

Katich outburst reflects Oz bias

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Simon Katich's outburst after being left out of the list of contracted players for the Australian season is an indication that all is not well with cricket Down Under. Even making allowances for the disappointment, sense of frustration and helplessness that a player feels when he is omitted from the team, Katich's comments on Cricket Australia are illuminating. What it does show is that politics is everywhere and to think that it only happens in India is naive. Any selection will always have positive as well as negative responses and most times the negative responses invariably suggest a regional or city bias.



Over the years, while talking to people connected with Australian cricket, one got the feeling that players from some states were not getting fair treatment at the hands of selectors. If say, 20-odd years back many Aussies felt that those from Queensland and Tasmania were not being picked and those from New South Wales and Victoria were

preferred, in recent times it is the Victorian and 'Tassie' players who are not given their due. Be that as it may, Indians will now hopefully realise that Australia does not have the magic potion to correct cricket's ills and it does not have the answer to every cricketing problem.

This year's IPL had no less than seven Australian coaches and none of their teams finished in the top three, so that should be the clincher. Their's is not the only way.

Way back in the 1950s and 1960s it was thought that only the English could coach. Later, as the Australians began to dominate international cricket, there was talk of how good their system is. Their domestic competition, boasting a lesser number of teams, was also hailed as the system to emulate. But as recent events have shown, the Aussies don't have a magic wand. It is just a cricketing cycle where a country has some of the greatest players in the world and they keep winning so their method appears to be the best.

The West Indies and New Zealand also have a domestic competition with less teams but that does not make their teams the best, does it? You could conceivably have a domestic competition of only six teams but if the players are not skilled and are not tough mentally then it is hardly going to win matches for the country. The so-called bench strength of the Aussies has also been exposed as being wood and not steel. What it teaches us is that there are plusses and minuses everywhere and Indian cricket must be smart

enough to recognise that and not go blindly on any one nationality.

India is dominating the One-day series as of writing this piece. The West Indies aren't helping their cause by not considering the destructive Chris Gayle for their team. It is a young, inexperienced team. Darren Sammy is an experienced hand but does not have the record that gets instant respect from the others in the team and so is struggling to assert himself. He is a game trier, though, with both bat and ball and he is the CEAT International Cricketer of the Week.