Gambling On The Cricket World Cup

Contributed by Jerry Garner Friday, 09 March 2007

The Cricket World Cup is an international sporting sensation watched closely by cricket fans around the world. In an age where sports and betting go hand-in-hand, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep a lid on bookmakers looking to cash in on such events. Authorities in Pakistan are having a particularly difficult time with bookmakers, with the bookies apparently winning the war of wagers.

The ICC Cricket World Cup is commonly referred to simply as the Cricket World Cup. The event is recognized as the international championship of the sport. Organized by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the final events are hosted once every four years.

The last Cricket World Cup championship match was played in Southern Africa during the Spring of 2003. Australia triumphed over India in that championship match to retain the titled. Australia can boast of winning more Cricket World Cup matches than any other nation, with three championship victories under their belt. The West Indies comes in second with two victories, while India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have won the championship one time each.

With such international attention given to a sport, combined with each nation having a base of die-hard fans for their home team, it is only natural that people will place wagers on the outcome of the games. The championship match, of course, is expected to have a much larger volume of wagering than other events.

One nation that is fighting hard to keep betting out of the game is Pakistan. All forms of gambling are technically illegal in this predominantly Muslim nation, but there is no shortage of gambling dens where bookies are looking to take bets on the cricket matches.

Pakistani bookies speaking with reporters on the condition of remaining anonymous stated that they can typically pull in around \$1,000 per match for normal cricket games, but as much as \$10,000 each for the championship matches that will begin on Tuesday. Big gamblers, or whales, can place bets as large as 10 million rupees (\$165,000 US Dollars) on a single game.

With the 2007 Cricket World Cup matches set to begin on Tuesday, the country has been increasingly cracking down on various gambling dens, particularly in the city of Lahore, which has become known for betting on sports. In recent weeks, police have raided 75 gambling dens and arrested 431 people, most of which were arrested for playing cards.

Those involved with Pakistan's sports betting underground feel that the recent raids are little more than an annoyance, and have done nothing to curb the expecting betting activity. There could be some truth to this, as those playing cards for social gambling typically are not associated with the sports betting that goes on in the side streets of Pakistan's cities.

Another problem is that the underpaid police force is susceptible to bribery. An average tribute of \$700 per month usually guarantees that a raid will not take place at all. In the event that there will be a raid, the bookies receive telephone warning in advance so that they have an opportunity to clear away evidence of a gambling operation.

While the ultimate winner of the current championship is still unknown, the one thing that is certain is that a lot of money will be exchanged by gamblers looking to make the event more exciting, while having an opportunity to cash in on the good fortune of their favorite team.

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