WHEN KAPIL’s DEVILS DETHRONED THE MIGHTY WEST INDIES

By **Sunil Sarpal**



It was 1983, the no-hopers or you may say the ‘under-dogs’ gave the all-crucial blow to West Indies cricket by beating them in one-dayers at Lords, England.

Before embarking upon the tournament at England, Indian Team did not expect any positive results from the World Cup. Their confidence level went a few notches up as the matches start unfolding. Early wins gave them the necessary confidence that they could also reach the play-offs. The confidence was given necessary boost by the captain Kapil Dev in a match against Zimbabwe when India was tottering with five top batsman having returned to the pavilion empty handed.

From then onwards, the pendlum shifted India’s way when Kapil

Dev arrived on the crease. He scored 175 runs, which was considered to be the best ever innings played in a one dayer. It was a difficult wicket to bat on, but Kapil being a genuine all-rounder in the world shone with the bat and changed the course of the match. His was the inning which brighten up India's stake to lift the trophy. Sunil Gavaskar admitted that in his life time he had not seen such an outstanding inning in one dayers, such was the master class of Kapil Dev as an explosive batsman. 4s and 6s rained from his blade in a magical show of batsmanship.
Unfortunately, the match could not be telecast on air due to technical hitches.

This inning was the turn-around of India's fortune in the world cup. People still remember this inning with a sigh of relief. With this inning, Kapil Dev became an overnight hero in the tournament. Kapil leading from the front and his exploits percolated on his team mates and gave them unbelievable self-belief.

Interestingly, Indian Team had in their ranks the luxury of multi-skilled players.

MOHINDER AMARNATH : A top order batsman and a military medium swing bowler.
KAPIL DEV : A genuine all-rounder
BALVINDER SINGH SANDHU : A genuine swing bowler who could bat a bit also.
ROGER BINNY : A medium pacer who could chip in with some runs too.
MADAN LAL : A fine medium pacer who could bat as well.

In fact, India succeeded in reaching the final on the basis of these all round performers because English conditions suited their bowling the most.

The final between the mighty West Indies and the underdogs India was scheduled to be played in the Mecca of Cricket ie.

Lords at England. But West Indies became over-confidant to lift upon being seeing that they are pitted up against the minnows India.

Batting first, India put up a paltry score of 180 odd runs on the board with Kris Srikant top scoring with 38 runs.

The first turning point of the match happened when Balvinder Singh Sandhu’s delivery pitching outside off stump swung in viciously, leaving Gordan Greenidge bowled and bamboozled. With this wicket in pocket, Indian Team looked pumped up. The drama started to unfold when a rampaging Viv Richards hit a skyer of a Madan Lal delivery and Kapil Dev took a catch of the match running backwards. This was perhaps the second turning point of the match. These two dismissals turned the tide in India’s favour.

Mohinder Amarnath’s military medium did most of the damage and wisely declared Man of the Match.

The no-hopers turned heros and World Champs under the captain cool Kapil Dev. Kapil Dev’s contribution was of immense value to the Team India. It was a herculean task for no-hopers but luck played a vital role for Team India. 1983 Indian Cricket Team members are written in golden letters in the history books.