

Dilshan is a late bloomer

Sunil Gavaskar, 13th June 2010

There are some players who are late bloomers, there are some who look like underachievers till some break comes their way and then there is some who completely change the way they play and become the better for it. There are also those who are given a new challenge and relish it and grasp the opportunity that challenge provides to become feared players. Tillakaratne Dilshan of Sri Lanka belongs to all these categories at various stages his career... He is indeed a late bloomer for while his initial forays in international cricket were not altogether disappointing they weren't as dazzling as today and so he was a bit of an underachiever till he started to change the way he approached batting and began to play more shots, took a few more risks and began to get heaps of runs. Then the Sri Lankan 'Think-Tank' decided to promote him to open the batting and that move has worked wonders both for the team and for Dilshan himself. He along with Virender Sehwag is now among the most feared opening batsmen in all formats of the game. He is also a brilliant fielder and like Sehwag a more than useful off spinner who has the happy knack of picking up wickets at crucial times and breaking well settled partnerships.



The Sri Lankan team to Zimbabwe for the tri series was captained by Dilshan and unlike India's Suresh Raina who promptly dropped himself down the order instead of leading from the front, Dilshan stuck to his position and gave his team just the starts that they wanted to win the series and got a century in the finals and won the man of the match as well as the trophy for his team.

Zimbabwe did not do their chances of being back in the test fold any harm at all. Their team looked eager and combined well and looks as if it is capable of holding its own in the longer format too. Sure the initial tests may be tough for it is not easy to get the mind set change from limited over's cricket to test cricket but the determination and enthusiasm is definitely there. This year's annual ICC meeting may well decide the issue if Zimbabwe do make the case for their return. The politicians may well try and stop them and that will be a pity because the cricketers will suffer for no fault of theirs.

In England, Bangladesh returned to their bad old days and lost the second test in three days despite Tamim Iqbal scoring yet another scorching century. Maybe Zimbabwe should play Bangladesh in tests and show the world how much they have improved. If they show their one day form in tests against Bangladesh they make the case for their return stronger.

The Sri Lankan skipper Dilshan is the CEAT Cricketer of this Week for his outstanding batting and clever captaincy.