

Gap between Test and ODI nations visible

Sunil Gavaskar, 9th May 2010

The ICC world Twenty20 is showing that those players who have been playing in the Indian Premier League are in much better touch than those who have come in cold into the tournament. The IPL is a tough tournament and the confidence a player derives after doing well in it can be seen in the manner in which these players have performed. In this week's top five players there is only one player who was not part of the IPL and that is Darren Sammy who was very impressive with both bat and ball in West Indies games against England and Ireland. What the performances of Ireland and Afghanistan have shown is that there is a yawning gap between the Test nations and the one-day nations. Their bowling may be decent and the fielding enthusiastic but their batsmen have little clue how to play fast bowling of Test quality and were blown away by the teams that they played against. Mind you it is not just those teams but even Test nations that found it tough to cope with the pace and bounce that the Barbados pitch provided to the quick bowlers and were floundering too. Ireland has been backed mainly by its English neighbors for an upgrade to Test status but having seen the manner in which they could not even get bat to ball in a D/L situation means that they still have a long way to go before they get Test status. If only their batsmen showed the same application that the bowlers and fielders do then they may get better otherwise they may continue to do well at the level just below the Test and international level. Afghanistan too showed that their bowling has something but their batsmen were all at sea against the quickies of South Africa and did not look the part at all. They need to play more games against the 'a' teams of the Test nations and get more exposure and experience against that quality which will help them develop and be better prepared for such ICC events. However they should continue to be part of such events because playing against top sides and talking to the top players and learning from them will help in their progress and keep their spirits up.



Not too many teams can go on to win the World Cup within 15 years of their induction as a Test nation and Sri Lanka have done that. They have always had some world class players who unfortunately have not got the same recognition as players much lesser in caliber and quality but who come from a country whose media is more influential do. Take the case of Mahela Jayawardene. Here is a player who has 30 Test centuries and almost 10000 runs under his belt in Test cricket and almost similar record in one-day internationals but does he even get a mention when the top batsmen in the world are discussed? No. That's simply because the Sri Lankan cricketing media does not have the same influence as the media from the old powers.

He is in superb batting form since he began to open the batting in the latter stages of the IPL and that form has continued in the ICC World Twenty20 too. His century and near century in the first round of the tournament makes him the CEAT T20 Player of the Week.