

ONE DAY CRICKET—THE CRAZE OF THE DAY

Game is a game; one must play it in the spirit of game.

— Anonymous

Cricket is a game known for its wonderful glories, fluctuating fortunes and tantalizing suspense. It is popular with men and women of all ages and almost all times. Whenever there is a cricket match, people crowd the playing fields in thousands or sit glued to their television sets for days. A cricket match used to be a long drawn out affair. But things changed with the introduction of one-day matches.

The one-day matches made cricket so popular that cricket players came to be celebrated more than the heroines or the heroes for the world of the theater. Various advertising companies hired the services of some of these players on fat payments. Some of the players developed a craze for instant with the bookies who used to stake huge fortunes over the result of the matches. The controversy arising out of the match-fixing is still fresh in every mind and charges and counter charges are being looked into by the authorities. Some players in some countries have already been found guilty and punished. All this is certainly against the very spirit of the game.

From instant coffee to instant cricket, the journey has not been very long. In this jet age everything fast is acceptable and anything moving at a slow pace is instantly rejected by the people. Only 30 years ago in the seventies, the five-day cricket matches inspired a lot of interest. Though the majority of these matches ended in a draw, yet they did cause a lot of excitement. Today a 5-day cricket match no longer holds the interest of the people to that extent. Far from it, it is being termed as out-dated or boring.

What has come to be known as one-day cricket or instant cricket, has very effectively replaced the traditional five-day matches. Today in most of the world tournaments, it is only the one-day cricket that rules the roost. This particular kind of match cannot exceed a day as each team plays only limited overs. That is why it is also called limited overs cricket. Each team plays a fixed number of overs and tries to score the maximum runs, without caring much for the fall of wickets. It is only the runs that not much time to contemplate or to watch. The entire atmosphere is filled with excitement throughout the match. The match moves with speed and there is action all through. Either the wickets fall or the runs keep coming in. There is movement, spirit, action and fun all over the field.

This kind of cricket has certainly caught the fancy of the people. The result of game is out by evening and the suspense is over.

There is no need to wait for five days for the outcome of the result. Time flies very fast in such matches. These days people do not have many days to spare for entertainment. In the good old days, people used to take things in a leisurely way and kept watching a cricket match for days on end. The matches used to be quite slow because the intention of every player was to stick to the wicket for as long as possible and score slowly at ease. There was hardly any action in majority of the matches.

It is because of these factors only that there was a swift change to instant cricket. In one-day matches people can relish the game without having to wait for the result of five or six long days. Fours and sixes have become a common feature in instant cricket. In a matter of a few hours only, more than 600 runs are often hit up by both the teams. Runs flow off the bat like autumn leaves while wickets fall like nine pins. Spectators demand a six every now and then. Instant cricket has attracted people of all ages. Once the series starts, there is hardly any work done in the offices. Students miss classes and office-goers miss their work. Everybody sits glued to his or her television set to watch the game. Instant cricket has caught on like wild fire. It thrills every soul, young or old. Time is not far off when 5-day matches will become a thing of the past only.