

DRS in Test match is like a trump card for both teams, as they hold the power to overturn the umpire's decision, if you use them smartly. You know what makes them more valuable? The fact that both teams get only 3 per innings. Now you know how strategic they can be in a Test match. However, a DRS Review controversy has caused major outrage in the cricketing community. Eyebrows were raised when on-field umpire Kumar Dharmasena gestured some signs, which allegedly helped England in the first innings of the 5th Test against India.

What is This DRS Review Controversy Involving Kumar Dharmasena?

It was all going as it was supposed to until the 13th over of the first innings brought an unexpected turn of events and, of course, some bewildering reactions. The over saw a sharp inswinging yorker from Josh Tongue, which struck Sai Sudharsan on the pads and caused him to lose balance. Tongue, along with a few fielders, appealed for an LBW. However, Kumar Dharmasena wasn't swayed by the appeal and shook his head against it.

You know, till here everything was normal and routine, but what happened after that was out of character for an umpire. Dharmasena made some hand gestures suggesting there was a bat involved. And it would have been fine if it had come after the 15-second DRS window when the team decides whether to take a review or not. But he signalled it inside this window, sparking an unwanted discord.

It can't be said for sure, but the gesture allegedly helped the Three Lions as the replays revealed that there was indeed a bat involved. This saved a DRS for England, which they could have potentially used if the umpire hadn't signalled before the end of the 15-second window. And you already know how strategic even a single DRS in Test match can be.

This put India a bit on the back foot from the perspective of an important psychological victory, as a loss of a DRS would have definitely damaged the morale of the English players.

What do the Rules Say Regarding This DRS Review Controversy?

It's a pretty common sight: an umpire will give a "not out" decision and then, in passing, tell the players why they made that call. But here's where it gets a little tricky, especially now that we have the Decision Review System, or DRS.

The issue is that the fielding captain's choice may be influenced if an umpire informs a team that, for instance, they are quite certain there was an inside edge on the ball. They may be on the verge of taking a review, but they change their minds after listening to the umpire's justification. Given the limited number of DRS in Test match, this could prevent them from losing a review that they would have otherwise squandered.

That's why umpires must refrain from signalling leg byes or gesturing if it is too high or inside edge when LBW appeals are involved. The guidelines state that they must wait until the 15-second DRS timer has expired before indicating any or all of the aforementioned. Kumar Dharmasena was guilty in this instance of indicating bat, and his gesture prevented England from considering a potential review.

What Does This DRS Review Controversy Mean For Umpiring?

When you look at umpire communication in a different light, it's not about them being unprofessional. It's a clash between the traditional, human-to-human way the game has always been played and the cold, hard logic of the DRS system.

For years, a little bit of banter or a quick explanation from the umpire was just part of the on-field dynamic. Now, we're asking them to turn off that natural human instinct and act like a robot for a few seconds. The umpire's comments aren't a bug in the system; they're a feature of how the game used to work.

Maybe the real challenge for cricket's governing body isn't to force umpires to be less human, but to find a way for the technology to work with, rather than against, the people on the field.

Lastly, it's very difficult to label Kumar Dharmasena's act as a deliberate act of favouritism or a harmless mistake. The line is too thin here. But one thing's for sure that umpiring is something where the margin of error is non-existent. And in

an intense series like the Anderson-Tenulkar Trophy, the margin of error goes right out of the window, or tensions are bound to flare up.