



McCullum is back to his old self

15th November 2009, Sunil Gavaskar

WITH the last game between Australia and India being washed out by unseasonal rains, players of both teams got some much needed rest, but they also lost out on the points needed to get the weekly CEAT award. The main contenders, therefore, were from teams that had started playing earlier in the week.

The situation in Pakistan being still not ripe for international cricket, their matches are now being played in the United Arab Emirates. New Zealand played their matches in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and the series was an opportunity for the Pakistanis to avenge their defeat in the ICC Champions Trophy semifinals. That loss stopped Pakistan from going for a rare double of winning the ICC World T20 and the ICC Champions Trophy in the same year.

Even before the series started, there was plenty of drama — which, of course, is not new to Pakistan cricket — when captain Younis Khan resigned and then was asked to continue. That some players were unhappy with his style of functioning was the rumor coming out of the Pakistan dressing room.

After winning the first game quite easily, the Pakistanis lost their way and went on to lose the three-match ODI series and thus could not exact revenge for their Champions Trophy loss. It also proved that New Zealand's win in the Champions Trophy was not just one of those lucky days for the team.

New Zealand depends a lot on a good start, especially from Brendon McCullum. The wicketkeeper-batsman, especially after his dazzling effort in IPL's inaugural game has gone down in performance so much that he was even stripped of vice-captaincy. The demotion certainly has stung and has had the desired effect if one goes by his scores in the series.

He got a blistering century in one game and a quick fire 78 in the matches that the Kiwis won. Whether that will get him the vice-captaincy of his national team is not certain, but his batting has definitely won him this week's 'CEAT International Cricketer' accolade.