

2014/18: Risks in cricket: should bouncers be banned?

What they said...

'Bouncers are purely intimidatory stuff, and intimidation has no role in cricket because this sport, unlike some others, was never meant to be a gladiatorial contest'

Vaibhav Purandare writing for 'The Times of India'

'Removing it completely would take one of the best parts of cricket out of the game, which wouldn't sit too well with fans as well as veterans of the game...'

Jack de Menezes writing for 'The Independent'

The issue at a glance

On November 25, 2014, Australian Test and One Day International cricketer, Phillip Hughes, was hit in the neck by a bouncer, during a Sheffield Shield match at the Sydney Cricket Ground, causing a vertebral artery dissection that led to a subarachnoid haemorrhage.

Hughes was taken to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, where he underwent surgery, was placed into an induced coma and was in intensive care in a critical condition. He died on November 27, 2014, having never regained consciousness, three days before his 26th birthday.

Hughes's death resulting from an on-field injury caused a world-wide expression of grief within the cricket community and has led some commentators to call for bouncers to be banned to increase batsmen's safety. Other cricket authorities have argued that this would be an over-reaction which would harm the game.

Background

(The information found immediately below is a slightly abbreviated version of the Wikipedia entry titled 'Bouncer [cricket]' and the Wikipedia entry on 'Bodyline'.

The full text can be accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bouncer_%28cricket%29 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bouncer_%28cricket%29http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodyline)

The bouncer in cricket

In the sport of cricket, a bouncer (or bumper) is a type of delivery, usually bowled by a fast bowler. It is pitched short so that it bounces on the pitch well short of the batsman and rears up to chest or head height (or even higher) as it reaches the batsman

Usage

Bouncers are used tactically to drive the batsman back on to his back foot if he has been freely playing front foot scoring shots, such as drives. To this end, bouncers are usually directed more or less at the line of the batsman's body. Aiming at the batsman is not illegal provided the ball bounces on the pitch, or without bouncing on the pitch as long as the ball upon reaching the batsman is below waist height, and is a tactically important part of the game. Aiming at the batsman's head without bouncing on the pitch, known as a beamer, is illegal.

A batsman may play a bouncer in either a defensive or an attacking way. If the batsman plays it defensively he aims primarily to avoid getting out, and secondarily to avoid being hit by the ball. For a head-high bouncer, these goals are achieved most easily by ducking under the ball. If the ball is at chest height, the batsman's best defence is to move on to his back foot, raise his bat vertically to chest height, and attempt to block the ball and direct it downwards to the pitch so as to avoid presenting a catch to a fielder. Sometimes the batsman will need to jump into the air to gain the necessary height to defend with the bat. He may also sway out of the way. Given these approaches, the bowler can hope to both intimidate the batsman somewhat, and possibly have the ball deflect off the bat at an awkward angle and produce a catch for a nearby fielder.

Conversely, the bouncer can be a very productive ball for the batsman, if he plays it in an attacking manner. The shot that is used to attack the bouncer is the hook shot. To play the hook shot the batsman moves his back foot backwards and towards the off side as the ball is being delivered. As the ball approaches, the batsman swivels from facing the off side to facing the leg side, while holding the bat horizontally. The batsman's aim is to hit the ball at high speed towards, into or over the leg side boundary. However, despite their run-scoring potential, hook shots frequently lead to wickets falling, particularly through balls hitting the top edge of the bat and being caught by leg side fielders. However, if the bouncer is misdirected by the bowler, and reaches the batsman on the off side of his wicket, the cut, uppercut or late cut can be played, either with the intention of guiding the ball along the ground, through a gap in the field setting, or over the infield for four or six.

International Cricket Council (ICC) rules

Because of the potential danger to batsmen of being hit and to stop bowlers bowling bouncers all the time, there are laws in the Laws of Cricket governing how frequently a bowler may bowl bouncers, as well as how many fielders may field backward of square leg. These laws take into account the relative skill of the batsmen.

During the 1970s to 1980s, bouncers were used as part of a team's intimidatory tactics, especially by the West Indies team. In 1991, the International Cricket Council (ICC) introduced a "one bouncer per batsman per over" rule in an attempt to discourage use of intimidation. However, the ruling was not well received by players and umpires alike, with English umpire Dickie Bird describing it as "farcical" as he felt that calling intimidatory tactics should be left to the umpire. The ICC changed it to two bouncers per over in 1994, with a two-run no-ball penalty (rather than one-run no-ball) if the bowler exceeded two bouncers an over. The ICC reverted again to one bouncer per over in 2001 (and a one-run no-ball in case a bowler exceeded the limit).

On October 29, 2012 the ICC increased the number of bouncers that could be bowled during a One Day International to two. The number of bouncers per over allowed in T20s was kept to one.

Bouncers in cricket history - Bodyline

Bodyline, also known as fast leg theory bowling, was a cricketing tactic devised by the English cricket team for their 1932-33 Ashes tour of Australia, specifically to combat the extraordinary batting skill of Australia's Don Bradman.

A bodyline delivery was one where the cricket ball was bowled towards the body of the batsman on the line of the leg stump, in the hope of creating leg-side deflections that could be caught by one of several fielders in the quadrant of the field behind square leg. This was considered by many to be intimidatory and physically threatening, to the point of being unfair in a game once supposed to have gentlemanly traditions, but commercialisation of the game had subsequently tended to elevate the principle of "win at all costs" above traditional ideals of sportsmanship.

Although no serious injuries arose from any short-pitched deliveries while a leg theory field was set, the tactic still led to considerable ill feeling between the two teams, with the controversy eventually spilling into the diplomatic arena.

Over the next two decades, several of the Laws of Cricket were changed to prevent this tactic being repeated. Law 41.5 states 'At the instant of the bowler's delivery there shall not be more than two fielders, other than the wicket-keeper, behind the popping crease on the on side,' commonly referred to as being 'behind square leg'. Additionally, Law 42.6(a) includes: 'The bowling of fast short pitched balls [bouncers] is dangerous and unfair if the umpire at the bowler's end considers that by their repetition and taking into account their length, height and direction they are likely to inflict physical injury on the striker'. Further, as already noted, there are now laws that limit the number of bouncers that can be bowled per over.

Internet information

The Cricket Australia Internet site includes a subsection titled 'The Spirit of Cricket'. This includes elements which according to some commentators would preclude bouncers.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.cricketaustralia.com.au/about/mission-and-values/spirit-of-cricket>

On November 25, 2014, The Daily Mail published a comment by Nasser Hussain titled 'Phil Hughes' head injury makes me wonder whether I was gung-ho about safety... I kept same old helmet for ages'.

The piece presents the issue from the perspective of a former test batsman who played for India.

It can be accessed at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/cricket/article-2848651/Phil-Hughes-head-injury-makes-wonder-gung-ho-safety-Nasser-Hussain.html>

On November 25, 2014, The Guardian published an information piece titled 'History of head injuries shows the rarity of Phil Hughes' accident'. Though intended to inform, the nature of the presentation implies that Hughes's accident was an unfortunate and uncommon accident.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/nov/25/phil-hughes-rare-head-injuries-australia-cricket>

On November 26, 2014, The Roar published a comment by David Lord titled 'Let's have no blame games with Phil Hughes' tragic accident'. The piece argues that Phillip Hughes's death is not grounds for banning bouncers.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.theroar.com.au/2014/11/26/lets-blame-games-phil-hughes-tragic-accident/>

On November 26, 2014, The Daily Telegraph published an opinion piece by Ron Reed titled 'Phillip Hughes injury: Outlawing bouncers would remove one of the great tests of batsmanship' Reed argues that bouncers are an integral part of cricket.

The full text of this comment can be accessed at <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/sport/cricket/phillip-hughes-injury-outlawing-bouncers-would-remove-one-of-the-great-tests-of-batsmanship/story-fni2fnmo-1227136093284?nk=6dbf3742ce92c16844136c1c4e18be9d>

On November 27, 2014, The Sydney Morning Herald published an opinion piece by Sam de Brito titled 'Time to ban the bouncer?'

The piece argues that the delivery is too dangerous to be retained.

The comment can be accessed at <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/time-to-ban-the-bouncer-20141127-11une7.html>

On November 27, 2014, IBN Live published an informative piece titled '10 fatal and near-fatal injuries on the cricket field'

The full text of this article can be found at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/cricketnext/10-fatal-and-nearfatal-injuries-on-the-cricket-field/515140-78.html>

On November 27, 2014, BBC News Magazine published an analysis by Justin Parkinson titled 'Phil Hughes: Could head injuries be eliminated?' The piece analyses the nature of injuries to the head incurred in cricket and suggests what modifications to helmet design might be made.

The full text of this article can be accessed at <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30206381>

On November 28, 2014, The Times of India published a blog by Vaibhav Purandare titled 'Cricket isn't worth dying for: Ban bouncers - that's the only way to prevent tragedies like Phil Hughes's death.' The commentator argues strongly for the full prohibition of bouncers.

The full text of this argument can be found at <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-edit-page/cricket-isnt-worth-dying-for-ban-bouncers-thats-the-only-way-to-prevent-tragedies-like-phil->

[hughess-death/](#)

On November 28, 2014, The Conversation published a conversation by Andy Harland, Senior lecturer in Sports Technology at Loughborough University titled 'Phillip Hughes death raises new questions over cricket helmet design'

The piece considers possible advances in helmet technology and the advantages and disadvantages of making helmets mandatory.

The full text can be accessed at <http://theconversation.com/phillip-hughes-death-raises-new-questions-over-cricket-helmet-design-34783>

On November 30, 2014, The New Zealand Herald published an opinion piece by Mark Richardson titled 'The bouncer must be left alone' which argued for the importance of retaining the bouncer.

The full text of the comment can be found at http://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/news/article.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=11366481

On December 12, 2014, The Courier Mail published an opinion piece by Graham Cornes titled 'It's time to bite the bullet and ban bouncers in cricket'. The piece argues that the dangers posed by this style of delivery are too great to allow it to continue.

The full text of the comment can be found at <http://www.couriermail.com.au/sport/its-time-to-bite-the-bullet-and-ban-bouncers-in-cricket-writes-graham-cornes/story-fnia3gmj-1227153783856>

Arguments in favour of banning bouncers

1. Bouncers place batsmen at significant physical risk

Some commentators have claimed that the cricketing community has become complacent about the dangers inherent in cricket. They argue that an event such as the recent death of Phillip Hughes was required to remind players and administrators of the risks and the need to moderate them.

Writing in the Courier Mail on December 12, 2014, Graham Cornes noted, 'That red five-ounce projectile can cause enormous damage, either out of the hand, off the pitch or the off bat.' His conclusion was 'Perhaps it is time to ban the bouncer altogether.'

An editorial published in The New Daily on November 26, 2014, further noted, 'A ball hurled at 140-150 km/h can cause devastating damage if it hits someone in the wrong spot, as was the case with Hughes...'

Although the injury sustained by Phillip Hughes was rare, some commentators have noted that such incidents have occurred before and represent an unacceptable risk. Some of these incidents are listed below.

In January 1959, while batting in the first-innings of the Quaid-e-Azam final against Pakistan Combined Services, 17-year-old Abdul Aziz was struck over the heart. While preparing to receive the next ball, Aziz fell to the ground and never regained consciousness, dying en route to hospital.

In 1962, India captain Nari Contractor was felled by West Indian Charlie Griffith in Barbados, where there was no sight screen and Contractor later said he was distracted by a window opening. Contractor suffered a skull fracture, was unconscious for six days and never played again.

In 1975 New Zealand cricketer Ewen Chatfield was hit on the temple by England pace bowler Peter Lever during a Test match. Chatfield's respiratory system stopped as he swallowed his tongue but quick resuscitation administered by England physiotherapist Bernard Thomas saved his life. At the time safety helmets were not required to be worn. They were introduced shortly after.

During a One Day International in Jamaica in 1986, West Indies pace bowler Malcolm Marshall's bouncer hit English batsman Mike Gatting on the nose leaving it broken.

An awkward delivery from former West Indies pace bowler Mervyn Dillon fractured Anil Kumble's jaw on India's West Indies tour of 2002.

In 2008 Australian pace bowler Brett Lee knocked out West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul for several minutes after hitting him with a bouncer. He also struck Englishman Alex Tudor in the face in 2002 in a Test at Perth.

Pakistani cricketer, Shoab Akhtar, one of the world's fastest bowlers, injured South Africa's Gary Kirsten (2003) and West Indian Brian Lara (2004) badly enough with bouncers that both had to leave the field. In 2006, Australian opener Justin Langer was hospitalised by a bouncer from South Africa's Makhaya Ntini. In 2008, New Zealand batsman Daniel Flynn lost a tooth from a bouncer by English paceman James Anderson.

Bangladesh batsman Shahriar Naafees retired with a bleeding nose after being struck by a bouncer from West Indian Fidel Edwards in 2011, while his countryman Kieron Pollard was hit in the face by a short ball from Dominic Cork during a T20 Final in 2010.

In a blog published in The Times of India on November 28, 2014, Vaibhav Purandare wrote 'According to the cricket writer David Frith, at least 40 cricketers hit on their heads, arms, ribs and hands by the Windies [West Indian] pacers had to be taken to casualty wards at hospitals [during the 1970s and 80s].'

Sydney Morning Herald sportswriter, Sam de Brito, has concluded from instances such as those listed above 'Even the best batsman in the world get hit in the head and it's not a million-to-one chance.

Batsmen get struck in the head regularly and often they are injured.'

2. The bouncer is an inappropriate tactic intended to intimidate

It has been claimed that bouncers are an inappropriate tactic to employ in cricket as the game is not a contact sport, but one which relies on strategy and skill and has built up its own elaborate code of ethics sometimes referred to as 'the spirit of the game'.

In a blog published in The Times of India on November 28, 2014, Vaibhav Purandare wrote, 'Bouncers are purely intimidatory stuff, and intimidation has no role in cricket because this sport, unlike some others, was never meant to be a gladiatorial contest.'

Cricket Australia's Internet site includes a subsection titled 'Mission & Values' which elaborates on what it refers to as the 'Spirit of Cricket'. The site claims 'Cricket is a game that owes much of its unique appeal to the fact that it should be played not only within its Laws but also within the Spirit of the Game. Any action which is seen to abuse this spirit causes injury to the game itself.'

Among the behaviours which it is claimed are contrary to the 'spirit of the game' is violence. The Cricket Australia website specifically states 'There is no place for any act of violence on the field of play.'

Opponents of bouncers claim that such deliveries are always an inherently violent act as they rely for their effectiveness on the threat of serious injury to the batsman.

3. Bowlers have other strategies with which to gain wickets

Those who argue that bouncers should be banned note that this style of delivery is not the only means available to bowlers to take wickets.

In a blog published in The Times of India on November 28, 2014, Vaibhav Purandare wrote, 'Fast bowlers should use pace, cut and swing to trap batsmen.' Similarly, slow and medium pace bowlers do not use bouncers in order to take wickets; they have to rely exclusively on their skill in placing the ball on the wicket and determining the angle on which it presents to a batsman and yet they regularly succeed in getting bowlers out.

Against accusations that banning bouncers would make it too difficult to get batsmen out, it has been noted that there are other measures that could be taken to diminish any apparent advantage given to batsmen.

Vaibhav Purandare has suggested, 'To address complaints that the game thus becomes even more batsman-friendly, cricket authorities must stop the deliberate shrinking of boundaries across the world and consider easing restrictions on fielders in the limited-overs format.'

It has further been claimed that rather than demonstrating the skill of the bowlers or showcasing the prowess of the batsmen, bouncers frequently reduce batsmen to having to duck and dive rather than take strokes.

In a letter published in The Belfast Telegraph, Andy Horton wrote 'Is it too much to hope that head-high bouncers will be definitely outlawed (maybe with a five-run penalty at least), so that we may enjoy a contest between bat and ball rather than having to watch ducking and weaving in avoidance of deliveries

persistently and deliberately aimed at a batsman?'

4. Helmets cannot provide full protection

It has been claimed that no helmet construction could ever offer a batsman complete protection. Phillip Hughes was struck on the neck, in an area below that which is protected by any helmet.

The manufacturers of the helmet Hughes was wearing, Masuri, have noted 'From the footage and pictures currently available to Masuri, it appears that Phil Hughes was struck by the ball to the rear of the grille and below the back of the shell, missing his Masuri Original Test model helmet. This is a vulnerable area of the head and neck that helmets cannot fully protect, while enabling batsmen to have full and proper movement.'

David Horne, writing in *The Roar* on November 26, 2014, stated, 'With lower protection, the batsman would have less free head movement, and that would be even more dangerous.'

Sydney University biomechanics expert Dr Edouard Ferdinands has stated, 'It [cricket] is fraught with a certain amount of risk. It's like grand prix car racing, you can improve safety standards but there's always a chance (of an accident).'

When you're looking at balls coming at you at 145km/h - the amount of force that's there and the short reaction time, it's always going to be one of those sports where the batsman has to avoid the ball and not rely on the helmet.'

Even with improved helmet design, it has been claimed the risks are too great. In a blog published in *The Times of India* on November 28, 2014, Vaibhav Purandare wrote, 'The helmet manufacturer has said Hughes was not wearing the latest version which is far more protective. That may be available to international cricketers, but how many school and college kids across the world are going to get it so that they are absolutely safe?'

In addition, some commentators have claimed that rather than adding to safety, protective helmets have made batsmen more willing to take risks when facing fast deliveries.

In an opinion piece published in *Cricket Country* on November 27, Abhishek Mukherjee wrote, 'Helmets have changed all that [taking precautions to avoid being struck by a ball.]... Keeping eyes on the ball till the last moment is not a necessary concept anymore. .. As a result men are being hit more and more on the helmet... Growing up with the helmet, batsmen will perhaps never be cautious the way their counterparts from earlier generations used to be.'

Some critics have claimed that this is placing a greater burden on the helmet than it can be expected to bear. Every so often there will be catastrophic consequences from a batsman being hit in the head, even when wearing a helmet. In such situations there are those who argue that the best way to reduce risks is to ban bouncers.

5. Other related sports have taken action to reduce the risk to players

It has been noted that in most sports there is a deliberate intention to protect the players' heads because it is recognised that life-threatening and permanently debilitating injuries can result from a blow to the head. Cricket has been condemned by some because its regulations actually allow fast bowlers to deliver a maximum of two bouncers per over.

In an opinion piece published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on November 27, 2014, Sam de Brito stated, 'It's a sign of how anachronistic the rules of cricket are...that even in the USA - which still chuckles indulgently about brawling in ice hockey - umpires will eject a baseball pitcher from a game if they "throw at the head" of a batter.'

Yes, there is leeway in this sort of decision in major league baseball because pitches like curveballs and splitters can sometimes see pitchers get it wrong and lose control of the ball. However, if the umpire decides there's intent, you're gone. Outta there. Hit someone in the head, you'll be suspended.'

Not only are deliberate measures included in the rules of baseball to protect batters against pitches aimed at their heads, it has been established that players who are fielding are at significant risk of being struck by a flying ball. This risk is likely to be reduced by fitting fielders and pitchers with protective skull caps. Comparing the likelihood of head injuries across a number of sports it has been determined that cricketers

are at similar levels of risk to those competing in what are usually regarded as more dangerous contact sports. Sam de Brito cites the following, 'The recent Australian Sports Injury Hospitalisations report by Flinders University revealed 18 per cent of injuries requiring hospitalisation in cricket were to the head, compared to 25 per cent for rugby (league and union) and 21 per cent for AFL.'

Statistics such as these have led some commentators to maintain that the level of risk of head injury within cricket has to be reduced and that current regulations which actually allow a certain number of balls per over to be directed at a batsman's head have to be altered.

Arguments against banning bouncers

1. Injuries such as that suffered by Phillip Hughes are very rare as are bouncer-related fatalities

It has been argued that Phillip Hughes's accident does not mean that Cricket Australia or international cricket needs to alter the rules of the game because the injury which led to Hughes's death is extremely uncommon.

On November 27, 2014, ESPNcricinfo published a report by Brydon Coverdale in which he stated, 'Phillip Hughes was the victim of a freakish accident, the kind that is rarely seen in any sphere of life and has only once before been recorded as the result of being struck by a cricket ball.'

Restating the same point, Dr Peter Brukner, the Cricket Australia doctor, remarked after Phillip Hughes's injury, 'This was a freakish accident, because it was an injury to the neck that caused haemorrhage in the brain. This condition is incredibly rare. It's called vertebral artery dissection, leading to subarachnoid haemorrhage - that's the medical term for it.'

If you look in the literature there's only about 100 cases ever reported, so this is incredibly rare. Only one previous case ever reported as the result of a cricket ball. So I think it's important to realise that yes, we need to review all our procedures and equipment, but this is an incredibly rare type of injury.'

It has been claimed that the extent of the risks involved in cricket have been exaggerated in response to Phillip Hughes death.

Writing in Swarajya on November 29, 2014, Sandipan Deb stated, 'Over the last day or two, several lists have appeared of cricketers who have died on the field. These run to 11 or 12 names (including Hughes), but on closer scrutiny reveal that only five players and an umpire have actually died from injuries sustained during a match. The others died on the field from heart attacks and seizures unconnected to the game.'

In fact, Pakistani cricketer Abdul Aziz was mortally injured during a domestic match in 1959 by an off-spin delivery which hit the rough and rose sharply to strike him in the chest! And Raman Lamba died after he took a pull shot on his head at close quarters, fielding at short leg without a helmet.

So, out of the five relevant deaths, only three had anything to do with fast bowling.'

The relative safety of cricket has also been acknowledged by Antonio Belli, professor of trauma neurosurgery at Birmingham University. Professor Belli has stated, 'For the number of hours played in cricket, it's actually considered a safe sport in terms of concussion.'

Similarly a recent study conducted by Flinders University's Research Centre for Injury Studies found that cricket came in at number 12 on the list of sports most likely to result in a trip to the hospital.

2. There are already measures in place to reduce the risk to batsmen

Cricket Australia and cricket authorities worldwide have stressed that there are numerous measures already in place to safeguard the wellbeing of batsmen.

Since the 1970s helmets worn by batsmen have become progressively more common. In an article published in *The Economist* on November 26, 2014, it was noted, 'Helmets have improved markedly since then [the 1970s]. At first they offered no facial protection; later the nose and jaw were covered only by a flimsy piece of perspex. Today, they feature a strong metal grill. They are also now lighter and use better energy-absorbing foams. Yet, because of a batsman's need for flexibility at the crease, it is not practical that they cover every inch of the head and neck.'

It has also been suggested that there may be further improvements that could be made to increase the level of protection that helmets provide without unduly restricting the batsman's freedom of movement. A skull

cap, worn inside the helmet, is being considered. Though this would not protect against the sort of injury suffered by Philip Hughes, it is believed it may add additional protection when a batsman receives a direct blow to the outer surface of the helmet. Further the newest version of the Masuri helmet (an earlier version of which was worn by Phillip Hughes) has the side grill extend slightly lower on the batsman's neck. While this may not have been sufficient to give Hughes full protection, it could prevent other injuries occurring. Supporters of the bouncer have noted that with ongoing improvements to helmet technology, the risk presented to batsmen is being reduced.

It has also been noted that there are already limits on the number of bouncers that can be bowled per over. During the 1970s to 1980s, bouncers were used as part of a team's intimidatory tactics, especially by the West Indies team. In 1991, the International Cricket Council (ICC) introduced a 'one bouncer per batsman per over' rule in an attempt to discourage use of intimidation. These limitations were not popular and on October 29, 2012 the ICC increased the number of bouncers that could be bowled during a One Day International to two. The number of bouncers per over allowed in T20s was kept to one.

Cricket Victoria's General Manager of Cricket and former Australia player Shaun Graf said current restrictions surrounding short balls were adequate.

Former West Indies captain and internationally renowned batsman Brian Lara has similarly stated that cricket authorities have continued to do all they could to protect players from injury. Mr Lara has claimed, '(The bouncer is) part of the game and they've done their best over the years to curb it and manage it as much as possible.'

3. If bouncers were banned it would reduce the excitement and entertainment value of the game

In an analysis piece published in *The Independent* on November 27, 2014, Jack de Menezes stated, 'Bouncers have been widely accepted as part of the game and are the root of the aggression and intimidation tactics that gives the sport its edge. Removing it completely would take one of the best parts of cricket out of the game, which wouldn't sit too well with fans as well as veterans of the game that had to face much worse during their hay-day. While no one wants to see a batsman get hurt, it's often a bouncer that stokes up the atmosphere both on and off the field, with batsman either electing to take on the bowler or duck out of the way in fear.'

The same point has been made by Mark Richardson writing in *The New Zealand Herald* on November 30, 2014, 'To take this strategic weapon away from the bowlers by banning the bouncer would tip the favour far too far towards the batsman. With the unresponsive nature of cricket wickets nowadays, it's already too far in their favour.'

The more docile the surface, the more important the bouncer becomes as a means of forcing batting mistakes and taking wickets.'

On November 30, 2014, *The New Zealand Herald* published a comment by Mark Richardson in which he stated, 'If cricket took away the bouncer, then we would have a problem.'

It would reduce the spectacle, especially in test cricket which needs to do all it can to re-excite the viewer. Last year, the sight of Mitchell Johnson charging in, breathing fire and getting right up the Poms was exhilarating and very good for cricket.'

4. Banning bouncers would make it very difficult to take wickets

It has been claimed that banning bouncers would skew the game in favour of the batsmen and make it very difficult to take wickets.

A number of bowlers have stressed that though they may be seeking to intimidate batsmen they are not seeking to injure them. The fast bowler's primary aim is to bowl a ball that will take the batsman's wicket and fast bowlers claim that the bouncer is an important part of their ability to capture a wicket.

This point has been stressed by former Australian fast bowler Merv Hughes. Hughes has stated, 'As a fast bowler we are not trying to hit a batsman or hurt a batsman, we're trying to take wickets so when you bowl a bouncer you are looking for a glove through to the wicketkeeper or possibly a catch down at deep square leg or deep fine leg, so it's not about hitting batsmen it's about taking their wicket.'

Ron Reed, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* on November 26, 2014, stated regarding the bouncer, '[S]hould

it be banned or even discouraged?

Only if you want to turn cricket into an entirely different game, skewing it so far in favour of the batsman that you might struggle to ever finish a match at the elite level.'

Former India allrounder Robin Singh has stated, 'To put an end to bouncers or to curtail it further will create great imbalance in the game.'

Already the pacemen are suffering because of flat tracks, better bats and shorter boundaries. If you take out the bouncer as well, everything will be in batsmen's favour.'

Writing in Swarajya on November 29, 2014, Sandipan Deb stated, 'Enough damage has been done to the game already by tilting the rules in favour of batsmen, and (especially in the sub-continent) carefully preparing dead pitches that offer the fast bowler no purchase. We certainly don't need to load the dice any further.'

5. Batsmen accept the risk that bouncers pose

It has been noted that all batsmen, particularly those who aspire to play international cricket are aware of and accept the dangers posed by the bouncer.

Since the injury and subsequent death of Phillip Hughes, a large number of bowlers have expressed their support for the bouncer as an integral part of cricket.

New Zealander Ewen Chatfield, who nearly died after being struck in the temple by a bouncer and swallowing his tongue in a 1975 Test against England, has stated his support for the bouncer. When asked whether the delivery should be banned, Chatfield replied, 'It would eliminate a quick bowler's armoury if you take it away.'

West Indies champion batsmen Brian Lara has similarly defended the status quo. Speaking after Phillip Hughes injury, Lara stated, 'There are some batsmen who feed off that sort of attack and I don't believe it's something that should affect the fast bowlers and the rules governing that.'

It's a sport and you're always going to have that element of risk. This is an unfortunate and rare situation. I suppose the authorities will be a little bit worried about something like this, how it happened and if it will ever happen again. I felt pretty safe playing. I knew the element of risk. A little prayer in the morning and hope for the best.'

Former Australian test batsman Matthew Hayden supported the continued use of the bouncer when asked should it be banned. Hayden's response was, 'No I don't reckon, I just think that if you take away that from the game it takes away that combative nature of cricket and I know that as we said, we're not running into massive human men, but you actually just want to challenge yourself and test cricket is called that for a reason - it tests everything.'

Further implications

Late on November 27, 2014, the day Phillip Hughes died, police confirmed they would be preparing a report for the Coroner. It is understood they had already spoken to witnesses to the incident, including bowler Sean Abbott.

A death can be reported to the Coroner for several reasons, including if it were unexpected, unnatural or resulted from an accident or injury. New South Wales Police would not say how many witnesses, or who, they intended to conduct formal interviews with.

Cricket Australia's chief executive, James Sutherland, has also promised that there will be a review into player safety as a consequence of Hughes's death, with particular emphasis on helmet regulations.

It is difficult to predict exactly what will result of either of these inquiries. There is no suggestion that charges of any sort will be laid against Sean Abbott, however, both the Coroner and the Cricket Australia review may make recommendations about ways in which to increase cricket safety. It seems unlikely that recommendations will be made, at least by Cricket Australia, to completely outlaw the use of bouncers. It is possible that the regulations may be tightened so that only one bouncer per over will be allowed in One Day Cricket as well as Test Cricket. It is also possible that the number of bouncers allowable could be reduced still further, for example, to one bouncer every two overs per bowler.

Currently batsmen are not compulsorily required to wear helmets. That may change. There are also likely

to be further improvements in helmet design. This would have occurred in any case; however, Hughes's death is likely to act as a catalyst for even further or more rapid development. It is also the case that the wearing of helmets may be extended beyond the batsman.

The effect of improved helmet design and the more general use of helmets is not certain. Concern has been expressed that the general use of helmets by batsmen has led to a less cautious attitude among batsmen which has placed them at greater risk. It is also possible that bowlers may have become more aggressive, believing that the helmets will protect batsmen from the dangers inherent in bouncers. If there were to be a further death or serious injury as a result of a bouncer, it would become more likely that the sport may remove that type of delivery from the bowler's arsenal. Currently, most commentators have explained the circumstances surrounding Phillip Hughes's death as a freak accident and thus something very unlikely to occur again.

Newspaper items used in the compilation of this issue outline

The Australian: November 29, 2014, page 19, comment (photos of batsmen, diagram) by Gideon Haigh, 'The illusion of safety at the crease / Phillip Hughes tragedy shows danger still lurks in super safe cricket'.
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/opinion/philip-hughes-tragedy-shows-danger-still-lurks-in-super-safe-cricket/story-fnb58rpk-1227138799932?nk=53ee7972ef67e354af32299a4bd62e07>

The Australian: November 29, 2014, page 12, background (ref to bouncers and rules) by King and Booth, 'Love not lost, but a game-changer for young and old'.
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/love-not-lost-but-a-game-changer-for-young-and-old/story-e6frg7mf-1227138847987>

The Age: November 29, 2014, page 5, background by Chloe Saltau, 'The other fatal blow from a ball'.

The Age: November 29, 2014, page 4, comment by Kathryn Wicks, 'Why our children should play cricket this weekend'.
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/why-our-children-should-play-cricket-this-weekend-20141128-11vu2r.html>

The Age: November 28, 2014, page 24, letters incl, 'Lessons to be learnt from this tragedy / Follow baseball's lead on safe helmets'.
<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/the-age-letters/lessons-to-be-learnt-from-this-tragedy-20141127-11vgb8.html>

The Age: November 27, 2014, page 29, comment by Michael Vaughan, 'Ashes rivalry forgotten after horror incident'.
<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/sport/cricket/philip-hughes-injury-unites-the-cricket-world-20141126-11u0jc.html>