



'T20 only entertainment'

For Wasim Akram Tests are the true judge of talent



Chhavi Banswal ■ New-Delhi

While most of the cricketing fraternity is proclaiming Twenty20 as the future of cricket, former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram has ruled out the possibility of more and more cricketers turning their backs on Tests and succumbing to the lure of Twenty20.

Akram, who has been roped by the Gatorade centre for pace and excellence as the chief coach for bowling variation and strategy, also feels that International Cricket Council (ICC) should make conscientious efforts to preserve the inviolability of Test cricket.

He feels ICC should progress with day-night Tests and must ensure that matches are played on wickets that favour the bowlers.

"The ICC has to do something with T20. Even cricket boards are running after it because it fetches millions. T20 and one-day cricket are fun but Test cricket is real. The ICC should do something to preserve Tests," he said.

However, Akram is optimistic about the future of Test cricket and feels is "just a phase in international cricket, which will pass soon without harming Tests."

"Cricket started with Tests, so how can it end? Every aspiring cricketer in the world wants to play Tests. T20 will take over the 50 overs game, but it can't hurt Test cricket," he added.

Legalising ball tampering can curb the growing hegemony of batsmen in the world of cricket, or so the South African pacer Allan Donald believes.

But the Sultan of Swing does not quiet share the same sentiments. Akram feels, though ball-tampering is an art, it is still illegal and will only urge the bowlers to start doing it from the opening spell of the match itself.

"I don't know why Donald said



that. Ball-tampering is illegal and I am with the ICC on the issue. If you legalise ball-tampering then bowlers will start doing it from the first over. Reverse swing is an art and you can only do it after 40-50 overs in Test cricket. It is not possible in ODIs and T20s," said the former Pakistani cricketer in New Delhi on Monday.

On being asked would he would coach Indian bowlers if approached by BCCI, Akram admitted that though he is willing to help, coaching isn't his forte. "Full-time coaching is not my cup of tea. I don't have the patience it requires. I can just help them and this is the only way I can give back

something to the game," he said.

"I will also teach them about aggression and appealing in a way to pressurize the umpires legally," he added. Citing the importance of spotting and exposing the weakness of a batsman, Akram said his focus would be on teaching youngsters how to exploit the conditions on even the flat-test sub-continental pitches.

"I'll tell them how to bowl according to a set field and how to swing the new ball and get the best out of the old ball, which the westerners call reverse swing. Besides, how to break a partnership, and how to contain when situation so demands will also



Showcause notice for Shoaib

KARACHI: Mercurial pacer Shoaib Akhtar has run into trouble yet again with the Pakistan Cricket Board issuing him a showcause notice for allegedly violating the terms of his central contract. Sources in the board confirmed that the notice signed by PCB Director of cricket operations Zakir Khan was sent to Shoaib two days ago, charging him with violating three clauses of his central contract. Shoaib has been asked to submit his reply by July 31 and if the board is not satisfied with his reply, it reserves the right to penalise him. Shoaib told a television channel that he would reply after consulting his lawyers and declined to comment on the charges. Shoaib was last week overlooked for a one-day series in Sri Lanka and from the preliminary squad announced for the Champions Trophy.

be discussed," he said.

The former left-arm pacer also stressed on the significance of sustaining a fitness regime in order to avoid injuries.

"Our part of the world is more prone to injuries perhaps because of the inherent genes. Youngsters, from the age of 16-22 years, are more susceptible to injuries. This is their growing phase and this is the right time to build muscles and strengthen their bones. Injuries will be a part and parcel of a fast bowler's life, you can't stop it. But if you have strong muscles you can cut down on the number of injuries," he said.