

Jonathan Agnew



As if it is not enough that the administration of FIFA, the international governing body of football, is currently facing serious allegations of corruption and malpractice, the headlines this week are likely to be made by FIFA's cricketing equivalent, the International Cricket Council (ICC).

At a meeting in Melbourne, the Test-playing countries will accept radical changes to the way that cricket is run, with India, England and Australia setting themselves up as the senior, all-powerful members of a

new executive committee that will govern the game and make the most money from it. Most controversial of all is that the man who will be proposed as the first chairman of this committee, and who therefore will effectively run world cricket, is the president of the Board Of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Narayanaswami Srinivasan, who denies the allegations of corruption he faces but who recently stepped down from his position at the BCCI under the instruction of the Indian Supreme Court.

It seems astonishing that Srinivasan should have any involvement with the administration of the ICC under the current circumstances, or that its members should meekly accept his nomination this week. It illustrates the power that India, which generates 70% of the game's income, holds over the others, all of whom need to play against India in order to benefit from the enormous sums generated by television.

Cricket's administrators need only to look over their shoulders at the maelstrom of allegations against their football counterparts, including the president of FIFA, Sepp Blatter,

to appreciate what dangerous territory they are dragging cricket into. Sponsors are becoming increasingly agitated about the manner in which Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup with one, Adidas, expressing its concern that the 'negative tenor of the public debate is neither good for football nor for FIFA and its partners'.

Blatter is set to stand for re-election next year and unless he resigns in the meantime, FIFA will continue

to stave off the allegations that are damaging its reputation. But the ICC still has time to take a step back. The new structure allows only India, England and Australia to nominate one of their own as chairman of the executive committee,

which ironically will also be responsible for dealing with corruption within the game, so why not put either the Englishman or the Australian in to bat first and allow Srinivasan time to clear his name? Because common sense rarely features in the often murky world of sports administration, that's why.

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