

Cricket SA needs an ethical makeover

 By [Cynthia Schoeman](#)

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Cricket, as the supposed "game of gentlemen", has revealed anything but gentlemanly behaviour. The incidences of unethical behaviour stretch from Hansie Cronje to jailed Pakistani cricketers, to the current Cricket South African (CSA) bonus scandal.

Added to the scandal is the behaviour of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC). The president of CSA, Mtutuzeli Nyoka, was removed from office at a special general meeting of the CSA members' forum on 15 October, accused of bringing the organisation into disrepute, instead of being recognised for telling the truth.

A positive initial step

The appointment of Judge Chris Nicholson to chair a commission of inquiry into CSA's finances and the bonus scandal, by Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula, was a positive initial step towards resolving the matter.

SA Cricketers' Association CEO Tony Irish's recognition that "cricket sorely needs a restoration of stakeholder confidence and public confidence", is stating the obvious. However, what is not obvious is how this can be achieved.

Both Irish and Ajay Sooklal, the CSA's legal and governance committee head, have made recommendations to the inquiry as to what should be done.

Irish recommended "having a proper, independent, expert review of the corporate governance structure with particular focus on the board of directors", in line with the International Cricket Council's resolve to review its governance structure. Sooklal called for a forensic audit in respect of the entire administration of CSA and recommended drafting a new constitution.

Do not go nearly far enough

Both recommendations are sound, but do not go nearly far enough to resolving the situation fully - not if the goal is rebuilding trust and confidence among the many stakeholders: players, sponsors and the public.

At a simple level, what this requires is a change of behaviour to that which is ethical and transparent. However, building confidence that stated intentions and changes are real and sustainable is the hard part.

A practical step towards realising this is to follow the recommendations of the King III Report on Corporate Governance,

which entails the assessment, monitoring, reporting and disclosure of an organisation's ethical performance.

Identify and prioritise actions

Conducting an independent ethics survey has the added benefit of giving stakeholders the opportunity to share their perceptions and insights into the CSA's ethical status. This can identify and prioritise what actions the CSA should take to improve its ethical status. Ongoing monitoring, via an annual ethics survey, will reflect improvements over time, which further supports increased trust and confidence.

When all the facts have surfaced and the findings published, the crucial question will be whether the CSA board will take sufficient action to meet King III's recommendation that they "ensure that the company's ethics are managed effectively".

ABOUT CYNTHIA SCHOEMAN

Cynthia Schoeman is the MD of Ethics Monitoring & Management Services. She has developed a web-based survey, The Ethics Monitor (www.ethicsmonitor.co.za), which is a practical tool to help organisations measure, monitor and proactively manage their ethics. Cynthia offers customised consulting, workshops and training to improve ethics in organisations and addresses how values and ethics can make positive business sense. Contact her on tel +27 (0)11 447 7661 or email cynthia@ethicsmonitor.co.za.
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