

DEAN JONES

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India gets off to a winning start in series

India have got the start they wanted. Virat Kohli now is the most successful Asian captain by winning not only in England and South Africa but also in Australia. Australia were a little better than I thought they would be at Adelaide. However, they have to bring their 'A' game because India can win on their 'B' game.

The Aussie batsmen can really look at the way Pujara went about his game. My father always told me, 'just bat time ... if you can bat five hours, a hundred will look after itself'. I feel Aussie batsmen are in too much of a rush. There's a lot of inexperience: among our top six — we only have one batsman that averages around 40 in first-class cricket, whereas the top six Indian boys all average over 50. They know what it's like to make hundreds, they know you need to play a long innings like Pujara, you just have got to hang in there. However, I do think they have to find a game plan to play Nathan Lyons better.

A new stadium awaits the teams at Perth and from what I've been told, this ground will be quite abrasive on the ball. This means that it will reverse swing, it will spin. That brings Starc and Hazlewood, who really know how to reverse swing the ball, into focus. So does Shami, so it will be interesting to see how this plays out. This pitch will not be like the one at the WACA; it will be slow tennis ball bounce.

I feel that both teams will go in with the same line-ups. Australia will not drop Aaron Finch; he plays spin very well and, in a line-up against Ashwin, he's a better bat at No. 5, no doubt, than when playing the new ball at the top. I would push him down, and everyone else up.

The new ball will be interesting because India have a couple of weaknesses: one, the opening batsmen are still struggling, and two, Rohit Sharma just needs to bat like Rohit Sharma! I feel he thinks because it's a Test match, he must bat differently. If he and Rishabh Pant come off, the game's over for Australia. So I'd let them be creative and aggressive and play the way they want.

I'm not expecting this game to go the distance: it will be finished in four days. I have said from the beginning that India will win this series 3-0. They're well on their way because after this Test they will be 2-0 going into Melbourne. I'm confident about that, because India are that good.

DEAN JONES

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Australia out-bats India; India needs to watch for slips

I just couldn't believe that Australia out-bat India at Perth, and if it wasn't for Virat Kohli's amazing hundred, the situation would have been a lot worse. India has some major problems with the two openers, and they were outsmarted by the pitch a little, too. They needed to bowl at least another spinner. I know they had injuries to Jadeja and Ashwin but I couldn't understand how Jadeja was injured and still in the side! That was a bit bizarre.

I think it's time India start to develop new openers. Mayank Agarwal should be playing again, and KL Rahul should be given one more opportunity. Ashwin has to play. It will be interesting to see what happens as this pitch has changed massively since the Test last year when Australia played England. It was flat and didn't change over the five days; the ICC said it was poor and gave it a strike.

India might need to think of playing both Ashwin and Jadeja if they are both fit. The reasons for this is that the Australians don't play Ashwin well, and they don't play spin that well generally, either. The Indians need a little spark to get something going. They've only got about four days off; it's almost back to back matches in Melbourne and then Sydney. The big one is this one and if India win this I can't see Australia beating them in Sydney because the SCG will turn.

Australia have got the momentum so it's very important that India fight back and show who's boss a little more. This is a pitch on which, if you win the toss, you bat first. I've played at the MCG more times than anyone else, and you must never, ever drive the ball in the first session of Day 1. The only time you drive is to and from the ground! The ball you tap is the short one out till after lunch – then you can drive the ball.

I'm expecting India to fight back here. I'm expecting Ishant Sharma, Kohli to do well, and I just feel KL Rahul will come through here. I think India will win, but I can't tell you how important the first session of Day 1 is. It's the session that you don't worry about runs. The thing is to not lose wickets and the runs will flow after lunch. Australia were bowled out for 98 a few years ago against England here because everyone was trying to drive the ball, and kept getting caught in the slips!

DEAN JONES

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India pull off another win with grit and poise

As predicted, India won the third Test at the MCG. Ishant, Shami and Jasprit have now taken more wickets than any other trio in the history of Test cricket in one calendar year. That's just fantastic. What's impressive also is that half the Indian team is very inexperienced and yet they won comprehensively. The hardest thing to teach youngsters is not how to play but how to win! And winning in Australia is everything. Many have tried before and haven't done it, and here's the opportunity for Virat Kohli to rub their noses in it.

The Sydney pitch will be a bit drier and will turn. Australia will play Marnus Labuschagne in place of Mitchell Marsh. The question is, will India gamble with their line-up? I would consider playing Jadeja and Kuldeep. Australia does not lay left-arm orthodox well – Jadeja bowled beautifully in Melbourne – and they don't play leg-spin well either, and that's why they need to bring in Kuldeep. It's time also to give a little bit of responsibility to Pant at No. 6. Jadeja is batting well, too, and with him at No. 7, they've got enough batting. It's unfortunate for Rohit Sharma but the final frontier is within grasp. The closest India got to winning a series Down Under was in 1977-78 when Bishen Bedi's side lost 2-3.

The MCG pitch was ranked as average by the ICC Match Referee. It was an awful, flat one. Why does Australia keep producing slow, turning pitches for India? Why they don't make it hard, bouncy and fast, I do not know! Australia are giving Virat and Ravi Shastri exactly what they want!

What I also don't get is why the Australian batsmen are not watching Pujara and Virat and how they go about constructing their innings. Their defence is outstanding, their patience amazing and yet the Australians are trying to score a run a ball or a boundary every time they go out to bat. They are in so much of a rush, it would seem they must like talking in the dressing room with their teammates! For some reason they are not enjoying the battle of facing Ishant or Shami. They are trying to power their way through. I don't see the Pujara or Kohli doing that against Pat Cummings.

It's going to be 3-1, and India will celebrate like they have never celebrated before. I hope Virat and his boys get the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, walk to the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and raise it in the air, as if to say the Final Frontier has now been conquered!

DEAN JONES

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India cruising beautifully; breaches final frontier

I think the success of Pujara, the media attention towards him, and the way he played, might inspire a lot more kids to now to play Test cricket. Virat Kohli's love of this form of the game and this magnificent win will ensure that it survives and is loved for generations to come.

The final frontier has been conquered after 71 years and I hope that every fan and past Indian Test player have raised a beverage in honour of this splendid victory. Australian fans really enjoyed the way India played. I now have a new fascination of proper Test batsmanship by Pujara, and I think Virat has won more fans here than ever before.

So the celebrations aren't going to stop there because in this three match, one-day series, India will smash the Australians again. India are cruising beautifully, while Australia have changed their game plan by dropping D'Arcy Short and Chris Lynn, and bringing in Usman Khawaja and Peter Handscomb, which means they going to play the conservative style of game now.

We are five months out from the World Cup, and our selectors are silly and stupid enough to change the game plan. They're resting three of our best bowlers – Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins. This, at a time when coaches and selectors are dotting I's and crossing T's, figuring out strategy and tactics for the World Cup.

India are pretty settled with their batting line-up. They've got an X Factor right through every part of their game: they've got spinners, quicks, and magnificent batsmen. Their game plan is going on nicely. Australia, however, haven't got one part sorted or organized yet; they're in disarray. In their last 23 ODI matches, Australia have only won three! And we've selected 32 different players in those 23 games! So, how can we be settled or organized with regard to the World Cup campaign? I blame the selectors. I think they have forgotten the fact that we are the defending champions and we're certainly not playing like it.

India and Australia's No. 1 priority this year, I have no doubt, is to win the World Cup, and Australia are doing an awful job of it in trying to defend it properly. I cannot believe that three of our fast bowlers will be rested for this series. I understand one, but not three!

I think this series is going to be three-zip, to India. The only bit I'd query is their fielding; their batting and bowling is great but they just need to sharpen up the fielding a tad.

DEAN JONES

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Aussies up the ante; criticism of Dhoni shocking

How did we win that first ODI? Our youngsters, especially Jason Behrendorff and Jhye Richardson got and took their opportunity against India on Saturday, and at four for three the game was almost over. I cannot believe how much criticism MS Dhoni has got about losing the game, and how the press and all the pundits in the world have gone after him.

Do people actually not understand what it takes to come in when the team is four for three? Number one, you have got to stop the bleeding, and he did that. Number two, he got a shocking lbw decision. And Number 3, at the end of the game with around six overs to go, Australia were worried, mainly due to the efforts of Rohit Sharma and Dhoni. And then there's the criticism that's been thrown at Rohit saying he's not fit! The Indian fans are just so hard, so critical.

That's not to take anything away from Australia. Richardson bowled with some real pace and reverse swung the ball; his batting shows that there's something there and that he may just be a replacement for Starc in the future. Overall, I think the batting was outstanding, the way they meticulously went about their job. I was so impressed by Peter Handscomb, and I would like to see him watch his footwork in the one-day game and try to mimic in Tests, if it gets another opportunity to do so. He's got to understand that red ball and white ball aren't much different in footwork. Where was the cover drive, the shots down the ground that we should have seen in the Test matches? Hopefully he will learn from this.

What Virat needs to do is stop the Australian middle-order; they have made sure they've got guys in the middle who play spin well, particularly Handscomb. India have got to plug up the ones. Australia needed the confidence from this performance and will have taken heart from it. So maybe, Australia aren't as bad as people think and I hope these bowlers make it very hard for Starc, Hazlewood and Cummins to come back into the team. I'm still expecting India to win the series. Virat and Ravi Shastri will be annoyed at losing because now they are under a little bit of pressure. So I see Virat and Co. coming out firing on Tuesday. It's nice, however, to see a competitive Australian one-day team again. Just like old times! And we have won five World Cups, so discard us at your peril!

DEAN JONES

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Virat magnificent; Dhoni continues to awe with understanding of ODI format

The last match, at the Adelaide Oval, was a fantastic one, finally. It has probably been the match of the series. Now we go to Melbourne on Friday for the decider. On that massive ground it will be interesting to see which bowlers will bowl what lines and lengths. Remember, the Australians won the World Cup there in 2015 and they know how to bowl on that pitch. You will find that they will be sending down a lot of short deliveries because the ground is very wide and expansive with boundaries of upto 80-85m. The Indian batsmen will have to be playing a lot of shots off the back foot.

The Aussies, on the other hand, need to bring in Glenn Maxwell early, if they can, at some stage. Skipper Aaron Finch needs to work on his technique, as he's been out bowled or leg-before seven times in his last eight ODI games. His dismissals read as: bowled, LBW, bowled, LBW, bowled, caught, bowled, bowled. So they have the measure of him.

I've noticed now that 32 of Virat Kohli's 39 hundreds in one-day cricket have come in a winning cause. He now has 11 international hundreds, the most in all formats by visiting batsmen to Australia. He's such a magnificent player and I get the feeling, with all due respect to Sachin Tendulkar, that he will be known as the greatest one-day player of all time.

We saw a wonderful little cameo by Dinesh Karthik in the end at Adelaide. Dhoni is just a marvel; what people don't understand about him is that he gets it. He understands the heartbeat of ODI cricket, he reads the game so, so accurately and then makes sure he brings in the other part of the orchestra, like Karthik, to get the tempo up and does what needs to be done.

I still think India will win this series because Kuldeep and Jadeja have enjoyed bowling within the dimensions of the MCG. I feel Ambati Rayudu needs to get some runs, there is a bit of a weakness with him at the moment and they are lacking a fifth bowler. If they keep Australia to less than 280, I don't see any reason why India won't win this match. Maybe the best way to go about it, as far as Australia is concerned, is for them to send India in, if Finch wins the toss. Because when India chases, there's no team in the history of the game that does it better.

DEAN JONES

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India earns reputation of 'scare factor' with Australia series win

This was the greatest tour that India has ever had to Australia. The only blemish was probably the way they played in the Test match in Perth, but overall the great thing was that a lot of the boys played good overseas. Everyone did something on the tour to contribute.

The emergence of Chahal on his first outing Down Under was awesome, while Kuldeep Yadav continues to impress and had a wonderful ODI series. He showed everyone why he's so good. Shami worked long and hard in the Tests and then backed that up with another superb ODI series. Sharma was brilliant in the one-dayers too, while Virat Kohli lead magnificently right through.

The main 'problem' is Dhoni. He's back in this team and the question is will India, if push comes to shove, play Rishabh Pant as just a batsman? India couldn't be having a better journey for their World Cup campaign than what they are having now and they have got to make sure they finish off New Zealand as well. What would be the worst thing to ruin this would be to go out to against the Black Caps and drop their guard.

India now are no different to what the West Indies were in the eighties and early nineties. They have got to maintain the reputation that they can win in anyone's backyard now and must not take the foot off the pedal. The Windies were brilliant at it and had that "scare factor", which is what India have now. That's huge going into the World Cup.

Australia have a long way to go. The top four did not make enough hundreds, and the engine room is not accepting responsibility of winning or losing games. I thought Richardson was a find, he played well. They've got problems all over the place. They don't have a good spinner; I think they've got to look at Fawad Ahmed who I feel is the best spinner going right now. I also feel we need Matthew Wade at No. 7. In fact, my best team for the World Cup would be: Finch, Short/Warner, Steve Smith, Shaun Marsh, Maxwell, Stoinis, Wade, Starc, Cummins, Fawad, and Richardson.

As for India: they can choose whoever they want, they'll still make the final! They've got 15 guys lining up for each position. So many options! Where they are concerned, if Kohli won't get you, Sharma will. If he doesn't get you, Dhoni will!

Lastly, Virat has made more friends among the Aussie fans on this tour than he has before. There is so much admiration for his technique and leadership. They wish he was playing for Australia!