

India done in by lack of practise games

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Two Test matches being played in the southern hemisphere are turning out to be totally different from each other. The third Test between Australia and England is heading to an interesting finish with the home team in a position of winning it and thus levelling the series while in South Africa, India are paying the price for going into a Test series without a single first class match under their belt in those conditions.

This Test is totally one-sided with South Africa dominating even as this is being written. England went to Australia almost a month before they played the first Test and while that does not guarantee that they will automatically win by doing so, the fact remains that they gave themselves a good chance of doing well by getting used to the conditions and pitches there.



In the Perth Test, the bounce was high even by regular standards and England stuttered against some sustained sharp bowling by the Australians. The Aussies themselves haven't looked entirely comfortable and seeing some of them cope against the short ball makes one wonder how they can point a finger at those from the subcontinent as not so good players of short bowling. The subcontinent players hardly get to play on hard bouncy pitches in domestic cricket but the others who do so regularly in their first class games hardly look accomplished against the genuinely quick bowlers.

The bounce was tough for the Indian batsmen but it was hoped the Indian bowlers would be able to use it to their advantage, but here again the lack of first class games in South Africa meant that they were not able to bowl the length that would trouble the batsmen. Here it was hoped that the bowling coach would be able to help being a South African, but the line and length that the Indian new-ball bowlers have bowled has been atrocious to say the least.

The Tests, of course, don't come into the reckoning for this week's CEAT Awards but the final One-dayers in India and Bangladesh do and these games have brought these countries players in the reckoning. India completed a clean sweep of the One-day series by winning all the games quite comfortably. This has been a real ordinary New Zealand team and some of the players

would struggle to make it to the first class eleven of some of the plate teams in the Ranji Trophy. Still, that does not take anything away from the Indian team which showed a pleasing ruthlessness in making sure that it won the remaining matches even after it had wrapped up the series earlier. It is this approach which is necessary to be a champion team and India are certainly looking that in limited-over's games.

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