

VVS deserves a platinum medal

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What a week it has been for Indian sport. The terrific opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games was followed by medals galore in the competitions that followed. There are still some more days to go before the games finish so there's every hope that there will be a few more medals in the bag for India.

If there were medals in cricket VVS Laxman would get a Platinum medal for his wonderful batting and the manner in which he shepherded two lower order batsmen to take India to an improbable win. He had a back injury during the game so did not bat at his usual number in both innings and came out with a runner. Batting with any injury is hard enough but with a back injury it is doubly tough since a batsman has to bend down to get as close to the ball as possible to prevent it from going in the air. VVS has never been one to smell the ball but his eye sees scoring opportunities that others don't. What distinguishes a great player from the good ones is the ability to score off the good ball and in VVS's case he has the God given gift of scoring off a good ball on either side of the wicket. Like G. R. Viswanath who could play a good ball on the off-side and off an absolute twin of the ball he could play on the leg-side which would leave the bowler scratching his head. Laxman did that in one over to Mitchell Johnson who was Australia's best bowler. He may have missed out on the Man of the Match award to his team mate Zaheer Khan but the back slaps he would have received from his team mates in the dressing room after that magnificent win would have more than made up for any disappointment he may have felt at missing out on the Man of the Match prize.

Though it was Laxman who was the talk of the cricket lovers after the Test, the other player who dominated the game was Shane Watson who hit a watchful century in the first innings and then followed it with a half-century in the second innings. He has taken to opening the batting like a duck takes to water and with the left-handed Simon Katich forms a formidable pair. He had got a century in each innings in the warm up game in Chandigarh earlier so he will certainly have fond memories of the place.



Zaheer Khan had been out of the Indian team for some time with a shoulder injury and it was a comeback of sorts for him. He got five wickets in the first innings with a fine display of reverse swing bowling and then got three more in the second at a crucial time for India to round up the Australian innings and ensure that India did not have too many to chase for a win. Another left-hander Mitchell Johnson also had a good game with both bat and ball and in neighbouring Bangladesh yet another left-hander, Shakib-al-Hasan too had a good game against New Zealand. The CEAT International Cricketer of the Week though is the right-handed Shane Watson for his batting in both innings of the Mohali Test.