

MCC Cowdrey Spirit of Cricket Lecture - 2013 (Simon Taufel)

Themes - Humility / Respect / serving the game - 3rd Team / integrity

Introduction

Distinguished guests, MCC Members, fellow cricket lovers, ladies and gentlemen, welcome and thank you for the kind invitation to share some time and thoughts with you. I am very proud and grateful to have received the invitation and to be here amongst so many cricket legends and lovers. So, I stand before the cricketing faithful, a very humble and lucky man. We do live in interesting times and in the middle of an Ashes series as a former umpire and given my role with the ICC, I also stand before you as somewhat of a target! So, as always, I think I'm prepared for anything, so take your best shot.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of my wife, Helen. Without her love and support, I would not have been able to explore the opportunities afforded by this game and yes, behind a great man is an even greater woman! Helen is no different to all the other "cricketing widows" who are often given a lesser priority when the cricket is on – this is not a reflection on them, but a reflection on how highly we value our game and sport. You can see why it was a hard decision to move away from active umpiring but it was time to redress the balance and put more time and effort into our relationship and family.

Just on the topic of family – it must be said that I have two families, my cricket family and my paternal one. At this point, I'd like to pay my own tribute to last year's MCC Spirit of Cricket speaker, Tony Greig. He was a commentator and I was an umpire, so I suppose you could say that we didn't see eye to eye on everything. His untimely passing helped reinforce to myself what the true Spirit of Cricket is. Attending his memorial service at the SCG just before the traditional January Test, with both of his families present, it was so right that all present were there to remember, celebrate and pay their respects to such a servant of the game. As sad as that occasion was, and as important as *this* one is, cricket does have the power to bring different people together for the common good – the love and advancement of the game. I sincerely respect the work of Tony, his passion, his love and commitment to serve the game of cricket. We all come and go, but the legacy of our game carries on – as it should.

One of the key qualities an umpire must possess is humility – the ability to know and accept the role that we play within the game and ensure that we create the right environment for the players to perform and express their talents. Yes, we have an important role but it's not the most important. It is, after all, a player's game and always should be.

My story (humility)

As with most stories, my umpiring one started with a bit of luck. I was lucky to be given the opportunity to attend the NSWCU&SA training course and exam, lucky to get more than the required 85% pass mark, lucky to be joining the best umpires' association on the planet, lucky to have such great teachers and mentors around me through my career. It was a great environment with extraordinary people and as a result NSW and Australia have produced some fine umpires over my time. Simply put, I would not be here today if it was not for the great people surrounding me – family, friends, work mates, employers, cricket administrators, cricket captains and most importantly, fellow umpires. To pinch a quote from one of our current ICC Umpire Coaches ... “Umpiring is everyone’s business”. Everyone has a part to play in its future and success.

I loved playing cricket and I was a child who lived for Saturday mornings. When I woke up and saw raindrops on the window of my bedroom, it was a heavy feeling of disappointment. I was not the best player, not the worst, but like most things, I gave it my best effort and worked very hard to improve all the time. The pinnacle of my playing career was being a team member of the U/19 NSW schoolboys side captained by Michael Slater with fellow team member (and previous MCC Cowdrey lecturer) Adam Gilchrist – two fine players and human beings.

As they say, when one door closes, another one opens and for me a back injury made me question and reassess my playing future. That’s when a good friend of mine talked me into joining him for the umpiring course. We thought we knew the Laws as players and this was going to be a breeze – the educators up the front had seen our type before and put us through our paces. Was 42 Laws over four nights and intermittent study the basis for being an umpire and having the right to send batsmen on their way?

Apparently it was! The written exam was passed and so technically I knew the Laws well enough, but what the game has taught me over many years, I can only scratch the surface in this small amount of time. Today, it continues to pay a full time wage and I continue to work with grassroots cricket as patron of the Bowral Cricket Club, where the Bradman Museum and International Cricket Hall of Fame is located, and right through to the highest level with the top umpires and players in the world. How lucky am I?

I would like to share with you just a few things that cricket and cricket umpiring has taught me over the years. So, here’s just a taste from my journey so far

...

- How to better prepare for success (Preparation and hard work)
 - Preparation is king – plenty of “what ifs” (gym sessions with Jock / Aussie players / post match laps and warm downs)
 - No substitute for hard work – you must put in the work and hours and earn your place – it builds self confidence

- How to serve others (training / advice / experience)
 - The game is bigger than the individual – know your place
 - Helping or teaching others forces you to really know your game
 - This is how you started – remember where you came from

- How to be a better team member (on and off the field)
 - Umpiring is a team game – you have to want your mate to have a good match – we are judged as a team / group

- How to set goals and achieve them / celebrate them
 - Small steps – one game at a time
 - Focus on making your next game your best game – my 1st Test was not my best, my second Test was better
 - Boxing Day 2000 saw my family and NSW members share the occasion

- How to be self disciplined (good habits)
 - What you do and the work you put in / decisions you make when no one is watching is what really defines your chance of success
 - To be in the top 1% of the sport, you need to do what the rest are not willing to do
 - Self discipline is THE difference between success and failure
 - Worked hard and followed the guidance of my coaches – life, fitness, diet, vision

- How to learn to like and appreciate who you are (role model for others)
 - Be yourself because everyone else is taken
 - Raise the standard / push the bar higher – don't accept the performance limits set by others
 - Others will use your performance as a benchmark

- We are all leaders in our own “world” and others take notice and make judgments
- How to think positively
 - I can, I will, I am...
 - Every great act / performance first starts with a thought – so does every bad one!
 - World Cup 2011 – Semi Final India v Pakistan and then the final India v Sri Lanka.
- How to better deal with setbacks – mental strength
 - No umpire likes to make an error – especially not me – I did take it personally
 - Rational thought needs to overtake emotional thought – we all have these battle scars (Mental toughness – the ability to control your thoughts and emotions and not let them control you)
 - We learn through our mistakes – the better umpires learn faster and make fewer mistakes than everyone else
- How to build relationships across cultures and age groups
 - To be a good umpire, you have to be a good person
 - Cricket is so diverse across cultures, age groups, religions – it unites so many
 - Great to know how to count to six in so many languages
- How to handle and deal with pressure and focus on what’s important
 - Pakistan v. India 2004 Test and ODI series
 - Red carpet at the hotel – armed guard escort – metal detectors at the ground – more police inside than spectators
 - Keeping it simple on the field
 - Watch the ball

- Keep the mind clear – the here and now – pre delivery self talk trigger
 - Shut out distractions – match goal anchors
 - Opportunity to impress not driven by fear of failure
 - Nerves are good
 - Set small targets – 1st ball, 1st over, 1st hour, 1st session – then do it another 14 times!
 - Pilots – hours of observation with the occasional few seconds of panic
 - Players are generally very good and once you earn their respect through performance and hard work, they respond.
 - Media focus
 - England and India dominate here!
 - Don't read a newspaper or look at internet cricket sites if you think there is going to be bad press
 - Do what is right to satisfy your own standards
 - You cannot be perfect but you can be excellent

- Player behaviour – conflict resolution
 - Empathy and understanding are key – dealing with people here
 - Pick your moment and battles – it's international sport
 - Maintain standards – not making a decision is also making a decision
 - Good Code of Conduct – the challenge is to be proactive but apply consistently
 - Fine with the players playing hard but fair – Test cricket should be just that – a Test (Warne and McGrath). First-Class domestic cricket needs to be strong to prepare us
 - Manage the player, manage the situation
 - Out of conflict comes better relationships (Munaf)
 - No problem with any appeal as long as they respect and accept the answer / decision. They have a job to do, like I do.
 - Really impressed with how people such as Dhoni, Dravid, Kumble and Sachin get on with their game with the weight of so many fans / expectation

- Life is short and we have some great people in our game

- The people in our game make the game what it is
- We have so many “heroes” (My boss Vince)
- We remember the person first and the cricketer second (story about Shep – ice cream / job caring – no one ever doubted his integrity or game first focus)

So what does the Spirit of Cricket mean to me? First, the central theme is **respect**. From 1744, when the Laws of Cricket were first codified, through to today and into the future, my desire is for that central value of respect to remain as a constant. The game has changed over the past two and a half centuries, and it will continue to change, but it is vital that some things remain constant...they being the values of respect, the basis of fair play and a balanced contest between bat and ball. We need to learn from the past (taking the intrinsic values forward), assess the present (celebrate the moment) and be visionary for the future (to ensure the game of cricket survives and grows).

Let's look at respect for the past

Cricket has established some great traditions that make it a unique sport. Many of our common values have been centered on such colloquial expressions like...

- “It’s just not cricket” – relating to fairness
- “A gentleman’s game” – relating to **honor** and **respect** amongst competitors and doing the **right thing** when required
- “Spirit of Cricket” – even though something might be technically right, applying a high standard of morals and **integrity** when playing – not to engage in cheating or taking undue advantage of someone else’s misfortune.

Then we have the conventions of the game that have been established over time. Today, we continue to respect those traditional conventions when we start plying our trade. As umpires we are the first to walk on to the field and the last ones to walk off – spare a thought for us at the tea break or innings break in a Test match where we spend the least amount of time having a break! (No, I don’t expect any sympathy here!!).

When only one umpire is present at a game of cricket, we are expected to officiate at both ends with the support of a stand in (normally a player) at square leg. We normally collect the bowler’s hat and carry it for the over in progress – some of you may not think this is much of a service, but no doubt many of you have not had to hold the sweaty, soaked and unlaundered hats belonging to players like Greg Matthews, Anil Kumble or Chaminda Vaas.

I started umpiring in the early 1990s just when third umpires were brought in for line decisions and recall the huge outcry when batsmen were now being given out run out or stumped by one or two centimeters. It was also an age when there was one home Board-appointed and one ICC-appointed umpire to be in the middle for Tests. My Test career started with being appointed by the ACB as they were called those days to stand in a Boxing Day Test at the

MCG – to represent your country and your profession at the highest level *is* the ultimate. There were no ICC contracts, no ball trackers, no hot spot, no Twenty20 cricket and no international umpire training workshops. The uniform was basic, I supplied my own white business shirt and the Match Referee (Mr. AC Smith) gave me some National Grid stickers to apply to my shirt for each day's play on behalf of our sponsor. My partner for the Test was Venkat and our teamwork was summarized by our chat as we walked out to start the match when I asked him, "*which ends shall we go to?*" and he replied... "*I don't care which end you want, but I'm going to that end!*"

Let's look at Respect for the present

Today, I have umpired as

- a full time contracted umpire spending more than half of each year working abroad,
- in three international formats of the game (Tests, ODIs and T20s),
- I've finished Test matches under floodlights to maximize playing time,
- umpiring under DRS and non-DRS playing conditions (and a mixture of both),
- I've had to sometimes publicly accept and reverse a decision error after it being dissected by the 3rd umpire on the giant replay screen,
- I've left a Test match unfinished lucky to still be alive after being involved in a terrorist attack, and
- umpired following journeys of over 16000 km, 72 hours after landing.

In today's cricket, the use of technology has shown how difficult the job of an umpire is. In most TV broadcasts, there are around 32 cameras to capture the action of a ball being bowled at around 145km/hr, the batsmen speeding between wickets and fielders catching the ball close to the turf or trying to slide and prevent boundaries up to 80 meters away.

Every movement of the player is under the microscope (on and off the field) and every movement of the umpire is also under intense scrutiny. There is at least one camera on the umpire all the time, every ball, watching his every move and facial expression, waiting to capture his decision for all to see (and be replayed as many times as the director sees fit).

In today's cricket, the decision of the umpire is scrutinized by all these cameras including slow motion, ultra motion, hot spot front on, hot spot leg side, hot spot off side, ball tracking and prediction, snicko, stump audio, the mat and then by up to three commentary experts upstairs in the box. After all that public scrutiny and technology, there is often divided opinion about what the correct decision was – was he out or was he not out.

The investment by television companies in extra cameras, high-speed frame rates, computer software programs and military infra-red technology, plus high definition broadcasting has certainly given the spectator and participants a lot more information – there is no doubt we now have a lot more "arm chair" experts in cricket! Today, everyone umpires the game by watching television. The invasive nature of this broadcasting has a double edge to it – it does put

more pressure on players and umpires. Not too much now happens on a cricket field that is not captured by a camera, a microphone or piece of technology. This has the ability to bring out the best in the game and also the worst.

We can appreciate the skills and high standards on display. A great switch hit in ultra slow motion off a pace bowler by AB De Villiers or Kevin Pietersen, a magnificent mystery ball out of the front of the hand from Narine or Ashwin, a superb diving catch taken millimeters off the ground by Jacques Kallis and the scenes of celebration when the last wicket has been taken in an Ashes Test. We can also see how good the umpiring standards are and how good some of the decisions can be – the small inside edge before the ball hits the pads for a not out LBW, the flick of the glove down the leg side for a catch and confirmation of no edge for a tough bat/pad appeal with lots of dust flying as the batsman hits the ground with his bat.

Champions Trophy video / music

Secondly, the Spirit of Cricket to me means that the values of the game take priority over personal gain or advancement. As you would have seen in that collage of pictures, there are so many facets and stakeholders in the game...

- players
- media
- spectators
- groundstaff
- administrators
- umpires
- broadcasters
- sponsors
- volunteers
- hospitality and marketing

When these people or groups interact within the game of cricket, the Spirit of Cricket to me means that they do the right thing to promote and serve the game. They should add value and contribute. Our game is strong due to the mix of a wide variety of talent and contribution of everyone involved.

The collective intelligence of the group is always greater than that of the individual. I'll repeat that ... the collective intelligence of the group is always greater than that of the individual. No single person has all the answers and solutions to the current challenges, so I'm not going to stand here and pretend to tell you that I have them. The real strength lies in the processes of associations, cricket committees and Governing Bodies that operate under the rule of democracy.

Debating difficult topics in the public domain is perhaps not the best way to solve our current challenges as they can sometimes be limited debates according to only a few people's viewpoints. It is also difficult to put all the

facts on the table and consider all the options and compromises involved. There is rarely a perfect solution to any problem or challenge – inevitably there is always compromise.

The fact is, our game is stronger and more vibrant today than it was 30 years ago when I first played cricket. It is stronger today than even 13 years ago before I started umpiring international cricket. The one constant in our world is CHANGE. We need to embrace change in our game and be careful about how we shape the game and ensure that every time we change something, we are adding value while balancing the benefits against the costs.

Umpires are a unique breed of individual, we think differently – the job demands it as we have to deal with the facts and not the emotions. I'm not saying that we are strange, some might say so based on standing in the hot sun for over six hours a day, absorbing the pressure, being booed when we come off for bad light and having to concentrate over long periods of time. We do think differently. Whenever we look at a situation like weather, ground conditions, player behaviour, an appeal for example, we have to consider what the Law says and apply it in a fair / unbiased, accurate and consistent way. Remember, umpires don't care which team wins the game!

Let me give you an example – have a look at this video clip (*Pakistan v India ODI – Inzamam obstructing the field*)...

This incident generated lots of debate at the time (and probably still does?). We almost had to order in a tow truck to remove Inzi and Bob Woolmer from our dressing room after the day's play as they would initially not accept the decision or application of the Law. All we did was apply the Law in a fair, unbiased and accurate way. The fact that it was the Pakistan captain at home in an important game, in a tight match had no bearing on the thought process. Our job is to make decisions and provide justice for all.

Decision making is tough in today's game; in my opinion tougher than when I started umpiring 22 years ago. Why? Because more people see evidence that we may not get to see on the ground at the time. There is more at stake when teams play – prize money, player contracts, support staff contracts and expectations of supporters and sponsors.

Anyone who watches the game at the ground, on the giant replay screen or on TV, will assess each and every decision of the umpires' and also make an overall judgment of their performance on the day (or even on their capabilities in general – often with only having seen a very small sample of an umpire's performance). I can tell you that ICC has taken the performance assessment of umpires very seriously as our rankings and continued contractual offerings depend on it. Every appeal is logged by the ICC Match Referee, every appeal is reviewed in the office and is assessed into three categories – correct, incorrect or inconclusive. Should the decision be assessed as inconclusive, the umpire is marked with only 50% of a correct decision (not sure I agree with this but it may surprise you to know that I don't always get my way with ICC management!!). There is no benefit of doubt to the umpire here!

I'm happy to share some performance statistics of the ICC Emirates Elite Panel (only correct decision percentages) to illustrate how better broadcasting and technology has allowed us to better assess decision-making performance.

2010/11 – 2745 appeals answered with a CD% average of 93.79% (umpires ranged from 97.29% to 91.6%)

2011/12 – 2597 appeals answered with a CD% average of 95.05% (umpires ranged from 97.49% to 91.14%)

2012/13 – 2956 appeals were answered with a CD% average of 94% (umpires ranged from 96.39% to 90.63%)

There is a rider here though; umpiring is not just about decision making. The danger is that we only assess or make judgments about an umpire or umpiring standards according to their correct decision percentage. Umpiring is much more than that – I would prefer to focus on preparation, match management, field craft (technique), communication, teamwork – an overall ability of an umpire to solve problems before they happen and create an environment of fairness for the players where they can play freely and show their skills. Correct decision making is important but for me it is a given, it should be there as a matter of fact. Only by exception should it be considered as an area to analyze and critique. For me, if you excel in preparation, match management, focus, teamwork and mental strength, the decision making will take care of itself.

If you were to ask the players, the coaches, the person in the street, would they be happy with an umpire who got nine out of ten decisions right in a day's play – I'm very confident the answer would be "yes". The reality is, this is not the response when an umpire gets one wrong (or should I say, not proved right by technology?!). Remember we are competing with many cameras and technologies and sometimes we are not in the best position to see or hear what actually happened. We have higher standards as umpires and there is always a strong desire and pursuit to get ALL decisions correct. I haven't met an umpire yet who is comfortable to make an error on the field or who doesn't want to get all of his decisions right – we really do care about our role and our decisions and performance.

Personally, I would set tour and game goals, just like the players do and strive to achieve them. I take enormous personal pride in every opportunity and performance in front of me – when I have fallen short of my own standards and expectations, it hurts. When I have met or exceeded them, it feels great.

As I said, the current environment has shown how difficult the role of an umpire is and perhaps has increased the respect for role and skills of the position. I honestly feel that respect for the role of the umpire has improved as people can now see how good we are and indeed, how tough the job can be.

Today's umpire has much more to do than just administer justice on decisions of dismissals. We have to police (and I personally dislike this term and approach) other vital areas of the modern game such as....

- Player behaviour
- Ball tampering
- Over rates
- Logos and clothing
- Impact of ground, weather and light having to reduce playing times

As I said up front, the Spirit of Cricket is centered on the theme of "Respect". As umpires we need to respect the process from the governing body of how the game is shaped and the role of technology. Remember the collective intelligence of the group is greater than the individual. Our technology system is not perfect and as I said one of the key roles of an umpire is to deliver justice when someone has infringed the agreed Laws.

One benefit of the current technology system has been the reduction in player behaviour, dissent charges and improvement in behaviour accordingly on the field. In the majority of cases in the modern game, if an umpire has made an error, there is an ability to correct it. In an Ashes Test, if there is an error off the first ball of the game, it can be corrected at the time rather than have it on the umpire's conscience for the rest of the day and have the players remind him constantly of it. If I make an error, it stays with me all day, all game and I have to keep focused and performing in the middle. There is no dressing room to immediately take refuge while another umpire comes out to the middle, no time off the field to regather thoughts and regroup.

Players and the game deserve the highest standards of umpiring and they deserve justice (at all levels). We also have to apply our values and Spirit of Cricket at all levels.

Please allow me to illustrate this point with a personal story from a match that happened earlier this year...

I don't normally umpire my children's cricket matches, in fact when they are looking for an umpire, I normally take a few steps backwards and pretend not to hear the request. I suppose it's a combination of not wanting to either embarrass myself, or have to deal with a conflict of interest if my son is involved in a decision and also the fact that I would just like to sit and enjoy watching my child in action. Now, I took my eldest son Harry (who was 13 at the time) one Saturday morning in January this year to play for his school in Bowral. You guessed it, I was roped in to umpiring for his team as no one else was there who could do it – or wanted to do it. So, I was thrown the poor excuse for a counter (yes, I am very particular about my tools) and off I went. I was doing ok and did not have too many five-ball overs with the poor counter, when I found my son Harry handing me his cap as he came on to bowl. Harry's not a bad bowler, a bit like Terry Alderman, with natural outswing. Within an over, Harry and the keeper went up for a huge LBW appeal on a rather large kid and I shook my head and said "not out". (The fact that I could

see all three stumps at the time made me pretty happy the decision was right but what would I know?). Well, Harry did not agree and he proceeded to give me and everyone the big “T” signal as if to request a decision review – is this something new at the U/14 level I thought. It didn’t stop there, he then yelled out to his mother on the sideline – “I never want Dad to umpire me again!” I was more than happy to comply with his latter request but took a serious objection to the former one of his dissent. How was I now going to handle this form of player behaviour I thought – where was the respect for the umpire’s decision? We ended up having our own internal Code of Conduct hearing at home later on that day, the penalty was handed out and there was no chance of Harry sending it to further appeal.

The story does illustrate though, how our future generations and their values of our game are being shaped by what they see at the highest level. This is unavoidable. I believe the highest form of the game needs to have the highest standards of respect, Spirit of Cricket, behaviour and integrity – those at the highest level are setting the tone and standards for others to follow, be they players, umpires or administrators. We owe the future of our game that much.

I do respect how the game is shaped and the role of technology. The technology genie has been let out of the bottle and it’s not going to go back in. I would simply advocate that we look at ways to be as pragmatic as possible so we can get more correct decisions and deliver more justice. I do have an important message on this topic though as it is often asked, “what is your view on the DRS?” I’m not sure that this is the right question. Perhaps we should be asking *“are we using technology in the best way to serve the players, supporters, umpires and values of our game?”* No matter what system of technology review / referral we implement in our game, it will not be perfect or 100%. The all-human solution is not 100%, neither is the DRS and neither will be an “all appeals” review system. There are trade offs and compromises with every system adopted. It all depends how the majority believe our game should be played underpinned with the values we want to promote and preserve (the Spirit of Cricket).

One performance improvement tip I have learned from speaking with Gary Kirsten, who I respect enormously as a person and for his coaching skill, is that we need to ask ourselves every day *“are we doing this the best way? Is there a better way?”* I would advocate applying this question to how we use technology in our sport as there is always room for improvement and we should always self assess and strive for excellence, not perfection.

So, now to Respect for the future

The playing control team (we call it the PCT) and the third team concept is an important one – not the most important but equally so when we consider the players. Whenever the game deals with issues like security, corruption, technology, hosting standards, Laws, Playing Conditions, scheduling / workloads and Spirit of the Game – we as umpires have an integral part to play as well. Umpires do not seek to be more important than the other two teams, we the “third team”, seek to be treated as equally significant and

respected for the role that we have to perform. If we expect our umpires and match officials to perform as professionals, then going forward, we need to set up a professional support structure and environment for them. Hopefully, this is where I can now play a role and serve the game better.

Cricket Australia and ICC have shown a lot of leadership here in particular in creating a professional relationship between the business and its umpires. Australian umpires were the first to be offered part time contracts back in 1998. In the case of ICC, we entered into our first MOU in 2009. Both Malcolm Speed and David Richardson deserve a lot of credit for their pioneering work and cooperation in this area. Being professional is not about how much money you are paid, but it's more about creating the right environment of accountability, security and clarity of who is responsible for what, that allows one to focus on their core function.

A contractual relationship is important for representative umpires and the top end of the game to flourish and to secure the best available. The top ICC Elite Panel umpires are travelling and working between 180 and 220 days per year with their own domestic season to participate in. For the top 12 and perhaps the best three or four of the International Panel, the workload is only manageable by having some financial and contractual security. For international umpires, the role is not just one of on-field game management but there are other duties off field such as umpire development with local Boards, media and sponsor requests. The rise of domestic cricket leagues provides another time and work challenge but they also create a development opportunity for domestic umpires. These local umpires now get to work more often with international umpires and referees, which allows more transfer of skills and best practice examples in what essentially is an international environment under the scrutiny of TV and overseas players and coaches.

Many people have asked why I “retired” from international umpiring, I prefer to call it moving on to a different role. I have been umpiring for 22 years and nearly 14 of those at the international level, for me it was time to take on a new challenge. Apart from the “it’s time” argument, there were two fundamental reasons – personal and professional. I would like to focus on the professional reasons. We all are aware that the game of cricket is much larger than any one individual and we should all be reminded of one of Sir Donald Bradman’s key themes, and that is ... *“Play the game for the game’s sake, enjoy it and leave the game in a better position that when you found it”*.

Upon considering my own role in the game, I came to the conclusion that there was more to offer in a coaching, development and support than in active umpiring alone. To date, most, if not all of our effective training has been “on the job”. We are looking to develop more simulated based training programs to support and prepare our umpires better before they walk into a game situation. That is a much better service to the players, stakeholders and the umpires.

There is very little material or training tools to help prepare umpires for the increasing challenges of cricket umpiring (especially at the representative

level). Since joining international umpiring in 1999, it was quickly established that the majority of knowledge and intellectual properties on umpiring still resided in people's heads. Training and coaching of umpires has primarily revolved around learning the MCC's 42 Laws and assessment based on passing an exam with an acceptable agreed number of correct answers.

Cricket umpiring is much more than that and my continued focus, right when the umpiring career began, was to make it easier and better for the current and future generations of cricket umpires. This is taking shape not only in the area of minimum hosting standards for match officials, contracts, payments and the like but also in training, accreditation and coaching resources.

It is vital to reinforce the mindset of the public, the players and the administrators that there are three teams who participate in the game of cricket – the two teams who play to win and the third team who provide the service and on field management – the umpires (and now match referees). At this time I would also like to acknowledge the importance and contribution of the scorers and ground staff to this third team – their work is equally essential and important. Hopefully one day, we can see a David Kendix or a Mick Hunt delivering a Cowdrey Lecture also!

So, what does this service and contribution look like? The game is changing all the time and is driven by the players and broadcasters. Umpiring is continually trying to catch up and keep pace with these developments. Laws and Playing Conditions change every year as a result. Many top umpires now officiate under no less than up to seven (7) different types of playing conditions within a year, all with slight variations on interpretations from the relevant governing body.

We need to make it easier to be a cricket umpire – at all levels. We need to create a better way to educate, train and coach our umpires. Our work has started this year on developing an ICC Accreditation Process for International Umpires that the Test Playing Nations can also use for their First-Class competitions with a target of having this implemented by 2015. We are seeking to establish and demonstrate best practice across six areas – Technique, Preparation, Match Management, Decision Making, Attitude and Teamwork and Self Management / Personal Development.

We have put in place a new coaching structure for international umpires – focusing on support and performance development and less on assessment. These ICC umpire coaches will need to reach down to the top domestic umpires and support the career path challenges for umpires. It's a start but we need more quality umpire coaches and more funding for resources. We have recently conducted a "Coach the Coach" training course for the Test Playing nation's future umpire coaches – this is first. This is a positive news story of leadership from the ICC and its Cricket Operations Department. We need to support and help the people who are training our future umpires BEFORE they get to representative levels – just like the players. We need to continually

look for ways to improve performance and get decisions right in the first place. We want each umpire to be the best that they can be.

We are developing skill development training programs – trying to tap into the resources that the players have. These programs and tools have to be developed from scratch. Skill development activities have been created like accurate ball pitching judgment, height judgment from square leg, third umpire communication and decision making and front foot no ball. Simulated based training exercises are the way forward.

MCC has a role to play as well. The Laws sub-committee requires resources to create a more modern, user-friendly and accessible support tool for understanding and interpreting the Laws of Cricket. We need to make use of the technological resources such as digital video clips, streaming on the internet and online Laws examinations / interpretations.

This Ashes series highlights one significant challenge – that of succession planning. The neutrality guidelines mean that eight of the 12 Elite Panel umpires are not eligible to officiate. That leaves us with only four umpires to control these ten Ashes Test matches – a significant workload and responsibility for these umpires and I'm confident that they will do a fine job. It is also recognition for the way that Cricket Australia and the ECB recruit, train and develop their match officials. We have a real need to encourage and support the other Test playing countries to invest more resources in this area. This representation trend by two countries needs more competition from the others. Umpiring is everyone's business, everyone seems to have an opinion on it but we need to alter the mindset and have all the countries investing more in the future of match officiating.

The best way to illustrate this point is through the balanced scorecard approach. We need all major elements of the game moving in the same direction at the same time and to all be of a high standard – I'm referring to quality players, match officials, facilities, administration and financial management. If any of these areas is weak, then the quality of our game is compromised. All five areas need to be strong and of a high standard.

The Laws tell us that the "Captains are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the spirit and traditions of the game as well as within the Laws." The future of our game shows us that our captains are getting younger and have less playing access to more experienced players, who are retiring earlier from the recreational game faster as life becomes more time challenged. Last year, I participated in a new concept by the Sydney Cricket Association where they held a "leadership" forum for all the Captains in Sydney grade cricket. Business and sports leaders presented their views and lessons learned on leadership, so that captains could self assess their own leadership styles and abilities. We need to continue to support our captains with such education and training and help them carry forward the spirit and traditions of our game. Leadership and captaincy is just

as important a skill in the game as an “off cutter” or “cover drive”. When cricket academies look at their programs, I’d like to see modules on the Spirit of Cricket, mental strength, emotional intelligence, the Laws of the game, leadership skills and history of our sport.

Umpiring is everyone’s business – we are the third team in the game. We seek equal consideration, we want to serve wholeheartedly and also have some fun out there.

So, in conclusion...

The Spirit of Cricket to me is about how best we all, individually, can serve the game – as a player, an umpire, a referee, a scorer, a grounds person, a commentator, a writer, a spectator, an administrator or a parent. We need to uphold the traditions and values of the game and carry forward that spirit by doing “the right thing” and putting these values ahead of personal gain or advancement so that future generations can experience what we have.

The game today does generate a lot of money, publicity, profile and opportunities for personal benefit. While it is fine to benefit from those opportunities, individuals and bodies need to also be aware of their responsibilities to keep reinvesting their time, profile and energies back into cricket – to reinvest back into the game, and remember where they came from.

I’m sure everyone here today has been a volunteer to the game at some point. Volunteers are vital to any sport and our game is no different – they take the form of umpires and scorers at the grass roots level, helping out at the club ground with the covers or helping out at the clubhouse at the end of the days play. The club strength and game is what we all make it. I encourage everyone to get involved in the game in any way that you can as it has so much to offer.

Together, let’s make the game of cricket better and more accessible for the next generation – by respecting the game’s heritage, enjoying and celebrating the present and creating more opportunities for our children – a legacy and future we can all be proud of. Thank you.