

Hussey should have been sent up the order

Sunil Gavaskar, 23rd May 2010

There is a bit of a lull in international cricket after the ICC World Twenty 20 Cup was over in Barbados last week. The days when there was a clear gap of at least a fortnight between the start of the English season and the end of the southern hemisphere season are long gone. So barely a few days after the dust had settled in Barbados and the steel band and calypsos had gone silent there the music started in another island with the West Indies playing South Africa in the T20 matches. South Africa's failure in a world tournament once more has got the knives out for Graeme Smith the skipper and the Proteas fans now want results. Smith has been in charge since the World Cup in 2003 in South Africa when the hosts failed to get to the super eight stages. In between that till the recent world cup South Africa have not always played to the potential and the skill level the side has. They have invariably been a team that is a hard and tough opposition but on the world stage they have not shown the results and that's why perhaps the South African fans are getting a bit impatient with the skipper.



Michael Clarke the Australian skipper has certainly done better in his first essay as skipper in a world tourney. Australia has won just about every cup there is in cricket excepting for the ICC World Twenty 20. Till this edition they had not even got into the knockout stage so for them to come so close is an achievement indeed. The skipper is still young and will learn as he goes along and by staying on at the ground after that loss in the finals to cheer for the Australian women's team as they played the finals shows that his heart is in the right place. Plenty of the men players look down on women's cricket and it was good to see the Australian captain along with some of his teammates staying on to give support to their women's team.

He will no doubt have time to ponder his call to keep the hero of the semis Michael Hussey at number 7 when it would have been far more beneficial to send him as early as possible. When a batsman is in form he needs to get to the crease as soon as he can and with the confidence he had from the previous innings it made sense to have Michael bat ahead of his brother David who got a half century but not at the rate the team needed. The best example of using a form batsman is the manner in which Ganguly sent VVS Laxman in to bat at number three in the second innings of the 2001 Kolkata test against the Aussies. Laxman had remained unbeaten with 50 plus in the first innings batting at number 6 and when the follow on was given he was sent ahead of the then regular number three Rahul Dravid; who was pushed to Laxman's number. The cricketing world knows what an innings VVS played and in partnership with Dravid turned the game and the series around for India.

Clarke will learn if he like Michael Hussey thinks hard about his cricket. The thinking 'Mr. Cricket' Michael Hussey is the CEAT International Cricketer of the Week for his stupendous batting in the semi finals.