

Cricket could lose sponsor Sunfoil

Cricket SA (CSA) is bracing for another blow in the form of the imminent departure of commercial manager Richard Glover - and possibly the loss of a sponsor.



(Image: Louis Rossouw, via Wikimedia Commons)

The news of Glover's departure coincides with one of cricket's few remaining sponsors, cooking oil brand Sunfoil, indicating that it was unlikely to fund CSA's remaining major property of the season, the domestic Twenty20 competition.

CSA has struggled to sell its properties in the shadow of a scandal involving R4,7m in bonuses paid to staff members without the board's full knowledge.

Michael Owen-Smith, CSA's executive consultant, earlier this week said Glover had resigned in November and would leave the organisation "this week or next".

Asked why Glover was leaving, Owen-Smith said: "That is not for us to say, but he leaves us on very good terms and is moving to a more senior position."

CSA's acting president, AK Khan, said Glover "has got a better job as the MD of another company". Another CSA board member said the board had been told only that Glover "had received a better offer".

Owen-Smith said CSA would "follow the normal process in terms of labour legislation" to replace Glover.

No comment

Glover did not respond to requests for comment.

A South African who spent 12 years working in the UK, Glover joined CSA in May after gaining experience in sports marketing and sponsorship with English football giants Arsenal.

Cricket's only major sponsors this season are Castle Lager, which branded the Proteas Test and one-day international teams, and Sunfoil, which put its name to SA's Test series against Australia and Sri Lanka and the one-day series against the latter.

The potentially lucrative T20 and one-day series against the Australians went unsponsored, as did the domestic one-day series.

The local T20 event, which will involve SA's six franchise teams as well as a side composed of semi-professional players, is scheduled to start on February 15.

Asked if Willowton, the Pietermaritzburg-based company that owns Sunfoil, would sponsor the T20 competition, sales and marketing director Shoaib Moosa said: "I don't think so. We haven't had an approach from CSA in that regard. If it comes, we will judge it on its merits."

Bonus scandal

Khan said CSA was heartened by the attention its teams and competitions had gained from potential backers.

"There is a lot of interest in all of our properties, but I don't want to say anything until the inquiry is completed," Khan said.

He was referring to the investigation, which was ordered by Sport Minister Fikile Mbalula and headed by Judge Chris Nicholson, into the bonus scandal at the organisation.



Fikile Mbalula. (Image: GCIS)

The future of CSA CE Gerald Majola, who earned R1,8m of the clandestine cash, would seem to rest on the outcome of the probe. An independent forensic audit found that Majola had breached the Companies Act four times in his negotiations with tournament organisers for the bonuses, which were paid to 40 CSA staff members.

Mbalula is not compelled to implement Judge Nicholson's recommendations, but he has committed himself to doing so.

Governance guru Mervyn King will make the inquiry's final presentation next week. Judge Nicholson is due to submit his report to Mbalula by the end of next month.

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge

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