

## England should be wary of Harris at the Ashes

Sunil Gavaskar, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010

The South Africa versus West Indies series was won by South Africa quite easily and the Proteas continue to show impressive results overseas. It is not how many games you win at home but how many a team wins overseas that is big factor in deciding how good a team is. That is why the West Indian teams of the 1970s, 80s and part of 90s and the Australian teams after that were recognized as all time great teams. Playing at home a team knows the conditions and gets big crowd support which can intimidate lesser teams so it is a lot easier to perform well at home. There is also a bigger pool of players available to the home team while the touring teams have only 15 players to choose from. The current problem for the West Indies though is that they don't seem to have 11 good players leave aside a bigger pool to pick. That Ramnaresh Sarwan was unable to find a place in the team is hard to imagine for the batsmen that the Windies put on the field were very ordinary indeed. If Chris Gayle and Shiv Chanderpaul don't make big scores the West Indies struggle to get to 200. It is such a far cry from the days when players like Alvin Kallicharran and Larry Gomes had to fight for a place in the West Indies playing eleven.



This is not to take anything away from the bowling of Dale Steyn and Johan Botha who both bowled superbly to pick holes in the West Indies batsmen's technique and dismiss them cheaply. It was only in the second Test that the West Indies batsmen thanks to centuries from Chanderpaul and Brendon Nash were able to secure a draw. In the other two Tests they barely survived 80 over's in an innings thereby saving the West Indies Cricket Board the cost of another new ball. Steyn who has had such a remarkable run in Test cricket spoilt his record by getting all his match fees taken away for spitting at Sulieman Benn.

Fast bowlers believe that they need to have a temper and show aggression but spitting at an opponent is a new low and even if he has been fined by the ICC match referee hopefully his Cricket Board will also give him a warning especially considering the sensitiveness of who it was done to in his country. He is a bowler who at the rate at which he is picking five wickets in an innings is going to be among the greatest in the game and it is for his bowling that he should be remembered and not for incidents like these.

This week though it is the bowlers who have dominated as can be seen by the fact that those in contention for this week's accolade are all bowlers. Australia may have lost the one-day series but in Ryan Harris they have found a bowler who hits the short of length spot hard and gets the ball to move either way at good pace. On harder pitches he will be an even more difficult proposition to face and England will be well warned that he could be the one to watch out for in the series later in the year.

However it is the South African off spinner Johan Botha who with his haul of 7 wickets in the third Test who is the CEAT International Cricketer of the Week.