On 30 June 2012 Haroon Lorgat will step down as the International Cricket Council's (ICC) third Chief Executive Officer, having decided not to take up the option of extending his four-year contract.

Lorgat, who took over from Mal Speed in July 2008, has been at the helm at a time when the ICC has faced enormous challenges on various fronts: political, commercial, and legal. Among the positives, global development of the game has continued to grow, with the emergence of Afghanistan as a cricketing force being the most spectacular product. The ICC World Twenty20 has been established as a major international event. Television rights for major ICC-owned events (the World Cup, World Twenty20, Champions Trophy being the most notable) have been locked in through till 2015.

Ironically that long-term TV rights deal has been a factor in two of the ICC's biggest failures of the Lorgat years, the inability to launch a Test Championship final series in 2013, and the botched attempt to reduce the size of the 2015 World Cup from fourteen teams to ten. The ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit was unable to detect spot-fixing incidents which have seen three Pakistani Test players imprisoned for breaches of UK law.

The ICC has also faced challenges in dealing with the security situation in Pakistan following the attack on Test players and officials in Lahore in 2009 resulting in the removal of all international cricket from the country. Politically, the ICC has been struggling with factions within its own full member ranks, with India's BCCI frequently mustering the numbers over the ECB and Cricket Australia.

Pressure has mounted for the ICC to compromise its schedule to accommodate the Indian Premier League, and it has been forced to make space in its Future Tours Program for the T20 Champions League - in which the ICC has no equity stake. Along with all this, the next CEO can be expected to be entrusted with acting upon the findings of Lord Woolf’s Independent Governance Review - or at least whatever actions the existing ICC Executive Board approves.

There are many possible directions from which Haroon Lorgat’s successor as ICC CEO could come. Lorgat is a former first-class cricketer who was chosen for the job whilst running a private equity firm and acting as a selector of the South African team in his spare time. Lorgat’s appointment came after the first pick, SuperSport chief Imtiaz Patel, declined to accept the offer. Lorgat’s predecessors, David Richards and Mal Speed, both followed the path from running Cricket Australia to running the ICC, Speed having prior experience as head of Australia’s National Basketball League.

The Richards/Speed precedent suggests that current Cricket Australia CEO James Sutherland could be a contender if he were to throw his hat into the ring. Among other CEOs of national cricket bodies, the ECB’s David Collier would have strong merit so long as the ICC’s political factions do not play a part in the selection process. New Zealand Cricket’s CEO Justin Vaughan has just resigned to take up a role with a health care company, but his predecessor at NZC Martin Snedden has recently wound up his position at the helm of Rugby World Cup 2011. If available, he would be a leading contender.

Within the ICC’s own Dubai offices, former South African wicketkeeper Dave Richardson has held a high profile as General Manager (Cricket) and is seen as a probable candidate for Lorgat’s vacancy. The traditional hierarchy of the BCCI doesn’t lend itself to any obvious candidates, but if I were to put forward one name to watch it would be the IPL’s COO, Sunder Raman. One hopes that there isn’t a repeat of the situation that arose with Lorgat’s selection in 2008 when the unsuccessful BCCI-backed candidate, IS Bindra, was rewarded with the specially created position at the ICC of “principal advisor”.

There would, of course, be too many possibilities to speculate upon from the sporting world beyond cricket or indeed the business world generally. It is to be hoped the fourth CEO of the ICC will be chosen on merit and free of internal politics, and that he (or she) will fearlessly tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Rick Eyre: *Rick Eyre was an editor and producer for Cricinfo between 1995 and 2001, helping establish it as cricket's dominant information website. Highlights including the development and management of a newsletter service and magazine website and production of an event website for the International Cricket Council.*

Rick, who has followed cricket closely for more than forty years, created and edited the women's cricket website Cricketwoman.com from 2001 to 2007 and in 2005 produced one of the first podcast series covering cricket. He continues to explore the fusion of cricket with online technologies and social media, and writes about the game on his own blog (cricket . rickeyre . com) and on Twitter (@ rickeyrecricket). He recently established the cricket online community for the Monaco-based humanitarian organisation Peace and Sport .

In 2009 he published his first book, "Today in Cricket: Events in Cricket History".

Rick's interests in cricket extend to a focus on the business, marketing, global development and politics of the sport. He also follows rugby league, baseball, field hockey, Australian rules and Olympics. He is a past member of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians (ACSH) and the Society of American Baseball Research (SABR).

Rick lives in Sydney, where he follows the Blues, the Breakers, the Thunder, and Australia.

Rick Eyre's profile

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