

Tokyo Olympics protest parody of logo that depicts COVID-19

Tokyo Olympic officials are incensed that the games emblem has been used in the cover design of a local magazine that combines the logo with the coronavirus.

Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya said in an online news conference on Tuesday that organizers had requested the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan "take down" the image.

Takaya did not answer a direct question if the organizing committee was planning a legal challenge. He said negotiations were going on "in a private manner" with the Tokyo foreign journalists' club.

"It is very disappointing to see the games emblem being distorted and associated with the novel coronavirus, which affects human life, people's lives, the economy, and our society," Takaya said. "The design is clearly using the design of the Olympic emblem. We therefore consider it an infringement on our legally secured copyright to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic emblem."

He said the organizing committee had not yet received a formal reply to its request.

The "look-alike" emblem, which had "COVID-19" written underneath, was published on

the cover of the April issue of the club's magazine. It also appeared in an online edition.

The FCCJ did not respond immediately to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

In an article about the logo published several days ago by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, it named the artist as Andrew Pothecary. It identified him as a British designer based in Japan who serves as the magazine's art director.

The artist said he viewed the design as a parody, though other designers interviewed by the newspaper suggest parody was difficult with a topic such as the virus and pandemic. (AP)



The cover design of Number 1 Shimbun is seen in Tokyo, on May 19. (AP)

Sports Plus



Spit banned but sweat OK to polish cricket balls amid virus

Saliva ban could change the swing of things in cricket



In this July 30, 2015, file photo England captain Alastair Cook polishes the ball during their Ashes Test cricket match against Australia in Birmingham, England. A move to ban the use of saliva to shine a cricket ball because of the danger of transmitting Covid-19 may force bowlers to relearn or reinvent one of the sport's most prized but troublesome skills. (AP)

By Steve McMorran

A move to ban the use of saliva to shine a cricket ball because of the danger of transmitting COVID-19 may force bowlers to relearn or reinvent one of the sport's most prized but troublesome skills.

The International Cricket Council's cricket committee, comprising a roll call of former top players, has recommended on medical advice that spit polishing the ball should be prohibited while the coronavirus outbreak persists. Unlike baseball, where the spitball has long been illegal, some methods in cricket are a well-established part of the game.

The cricket decision was based on evidence from Dr. Peter Harcourt, the chair of the ICC's medical advisory committee, of "the elevated risk of the transmission of the virus through saliva."

It found at the same time that it is "highly unlikely that the virus can be transmitted through sweat and saw no need to prohibit the use of sweat to polish the ball."

The decision of the committee, chaired by former India captain Anil Kumble and comprising high-profile ex-international stars such as England captain Andrew Strauss, Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene, India's Rahul Dravid and South Africa's Shaun Pollock, seems a straight-forward hygiene precaution as cricket considers a path to resumption amid the coronavirus pandemic. But nothing to do with swinging a cricket ball is ever simple.

Even the science around out-swing, inswing and reverse swing bowling isn't generally agreed or understood, nor are the conditions that favor swing bowling or the means that allow a bowler to cause the ball to deviate in the air as it travels towards the batsmen. Inducing swing is one of cricket's most desired skills but also a minefield threaded by a narrow path which divides legality from illegality.

Spit-polishing by the bowler or the fielding team has been for decades the accepted method of

shining one side of the ball to create the aerodynamic asymmetry which, in conjunction with the position and angle of the seam and the grip and delivery action of the bowler, causes the ball to swing.

Licking the fingers, applying the saliva to the ball and rubbing it vigorously on the trousers to improve the shine has become an ingrained, almost instinctive action by players between deliveries - one that will be hard to resist or unlearn. Whether sweat can be as effectively employed as saliva is uncertain but it is likely every swing bowler in the world will be working to find out as the ban on spit-polishing passes through the ICC machinery.

The recommendation of the cricket committee moves now to the chief executives committee where likely it will be quickly endorsed.

The use of saliva was always fraught because by chewing gum, sucking boiled candy or some other confectionery it was possible to apply to the ball some combination of saliva and another agent that

enhanced the shine. Ball tampering - the use of illegal methods or substances to change the condition of the ball - has been one of cricket's most chronic or intractable problems.

The former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis was twice sanctioned for ball tampering: first for rubbing the ball on the abrasive zip of his trousers and later for applying to the ball saliva mixed with a mint or other candy.

Ex-Australia captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner were banned for 12 months and batsman Cameron Bancroft for nine months by Cricket Australia for their involvement in an attempt to use sandpaper to alter the condition of the ball in a test in South Africa in 2018.

For that reason the cricket committee cautiously considered whether, in the absence of saliva, the use of an artificial substance such as wax to shine the ball should be temporarily approved. The committee found the question too

fraught: at present the use of any artificial substance constitutes ball tampering and members felt any relaxation or variation of the rule might be problematic.

However, amid fears that an inability to swing the ball might tip the balance of cricket matches too far in favor of batsmen, various methods to reproduce swing in the absence of saliva have been promoted.

The Australian cricket ball manufacturer Kookaburra last month suggested the use of a small sponge or applicator to apply wax to the ball with the oversight of the umpires. The great Australian test leg-spinner Shane Warne suggested weighting the ball to create swing.

Moves are underway for cricket to resume in Darwin, in Australia's north, as early as next month and local cricket chairman Lachlan Baird said experimentation would be necessary.

"The ICC is working really closely with all the cricket bodies around the world in terms of finding new ways," Baird told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "Some consideration is now being given to whether things like that wax applicator will become part of cricket's new normal."

Meanwhile, the use of saliva to polish cricket balls is set to be prohibited as part of changes to regulations recommended by the sport's world governing body during the coronavirus pandemic.

The International Cricket Council said, however, that sweat can still be used to polish the ball because medical advice shows "it is highly unlikely that the virus can be transmitted" that way.

An ICC committee also recommended that local match officials be appointed in the short term "given the challenges of international travel with borders being closed, limited commercial flights and mandatory quarantine periods."

If there are no local match officials available from the "elite panel," the best local officials from the international panel will be chosen.

Officials appointed by the ICC haven't come from the same country as the participating teams since 2002.

An additional DRS review per team per innings is also set to be introduced in each of cricket's formats as an interim measure.

The recommendations of the committee will be presented to the ICC chief executives' committee in June for approval.

"We are living through extraordinary times," committee chair Anil Kumble said, "and the recommendations the committee have made today are interim measures to enable us to safely resume cricket in a way that preserves the essence of our game whilst protecting everyone involved." (AP)

‘Some consideration is now being given to whether things like that wax applicator will become part of cricket’s new normal.’

Hitting in indoor cages discouraged, batting gloves encouraged

New MLB rules: shower at home, don't spit, Mr Met stay away

NEW YORK, May 19 (AP) — Major League Baseball will look somewhat like high school ball this year under protocols to deal with the new coronavirus, with showers at ballparks discouraged and players possibly arriving in uniform, like they did when they were teenagers.

Team personnel will be banned from eating at restaurants on road trips. Even the Phillie Phanatic and Mr. Met will be missing, banned from the field along with all other team mascots.

The traditional exchange of lineup cards would be eliminated, along with high-fives, fist bumps, and bat boys and girls, according to a 67-page draft of Major League Baseball's proposed 2020 Operations Manual. A copy was sent to teams Friday and obtained by The Associated Press. The guidelines, first reported by The Athletic, are subject to negotiation with the players' association.

Teams will be allowed to have 50 players each under the plan, with the number active for each game still to be negotiated.

Spitting is prohibited along with water jugs and the use of saunas,



In this March 3, 2020, file photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Paul DeJong, left, talks to Houston Astros shortstop Carlos Correa during the second inning of a spring training baseball game in Jupiter, Florida. (AP)

steam rooms, pools and cryotherapy chambers. Hitting in indoor cages is discouraged, batting gloves encouraged.

Batting practice pitchers are to wear masks, dugout telephones disinfected after each use. Players may not touch their face to give signs, and they're not allowed to lick their fingers. Teams are encouraged to

hold meetings outdoors, players spread apart.

Teams were asked to respond with their suggested input by May 22. The protocols were written by MLB senior vice presidents Patrick Houlihan, Bryan Seeley and Chris Young, and vice president Jon Coyles. Young is a former pitcher who retired after the 2017 season.

Protocols include details on testing for team staff, who are divided into three tiers. All others may not enter clubhouses, dugouts and the field.

Seats in the empty stands near the dugout should be used to maintain distance, according to diagrams in the manual, and the next day's starting pitcher can't sit in the dugout. Everyone must keep their distance during "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America."

Fielders are "encouraged to retreat several steps away from the baserunner" between pitches. First and third base coaches are not to approach baserunners or umpires, and players should not socialize with opponents.

Managers and coaches must wear masks while in the dugouts. The entire traveling party -- including players -- must wear personal protective equipment while on buses and flights. Restaurants are off limits on the road, including the ones in hotels, as are hotel fitness centers.

"We emphasize that this is a first draft, and will undergo several rounds of changes as we collect comments and suggestions from the clubs, the players' association,

players, and government officials," deputy commissioner Dan Halem wrote in an email to owners, team presidents and CEOs, and general managers that accompanied the protocols.

"The document is designed to set minimum standards and identify best practices, but we have attempted to provide clubs with enough flexibility to achieve the desired health and safety objectives in a manner that is tailored to their particular circumstances, including ballpark configuration, location, and the nature of any local governmental regulations or restrictions," Halem wrote.

Scoreboard video is prohibited but music allowed. While there won't be fans, at least not at the start, it will provide a familiar background audio for the telecasts critical to MLB's bottom line.

A ball will be thrown away after it is touched by multiple players, and throwing the ball around the infield will be discouraged. Personnel who rub baseballs with mud for the umpires must use gloves.

"Individuals must avoid any physical interactions (such as high-fives, fist bumps, or hugs) while at club facilities," the manual says.

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