moment the authorities got wind of this, it was condemned as unethical and banned

immediately. The captain must do his job alone.

And how the pressure on him has grown. The debate surrounding Alastair Cook's future has been played out much more vigorously than ever before. Gone are the days when such matters were the source of a good argument in the village pub; now it is played out all over social media where cricket fans express their opinions both freely and without reservation

while high profile former players such as Australian Shane Warne take to national newspapers to present their critical analysis.

All of this is worse when the captain is out of form. His team mates are able to focus entirely

on their own games, free from the burden of decision making. But when England find themselves in a losing streak and the captain can't buy a run for love nor money, he has nowhere to hide. Despite the honour and the prestige the position brings, being England cricket captain must sometimes make you feel like the loneliest man in the world.

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