



Last Sunday India broke a recent jinx of losing the finals of the tournaments it was playing in. The Indians would dominate the games till the finals but somehow on the day that mattered it would stumble and fall at the last hurdle. That win in Sri Lanka should give the team heaps of confidence as it travels to South Africa for the Champions Trophy where it is in the strongest group with arch rivals Australia and Pakistan and the West Indies who beat them in the recent ICC T20 World Cup.

If India goes in with lots of confidence the Australians are not too far behind and will look to defending the trophy with the same confidence after their performances in the one dayers against England. While it is true that playing the limited overs series after the Ashes was decided, makes little cricketing sense, the fact is that in the modern world players have to get used to switching from one format to the other very quickly as well as get used to the conditions in other countries where they will be playing. The calendar will always be tight for teams like India and Australia for not only do they have the better players but they are also highly marketable and thus it is profitable to have these teams playing as much as possible for the Boards.

The Australians are one game away from making it a total rout in England and if they do that then it will to a large extent take away the bitter taste of having lost the Ashes. England are looking very ordinary indeed and it maybe that after winning the Ashes the players have not been able to bring the same intensity that they had for the Ashes series. Be that as it may, there is no taking away from the Australian teams efforts which has seen them recapture the number one ranking once again. The captain Ricky Ponting having had a few days rest back home has come to England recharged and hit a brilliant century and also had a couple of run-outs to see that the winning momentum was not lost.

It is however the new kid on the block, Tim Paine, who has been impressive both in front as well as behind the wickets and his first century in limited overs cricket and sure wicket keeping has ensured that the absence of regular keeper Brad Haddin is not felt at all.

If one of the youngest cricketers in the world is showing his talent so also is one of the senior most cricketers in the world, Sachin Tendulkar. His superb century in the searing and energy sapping heat of Colombo gave India just the big score it needed to pressure Sri Lanka in the finals and then Harbhajan Singh bowled craftily to take India to the elusive win.

This week's CEAT International Cricketer of the Week is shared by the senior Sachin Tendulkar and young Tim Paine for their contributions to their teams wins.