

Aussies capitalized brilliantly on Pakistan's bickering

7th February 2010, Sunil Gavaskar

With the India tour of Bangladesh over, the focus was on the limited overs matches between Australia and Pakistan. The tourists who had lost all three Tests had the chance to recover some ground in limited overs series where they fancy their chances and are always a dangerous outfit.

However, the Australians who rarely take their foot off the opponent's throats were not going to do that this time around too. They knew that after that win in the Sydney Test match, where they won from an impossible situation, the Pakistanis were down and out and the familiar blame game was on in Pakistan.

With that distraction it was easy for the Australians to come hard at the visiting team and there was no surprise that they hardly found any resistance. Pakistan as a team are tough when they are on top but the moment they lose, the internal bickering starts and the focus unfortunately shifts from on the field to off the field happenings.



The problem seems to be that there are always players in the team with ambitions to captain the team and so once the downhill slide starts the skipper is a lonely figure with not much help coming from any quarters within the team or from outside from the administration.

It used to be a similar story in Indian cricket but thankfully it is not so for some time now. Certainly after Sourav Ganguly established himself as the supreme leader of the Indian team anybody else with ambitions in that regard knew that it was not going to be easy. Ganguly had the backing of the administration too which is crucial for then a skipper is not looking over his shoulder.

The loss in Sydney brought out the critics of Yousuf's captaincy and he went into his shell which is what the Australians are looking for and they pounced on the team. The Pakistanis were sitting ducks after that and found it tough to chase gettable scores. They came close but never quite made the distance.

The Australians used the opportunity to try out some new players mainly among the bowlers as the batting seems to be well settled and that worked for them. Ryan Harris grabbed his chance and bowled with spirit to take five wickets in the fourth one dayers and another three in the next and final ODI.

A five wicket haul is not a regular happening in limited overs cricket where bowlers have only 10 overs to bowl and so Harris has to be commended for it. His bowling helped Australia to win all five games and add to the agony of the Pakistanis who also found their skipper Shahid Afridi banned for chewing the ball.