

Is Cricket Following the Same Decline as Hockey and Squash in Pakistan?

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After Pakistan's defeat in the second Test at Lord's, concerns about the future of Test cricket in the country have become even more serious. A nation that once produced some of the finest cricketers in the world now appears to be struggling to maintain its traditional standards. There is an increasing fear that cricket may eventually face the same decline that has already affected hockey and squash in Pakistan.

The reasons for this disappointing situation are numerous. Poor management, inconsistent selection policies and a lack of long-term planning have badly affected the development of the national team. Frequent changes in captains, coaches and playing combinations prevent the team from developing stability and confidence. Selection should be based purely on merit, current

performance and the specific requirements of international cricket rather than on reputation, pressure or short-term considerations.

Another major issue is the shortage of properly developed talent. Pakistan has no lack of natural ability, but talented youngsters need quality coaching, modern facilities, regular competitive cricket and exposure to international standards. The domestic system should be strong enough to identify promising players and prepare them for the physical, technical and mental demands of Test cricket.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the longer format is the growing attraction of T20 cricket.

Prominent players are understandably interested in various T20 leagues around the world because they offer enormous financial rewards, greater exposure and shorter playing commitments. As a result, many established players show less interest in long-form domestic cricket. This trend is particularly damaging because Test cricket requires patience, concentration, sound technique and the ability to play under pressure for long periods—qualities that can only be developed through regular first-class cricket.

The Pakistan Cricket Board must therefore take urgent and meaningful steps to revive domestic Test cricket. First-class players should be given better financial incentives, facilities and career opportunities so that playing the longer format becomes attractive. Selection procedures must be

transparent, while coaches and administrators should be held accountable for their decisions and results.

Pakistan still possesses immense cricketing talent and a passionate fan base. What is needed is competent management, consistent policies and a genuine commitment to Test cricket. If these reforms are ignored, Pakistan may not merely lose matches; it could gradually lose the proud cricketing culture that has been one of the country's greatest sporting assets.

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