

Chapter 7 - The Story of cricket

Q1: Give an example to prove that Englishman gave too much importance to cricket in the 17th century.

By the seventeenth century, cricket has evolved enough to be recognized as a distinct game and it was popular enough for its fans to be fined for playing it on Sunday instead of going to church.

Q2: Why did the early cricketers in England use bats with the shape of a hockey stick?

Till the middle of the eighteenth century, bats were roughly the same shape as hockey sticks, curving outwards at the bottom. There was a simple reason for this: the ball was bowled underarm, along the ground and the curve at the end of the bat gave the batsman the best chance of making contact.

Q3 Why is sports very important?

Sport is a large part of contemporary life- it is one way in which we amuse ourselves, compete with each other, stay fit, and express our social loyalties.

Q4: What are the peculiar features of cricket as a sport? Or How is cricket different from other contemporary sports?

One of the peculiarities of Test cricket is that a match can go on for five days and still end in a draw. No other modern team sport takes even half the time to complete. Another curious characteristic of cricket is that the length of the pitch is specified – 22 yards – but the size or shape of the ground is not. Most other team sports, such as hockey and football lay down the dimensions of the playing area: cricket does not. Grounds can be oval like the **Adelaide Oval** or nearly circular, like **Chepauk** in Chennai.

Q5: What reason would you give for the oddities of Cricket with that of other sport?

There's a historical reason behind the oddities of cricket. Cricket was the earliest modern team sport to be codified, which is another way of saying that cricket gave itself rules and regulations so that it could be played in a uniform and standardized way well before team games like soccer and hockey.

Q6: Trace the earliest rules of cricket. Who is the guardian of cricket regulations?

The first written 'Laws of Cricket' were drawn up in 1744. They stated, 'the principals shall choose from amongst the gentlemen present two umpires who shall absolutely decide all disputes. The stumps must be 22 inches high and the bail across them six inches. The ball must be between 5 and 6 ounces, and the two sets of stumps 22yards apart'. There were no limits on the shape or size of the bat. It appears that 40 notches or runs was viewed as a very big score, probably due to the bowlers bowling quickly at shins unprotected by pads. The world's first cricket club was formed in Hambledon in the 1760s and

the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787. In 1788, the MCC published its first revision of the laws and became the **guardian of cricket's regulations**.

Q7: What were the changes introduced by the MCC in the rules of cricket in the eighteenth and nineteenth century?

- i) During the 1760s and 1770s it became common to pitch the ball through the air, rather than roll it along the ground. This change gave bowlers the options of length, deception through the air, plus increased pace. It also opened new possibilities for spin and swing. In response, batsmen had to master timing and shot selection.
- ii) One immediate result was the replacement of the curved bat with the straight one. All of this raised the premium on skill and reduced the influence of rough ground and brute force.
- iii) The weight of the ball was limited to between 5½ to 5¾ ounces, and the width of the bat to four inches. The latter ruling followed an innings by a batsman who appeared with a bat as wide as the wicket!
- iv) In 1774, the first leg-before law (LBW) was published. Also around this time, a third stump became common.
- v) By 1780, three days had become the length of a major match, and this year also saw the creation of the first 'six-seam' cricket ball.
- vi) The rule about wide balls was applied, the exact circumference of the ball was specified, protective equipment like pads and gloves became available, and boundaries were introduced where previously all shots had to be run and, most importantly, over arm bowling became legal.

Q8: How has cricket become a game with characteristics of both the past and the present?

Cricket's connection with a rural past can be seen in the length of a Test match. Originally, cricket matches had no time limit. The game went on for as long as it took to bowl out a side twice. The rhythms of village life were slower and cricket's rules were made before the Industrial Revolution.

In the same way, cricket's vagueness about the size of a cricket ground is a result of its village origins. Cricket was originally played on country commons, unfenced land that was public property. The size of the 'commons' varied from one village to another, so there were no designated boundaries or boundary hits.**Continue next answer**

Q9: Cricket both changed with changing times and yet fundamentally remained true to its origins. Explain.

- i) Cricket's most important tools are all made of natural, pre-industrial materials. The bat is made of wood, as are the stumps and the bails.
- ii) The ball is made with leather, twine and cork. Even today both bat and ball are handmade, not industrially manufactured.

iii) The material of the bat changed slightly over time. Once it was cut out of a single piece of wood. Now it consists of two pieces, the blade, which is made out of the wood of the willow tree, and the handle, which is made out of cane that became available as European colonialists, and trading companies established themselves in Asia.

iv) Unlike golf and tennis, cricket has refused to remake its tools with industrial or man-made materials: plastic, fibre glass and metal have been firmly rejected.

v) But in the matter of protective equipment, cricket has been influenced by technological change. The invention of vulcanized rubber led to the introduction of pads in 1848 and protective gloves soon afterwards, and the modern game would be unimaginable without helmets made out of metal and synthetic lightweight materials.

Q10: Distinguish between the Amateurs and Professionals.

The rich who could afford to play it for pleasure were called amateurs and the poor who played it for a living were called professionals.

The rich were amateurs for **two reasons**. One, they considered sport a kind of leisure. To play for the pleasure of playing and not for money was an aristocratic value. Two, there was not enough money in the game for the rich to be interested. The wages of professionals were paid by **patronage** or **subscription** or gate money. The game was seasonal and did not offer employment the year round. Most professionals worked as miners or in other forms of working class employment in winter, the off-season.

Q11: 'The social superiority of amateurs was built in to the customs of cricket'. Explain.

i) The social superiority of amateurs was built into the customs of cricket. Amateurs were called Gentlemen while professionals had to content with being described as Players.

ii) They even entered the ground from different entrances. Amateurs tended to be batsmen, leaving the energetic, hardworking aspects of the game, like fast bowling, to the professionals. That is partly why the laws of the game always give the 'benefit of the doubt' to the batsman.

iii) Cricket is a batsman's game because its rules were made to favour 'Gentlemen', who did most of the batting. The captain of a cricket team was traditionally a batsman.

iv) The social superiority of the amateur batsman was not because batsmen were naturally better captains but because they were generally Gentlemen. Captains of teams, whether Club teams or national sides, were always amateurs.

Q12: Why is it said that 'The Battle of Waterloo' was won on the playing fields of Eton?

This means that Britain's military success was based on the values taught to schoolboys in its public schools. Eton was the most famous of these schools. The English boarding school was the institution that trained English boys for careers in the military, the civil service and the church, the three great institutions of imperial England. They introduced team sport like cricket and rugby not just as outdoor play, but as an organized way of teaching English boys the discipline, the importance of **hierarchy**, the skills, the codes of honor and the leadership qualities that helped them build and run the British empire.

Q13: Why did Thomas Arnold introduce cricket in his school?

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, men like Thomas Arnold, headmaster of the famous Rugby School and founder of the modern public school system, saw team sport like cricket and rugby not just as outdoor play, but as an organized way of teaching English boys the discipline, the importance of **hierarchy**, the skills, the codes of honor and the leadership qualities that helped them build and run the British empire. Victorian empire builders justified the conquest of other countries as an act of unselfish social service, by which backward peoples were introduced to the civilizing influence of British law and Western knowledge. Cricket helped to confirm this self-image of the English elite by glorifying the amateur ideal, where cricket was played not for victory or profit, but for its own sake, in the spirit of fair play.

Q14: How was the conquest of other country justified by the Victorian empire builders?

- i) Victorian empire builders justified the conquest of other countries as an act of unselfish social service, by which backward peoples were introduced to the civilizing influence of British law and Western knowledge.
- ii) Cricket helped to confirm this self-image of the English elite by glorifying the amateur ideal, where cricket was played not for victory or profit, but for its own sake, in the spirit of fair play.

Q15: What are the real factors that helped Britain to win Napoleonic wars?

(Battle of Waterloo)

- i) In actual fact the Napoleonic wars were won because of the economic contribution of the iron works of Scotland and Wales, the mills of Lancashire and the financial houses of the City of London.
- ii) It was the English lead in trade and industry that made Britain the world's greatest power, but it suited the English ruling class to believe that it was the superior character of its young men, built in boarding schools, playing gentlemanly games like cricket, that helped them to come up.

Q16: Why did cricket become popular in India and the West Indies?

- i) While some English team games like hockey and football became international games, played all over the world, cricket remained a colonial game, limited to countries that had once been part of the British Empire.
- ii) The pre-industrial oddness of cricket made it a hard game to export. It took root only in countries that the British conquered and ruled. In these colonies, white settlers (as in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia, New Zealand established cricket as a popular sport either the West Indies and Kenya) or by local elites who wanted to copy the habits of their colonial masters, as in India.
- iii) While British imperial officials brought the game to the colonies, they made little effort to spread the game, especially in colonial territories where the subjects of empire were mainly non-white, such as India and the West Indies. Here, playing cricket became a sign of superior social and racial status, and the Afro-Caribbean population was discouraged from participating in organized club cricket, which remained dominated by white plantation owners and their servants.
- iv) The first non-white club in the West Indies was established towards the end of the nineteenth century, and even in this case its members were light-skinned **mulattos**.

Q17: Why was the success in cricket considered a measure of racial equality and political progress in Caribbean countries?

Despite the exclusiveness of the white cricket elite in the West Indies, the game became hugely popular in the Caribbean. Success at cricket became a measure of racial equality and political progress. At the time of their independence many of the political leaders of Caribbean countries like Forbes Burnham and Eric Williams saw in the game a chance for self-respect and international standing. When the West Indies won its first Test series against England in 1950, it was celebrated as a national achievement, as a way of demonstrating that West Indians were the equals of white Englishmen.

Q18: Why did West Indies celebrate the winning of the first test series as a national achievement ? What were the ironies in it?

When the West Indies won its first Test series against England in 1950, it was celebrated as a national achievement, as a way of demonstrating that West Indians were the equals of white Englishmen. There were two ironies to this great victory. One, the West Indian team that won was captained by a white player. The first time a black player led the West Indies Test team was in 1960 when Frank Worrell was named captain. And two, the West Indies cricket team represented not one nation but several dominions that later became independent countries.

Q19: On what grounds do cricket fans take sides?

- i) Cricket fans know that watching a match involves taking sides. In a Ranji Trophy match when Delhi plays Mumbai, the loyalty of spectators depends on which city they come from or support.
- ii) When India plays Australia, the spectators watching the match on television in Bhopal or Chennai feel involved as Indians – they are moved by nationalist loyalties.

Q20: Trace the history of cricket in India.

- i) Cricket in colonial India was organized on the principle of race and religion. The first record we have of cricket being played in India is from 1721, an account of recreational cricket played by English sailors in Cambay.
- ii) First Indian club, the Calcutta Cricket Club, was established in 1792. Through the eighteenth century, cricket in India was almost wholly a sport played by British military men and civil servants in all-white clubs and gymkhanas.
- iii) Playing cricket in the privacy of these clubs was more than just fun: it was also an escape from the strangeness, discomfort and danger of their stay in India. Indians were considered to have no talent for the game and certainly not meant to play it. But they did.
- iv) The origins of Indian cricket, that is, cricket played by Indians are to found in Bombay and the first Indian community to start playing the game was the small community of Zoroastrians, the Parsis. Brought into close contact with the British because of their interest in trade and the first Indian community to westernize, the Parsis founded the first Indian cricket club, the Oriental Cricket Club in Bombay in 1848. Parsi clubs were funded and sponsored by Parsi businessmen like the Tatas and the Wadias.
- v) By the 1890s, Hindus and Muslims were busy gathering funds and support for a Hindu Gymkhana and an Islam Gymkhana.
- vi) In the late nineteenth century, many Indian institutions and movements were organised around the idea of religious community because the colonial state encouraged these divisions and was quick to recognise communal institutions.
- vii) The teams that played India's greatest and most famous first-class cricket tournament did not represent regions, as teams in today's Ranji Trophy currently do, but religious communities. It later became the Pentangular when a fifth team was added, namely, the Rest, which comprised all the communities left over, such as the Indian Christians.

Q21: What was the quarrel between the Bombay Gymkhana and the Parsi cricket club? How did the rivalry end?

There was a quarrel between the Bombay Gymkhana, a whites-only club, and Parsi cricketers over the use of a public park. The Parsis complained that the park was left unfit for cricket because the polo ponies of the Bombay Gymkhana dug up the surface. The rivalry between the Parsis and the racist

Bombay Gymkhana had a happy ending for these pioneers of Indian cricket. A Parsi team beat the Bombay Gymkhana at cricket in 1889.

Q22: Why did Mahatma Gandhi condemn pentagonal tournament?

Mahatma Gandhi, condemned the Pentagonal as a communally divisive competition that was out of place in a time when nationalists were trying to unite India's diverse population. The colonial state and its divisive conception of India was the rock on which the Pentagonal was built.

Q23: Why was India able to play Test cricket even before Independence?

India entered the world of Test cricket in 1932, a decade and a half before it became an independent nation. This was possible because Test cricket from its origins in 1877 was organized as a contest between different parts of the British Empire, not sovereign nations. The first Test was played between England and Australia when Australia was still a white settler colony, not even a self-governing dominion. Similarly, the small countries of the Caribbean that together make up the West Indies team were British colonies till well after the Second World War.

Q24: 'The name of ICC was changed from the Imperial Cricket Conference to International Cricket Conference'. Explain.

After Indian independence kick-started the disappearance of the British Empire. The supremacy of Britain on Cricket ended later. The regulation of international cricket remained the business of the Imperial Cricket Conference ICC. The ICC, renamed the International Cricket Conference as late as 1965, which was dominated by its foundation members, England and Australia, which retained the right of veto over its proceedings. But in 1989 there was a demand for equal membership in ICC.

Q25: Prove by giving examples that the colonial flavour of cricket was seen during 1950 to 1960?

The colonial flavour of world cricket during the 1950s and 1960s can be seen from the fact that England and the other white commonwealth countries, Australia and New Zealand, continued to play Test cricket with South Africa, a racist state that practiced a policy of racial segregation which, among other things, barred non-whites (who made up the majority of South Africa's population) from representing that country in Test matches. Test-playing nations like India, Pakistan and the West Indies boycotted South Africa, but they did not have the necessary power in the ICC to debar that country from Test cricket. That only came to pass when the political pressure to isolate South Africa applied by the newly decolonized nations of Asia and Africa combined with liberal feeling in Britain and forced the English cricket authorities to cancel a tour by South Africa in 1970.

Q26: How have advances especially television technology affected the development of contemporary cricket?

Kerry Packer, an Australian television tycoon who saw the moneymaking potential of cricket as a televised sport, signed up fifty-one of the world's leading cricketers. Packer drove home the lesson that cricket was a marketable game, which could generate huge revenues. Television channels made money by selling television spots to companies who were happy to pay large sums of money to telecast commercials for their products to cricket's captive television audience. Television coverage changed cricket. It expanded the audience for the game by beaming cricket into small towns and villages. It also broadened cricket's social base. Children who had never previously had the chance to watch international cricket because they lived outside the big cities, where top-level cricket was played, could now watch and learn by imitating their heroes.

The technology of satellite television and the world wide reach of multi-national television companies created a global market for cricket.

Coloured dress, protective helmets, field restrictions, cricket under lights, became a standard part of the post-Packer game

Q27: Why was the ICC headquarters shifted from London to Dubai?

Since India had the largest viewership for the game amongst the cricket-playing nations and the largest market in the cricketing world, the game's centre of gravity shifted to South Asia. This shift was symbolized by the shifting of the ICC headquarters from London to tax-free Dubai.

A more important sign that the centre of gravity in cricket has shifted away from the old, Anglo-Australian axis is that innovations in cricket technique in recent years have mainly come from the practice of sub continental teams in countries like India, Pakistan and Srilanka.

Pakistan has pioneered two great advances in bowling: the *doosra* and the 'reverse swing'. Both skills were developed in response to sub continental conditions: the *doosra* to counter aggressive batsmen with heavy modern bats who were threatening to make finger-spin **obsolete** and 'reverse swing' to move the ball in on dusty, unresponsive wickets under clear skies.

In time, it came to be accepted that the laws of cricket could not continue to be framed for British or Australian conditions of play, and they became part of the technique of all bowlers, everywhere in the world.

Q28: Why were the Indian institutions and movements organized around the idea of religious Communities in the Nineteenth century? OR How was cricket organized on communal lines in India?

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