

Swann brings a refreshing attitude to the game

27th December 2009, Sunil Gavaskar

THERE have been some fine performances in the last week both in Tests as well as limited overs internationals played in various parts of the world. Australia played the West Indies in the third and final Test at Perth, South Africa played England in the first Test in South Africa while India and Sri Lanka played each other in One-dayers in India. All the games had heroes from each teams though of course only a few of them were in the race for this week's accolade.

In Australia, in a match which was ill-tempered at times — and isn't it strange that it seems to happen when the Aussies are not doing well — the heroics of Gayle and company was overshadowed by the suspension of Suleiman Benn for reacting to provocation.

There was some good cricket too as Australia batted brilliantly and then Gayle came in like Force 1 and blew away the Australian attack to get a quick fire century. Then Doug Bollinger came to the party for the Australians and bowled with great heart to take them to a narrow win.

Talking of party, if there is one cricketer in the world who gives the impression that he is having one as he plays for his country, it is Graeme Swann. A few years back, we are told, he was dropped because his attitude was not in keeping with the then coach's approach to the game. He persevered and got back in the team. Apart from his off-spinners, for which he is primarily in the team, his free spirited batting has swung many a game away from the opposition.



Moreover, the delight he takes in playing the game is so infectious that he is never far away from a smile or a quip even when appeals off his bowling are turned down by the umpires. It is such a refreshing attitude in an era that has been spoilt by abusive behavior by some teams who then take refuge in that as playing hard cricket.

Swann not only picked up wickets for England but when they were in real trouble in the game he came in and played a swashbuckling innings to get them close to the South African total when at one stage it looked like the hosts would take a big first innings lead. That innings made sure that South Africa had to bat for a long time in the second innings and that gave England some breathing space though they nearly muffed it up in the second innings too.

There were some terrific performances from the Indian and the Sri Lankan batsmen as they are enjoying playing on good pitches against not so great bowling. Tharanga, Gambhir and Kohli have got hundreds and have been hugely entertaining but this week's CEAT International Cricketer of the Week is Swann for his all-round performances in the England-South Africa first Test match.