MOHINDER AMARNATH

Published on 29.8.18

India will hopefully carry confidence of win to Southampton

It was a remarkable recovery by the Indian team in Nottingham. They showed that they are on a par with England and once again it was the captain, Virat Kohli, who played the main role. India were superb as a unit but you can only win when you have runs on the board, so the rest of the boys should try and take a leaf out of the captain's book.

What is great about Virat is that he is playing in testing conditions and being able to adjust very well. Playing in England is totally different from playing anywhere else in the world. He has made the necessary adjustment to his technique and that made all the difference. His balance is terrific, he gets into position and judges length much better than the others. Once he occupies the crease, he is always looking for and taking runs, and this is not a good sign for the opposition! He reminds me of Viv Richards who would do the same thing. I've never seen anyone playing with so much authority, and so consistently. He is a match-winner; whenever he performs India has always done well.

I don't know how the pitch at Southampton will play but the bit of cloud cover that is being predicted will help India. There will probably be some grass as England knows that the Indians play spin much better. To be very honest, I don't think the pitch matters much. They just need to go and play; as Virat showed it doesn't matter where you play, and in what conditions, you just have to go and perform.

Where the opening combination is concerned, I was glad to see Shikhar Dhawan back. He did look a bit vulnerable but everybody is when you play in England — who's not? Barring Virat, the others have been struggling, and this is on both sides. But Shikhar is one of those who go for his shots; he and KL Rahul may not have scored very many runs but they gave India the start they needed.

The bowlers also did wonderful job. Bumrah bowled a magnificent spell in the second innings when the pitch was not really offering much help. Pandya's spell in the first was crucial and made all the difference. The seamers have been absolutely fantastic, were moving the ball much more and looked sharper than England's bowlers. Despite his injury, Ashwin will definitely be in the scheme of things for the fourth Test. However, should he not be able to play, Ravindra Jadeja would be the best bet to replace him.

England will have to work on a few aspects of their game to come back strongly. The hosts will, I'm sure, shrug off the last match as a bad game. However, the openers — Cook and Jennings — don't seem to be in the best form to tackle the Indian pacers and Ishant and Bumrah will cause them problems. They rely heavily on Joe Root, and Ben Stokes. I think that they will go in with the same bowling combination, though Stokes looked a bit rusty after his 'lay-off'. If the pitch has something to offer they may need to choose between Woakes and Stokes.

It's been a very interesting series thus far, there have been many ups and downs from Test to Test. It was great to see India's fight-back. Every game is different but once you make a strong comeback, after being on the mat, you carry that confidence into the next game and feel that you can do it again. I think that we are in for another cracking match. Hopefully they will level the series so that we can look forward to a deciding final Test.

