



Kevin Pietersen: A man betrayed

Kevin Pietersen is a character. He rubs people the wrong way. But has he been deserving of the treatement that has been dished out to him through his English career? More pressing however is the matter of whether England can afford to be so picky about their selection at this juncture in time or is winning really not a priority in Andrew Strauss' short term plans?

By Roshini Thribhuvan

One of the most prodigious talents of his generation, Kevin Pietersen is an enigma, more so off the cricket pitch than on it. He is talented and arrogant, gifted and egotistical, destructive and sublime. He is truly one of a kind. Touted as an aggressive limited overs specialist when he broke on to the international scene a decade ago, his sheer skill and talent saw him conquer the longer format of the game with aplomb. He has always seemed like a misfit in the English dressing room, maybe it has something to do with his fiery Afrikaan spirit coming up against the stiff and reserved English upper lip. Maybe it has something to do with his out spoken demeanour as opposed to the gentlemen that have always held court in an English dressing room. Be it as it may, he has always clashed with his teammates, just like he's always performed above average for his adopted nation.

For all his faults, for all his un-English bearings, he has qualities that were an integral part of the English psyche in bygone days. He is in character the similar to the characteristics of the game he plays; both entities are ruthless, driven, uncompromising, inventive, fiery, hardworking, loyal and protective. He is a man who would have fitted into folklore as a perfect specimen of the human condition. He is as a personality a divisive character. However, through it all, through all the ups and downs, he has held a steadfast dedication to his craft and for that craft that he holds so dear and which he has crafted to such perfection to be pulled out so cruelly and with deception from under its feet is incomprehensible. He has dominated the headline for the last week, just as he has through most of his decade long career as an English cricketer. To be fair to the establishment, there is a fire that has created this smoke. Whether the fire was fair or required to be fanned is another debate, but a fire there was. Pietersen was first 'banned for life' from playing competitive cricket for England after a shamolic Ashes series held in Australia 15 months ago. There had to be enough of a reason one would imagine in order to

take a step as extreme as banning a person for life and there was, at least the world was told that there was a valid enough reason. This valid reason involved a dossier that had been built up against the South Africa and contained over 50 allegations of his misdemeanours. Now, the contention with this dossier is not that Pietersen could not have been culpable to the allegations, but rather that nobody has ever seen any of these allegations. We the public were then told that he was wrecking the dressing room, that his teammates could not stand the sight of him, that this disharmony was affecting the morale of the team. The problem with that theory though, is that none of his teammates when asked all denied having an issue with him. Along with these behavioural problems he was blamed for the embarrassing loss that England suffered at the hands of Australia, a series in which Kevin Pietersen was the highest scorer for England, he was singled out for blame as to why the team failed. This all seems like a perfectly respectable, well documented set of reason to ban someone from playing a sport for life, does it not? The Pietermaritzburg native is a big personality. He is someone that will speak his mind and on more than one occasion that has

landed him in a large pot of very hot water. The debacle that was borne out of this particular incident is whether the punishment befits the crime. Big personalities need handling. It is the big personalities that are prone to the eccentric, they are the mercurial talents, the once in a generation athletes, the ones that excite and inspire the people around them. But any of these personalities need to be managed. It can be argued that this is possibly the reason that Eric Cantona was a bigger success at Manchester United than he was at either Leeds United or for the French National team. He had an Alex Ferguson to handle him. Someone who knows when to stroke an ego and when to use a firm hand. As Pietersen and the English public is finding out, the hard way, you need a certain type of person to manage a big personality. A person that the English setup does not currently possess. The worst thing about the Pietersen scenario is that he was grossly misled by the powers that rule. He was assured by Colin Graves, Chairman of England and Wales Cricket Board, of a place within the English setup. Graves said both to Pietersen and the public, "It

needs to be put clear to him that if he plays well in county cricket then there's going to be a genuine - and I mean the word genuine - change of heart that he is going to be open for selection and that they are going to put bygones to one side." It was under these assurances that Pietersen relinquished his change to play at the lucrative Indian Premier League and instead chose to play county cricket for Surrey going as far as to donate his match fees to a charitable organisation. He scored a career best 326 not out on the day before he was to attend a dinner with newly appointed, Director of the England and Wales Cricket Board Andrew Strauss and Tom Harrison, the newly appointed Chief Executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board. This was supposed to be a meeting at which Pietersen was given assurances if not an immediate call up to the National team, however it was at this very meeting on the day he was riding a high that he was dealt the debilitating blow that he was not a part of England's plans and there was no foreseeable way that he would be under the current regime.



Alonso and McLaren: second time lucky?

After 5 unfruitful seasons at Scuderia Ferrari, Fernando Alonso made the switch to McLaren for the second time in his career.

Have old hatchets been buried and more importantantly, does McLaren have the pace to challenge the best in the field?

McLaren were tipped to be the challengers to Mercedes' domination. The McLaren-Honda tie up was supposed to given them a competitive car. They were so promising that a disillusioned Fernando Alonso left Ferrari after four unsuccessful, progressively frustrating seasons to re-join McLaren despite his less than pleasant time with them in 2007. But come preseason testing this homecoming is now in jeopardy as Alonso faces a late fitness evaluation and McLaren's continued technical issues with the car. There have been more than a few surpris-



They've shown us that the car doesn't have any conceptual or architectural issues." The shortage of laps during the day was down to the loss of cooling water pressure in the car. Button had to then contend with engine problems.

The stance from the McLaren camp throughout the Jerez testing was positive with them claiming that they were able to "meet their prime objectives" however the issues of whether the car will last an entire race or not were starkly highlighted. While Jerez is the test that is used to iron out initial teething problems within the teams, it is the test at Barcelona that are the real litmus test to how a car will perform at the opening few races at the season at least. It was at the Barcelona testing that McLaren-Honda's fragility was brought to the fore.

The first day of testing at Barcelona ended after just 21 laps with a power unit issue. This issue carried on into the second day of testing with Button setting a time of 1m 28.182s which while encouraging was still about 3 seconds off the time set by Pastor Maldonado and Lotus. The same power unit issues followed the team around through the whole of their testing time at Barcelona. They stated that they were still only evaluating their car with Boullier quoted as saying, "We're happy with what we're doing – we're still not looking at outright performance as we still have a long list of systems checks to evaluate. The car is reacting as we expected, but it's too soon to go into a race simulation, and, as a result, too soon to be sure of our overall performance."

However, the worst of their problems were yet to come and come they did on the final day of testing before the start of the Formula 1 season. At 12:35 CET on the 22nd of February, Alonso crashed his McLaren at turn 3 on the Circuit de Catalunya, at the time the car was travelling at a speed of 150 km/hr. The crash was so horrific that he had to be airlifted to the hospital as the medical centre could not fully evaluate his condition. He was conscious and was kept for observation in the hospital overnight. He was found to have suffered a concussion and will need more tests before he is cleared to race in the opening round of the Formula 1 season on the 15th of March in Melbourne.

Only the season and time will tell whether this, the supposed revival of both McLaren as a team and Alonso as a driver will actually come to fruition or if it will end in the same heartbreak as their first association. As a fan of the sport, let's hope it is at the very least as enjoyable as their previous partnership.

The crash that kept Alonso out of the opening Melbourne Grand Prix. His worst start ever to a Formula 1 season.

By Roshini Thribhuvan



Andy Murray: marriage works

Two clay court wins in quick succession for Andy Murray.

Has marriage really helped his break his clay court duck?

By Roshini Thribhuvan

Immediately after beating Rafael Nadal in straight sets in the Madrid masters, Andy Murray scribbled "Marriage works" into the camera lens.

Murray's win percentage on clay courts for tournaments before his marriage to long-time partner, Kim Sears was 0%. However, since the wedding in April of this year, Murray's win percentage on clay has been an astounding 100%. The win in Madrid in straight sets over the 'King of Clay' Nadal coming on the heels of Murray winning the Munich Open, just the previous week.

Murray later said, "It (marriage) has been nice and a lot of people have spoken about the honeymoon period. But we've been together a very long time and getting married was the next step.

"I've always said if the personal stuff is happy and under control that helps your performance

Wedding ring stored safely in his shoestrings



Mick Schumacher wins formula 4 race

Following his father's illustrious footsteps. Mick Schumacher begins his motor-racing career with cautious success.

By Roshini Thribhuvan

When said of her trust in her son, "She sees the dangers, but they know any other sport can also be dangerous. With Mick it's like Michael: They trusted him completely."

With Michael Schumacher still being incapacitated after his skiing injury in 2013, Mick Schumacher is reportedly being trained by four time Formula 1 World Champion and his father's protégé, Sebastian Vettel.

The race ended behind the safety car with Schumacher's teammate, Joseph Mawson in second and Preining in third place.

In his post-race interview Schumacher said, "I'm ecstatic, of course. My first race weekend could not have gone better."

"We had a good start, because my tyres were still fresh, and it went well from then on, apart from at the end where things were close again. I was not too unhappy about the safety car."

"All in all, I'm really pleased with this start to the season and look forward to the next set of races."

He leaves Oschersleben fifth in the standings, with Marvin Dienst, the winner of races first two races on top of the drivers' standings.



Marc Marquez racing his dirt bike

World Champion, Marc Marquez injured

Reigning Moto GP World Champion, Marc Marquez, faces a challenge to be fit for the Spanish Grand Prix. Marquez was racing a dirt bike in L'Albi, Tarragona, Spain and an accident at that race left him with a nasty broken finger.

Marquez's management said of the accident, "Marc was dirt track riding on Saturday when he crashed, alone. There was no other bike involved in the crash itself, but he was unlucky and another bike hit his hand while he was down."

Marquez broke the little finger on his left hand

while dirt track racing and had a titanium plate fitted soon after.

"This will allow us to initiate functional recovery after 24 hours and give him a chance of racing at Jerez," head surgeon Dr Xavier Mir said.

Marquez's Honda team-mate Dani Pedrosa is also side-lined due to injury.

Currently only Hiroshi Aoyama is available for Honda for the Spanish GP.

But, in a statement, Honda said Marquez's participation in the Spanish GP "has not been ruled out".

THE SPORTS BULLETIN



The Bournemouth fairytale

Bournemouth players and manager Eddie Lowe pose for photographers

Jeff Mostyn: We'll Survive!

“Six years ago we were on the edge of an abyss” AFC Bournemouth chairman, Jeff Mostyn, “We would be the smallest club to ever play in the Premier League. It would be the greatest fairy tale since Hans Christian Andersen wrote his last one.”

After almost falling out of the Football league six years ago, the Cherries are now on the journey to the highest level of English football. However, this isn't the end of the dream for this small club, by Premier League standards; they have the belief that will hold their own in the top flight.

Mostyn said, “I think we'll survive. We are going up with Watford and we've got four points from them this year, we beat QPR last year and we should have got

more points from Burnley.

The way we play football we'll enhance the Premier League and I think of any team that has been promoted in recent years, we have as much chance as any of staying up.”

Mostyn was all praise for manager Eddie Howe and his breeding of the team and their style of play. “Eddie has created a siege mentality and the boys have carried themselves up four divisions against all the odds. They are just magnificent.

“He has an insatiable appetite to improve the team, he's calm and collected and he just wants to develop the team in his own style. We will actually make the Premier League proud.”



Chasing the Treble

Both clubs participating in the Champions League Final have a chance to win their own treble if they lift the trophy on 6th June 2015 at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

Juventus are chasing their first treble and Italy's second, with Internazionale having completed the same in 2009-10. FC Barcelona are looking to complete their second and Spain's second treble having completed their first one in 2008-09.

Juventus have already clinched the Serie A and are in the Coppa Italia final. They play Lazio on the 20th of May 2015.

Barcelona are currently at the top of the Spanish La Liga with two games to be played. They are currently in the Copa Del Rey final and face off against Athletic Bilbao on the 30th of May 2015.

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Will Fernando Alonso's McLaren gamble pay off?

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