

## Darrell Hair returns to the ICC Elite panel



Darrell Hair has not officiated in a major cricket match since the infamous Oval Test in 2006 when Pakistan refused to continue after allegations of ball-tampering.

Darrell has remained contracted to the ICC but he was not chosen for international matches involving Test nations. Instead he took charge of a match between Kenya and Scotland and was offered the chance by the England and Wales Cricket Board to officiate in county 2<sup>nd</sup> XI matches, but declined and returned with his wife to Australia.

He has been ranked in the top three umpires in the world, a view supported by Cricket Australia who are *"pleased to see Darrell back"*. He commands the respect of captains such as England's Paul Collingwood who said *"The times Darrell has umpired us I think he has done a very good job. He's good to talk to on the pitch, he's very good with the players and gets the majority of the decisions right."*

ICC president-elect David Morgan confirmed that the decision had been a *"unanimous one"*. *"Darrell Hair is a good, competent umpire and his position will be reviewed after March 31, 2009 as is the case with other umpires at the end of their contracts."* he added.

Darrell will be able to add to his tally of 135 ODIs and 76 Test matches. However, he may not be appointed to matches involving Pakistan whose Cricket Board and former captain Inzamam al Haq are unhappy about the recall - *"This is shocking news"* and *"Our board should never have backed down on this issue."*

Interestingly, Sri Lankan Cricket Board chairman Arjuna Ranatunga says *"Hair should be able to umpire all international matches. The important factor is if he is eligible to umpire and I think he should do all matches featuring India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, otherwise he won't be tested."*

The Australian umpire said *"I do not have any objections to umpiring matches involving Pakistan in the future. I'm available now to umpire Test matches and one-day internationals, now whether umpiring in Pakistan is going to happen, I think you'll need to ask the people who make the appointments. I'm really thrilled at the prospect of being able to get back out there and umpire the matches I'm appointed to. My approach to umpiring has altered since spending almost 18 months away from the Test arena. I don't think my whole attitude has changed but I've picked up a few things that will be helpful in the future. Probably having a broader understanding and the old communication issue of making sure that what you say and what you want is understood by the other people."*