



SLEDGING AND CRICKET

D. S. Viegas, Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar

Received: 17/01/17

Edited: 26/01/17

Accepted: 04/02/17

Area: Physical Education

Abstract: *In any game there will be either a winner or a loser, but winning and losing doesn't matter; the spirit in which the game is played is that what matters. Nowadays it is very common to see teams sledging their opponents trying to get advantage in the game or trying to impress the spectators and the viewers. Nowadays, play ground most of the time seem to become battle fields. Sports once meant to bind society and countries have started to generate hatred. Sledging is often considered a psychological warfare, where the basic is to break the concentration of the opposition player, which may affect the technique, game plan or focus of the player. Sledging is mainly a mental warfare which may change the course of the game. Sledging can also backfire at times, the opponent can be more focussed and determined to accept the challenge. Even after sledging the team loses, it is a big psychological impact on the team and the players. Sledging is temporary, class is permanent. The game always comes first and then the players.*

Key words: Sledging: *The practice of a fielder making insulting or comical references to an opposition batsman with the aim of distracting him.*

Introduction:

The mind plays an important role in any game, sledging is where the opponent tries to disturb the opponent to gain advantage in the game. It's in a way trying to insult the opponent and compel the opponent to lose focus in the game. Sledging not only has an effect on the field but also off the field. The image of the player is also tarnished, no matter how great performer he/ she maybe. It is the game that comes first and then the player. Sledging can start verbally and end up physically. It is quiet entertaining for the spectators and viewers to watch the ugly battle on the playground. In cricket it is known as 'sledging', in basketball 'thrash talk' and in ice hockey as 'chirping'. The banter between the players ends up looking ugly. Day by day the level of sledging is becoming ugly and measures need to be taken to keep the game sporting. The governing body can fine/ban the guilty players but is that going to solve the problem? Players are role models for the upcoming players and need promote the game in the right way. Sports plays an important role in acting as bridge between two countries, but sledging can aggravate the relations. For example India and Pakistan, we see sledging at its peak and all the

viewers being more patriotic than being sporting the game is taken so seriously, resulting there are no matches between India and Pakistan they only play against each other in the world cup games. At the end, it is the goodness that is appreciated and remembered. Being good human beings is more important than winning.

Data and Methodology:

The data collected has been taken from paper articles and web sites with regard to sledging. In cricket sledging is becoming uglier day by day. Sportsman's spirit is rarely seen on the field nowadays and when shown is good to watch. Play fields have started to look like battle fields. Players have started to rely more on mind games than the skills of the game.

Sports act a bridge to join countries and if it turns a battle field, it would create hatred among countries. It is the game that is important, winning and losing needs to be secondary. Spectators come to watch a good game and not to see fights.

Sometimes sledging can also back fire by challenging the opponent. So it's not always that sledging will be helpful, it's also makes the opponent more determined to give back. Micky Stewart says

that sledging is bringing the game down. He says that it looked like things were going out hand at Trent Bridge between Zaheer Khan and England. The number of incidents with sledging is increasing.

On the contrary former Australian fast bowler Andy Bichel disagrees and says that sledging is healthy for the game. It is putting the opposition out of the game. He never agrees with personal sledging.

During the Ashes test, between Australia and England, the on field verbal altercation Michael Clarke and James Anderson was overheard on the stump microphone threatening James Anderson. Clarke was fined 20% of his match fees by the International Cricket Council (ICC). Unsubstantial reports claimed that Anderson threatened to punch Bailey in the face. Players are fined and banned for sledging which doesn't matter them much. One bad move leads to another.

During the on field sledging it is the umpires or referees that need to communicate with the players and the captains to settle the issue as early as possible. Captains play an important role in the use of sledging and response to the opponent's sledging. Seeing the current scenario the on field referees/umpires need to be given more powers to control the game and sledging.

The media need not highlight the ugly incidents that would encourage the players and influence the spectators and the viewers. Sledging incidents are highlighted in the newspapers, television channels that make things worse.

Sledging may also be termed as abuse and at times also cross the line and turn into personal abuse. During the 2007-08 India's tour of Australia, Andrew Symonds accused Harbajan Singh of racial abuse, who was of Jamaican ancestry. Symonds couldn't interpret what Harbajan Singh had exactly said in his native tongue. It could not be proved what he had exactly said and the post three match ban on Harbajan Singh, that was lifted. He was fined 50% of his match fees.

The West Indian batsman Vivian Richards was known for punishing bowlers if they tried to sledge him. The opposite teams used to tell their bowlers not sledge him. Once in a county game, Greg Thomas attempted to sledge Viv Richards and the next ball was sent out of the ground into the nearby river. Viv Richards not only answered him with bat but also verbally.

On the recent tour of South Africa, Australia though were on the brink of a four straight defeat were engaged with verbal banter with the Proteas. The approach totally back fired the Australian team. It was a totally embarrassing for the Australian team.

There are incidents were the verbal encounters end up being physical for eg. the episode between the Pakistan batsman Javed Miandad and Australian fast bowler Dennis Lillee.

Nowadays, before the series begins statements are made through the media regarding the game plan and the opposition players. The mind games start before the actual series has began.

As per, the newspaper Sakal, Pune edition, dated 08/03/2017, the article say that the Melbourne Cricket Committee, looking at the present scenario has decided to take strict action against the increasing indiscipline of the players on the ground. The increasing indiscipline in the matches has made many upcoming umpires leave umpiring. Seeing the latest incidents the new rules are made stricter, giving the umpires more powers to conduct the game that will be with effect from 01/10/2017.

Looking at the different sledging incidents, it is clearly understood that sledging is not good for the game. If the game is having insults and abuse language, we can't expect sportsman spirit in the game. There is no difference in the abuse language used on the field and off the field. Sportsmen are role models for the upcoming generations and need to act responsibly. One small good gesture on the field is appreciated more than sledging. Winning or losing is important but it is the spirit in which it is played that is important.

Conclusions:

- To keep the game a gentleman's game, there should be no place for sledging.
- Sports should act as bridge between countries.
- Sportsman's spirit will take the front seat if sledging doesn't exist.
- Being good human beings is more important than winning the game.
- Players are role models for the upcoming players and players need to act in a proper manner on and off the field.
- The game needs to be played in the right spirit.
- When sledging backfires, it can also have a psychological effect on the players.
- Stringent rules need to be made to make the umpires more influential in the game.

References:

- <http://www.localmatters.co.nz/opinion/columns/Health+Columns/Health/2015/The+psychology+of+sle dging.html>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2007/aug/01/cricket.englandcricketseries5>
- <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/thin-edge-of-the-sledge/news-story/6afde75a924ed24f3d489bbdd93a38e4>
- <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/dont-be-so-sensitive-sledging-is-part-of-the-game-20131205-2ytiz.html>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sledging_\(cricket\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sledging_(cricket))
- <http://christiantoday.com.au/news/sledging-in-sport.html>
- <http://www.bbc.com/sport/cricket/37562417>
- <http://www.foxsports.com.au/cricket/australia/sledging-is-hurting-australian-cricket-says-trent-woodhill/news-story/be24af12e885f40fa3d0>
- <http://www.localmatters.co.nz/opinion/columns/Health+Columns/Health/2015/The+psychology+of+sle dging.html>
- Sakal Newspaper, Pune edition, dated 08/03/2017