

# SUNNY SIDE UP

## Super Watson owes it to Warne

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SHANE WATSON came very close to being the second batsman in the world to notch a double century in one-day cricket. He finished 15 runs short of that magical mark but that was simply because his team had just overtaken the total that Bangladesh had put up. If there were even 20 more runs to be scored then there is no doubt that he would have got them off his own bat and in the process got a double ton as well. Watson had been marked from a young age to be the allrounder that every team yearns for, someone who can bowl nippily and then can go out and smash the ball to all corners of the field. However, in the early part of his career he was hampered by injuries that did not allow him to play to his full potential.

There was a feeling that he got himself too tense with all the expectations and then ended up pulling a muscle or something that meant that he was out of action for a fair bit of time. It was something that Zaheer Khan also suffered from and its only in recent years with their places in the team assured that they have been able to play without worrying too much about expectations. Watson's turnaround started after spending the first year of the Indian Premier League with Shane Warne. Whatever magic "Warnie" worked on Watson, it worked marvellously as it was clearly evident from Watson's body language that he was relaxed and enjoying his cricket.



Warne similarly helped Munaf Patel realise the importance of playing for India and not just be laid back about the game that was giving him so much. The

transformation in these two players since 2008 has been remarkable and while Watson has taken his game several levels higher Munaf too is a rejuvenated cricketer who has become a vital cog in the Indian bowling machine.

The Indian Premier League has seen some upsets and that has evened out the chances of other teams too. The Chennai Super Kings lost to Kings XI Punjab and the Kochi Tuskers beat Mumbai despite a first century in the IPL from Sachin Tendulkar.

The Deccan Chargers also have registered their first win on their home ground and that should charge their fans even more for the home games ahead. Most of the big scoring games have come on pitches that have good bounce and carry and which allow a batsman to play through the line.

The bowlers also get encouraged by the bounce and turn and it at least gives them some chance in a format where the bat dominates everything. The crowds come to see big hitting and good pitches provide the batsman the chance to do so while those where the ball keeps slow and low are those games which have been low scoring and quite tedious.

The IPL will continue to dominate over the next few weeks and the CEAT International Cricketer of the Week will be from the IPL games, but for this week it is Shane Watson who gets the accolade for his fabulous batting in the One-Day series against Bangladesh.