

## Pakistan have got a rare talent in Umar Akmal

Sunil Gavaskar, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2010

The Football World Cup is coming to an end and then there will be some Formula One Racing and then some Golf and of course there will be some cricket too, as Pakistan take on Australia in England for their 'home series'. Ever since the attack on the Sri Lankans in Lahore no team has agreed to go to Pakistan and so Pakistan has to play its matches in neutral venues. Of course in England with the huge Pakistani expatriate community it's never felt that a game is being played at a neutral venue. That also is the case with the other teams in the sub continent and because our crowds are more vocal and bring music and '*ganaa bajaana*' and it is more of a picnic and fun time than when the locals are attending the matches. No wonder many English players complain that even in England it feels like they are playing away with the crowd support that the teams from the subcontinent get. Mind you England today is more like a United Nations team than a purely English team so, some if not all their players, shouldn't feel that way when the subcontinent supporters come out to beat the drums for their teams.



Pakistan has been one of the top T20 teams for quite a while now and they once again showed that the Australians have a lot to learn in this format of the game by beating them comfortably in the two T20 matches played. Australia did upset the applecart for the Pakistanis when Michael Hussey single handedly took them to a fabulous win in the semi finals of the ICC World Twenty20 in May but the Pakistanis have bounced back quite nicely with their display in the T20 games in England. The one man who has made an enormous difference to the team is skipper Shahid Afridi and under his leadership the team seems to be responding positively.

In Umar Akmal Pakistan have a rare talent who has got tremendous skill and has shown in the short time that he has been in international cricket that he has a good temperament too. His temperament will be tested to the full in the test matches that will be played next week but he looks capable of handling anything that the Aussies dish out. Mohammad Aamer is another fine prospect and in these two youngsters Pakistan have stars for the future. They are young and so need careful handling to ensure that they stay focused on the game otherwise not just Pakistan but the cricketing world will lose two super talents.

Umar Akmal for his splendid batting is the week's CEAT Cricketer of the Week