

# JONATHAN AGNEW



England's heart-stopping victory in the first Test by just 14 runs has set the Ashes series alight. The match had all the essential ingredients for a classic Test – drama, excitement, great skill, heroism and, of course, controversy. The standard of umpiring and the implementation of technology that is supposed to prevent serious errors are issues going into Lord's – the home of cricket and

the standard bearer for the MCC's Spirit of Cricket.

This is an undefined code, but something that every cricketer understands. Essentially, it is to do the right thing by you, your opponent and the game. In a sport that has become increasingly less sporting, it is pointless to demand a return to the 'good old days'. It will never happen and, besides, some batsmen did not walk, even then. But there is a line that every cricketer is expected not to cross – a limit that goes beyond the increasingly accepted level of gamesmanship.

The problem is the invisible line is drawn by every individual and it can move at any given moment, given the situation of the match. Using my own as judgment, I believe that in standing for such an obvious catch at Trent Bridge, Stuart Broad crossed the line.

It was the intense heat of battle and judging by reaction on Twitter, many disagree with me. Perhaps had Broad been an Australian and England had lost the match as a result, the response

might have been different. Recently Broad's team mate, Graeme Swann, called a Sri Lankan batsman a cheat because 'he stood there knowing 100% that he had hit it.' So even in the same England dressing room you have a different interpretation of the same code.

To have a cricket ground bristling with technology is one thing, but it has to be applied in such a manner that these incidents simply cannot happen. It is for the ICC to take proper control of its own system that it currently expects the television companies to implement on its behalf.

In the meantime, to those who say that you should never walk and do your best to get one over on your opponent, I say: you are entitled to your opinion. But you must accept the same in return, uncomplainingly, and play a sport in which you have to win at all costs. What a shame. Cricket is better than that.

***'The first Test has set the Ashes series alight'***