

Steyn, Benn picks of the week

Sunil Gavaskar, 20th June 2010

When Bangladesh lost their second Test with a couple of days to spare a lot of critics went to town questioning why their Test status should be retained. This despite the fact that Bangladesh had almost managed to draw the first Test and had looked good for the first couple of days of the second Test too... Then the batting collapsed again and gave England not only a series win but also two days to relax. England of course are looking at any cricket this summer as a lead up to the Ashes Series in Australia later in the year and know that unless they beat Australia in Australia not many would give them much credit about their cricket. The fact is that England has become a better side and a much more balanced one after the progress of Graeme Swann as a wicket-taking bowler of the highest class. He also bats handily down the order and thus gives the England team a nice balanced look about them. England has a series against Pakistan after the Pakistanis play Australia in England as part of their 'home' series. If anything, that experience against the Australians will toughen the Pakistanis up and prepare them better when they take on England. England also plays Australia in a limited over's series which will give them a good idea of what to expect in the winter in Australia.



If critics are asking for Bangladesh's Test status to be removed then what would they be saying about the West Indies team which also collapsed in spectacular fashion in the first Test against the South Africans. In Dale Steyn South Africa have one of the greats of the game and his strike rate of wickets is pretty impressive. If batsmen are judged by the number of centuries they score and their consistency in doing so then bowlers are rated according to the number of five wickets in an innings that they capture. A five wicket haul is thought to be as good a century and going by that Dale Steyn is among the very best. He seems to get a five wicket haul every third or fourth innings which is remarkable indeed and it is his quick bowling that is giving South Africa such easy wins.

Despite Steyn's heroics the West Indies also had a hero in Suleiman Benn the tall gangly left-hand spinner. He too got a five wicket haul and also batted stubbornly but was not able to stop South Africa from winning the Test easily. There were some other outstanding performances in the week from Lasith Malinga who also got five wickets and stopped Shahid Afridi from taking Pakistan to a win. Afridi scored a blistering century and the new responsible Afridi is showing consistency with the bat and that is good news for Pakistan cricket.

It is the five wicket boys Dale Steyn and Suleiman Benn who also batted well who are the joint CEAT Cricketers of this Week.