



## **Historical Development of Cricket**

### **Introduction**

Cricket is a ball and bat game played between two teams of 11 players on an oval shaped field. In the centre of the field, there is a rectangular 22 yards long pitch. One team bats, trying to score as many runs as possible while the other team bowls and fields, trying to dismiss the batsman and thus limit the run scored by the batting team. A run is scored by the sticking batsman hitting the ball with his bat, running to the opposite end of the pitch and touching the crease there without being dismissed. The teams switch between batting and fielding at the end of the inning.

### **Origin of Cricket**

The origin of the game of cricket are lost in the mists of time. There is a reference in the household accounts of Edward I in 1300 of a game like cricket played in Kent. It seems clear that the English game originated in the sheep-rearing country of the South-East, where the short grass of the downland pastures made it possible to bowl a ball of wool or rags at a target. That target was usually the wicket-gate of the sheep pasture, which was defended with a bat in the form of a shepherd's crooked staff. By the 17th century the game was quite popular as a rough rural pastime, but in the following century the leisure classes took up the sport, particularly in Sussex, Kent, and London. An organized match was held at the Artillery Grounds, Finsbury, London, in 1730. By the middle of the 18th century, cricket was played at every level of society, from village greens to wealthy estates. However, the game lacked a coherent set of rules.

The first and most influential cricket club in the land was formed at Hambledon, Hampshire in the 1760s. The club was sponsored by wealthy patrons, but the players were local tradesmen and farmers. The Hambledon Club established techniques of batting and bowling

which still hold today, and Hambledon claims a page in history books as the "Birthplace of Cricket". The centre of power in the game soon shifted to London, most notably with the establishment of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), which had its headquarters at Lord's ground. In 1835 the MCC gave cricket its first formal laws, which still stand largely intact today.

A major boost for the sport of cricket was provided by public schools such as Eton, Harrow, and Winchester. The game of cricket is now played worldwide, and despite occasional successes, it is fair to say that the real power in the game has shifted from England to nations such as South Africa, Australia, India, Pakistan, and the West Indies. In England the major focus of the game is the country championship, with both four-day and one-day competitions running simultaneously during the summer months. But traditional village cricket is still played in towns and villages all across the United Kingdom.

### **History of Indian Cricket**

The history of Indian Cricket started its journey in Sylhet (currently in Bangladesh). The proper evidence to prove this has been found from the Sporting Intelligence Magazine, on 3rd of March, 1845. The report was published by the editor of the Englishman newspaper and the news item was titled "Sepoy Cricketers". The reporter made proper observation of the match played between the European cricketers and the Sepoy cricketers. Apart from this news item, another report has been found to support the fact that Cricket was first played in Sylhet then a part of India. This report was titled as "Sepoy Cricket at Sylhet" and in this report, the reporter mentioned about the match between two regimental sides, each of which contained at least eight native cricketers. Afterwards, the first Indian Cricket Club, named the Parsee Oriental Cricket Club, was founded in that year and they played their first match in Bombay (Mumbai). Thus began the journey of the Indian cricket.

### **Indian Cricket in 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The middle and last half of the 19th century was an important period in the history of Indian Cricket, as the game spread in almost all the parts of India during that period. Many teams from England started touring India by the close of the 19th century. There is a report published in the newspaper, The Times of India, that supports this fact and the report was about the Presidency matches between the Parsees and the Lord Hawke's Englishmen. The match was held in Bombay in 1892. The report described how the international cricket

matches that took place in Bombay at that time, increased interest among the local people. In the metro cities of India like Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai), cricket was played as a sports in the first half of the 20th century.

### **Test Match in India**

The First Test Match was played in 1932. Though India did not have a national cricket team during the early 1900s, a few Indian great cricketers of that era represented the England cricket team. Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Duleep Singhji were the prominent ones among them. However, the first international exposure in the history of Indian Cricket came in the year 1926. In that year, a team from the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), led by A.E.R Gilligan toured India. Though it was an unofficial tour, the Indian people were quite interested and enthusiastic about the matches that Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) played during the tour. The legendary Indian cricket player, C. K. Nayudu played brilliantly during that tour. He also scored a century against the Marylebone Cricket Club(MCC) side in Bombay. The tour was responsible to redefine the contours of Indian cricket. It ultimately spearheaded to the formation of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in the year 1928. India was accredited Test status by 1932, much before it got its Independence in 1947.

### **Indian Cricket after Independence**

After Independence, a big push came in the history of Indian Cricket, when India got its first ever Test series win against the neighbouring Asian counterpart and arch rivals Pakistan, in 1952. The series saw brilliant and extraordinary performances from some of the greatest Indian Cricket players like Polly Umrigar, Vijay Manjrekar and leg - spinner SM Gupte.

### **Indian Cricket during 1960s**

The Indian Cricket during 1960s saw the Indian team becoming a formidable side on native soil. It was also the decade, when the Indian team started playing well in overseas. India's great performances on home soil were evident from the fact that India defeated New Zealand and held the teams like Pakistan, England and Australia to a draw, during that period. The 1960s also saw the rising of some of the greatly talented Indian Cricket players like Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, Dilip Sardesai, Hanumant Singh, Chandu Borde and off-spinner EAS Prasanna.

### **Indian Cricket during 1970s**

The 1970s is considered as the golden era in the history of Indian Cricket. Bishen Singh Bedi (left-arm spinner), Erapalli Prasanna (off-spinner), BS Chandrasekhar and Srinivas Venkataraghavan (off-spinner) were prominent players during this era. It also marked the rising of two of India's greatest ever batsmen-Sunil Gavaskar and Gundappa Vishwanath. All of these great Indian Cricket players made their presence felt in the international circuit and contributed immensely in the success of the Indian team. India successfully won consecutive Test series in West Indies and England in 1971. In both the series the team was led by Ajit Wadekar.

### **Indian Cricket during 1980s**

During the 1980s, India saw the emergence of players like Mohammed Azharuddin, Dilip Vengsarkar and all-rounder Ravi Shastri. India won the Cricket World Cup in 1983, defeating West Indies in the final. In spite of this the team performed poorly in the Test arena, including 28 consecutive Test matches without a victory. In 1984, India won the Asia Cup and in 1985, and also won the World Championship of Cricket in Australia. Apart from this, India remained a very weak team outside the Indian subcontinent. India's Test series victory in 1986 against England remained the last Test series win by India outside the subcontinent for the next 19 years. The 1987 Cricket World Cup was held in India. The 1980s also saw Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev (India's best all rounder to this date) at the pinnacle of their careers. Sunil Gavaskar made a Test record of 34 centuries as he became the first man to reach the 10,000 run mark. Kapil Dev later became the highest wicket taker in Test cricket with 434 wickets.

### **Indian Cricket during 1990s**

The addition of Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble to the national side in 1989 and 1990 improved the team. The following year, Javagal Srinath, India's fastest bowler since Amar Singh, made his debut. Despite this, during the 1990s, India did not win any of its 33 Tests outside the subcontinent while it won 17 out of its 30 Tests at home. After being eliminated by Sri Lanka on native land at the 1996 Cricket World Cup, the team underwent a year of sea change as Rahul Dravid, Saurav Ganguly, later to become captains of the team, made their debut in the same Test at Lord's. Tendulkar replaced Azharuddin as captain in late 1996, but

for a personal reason, Tendulkar relinquished the captaincy and Azharuddin was reinstalled at the beginning of 1998. With the captaincy burden removed, Tendulkar became the world's leading run-scorer in both Tests and ODIs, as India enjoyed a home Test series win over Australia. After failing to reach the semi-finals at the 1999 Cricket World Cup, Tendulkar was again made the captain, and had another poor run, losing 3-0 on a tour of Australia and then 2-0 at home to South Africa. Sachin Tendulkar resigned; vowing never to captain the team again. Saurav Ganguly was appointed as the new captain. The team was further damaged in 2000 when former captain Azharuddin and fellow batsman Ajay Jadeja were implicated in a match-fixing scandal and given life bans.

### **Indian Cricket during 2000s**

The Indian team underwent major improvements with the appointment of John Wright as the captain of India. India maintained their unbeaten home record against Australia in Test series after defeating them in 2001. The series was famous for the Kolkata Test match, in which India became only the third team in the history of Test cricket to win a Test match after follow-on. Australian captain Steve Waugh labeled India as the "Final Frontier". The victory in 2001 against the Australians marked the beginning of a dream run for India under the captainship of Saurav Ganguly, winning Test matches in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, West Indies and England. The England series is also known for India's highest ODI run-chase of 325 runs at Lord's which came in the NatWest ODI Series final against England. In the same year, India was joint winners of the ICC Champions Trophy with Sri Lanka. The 2003-2004 seasons also saw India play out a Test series in Australia where they drew 1-1 with world champions, and then win a Test and ODI series in Pakistan.

At the end of the 2004 season, India suffered from lack of form and fitness from its older players. A defeat in a following home Test series against Australia was followed by an ODI home series defeat against Pakistan followed by a Test series leveled 1-1. Greg Chappell took over from John Wright as the new coach of the Indian cricket team following the series. His methods proved to be controversial during the beginning of his tenure. The tension resulted in fall-out between Chappell and Ganguly. It resulted in Rahul Dravid made the captain of the Indian cricket team. This triggered a revival in the team's fortunes, following the emergence of players like Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Suresh Raina, and the coming of age of players like Irfan Pathan and Yuvraj Singh.

## **Twenty 20 International Tournaments in India**

In December 2006, it played and won its first ever Twenty20 international in South Africa, becoming the most recent Test team to play Twenty20 cricket. After winning the Test series against England in August 2007, Rahul Dravid stepped down from the captainship of the Indian team . Mahendra Singh Dhoni was made the captain of the Twenty20 and ODI team. In September 2007, it won the first ever Twenty20 World Cup which was held in South Africa, beating Pakistan by 5 runs. Then they toured Australia with a controversial series and lost 2-1 in the test.

## **Conclusion**

Cricket is a ball and bat game played between two teams of 11 players on an oval shaped field, at the centre of which is a rectangular 22 yards long pitch. By the 17th century the game was quite popular as a rough rural pastime, but in the following century the leisure classes took up the sport, particularly in Sussex, Kent, and London. In the middle of the 18th century cricket was played at every level of society, from village greens to wealthy estates. Further, the game of cricket is now played worldwide, and despite occasional successes, it is fair to say that the real power in the game has shifted from England to nations such as South Africa, Australia, India, Pakistan, and the West Indies.