

Former cricketers justify Gambhir's ban

Former cricketers from India and Australia have justified the one-Test ban on Indian opener Gautam Gambhir, saying the batsman should learn from the punishment.

Match Referee Chris Broad Friday imposed the ban on Gambhir for violating the spirit of the game after the opener was found guilty of elbowing Australian all-rounder Shane Watson on the opening day of the third Test here Wednesday

Watson had abused Gambhir, who while taking a run stuck out his elbow to nudge the bowler. Watson was slapped a match-fee fine of 10 percent. The Indian cricket board said the opener would appeal against the ban.

Former Australian spinner Colin Miller said there was no place for getting physical in cricket and Gambhir's action was against the spirit of the game.

'It was a good decision by the Match Referee. There is no place for getting physical. Gambhir deserved the ban and hopefully he will learn from it,' Miller told IANS at the Feroz Shah Kotla here Friday.

In a similar incident last year, Gambhir was involved in a mid-pitch collision with Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi during a one-day international in Kanpur. Gambhir was fined 65 percent of his match-fee while Afridi was fined 95 percent.

Former India skipper Ravi Shastri felt Gambhir is not a first-time offender and that it is time he learnt a lesson.

'This is not the first time he has been involved in such an incident. He needed a rap on the knuckles. Gambhir is a young guy and he will take this decision in his stride. Imagine him doing this during a World Cup semi-final and missing the final,' he said.

Former India wicket-keeper Syed Saba Karim, said the ban if one sees in isolation can appear harsh.

'But if you look back, one can say that he should have learnt from his past mistake,' he said.

Former Somerset captain and columnist Peter Roebuck said the verbal abuse has always been a part of the game, but when a player gets physical, he crosses the line.

'When there is an exchange of words in the field, who knows what is being said. But Gambhir's action looked a bit intentional. So it was a right decision but I know he will learn from it,' said Roebuck.

Broad while announcing the decision said that any degree of physical contact is unacceptable and wanted to hand out a harsher sentence on Gambhir.

'I would have been obliged to impose a minimum penalty of a two-Test match ban. But in the view of the umpires, the facts of this case - the lightness of the physical conduct and the element of

provocation - would not justify such a penalty,' he said.

Abhishek Roy (© IANS / India eNews)