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.



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A Halla Gulla called IPL

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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 calender year and bring lot of fun and joy to cricket world. On every TV set in a home, this tussel 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.

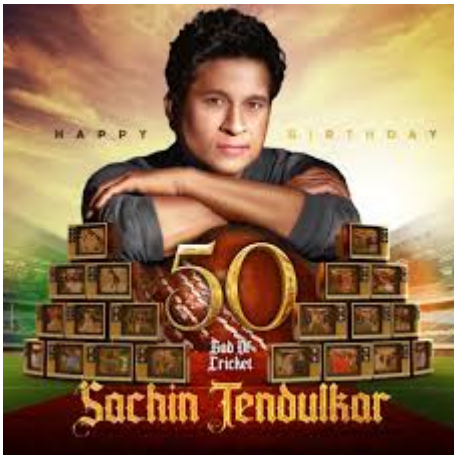
It has become a joy to watch IPL matches because music is played in the background. It is full entertainment. These days commentators provide lot of stories, past experiences and also discuss spats between players. Such things bind the viewers to TV sets.

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.

Mike Tyson's ability to knock down any boxer with one strike in any International match. Absolutely unbelievable feat.

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 string 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 favouratism 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 KALICHARAN), 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 divident 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**

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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.

Legendary Australian fast-bowler Brett Lee makes a prediction about an Indian player

by **Sunil Sarpal**



Brett Lee: Yep! He’s the one, SKY!

Legendary Australia fast-bowler Brett Lee believes an Indian in-form batsman will someday be a major factor in winning a World Cup for the Indian team. 2022 has been a year in which, through his 360-degree play and astonishing shots, became the toast of T20I cricket.

He is currently the highest run-getter in T20Is this year with 1,164 runs in 31 matches, averaging 46.56 and at a strike-rate of 187.43. He also lit up the Men’s T20 World Cup in Australia, the first time he’s played competitive cricket in the country. **Surya Kumar Yadav** amassed 239 runs in six innings at a strike rate of 189.68, often changing the tempo of the innings for India.



Surya Kumar Yadav: Where SKY is the limit

“SKY was one of the highlights for me at the T20 World Cup. He continues to bat with the same attitude. Not only will he score big runs but he will also someday win a World Cup for Team India. I love watching him play. My advice to SKY would be no advice. Keep doing what you are doing, don’t change, don’t complicate things, back yourself,” said Lee on his YouTube channel.

Just after T20 World Cup, Suryakumar enthralled cricket fans yet again when he smashed 111 not out off 51 balls against New Zealand at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui. In that match, the rest of the visitors’ batters made 69 runs off as many balls and Suryakumar’s knock was called by Virat Kohli on Twitter as a “video game innings.”

“India did not win the T20 World Cup but the SKY rose. Of course, I am talking about **Surya Kumar Yadav**. He is the new global T20 superstar. What a sensational 12-15 months he has had on the big stage.”

“He has shown here on Australian grassy wickets where the ball skids through. His fearlessness and his shot selection are like that of a chess grandmaster. His execution is awe-

inspiring and the smile on his face when he played it, is priceless," added an impressed Lee.

On Yadav's technique of playing shots which has made him stand out from other players, Lee stated that his basics of the game are sorted and wants Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma to let him shine in the coming years for India.

"I like the way he executes the impossible shots because his basics are in place. He doesn't go out there and just tries to hit the ball that isn't there to hit. He has a wonderful technique and he is definitely a player for the future."

"You can trust Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma to just let him be the person he needs to be. SKY would rise and this could lead to many more peaks for India in years to come."

Last day for receiving applications for a new Cricket Selection Committee

By **Sunil Sarpal**

After the ignominious exit from ICC T-20 tournament at the hands of England, Indian Cricket Team's prestige was at stake. In order to save it's face, BCCI had no other option but to sack the Selection Committee, led by Chetan Sharma. Even the BCCI President Saurav Ganguly was earlier shown the exit door.

The new BCCI President is Roger Binny, a former cricketer. And the process of forming the new Selection Committee has been under-way. It has become a norm in India that whenever Indian Team is defeated in a big tournament, changes and chopping of

heads takes place.

The deadline to submit applications for the post of new selectors ends today, november 28th. According to InsideSports, BCCI is reported to have already received over 80 applications for vacancy of five selectors. The board will scrutinise the applications and will make announcement of the new selection committee in December 2022.

It is speculated that, some of the new faces such as, Shubham Gill, Prithvi Shah, Sanju Samson and Hooda may get the nod. In the bowling department too the return of Jasprit Bumrah will boost the already formidable bowling attack.



Ravi Shastri down the memory lane

If we talk about going down the memory lane, when Ravi Shastri was removed from the position of a Director, Team India, after his 2- term tenure, the team was performing very well except for out of form Virat Kohli. Ravi possesses the right

ingredients and knowledge, about how to deal with the boys, which is a rare quality to lift the spirit of the game. Therefore, there are voices demanding for his return as Director, Team India. Whereas, Rahul Dravid’s tenure as Coach has not brought the positive results because coaching Team India is a different ball game. Whereas, Ravi’s invaluable inputs to India captain, time to time intervention in matter of significance and foresight were some of the qualities rarely found in a person.



Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni

With the induction of Roger Binny as new BCCI President, it is reported that his first call was to include MS Dhoni as Head Coach or Director, Team India T20. MS Dhoni is immensely

talented, cool as a cucumber and his skills for man-management are extra-ordinary. It is hoped that MS Dhoni, if appointed, as Director, in coordination with Rahul Dravid as coach will do the best for the team, which takes Team India forward.

Time is ripe to include new legs because the demand of the game is to be fast and ferocious. Surya Kumar Yadav has proved time and again that the shorter version of the game’s demand is 360 degree. It is therefore absolutely necessary on the part of New Selection Committee to re-build the side and to not go by past reputation of the players.