

WTC Final: India had to be content being a runners-up as Australia steals the show



Image courtesy Twitter
By **Sunil Sarpal**

The WTC final cricket test match played between India and Australia at The Oval, England was a mouth-watering contest. There was juice on offer for fast bowlers and life for batters

was not a cake-walk at all. Indian fast bowlers did not bowl at the right areas in the first outing, enabling Aussies to take early initiative and advantage in the match. Aussies amassed a mammoth 479 in the first innings. It was a daunting task for India to take on 4-pronged pace attack of Australia. Of the 4, Boland was the most difficult to deal with. The first innings scalp of Gill by Boland was a treat to watch. The ball pitched well outside the off stump but jagged back and uprooted the stumps.

One particular noticeable factor was when once a batsman settles down after gauging the behaviour of the pitch, it becomes imperative on his part to play a disciplined knock and not over-indulge. Once India is in a precarious situation, batters going for expensive shots leads to their downfall. The most difficult corridor for a batsman is off stump and just outside off stump. Generally, it is the away going delivery which creates trouble for batters but when bowlers swing one in, it is absolutely nightmarish for the batters.

Batting on helpful tracks for batters call for a great deal of concentration, determination and application.

In the second essay, Indian batters Rohit, Pujara and Kohli all perished after making good start and making necessary adjustment.

For Aussie fast bowlers above 6 ft plus height get extra ordinary lift and bounce from the wicket. All Aussie fast bowlers are above 6 ft.

If we talk about Rohit Sharma's batting, his batting involves lot of risk-taking shots. Pulls and hooks are his favourite shots but controlling these shots is equally important. He may get a lot of runs playing such shots but there is an element of risk involved. Anything misjudged goes to waiting hands.

I think Gill has to make lot of adjustment in playing outside off stump line.

Pujara these days has changed his style of play. He need not be over enthusiastic in playing shots. Pujara of old was much more secure and stood like a wall for other batters to score bulk of runs.

In this match, India badly missed the services of Bumrah because of injury. For India it was a testing time but Aussie is a class act. Let us hope with the recovery of Pant, India poses more solidarity to the side in the future.

CSK vs GT – a thrilling, nail-biting IPL final, down to the last ball

By **Sunil Sarpal**



Chennai Super Kings (CSK) led by MS Dhoni and Gujarat Titans (GT) led by Hardik Pandya were pitted against each other to play for IPL 2023 Final. The venue of the match was Ahmedabad but the match on Sunday was washed out due to incessant rain and re-scheduled for play on Monday.

It was a belter of a pitch but for initial seam movement that provided little spin.

Dhoni, after winning the toss elected to bowl first, considering that in the event of intervening rain, the contest shall be reduced in target and number of overs. It will benefit the team batting second. In the ultimate analysis his prediction proved right and CSK lifted the IPL 2023 trophy for the 5th time.

A few salient features emerged from the match. They are enumerated below :-

- 1) The stumping effected by Dhoni of in-form Shubham Gill off the bowling of Ravinder Jadeja was a mercurial work behind the stump. Mind you Gill notched up 3 centuries on the trot before this match. and was a hot favourite facilitating GT to lift the trophy.
- 2) For Gujarat Titans the stand-out performers with the bat were Sai Sudershan and Saha. They both batted brilliantly and posted a formidable total of 200 +.
- 3) With the intervention of, rain after the first inning, the contest was limited by a reduction in overs and scaling down of the target.
- 4) The relatively disappointing factor was that the match could not be decided in a 20-over contest.
- 5) Even though MS Dhoni was not fully fit and one of his knees not taking the rigorous of running between the wicket, he has not called it quit from IPL and shall appear in the next

year's IPL too for CSK.

In conclusion, as per the post tournament analysis, some of the batters have performed exceptionally well.

- 1) To start with, Shubham Gill has notched up three tons.
- 2) Followed by Virat Kohli who posted two back to back hundreds with a fifty.
- 3) Batters like Ishan Kishan, Nitish Rana, Rinku Singh and Surya Kr Yadav stole the show exhibiting T-20 style of shots. They redefined the game of cricket by introducing the formula – throwing caution to the wind.

WHAT A TOURNAMENT CALLED IPL

ALSO RAN: VIRAT KOHLI – IN THE PINK OF FORM

by **Sunil Sarpal**



Virat Kohli

As we approach the final today, in the on-going IPL season, Virat Kohli belted out back to back centuries for his franchisee RCB. Virat stole the show but unfortunately his team RCB could not even find a place in the play-offs. Kohli leaves a solid impact on his followers with the kind of flourish seen in his knocks. He plays conventional cricketing shots all over the park in a commanding fashion that bowlers are left clueless where to pitch the ball and where not.

The behaviour of the pitch on which match is played plays a pivotal role in batting performance.

Indian pitches generally are spin friendly.

In Australia the bounce is waist high.

In England, the conditions provide more swing.

In New Zealand, there is more lift from the surface and

swing too.

In West Indies, the pitches provide low bounce and are on the slow side.

A batsman needs to adjust to conditions first and plan which shot should be played and which not.

Kohli with 76 International tons in his pocket in all formats has enormous experience and exposure to any given condition. He therefore is the backbone of Indian batting and other just revolve around him. Dislodging him therefore becomes next to impossible. He stands tall among his contemporaries.

People and his die-hard foes becomes so critical about his inclusion in the side when he goes thru patchy and lean periods. They immediately write him off but Kohli has in him to bounce back with vengeance.

Kohli proclaims; "As long as God so desires, I shall keep on playing for India.

He is a modern-day iconic figure and others just want to emulate his work ethics.

He stands tall among the legendary figures India has produced so far.

If he remains fit and rarin-to-go, he will set such high benchmarks that he will be hard to dislodge.



Virus-free.www.avg.com

A Halla Gulla called IPL



By **Sunil Sarpal**

Indian Premier League will soon draw to a close for this season. Let's see what the Halla Gulla called IPL was all about

It happens once in a calendar year and brings lots of fun and joy to the cricket world. On every TV set in a home, this tussle between bat and ball is fought, providing great entertainment to the viewers of the game. The game is also a reminder that it belongs to young legs. Ageing has no room in this game which is on a fast lane.

Often viewers remember those that are no more, but were star cricketers during their playing days.

Dean Jones, Aussie

Malcom Marshal, WI

Martin Crow, NZ

Alas, cruel death ended their journey mid-way, depriving followers of their incredible presence and charisma.

IPL pays an astronomical amount of money to the players – thanks to IPL franchisees. On the basis of players' performance over a period of time, they are auctioned by franchisees at huge amounts. Even after the auctioned player loses his touch and his performance dips, he remains on the bench and still paid the committed amount.

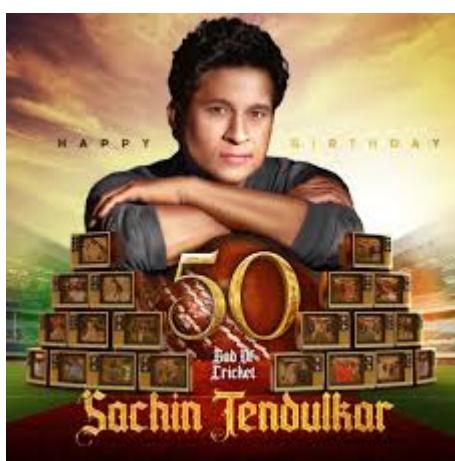
It has become a joy to watch IPL matches because music is played in the background. It is full entertainment. These days commentators provide lot of stories, past experiences and also discuss spats between players. Such things bind the viewers to TV sets.

Young guns join shoulders with foreign players and get lot of international experience. Players like Nitish Rana, Ishaan Kishan and Rinku Singh are the stars in making. Cricket is in the blood of followers and they enjoy this soap opera much more than Saas and Bahu episodes on TV.



WHAT MORE CAN YOU ACHIEVE IN SPORTS ?

By Sunil Sarpal



God comes to bat for India at No. 4, said Mathew Hayden for Sachin Tendulkar

Sometimes somebody's achievements surpass all records and record books. That person becomes immortal during lifetime.

Be it Sachin Tendulkar in Cricket

or Mike Tyson in Boxing

or Maradona in Football

They are living legends in their chosen sport. Though they have retired from their

sport, but they are remembered with 'awe' coming from the heart.

They are simply human being like others but they have 'Gift of the Gall from God'. Otherwise, they would not have achieved what they did. Their names are written with Golden letters. They always receive Red Carpet Welcome. Stadiums (stands) are named as Sachin Tendulkar Stand. Academies are run on their names.

People chant their names and

worship for their success.

West Indies legend Brian Lara has named his son as Sachin.

In football, Maradona beat all defenders single-handedly and scored too a goal in a World Cup match.

They lived, they ruled and
they scripted the history

books. In fact, they have re-written the history books. Their brilliance in their craft left the game gasping for breath. They took the game to altogether different and unexplored height and level.

Sachin Tendulkar from the sound of ball hitting his bat, could determine whether he is in-form or not.

God has created man in his own image but some of them over-whelmingly different and unique from the rest.

SALUTE TO THEM.

Australia vs India at Wankhade Stadium Rahul and Jadeja rule the pitch

By Sunil Sarpal



Rahul and Jadeja seal victory for India

Yesterday's encounter, on 17th March 2023, between visiting Australia vs India at Wankhade Stadium proved a nightmare for the batters. It was a day-night one- day match. Australia upon winning the toss chose to make the first use of the pitch and elected to bat first. There was help on offer for the fast bowlers. The ball was moving in the air and off the pitch too. There is a saying – when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. For Mitchel Marsh who was an in-form batsman from Australia, the batting was to his liking. He hit some huge sixes and dominated the proceedings with his power hitting. On the other end, batters were struggling to cope up with movement. It was the golden arm of Ravinder Jadeja who undid the proceeding and took Marsh's scalp. There was no other

batsman who could settle down to post a formidable score on the board. Jadeja's made his presence felt in fielding when he took a diving catch and stalled the proceedings. Australia could post a paltry score of 188 runs in a 50 over encounter. Shami and Siraj were among the wickets. Jadeja too was economical and restrictive in bowling. His line and length were spot on and did not allow Aussis to freeze arm.

Indian batting started on a dismal note when the opener Ishan Kishan perished early to Mitchel Starc LBW. Kohli too was in all sorts of trouble against the moving ball and was not at all in his elements. He too perished early leaving Gill and Rahul to steady the ship. There were chances on offer in the slip cordon but Gill was lucky to survive and played some trade mark shots. He too could not trouble score board much and lost his scalp scoring just 20 runs. Surya came and left on the first ball, LBW to Starc – the most successful bowler from Australia.

Both Rahul and Jadeja provided stability to Indian innings. Both played disciplined knocks and took the Indian side to victory.

By no yardstick the pitch offered a run feast required in a 50 over encounter. It was a fast bowlers paradise. KL Rahul's grit and unflinching determination in the company of Jadeja proved handful for India and won the match for India. All credit for this win should go to the duo.

Lastly one thing I like to mention that Jadeja's graph as a genuine all- rounder – be it bowling spin, batting, especially fielding and catching is commendable. Although Rahul's discipline and score deserves man-of the match award but Jadeja's brilliance in all walks of the game deserve standing ovation from the followers of the game. Somebody even compared him to the legend Sir Gary Sobers.



Is Indian Cricket riddled with politics?

By Sunil Sarpal



As per media reports, the out-going Chief Selector of Cricket in India, Chetan Sharma, has made a shocking revelation during a sting operation conducted by a channel that it is Saurav Ganguly, the then BCCI president, who was instrumental in removing Virat Kohli of his captaincy from Team India, because Saurav did not like him personally.

If true, this sums up the story of how politics has become an integral part of Indian Cricket which at one point of time was considered a gentleman's game.

It is alleged that, earlier, during Saurav Ganguly's tenure as BCCI President, he did not allow Shastri a third term as India coach. Though Ravi Shastri proved to be the most successful

Indian Coach under whose guidance Team India made big strides in International matches.

Saurav's removal of Virat Kohli as Captain could have had a debilitating effect on his performance as a batsman but timely regaining of his form saved him from the ignominy of an exit door.

There is no dearth of talent in India but it needs to be nurtured and channelised. But the opportunities are far and few to showcase the talent and represent Team India.

Take the case of Ravinder Jadeja, earlier he was considered a stop gap arrangement but now-a-days both his bowling and batting excelled so much that his position in the side has become indispensable.

To get to know the tricks of the trade, it calls for a great deal of perseverance.

BCCI is one of the richest body in the world and the selection process should be unbiased. Those at the helm of affairs should not be allowed to tinker with the careers of players.

A pool of players worthy to represent India should be made and from that pool, as per the rotation policy, the players should be picked up to play the game. This process will have a sobering effect on the mind of players. Any untoward favouritism or changing and chopping of players should be governed by an unbiased procedure especially adopted for this purpose so that the game is played in a fair manner.

India can only shine on world stage if there is unity and friendship among the playing eleven. Administration should be fool proof and just one person should not be empowered to dictate terms. Such arbitrariness should be abolished from the whole selection process.

The responsibility of the BCCI President is huge, as a result,

the most responsible and knowledgeable person should be given the charge to take the team forward. Favoritism, biased and negative narratives should have no place in the overall process.

Cricket Teams of the World – West Indies

By **Sunil Sarpal**



West Indies Winners and Warriors

Posting this historical article a day after in the INDIA vs West Indies, Women's T20 World Cup match, India beat West Indies by 6 wickets!

That is the see-saw battle of this game. That's what makes it so interesting. There came a phase in the history of men's cricket when all the cricket playing nations boasted of 2-3

genuinely quick and skillful bowlers in their line up. The very sight of these bowlers was intimidating because they were possessing such a variety in their repertoire which even the most accomplished batsmen could not withstand. It took the game of cricket to altogether different level. These quickies were always on the throat of the batsman so that the hapless batsman had no respite. The 6 ft plus barging in from the boundary line with red cherry in hand can lead to shiver down the spine of a batsman. How can a batsman face, put aside, withstand, barrage of bouncers one after the other. This was some sort of suicide type of cricket facing these quickies with 150 plus speed.

West Indies had an unbelievable line-up consisting of

Malcom Marshal

Joel Garner

Any Roberts

Michael Holding

Croft etc. etc.

Pakistan's challenge rests with Cap. Imran Khan, Wasim Akram, and Waqar Younis.

Australia had the fearsome duo of Deniss Lillee and Jeffery Thompson.

England spearheads were Ian Botham and Wills.

New Zealand had the services of undisputed talented Sir Richard Hadlee and Chatfield.

India too had Kapil Dev and Manoj Prabhakar.

When we talk of competition, West Indies were undisputed champs, head and shoulders above in pace and variations. On the face of their battery of fast bowlers, other teams were

found just chockers. They ruled the cricket world like roaring lions and their roar was deafning and debilitating for the opposition. West Indies Team was studded with charismatic individuals either with bat or ball. Their line-up challenged all the teams in their own den and humiliated them like never before. They made mockery of opposition on the field of cricket and tasted them dust.

The line-up of West Indies team was :-

GORDAN GRINIDGES, DESMOND HAYNES, VIV RICHARDS, CLIVE LLOYD (C), LARRY GOMES (OR ALWIN KALICHRAN), JEFFERY DUJON, ANDY ROBERTS, MICHAEL HOLDING, MALCOM MARSHAL, JOEL GARNER, GIBBS AND CROFT.

They were all stars in their chosen field. Perhaps in the history of cricket, such a combination of batsmen and bowlers never got together in unison.

It was their captain Clive Lloyd who for the first time in the history of cricket introduced 4-pronged fast bowling attack. It paid rich dividend to West Indies so that they ruled the world over a decade or so.

Indian cricket on a high

By Sunil Sarpal



Image: meravote

Indian Cricket is on a high these days. Winning one tournament after another has now become a routine feature for India. Bringing in just the bench strength to take on the likes of New Zealand team is a milestone that the world is watching with total disbelief. The just concluded 3-match series in 50-over format against New Zealand has left them shaken and outclassed.

The highlight of the Indian Team is that we have discovered one Surya Kumar Yadav whose range of shots takes the game to a altogether different level. As if he just descended from MARS. The short form of his name too is SKY. He hits good balls disdainly and one can imagine the treatment meted out to bad balls. He plays all over with straight bat, horizontal bat, scoop, lap shot and what not. It is just amazing to see

the range of shots he has in his arsenal. Bowlers are often left in a mad like situation when up against SKY.

We consider the other legends too, but he is the greatest, head and shoulders above them. His heroics are unparalleled and the whole cricket fraternity is singing his songs.

Opposition too is applauding his batting feat and some kind of relief rends the air when he departs. Then the contest between bat and ball starts anew.

The 'rotation policy' has brought in all the bench strength into play, particularly bowlers.

India's fast bowling strength is unbelievably amazing. We have Bhuvi, Arshdweep, Siraj, Bumrah, Shami, Pandya. They certainly have an edge over Umran Mallik and many more.

In batting, the resurgence of Virat Kohli has given new dimension to batting as well. With the likes of Rohit, Ishaan Kishan, Surya, Gill, Rahul, Iyer are all in-form batters and rarin-to-go.

Amongst allrounders, Hardik, Ravinder Jadeja, Ashwin, Shardur Thakur, Axar Patel, to name a few.

Among spinners, Kuldeep Yadav, Ashwin, Chchahal and many more.

Indian fielding standard is second to none. With the intro of YOYO test as pre-requisite, every player has to maintain high-class fitness so as to survive and establish his position in the side.

We, in cricket, has reached a stage when others look up to us to emulate the feat and plan their own cricket strategy.

Ravindra Jadeja – All Rounder Top to Toe

Ravinder Jadeja – an asset to Indian Team by Sunil Sarpal





Ravinder Jadeja is considered as the most under-rated performer in Team India. In fact, he is a 3-dimensional

cricketer – a good batsman, a wicket taking left arm spinner and most importantly a sharp and agile fielder. His throwing arm has done havoc in opposition camp and batsmen are always under a ‘fear psychosis’ whether or not to steal a single if the ball is hit in their direction.

He is such a talented cricketer but creates an impression of being ordinary only because of not possessing good oratory skills.

As a bowler, his slow left arm bowling is quiet effective and he creates lot of impact on helpful pitches. His bowling style is restrictive type because he does not give much air to the ball. His line and length do not allow batters to freeze arm and smash him for biggies. He even spins the ball where no other bowler gets any purchase from the wicket.

As a batsman, he is slotted down the order and invariably bats with lower down batsmen or bowlers. Even while playing in English conditions where the ball swings viciously, and other batsmen are struggling to cope with swing, his approach to batting is as solid as a rock. In such conditions, his contribution with the bat was significant to India total. His batting technique may not be from the ‘cricketing book’ but his adjustment and leg side play is of proven quality.

He is a very sharp fielder whether it is out-field or within 30-yard circle. He has extra-ordinary diving skills and produce improbable catches. His ability of stopping the ball and throwing in one action has made him a very dangerous fielder. He sets such high benchmark in fielding which is hard to emulate.

MS Dhoni had rightly given him the status of Sir Jadeja.

Jadeja may not fall in the league of a Kohli or Rohit as batsman but his overall contribution to India’s cause should not be under-mined. He has already played International cricket with distinction and does not throw away his wicket in

a rush of blood, as was the case earlier.

India needs the services of such cricketer for a long-long time to come as he is young and fit.

In the commentary box, people like Sanjay Manjreker called him bits-and-pieces cricketer. This is cheap commentary to distract the enthusiasm of a 3-dimensional cricketer. His graph in terms of both batting and bowling is on the rise and eye-awakening. There is a hint of 'carelessness' in his approach to the game but actually it is not the case. He is as serious and studious as anybody else in the team.