



Australians to eat humble pie

Shafeen Mustaq

For the past decade, the likes of the Waugh brothers, Gilly and Warnie have made Australia the best cricket playing nation in the world, and also the proudest. The consistent form and excellence in achievement from the batsmen and bowlers alike meant that the Aussie team and the whole nation of supporters could hold their heads high and sneer good naturedly (or condescendingly) at the demolition of the rest of the world's cricket teams.

We still have a good laugh as we recall the demolition of England, India and Pakistan in the past two years as Ponting's captaincy took the Aussie team on an undefeated power trip. And yet when it's our turn to admit that maybe, just maybe we aren't invincible, that just maybe the Indian team is in better form this season, we would much rather concentrate on the off field antics and dramas of the players than the shortcomings which have led to the Aussie team's demise.

The game of cricket is deceptively ordinary and placid, it is in reality a game where players slip and slide in form and performance giving the players, commentators and fans much to discuss. The Indian team is notorious for being the most famous team in the world. The players are treated like celebrities by their fans in India and abroad and the backlash at poor performance is equally forceful. Who can forget the burning effigies and threats to burn down Dhoni's house after the Indian team lost to Australia at the World cup? The Indian team is to be applauded for its quick improvement and consistent performance which has brought back its adoring fans to watch the flailing Aussie team bowl against the might of Mishra.

Despite the notable absence of Gilly's ears and those impassable wicketkeeper's hands and the wheat field that was Warnie's head of much advertised hair, we still have a strong line-up of performers in Hayden, Hussey, Ponting, Katich, Lee and now Krejza.

So it's not for want of talent that the Aussie team has slid so fast from its considerable perch above the rest, its due to pride. We've become so certain of our superiority that some humble pie fed by the triumphant Indians might be just the thing this cocky young side needs to get back to playing the game instead of focusing on off field antics, product endorsements and player's personal lives.

So how about we all stop taking the piss out of Harbajan's cocky comments or Lee's emotional roller coaster and just focus on the game for the sake of the game. Get back to the nets boys because if we lose against this fledgling New Zealand team then heads will roll and the perch we took for granted will slip out of reach.