



Skin cancer checks for the Notts stars

By CLARE BOYD

A NOTTINGHAM doctor has been screening some of England's top cricketers for skin cancer in the run-up to the new season.

Dr Sandeep Varma, consultant dermatologist at Queen's Medical Centre, has tested the Notts County Cricket squad – including England players Ryan Sidebottom, Stuart Broad and Graeme Swann.

As well as examining them for the disease, he has advised the players on the best way to cover up and protect themselves from the sun.

TEST: Dr Sandeep Varma with Ryan Sidebottom

Dr Varma has been screening the Notts County Cricket team pre-season for the last five years.

Fortunately, no serious problems have been picked up in that time.

"Many of the players play throughout the summer and then go overseas in the winter months and therefore it's important that they are aware of the best way to protect themselves from the sun. The players must take sun exposure very seriously," said Dr Varma.

"If people notice a mole that has changed in size, shape or colour or notice a sore spot that

weeps, bleeds or crusts they should go to their GP to seek advice. The message is, avoid sun beds, enjoy the sun – but take sensible precautions to ensure you don't get burnt.

"For cricketers and others that play predominately summer sports such as tennis, this means wearing a hat and applying sun block regularly and feeling confident enough to look out for changes on the skin, especially moles, that may be indicative of skin cancer."

There are more than 70,000 new cases of skin cancer a year in the UK. More than 9,000 cases of malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, are diagnosed every year in the UK and over 2,000 will die from the disease.

Harbhajan in trouble again

HARBHAJAN Singh has apologised to Shanthakumaran Sreesanth after being handed an 11-match ban following the clash with his India team-mate at the end of their Indian Premier League match.

The Mumbai Indians bowler was also fined 100% of his match fee after being found guilty of a Level 4.2 offence under the International Cricket Council's Code of Conduct for slapping Sreesanth following Kings XI Punjab's 66-run victory.

The suspension will likely see Harbhajan miss the remainder of the inaugural IPL campaign. He would only return to the series should the Indians reach the semi-finals.

The 27-year-old off-spinner has expressed his regret over the altercation, which left his international colleague in tears.

"I am very apologetic about the whole incident," Harbhajan said.

"What I did to Sree was wrong. He is like my younger brother. I regret my actions that have hurt Sreesanth's feelings."

After Monday's 45-minute hearing, which was chaired by match referee Farokh Engineer, Harbhajan and Sreesanth hugged and shook hands for the cameras.

Mumbai coach Lalchand Rajput was fined 50% of his match fee after being found guilty of a Level 2 offence at the same hearing.

"Rajput did not do enough to stop the incident," said IPL commissioner Lalit Modi. "Rajput was right behind Harbhajan when the incident took place. He didn't take any step to restrain him."

Sreesanth, meanwhile, was let off with a warning for his part.

Former India wicketkeeper

Harbhajan Singh's career has been dogged by controversy - the latest incident in the Indian Premier League is not the first time he has had a brush with authority ...



'SORRY': Harbhajan Singh

Engineer revealed after the hearing that everyone involved had accepted their punishments.

He said: "Whatever decision has been handed over has been accepted by all parties concerned – Sreesanth with a warning, Rajput a fine and Harbhajan a ban.

"I gave a fair hearing to the parties concerned and both of them gave me their points of view.

"Sreesanth was quiet most of the time. I told him to concentrate on his career and that he had a bright future ahead of him."

Engineer insists he still rates Harbhajan as a player and

reckons he is lucky to have got off so lightly.

"I know Harbhajan well – he is a good bowler," he said.

"I was the one who helped him sign up for Lancashire. I wouldn't recommend a person who I wasn't sure of for the county.

"Harbhajan had no intention to assault. Things happen sometimes in a weak moment. The punishment could have been worse. He is lucky to get away and he knows this."

Harbhajan, who captained the Indians encounter in the absence of Sachin Tendulkar, is likely to face a separate inquiry from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

BCCI chief administrative officer Ratnakar Shetty said: "This is the decision taken by the IPL, independent of the BCCI.

"We will also look into the matter and conduct our own inquiry."

The BCCI have appointed Sudhir Nanavati to head up a preliminary inquiry into the incident between two national team players.

The incident is the latest in a long line of recent controversies surrounding the off-spinner.

Harbhajan was found guilty – and subsequently cleared on appeal – of making a racist comment to Andrew Symonds during the Test between India and Australia earlier this year.

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