

Sehwag, Gilchrist spar over substitute strategy

Deccan Chargers skipper Adam Gilchrist minced no words in criticising Delhi Daredevils' ploy of bringing an unfit Mohammad Asif for bowling and replacing him with a substitute for fielding in their Indian Premier League (IPL) match here Thursday night.

Asif, who was suffering from an injury, after bowling his first two overs at the start of the innings retired to the dug-out and then returned to bowl the 15th and 17th over.

Shoaib Mallik was called in as substitute. Gautam Gambhir, who injured his knee while batting was also out of the field and was replaced by substitute Abraham de Villiers.

Malik and De Villiers took four catches and Gilchrist was not amused.

'This is the first time I saw substitute players taking so many catches. The bowler (Asif) went off and then came again to bowl. It is for the umpire to see,' a visibly annoyed Gilchrist said after his team lost to the home side.

Daredevils skipper Virender Sehwag defended his move saying he was going strictly by the rule book.

'Asif had an external injury so he went out. He had to return to bowl a few overs again. We can have as many substitute fielders as possible. It is absolutely as per the rules. You can check with the umpire,' said Sehwag.

Sehwag also had reasons to be upset as somebody from the crowd threw a stone that injured him while he was fielding near the boundary and the game was stopped for some moment.

'This is the first time that a Delhi player has been stoned in Delhi and unfortunately it is Virender Sehwag,' he said.

He lauded Amit Mishra for his match-winning spell of five wickets including a hat-trick in the final over.

'I had complete faith in him and so I gave him the last over. He has bowled well in the tournament.

For his team, this win comes after four losses. 'No team can consistently win matches in this league. We are happy to be back on the winning note. We have done well with the ball throughout the tournament but it was important for the batting to click and it happened today,' said Sehwag.

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