

Cricket - A Bat & Ball Game

Overview

Cricket is a team sport that is played outdoors. Cricket originated in England and gradually became popular across the globe. This sport requires complete physical fitness and athleticism to play. The sport is played between two teams of 11 players each.



Australia is the current World Champion (2015). Countries like India, Pakistan, England, South Africa, New Zealand, West Indies, and Sri Lanka also have equally dominant cricket teams.

Objective

Cricket is played outdoors on a ground. The objective of the game is that a team should score more runs than the opponent team. It is all about attempting to score more runs, while restricting the score and dismissing the batsmen of the opponent team. Further in the document, one can closely understand the game, its popular terms and rules.



Team Size

In cricket, each playing side has 11 players and one of them is appointed as captain. Apart from these 11 players, there are a few more players on each side who can only field as substitute for an injured team member. The fielding team should have 11 players and the opposition can send only two batsmen on the ground at the time of play.

A 15-member squad is a must for all international tournaments conducted by the cricket's governing body, International Cricket Council (ICC).

Cricket - Participating Countries

Cricket as a sport began in England. The evidences available lead us to believe in south-east England in the beginning of 1900s. During those days, Australia, South Africa, and West Indies were the other countries where the sport was played. Gradually, the sport picked up popularity in the Asian continent as well. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh also started playing the sport.

Asian Countries Participating in Cricket

In late 1900s, Asian countries like India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan have made a mark in world cricket with each winning World Cup once. It led to the founding of Asian Cricket Conference in 1983 that took charge of developing the sport in rest of Asia. By 21st century, Bangladesh had become a new force in Asian cricket. Nepal, Malaysia, and Afghanistan also play competitive cricket now. Amongst these three nations, Afghanistan made headlines by qualifying for the World Cup in 2014.

The Asian Cricket Conference was renamed as Asian Cricket Council in 2003, headquartered in Kuala Lumpur. The council is subordinate to ICC and has an association of 25 countries.

Non-Asian Countries Participating in Cricket

England, Australia, West Indies, and South Africa started playing cricket from early 20th century. It was the brain of Abe Bailey, the then President of South Africa Cricket Association, to form an international council. Imperial Cricket Conference was formed in 1906 that was later renamed as International Cricket Council. Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ireland, Netherlands, Canada, Scotland, and UAE have all been part of international tournaments over two decades. United States also adopted the game since last few years. Currently, there are more than 100 countries playing this sport and associated with ICC.

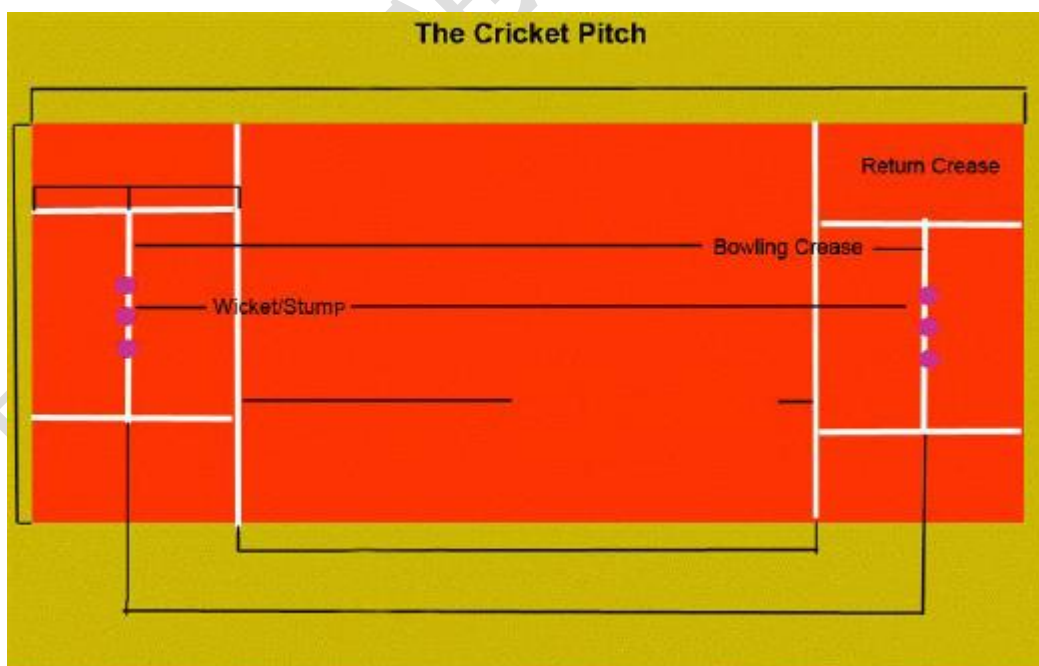
International cricket is played in three formats. A five-day match called Test match; same day match comprising 50-over a side called One-day International; and 20-over a side called T-20 International are the three formats. T-20 is the latest and the most popular format over last five years.

Cricket - Playing Environment

Cricket is a team sport and is played on a big ground. The pitch in the center and ground is prepared for any format of the match. Later, stumps are rooted along the breadth of the pitch and players are called on to the ground to start the play. The team fielding will have 11 players guarding the boundary and two batsmen from opposition will come to bat. There will be two umpires on the field to monitor the match proceedings.

Cricket Field Dimensions

The sport is played on presumably a circular leveled ground with **pitch** as the center. The pitch is 24-yards in length and 4-yards in breadth. A rope is placed around the ground at a distance of 80 yards from the pitch. This rope is observed as **boundary**. The stumps are rooted at both ends with distance of 22-yards between them. Two carved small pieces of wood are placed on stumps, called **bails**. White parallel lines are drawn on both ends of stumps, called **batting/bowling crease**. It is 1.2 meters from stumps. Another set of parallel lines are drawn perpendicular to batting crease, called **return crease**. This is at a distance of half-meter from the length of pitch.



Dimensions of Cricket Equipment

ICC has formed certain rules for cricket equipment along with the rules of play. The bat, ball, glove, pads, and all other equipment have to meet the standards set by the governing body. It's not only the size of equipment but also the logos used on the equipment that should conform to the standards set by ICC. Given below is a list of cricket equipment with permissible measures –

- **Bat** – A cricket bat should not be more than 38 inches in length and 4.25 inches wide.
- **Ball** – The cricket ball must weigh between 155.9 and 163 g. Apart from weight, the circumference should be between 224 and 229 mm.
- **Keeper glove** – The keeper glove doesn't have specific measurement but should not be made of stretchable material. The glove has webbing between thumb and the index finger.

Rest of the equipment are all used to protect body parts, hence there aren't any specific measures or design standards, with safety as priority.

Cricket - Equipment

As cricket is a game of bat and ball, the players are subjected to wear protective gear from not getting hurt. In this chapter, we will discuss about all the important gear and equipment that the players use while playing the game.

Bat – Bat is a nicely carved equipment made out of special wood, with a handle on top to hold and play. These vary in weight and size with age and requirement of the batsman.



Ball – It is spherical object made out of cork and covered with leather. Two pieces of leather are stitched around the cork ball. The color of the ball for test matches is red and white for ODI and T20 matches.



Keeper Glove – These are worn on both hands to protect the fingers from injury. Cloth and leather are stitched together in the shape of fingers and palm to fit exactly. The inner-side of the glove has finger gaps with cork tips for more protection.



Batsman Glove – This gear is similar in shape but smaller and softer on the outer part when compared to keeper glove. It is used to hold the bat firmly. The finger part of glove has extra protection with hard sponge on the outer area.



Keeper/Batsman Pads – These are worn to protect the lower limbs of the batsman/keeper. They are made with cloth and leather. The front portion of the pads is very hard as there is hard plastic or wood sticks beneath. The rear portion is spongy and soft to soothe and comfort legs. Keeper pads are little shorter than batsman pads.



Helmet – A head gear for the batsman/keeper while batting or wicket-keeping behind the stumps. It is a mix of metal and hard plastic. It has a metallic grill in the front to protect the face.



Stumps – These are cylindrical and long in shape with sharp end like spear. This end goes into the ground so that stumps stand erect in the ground.



Bails – Bails are the smallest equipment placed on stumps. It helps in giving easy decisions by umpires to dismiss the batsman when the wicket is broken.

Popular Terms in cricket

By now, you must have got the hang of terms like batsman, bowler, umpire, stumps, etc. Now, let's know the terms used at play.

- **Striker** – A batsman facing the bowler is called striker and the opposite end is called non-striker.
- **Off-side/leg-side** – One half of the ground is called off-side and the other side is called leg-side. From the perspective of a right handed batsmen, the pitch in front of his body

as he takes a strike, i.e. the right side of the pitch is called off-side. Similarly, the left half of the pitch, i.e. the pitch behind his body while taking a strike is called as leg-side.

- **Run** – It is the basic unit of scoring in cricket. It is scored when a striking batsman hits the ball bowled and runs between the stumps along with non-striker. It is usually scored in ones, twos, and threes.
- **Four** – The ball hit by the batsman crosses the boundary rope by rolling on the ground. Then, it is called a boundary or four runs.
- **Six** – The shot that ensures the ball lands directly outside the rope is called six or six runs are allotted to the batsman.
- **No-ball** – If a bowler's foot crosses the popping crease while delivering the ball then, it is called a no-ball. The ball bowled that is directed above waist of the batsman without pitching on the ground is a no-ball too.
- **Wide** – A ball that is bowled away from the batsman and moves wide of the return crease on the off-side at the batting end is called wide. Another definition is ball bowled that bounces over the head of the batsman after pitching is also called wide.
- **Out** – When a batsman gets out, it gives opportunity to the next person on the batting side to play until 10 players out of 11 are dismissed in various ways. Bowled, Caught, Run-out, LBW, and Stumped are the most common ways of getting out.
- **Bowled** – It is a way of getting out where the batsman misses the ball bowled and the stumps behind are disturbed.
- **Caught** – A batsman is declared out when the fielder catches the ball on full that is hit by the batsman. If it is caught by the wicket-keeper then, it is called caught-behind.
- **LBW** – LBW stands for leg-before wicket. A batsman is declared out as lbw when he tries to play the ball with the body that is directed on to stumps.
- **Run-out** – If a fielder disturbs the stumps with ball in hand while the batsman is not in crease after playing a shot, then the batsman is declared run-out.
- **Stumped** – A batsman moves out of crease to play a ball and misses, the keeper gathers the ball and hits the stumps with ball in hand. Then, the batsman is declared out as stumped.
- **Spin bowling** – Bowlers run short distance from stumps and release the ball with the use of wrist or fingers to get maximum revolutions. The ball tossed in the air spins after pitching. Off-break and leg-break are two varieties of spin bowling.

- **Fast bowling** – Bowlers sprint and deliver the ball at high speed to batsman. To do so, they take long run-up from stumps. Slow-medium, medium-fast, and fast are the popular fast bowling varieties.
- **Extra runs** – All the runs given by fielding team where the batsmen have not hit the ball with the bat are considered as extra runs. For example, wide, no-ball, etc.
- **Innings** – A session of batting and bowling where either the batting team is all-out or the permissible number of overs to be bowled by the fielding team is completed.

How to Play Cricket?

Cricket is a game that requires physical agility to bat, bowl, and field. Two teams of 11 players each play at one time. A set of rules were designed for the game by ICC. These are same for both men and women players. The game begins with captains of both teams and match referee gathering for toss. The toss winning captain is allowed to elect to bat/field first. This process is same across all formats. However, the dress code and fielding restrictions vary by format. It is mandatory for players to wear all white for a Test match, and colored tees and trousers for ODI and T20.

Umpires have a key role in the game as they monitor the proceedings. They decide whether the batsman is out, decide on no-ball, wide, and ensure both teams are playing according to the rules.

In this section, we will understand few laws of the game and how a cricket match is played. The cricket game begins with the on-field umpire's signal "Let's play!"

Let's play! A Glimpse of the Game

- Two batsmen from the batting-side and 11 players from the fielding-side take positions. Two umpires also join them on the field. One stands at the pitch and the other on leg-side.
- Suppose A and B are two teams playing a limited over cricket match. Captain of A wins the toss and elects to bat first.
- The game starts with bowler from B team bowling to the first batsman of A team. They are usually called **opening-bowler** and **opening-batsman**. The first two batsmen are called **openers** as they start the innings of their team.
- The batsmen hits the balls bowled at them and score runs. Fielders attempt to stop the balls that were hit and even catch them to get the batsmen out.
- Each bowler bowls 6 legal deliveries to call it an over.

- The bowling and batting ends change after every over. The non-striker at the end of every over becomes the striker of the next over.
- The wicket-keeper has to change ends after completion of each over. In general, the keeper stands far from stumps when a fast bowler is bowling and closer to stumps when a spinner is in action.
- Once a batsman is out, he has to walk out of the field and a new batsman comes to the crease. An innings is regarded as complete if all the batsmen of team A are out or team B has bowled their full quota of overs.
- Now, team B comes on to bat in the second innings to chase the target set by team A.
- Team B is accorded as winners if they achieve the target else, A is victorious.
- If the scores are level at the end of match, then it is called a tie.

Scoring

- Manual and electronic scoring is done during the match to avoid any errors.
- The scoring is done on cumulative basis. All the runs scored with bat, extra runs like no-ball, wide, etc. are added to team's total.
- In some instances, on-field umpires find it tough to give few decisions like boundaries, out, no-ball, etc. Therefore, they seek help of another umpire, called third-umpire.
- The third-umpire looks at video visuals and gives a final decision.

Cricket - Formats

In the golden era, cricket was played for days as each team almost played more than 100 overs a day. We can relate that to the current format of Test cricket. In the early days of cricket, an over involved eight legal deliveries. Gradually, new formats and rules came into existence and an over was reduced to six legal deliveries across all formats. We're going to discuss the different formats of professional cricket in this chapter and few rules about them.

Test Cricket

Test cricket is considered the format of highest level as it required both mental and physical strength to excel. All players wear white tees and trousers for this format. A red cricket ball is used to play. The earliest format of test cricket was played for six days with a day as reserve. The field restrictions are quite different compared to limited overs cricket.

Teams A and B have to play two innings each, if necessary. 90 overs are to be bowled every day. Team A batting first scores X runs. Team B gets to bat if team A declares their innings or is all-out. Team B should score X or more runs to stand a good chance of winning the match. Then, team A gets to bat for second time and set target for team B. Now, Team B has to achieve target in the time left and overs to be bowled.

In case team B gets all-out during the chase in second innings, team A is declared winner, else the match is drawn between the teams.

One-Day International

One-day international (ODI) is a limited over format of cricket. It was introduced in 1980s and 60 over a side were bowled. The dress code was same to that of test cricket. Over the years, this format also went through drastic changes in rules and it was reduced to 50 over a side and colored uniform. The red-ball was replaced with white-ball.

Team A batting first had to set a target for team B in 50 overs. Batting second, team B had to chase down the target in same number of overs. If they fail to do so, team A is declared as the winner irrespective of team A bowling out team B or not.

T20 International

T20 is the latest and the most successful format of cricket. It has attracted lot of spectators to the ground and witness the match. Cricket became a widespread game in this format and new countries like United States, Malaysia, Canada, and Netherlands adapted to it swiftly. It originated in Caribbean islands, West Indies. Each team gets to play 20-over a side. Since it is the shortest format of the game, it is played under flood lights.

Batting first, team A sets a target for team B in 20 overs. Team B has to achieve the target in their stipulated number of overs while batting second.

Team B is declared the winner if they achieve the target else, team A is declared victorious. Team A is declared the winner even if they restrict team B from scoring the required number of runs and don't get themselves bowled-out.

Cricket - Tournaments

ICC is the supreme governing body of all the international cricket events and tours. All the international teams are ranked based on their performance in a calendar year. Ranking for cricket teams is based on their progress during international events and tours. These ranks are assigned individually for each format.

Currently, there are 10 test playing nations that are eligible for all three formats. Rest of the countries have to play qualification rounds for entry into international events like ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup. The World Cup is conducted at senior and under-19 levels.

Test status is given to a national team depending on the performance at domestic level and global events. We will look at champions of different formats in the last chapter. Here is a list of all the global events organized recently by ICC and multiple nations participate for the ultimate trophy.

Tournament Name	Venue
T20 World Cup 2015	India
ODI World Cup 2015	Australia, New Zealand
ICC Champions Trophy 2013	England, Wales
ICC U-19 World Cup 2014	UAE
ICC Women's World Cup 2013	India

The venue for all the international events are finalized by ICC based on its facilities, playing area standards, and security measures.

All the cricket playing nations have their individual bodies that manage cricket events at the domestic level. The domestic level matches are also played as one-day and five-day games. The one-day games at domestic level are called **List-A** and five-day format is called **First-class**. Best players are picked from the domestic tournaments to represent country at the highest level. These national cricket boards also manage venues when another national team is touring their country. They are responsible for visiting player's facilities and security.

The following table illustrates the domestic tournaments with respect to country and format.

Tournament Name	Country	Format
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Ranji Trophy	India	Five-day
Challenger Trophy	India	One-day
Big Bash League	Australia	T20
The Sheffield Shield	Australia	Five-day
English County Cricket	England	Five-day
Caribbean T20 League	West Indies	T20

Cricket - Champion of Champions

Though cricket has its origins in England and are one of the best teams in the world, they have never been champions of the game. The winner of ODI World Cup finals is considered Champion of Champions. It is conducted once in four years. T20 World Cup is conducted yearly. The champion of Test cricket is decided based on the points in a calendar year. ICC has a ranking system for individual players that is similar to team rankings.

- Australia is the current World Champion of ODI as they won the finals of year 2015 against New Zealand.
- Sri Lanka is the T20 International champion as they defeated India in finals of year 2014.
- Based on ranking system, the International Cricket Council, declares the team with the highest ranking as the winner of the Test Championship mace. South Africa was awarded in 2014 as they defeated Sri Lanka in a two match series in July 2014.

Hall of Fame

Cricket has its legacy with the way it is played across the globe and the members involved in the game. Players and umpires are key to popularize the sport over generations. Hence, the players with illustrious careers are regarded and admitted into the Hall of Fame category by ICC. Let's take a brief look at these players and their stats.

WG Grace (1880 -1899) – WG Grace is considered as the father of English cricket and played an important role in promoting and developing the game. He attracted huge crowds during his playing days. He debuted for England in September, 1880 against Australia. He played 22 Tests and scored 1,098 runs at an average of 32. He had an outstanding first-class career that lasted more than 40 seasons and scored 54,211 runs. It included 124 centuries and 251 fifty plus scores.



Sir Donald Bradman (1928 -1948) – As Grace was considered for English cricket, Bradman was equivalent to Australian cricket. Sir Don as he is fondly called, is regarded as the best batsman ever in the history of cricket. He has a staggering 99.94 average in 52 Test matches that included 29 Tests. He has 117 centuries at first-class level.



Jack Hobbs (1908 -1930) – Jack Hobbs is the best English opening batsman ever in Test history and also the oldest player to score a Test century. He was 46 when he scored his last Test century. He has also amassed the highest number of runs and centuries in first-class career that last 29 years. He has scored a total 199 centuries and 61,760 runs in first-class and averages 56.94 in Tests.



Sydney Barnes (1901 -1914) – Barnes was one of finest medium fast bowlers in Test cricket for England who has played very little first-class cricket. He bowled right-arm with ability to swing the ball effectively. He played 27 Test matches picking up 189 wickets at an average of 16.43. He was 61 when he played his last match for his league.



Jim Laker (1948 -1959) – Jim Laker was the best off-spinner for England during his playing days. He picked 193 wickets in 46 matches at an average of 21.24. He will ever be remembered for his spell of 19 wickets in a match against Australia in 1956.



Garfield Sobers (1954 -1974) – Sobers is a former West Indian player and the greatest all-rounder cricket has ever seen. He launched himself into Test cricket with run tally of 365 runs in an innings against Pakistan. He also captained the side from 1965-72. Overall, he scored 8,032 runs and picked 235 wickets in 93 Tests played for West Indies. He was also the first to hit six sixes in a first-class match.



Rod Marsh (1970 -1984) – By far, Rod Marsh is the best wicket-keeper in the history of the game. He has 355 dismissals to his account in 96 Tests and 124 dismissals from 92 ODIs. He is fondly called as Iron Gloves.



Dennis Lillee (1971 - 1984) – Lillee was one of the most feared fast bowlers of Australia in Tests and ODIs. He has played professional cricket for 13 years and took 355 scalps in 70 Test matches. The combination of Rod Marsh and Dennis Lillee was widely popular. He was exceptional in the shorter format of the game with a bowling average of 20.82 and took 103 wickets in 63 ODIs.



Ian and Greg Chappell (1964 -1984) – Ian and Greg Chappell were one of the most popular siblings in cricket history. They dominated Australian cricket for almost two decades. Ian was the elder brother of Greg. They were popularly known as Chappell Brothers. Ian was a prolific middle order batsman and one of the best captains of Australia. He averaged 42.42 in 75 Tests and 48.07 in 16 ODI games. Greg, on the other hand, started his career six years later, in 1970. Greg was an all-rounder with good batting and bowling skills. He scored 7110 runs in 87 Test matches and just above 2300 runs in



ODIs. His bowling average in ODIs was as good as a mainstream fast bowler.

Richard Hadlee (1972 -1990) – He was renowned as the most fearsome fast bowler of the late 20th century. A former New Zealand cricket player who dominated world's fast bowling charts for more than a decade. He was the leading wicket taker in the world until Kapil Dev of India first broke the record. Hadlee took 431 wickets in 86 Tests and became the first bowler ever in history to take more than 400 wickets. Not just bowling but, he was a decent batsman too and hence, found a place amongst top all-round players of the world during his prime.



Vivian Richards (1974 -1991) – A former West Indian batsman and the most destructive ever in cricket history. It was a challenge to best of the best bowlers in the world to stop him from scoring quickly. A live wire on the cricket field; he has scored 8540 Test runs in 121 matches and 6721 runs in 187 ODIs. He scored his best and made a world record of scoring 189 runs in an ODI match.



Malcolm Marshall (1978 -1991) – Marshall is another speed gun from West Indies who bowled at sheer pace. He had exceptional ability to swing the ball at raw pace. He debuted against India at 20 years. Since then, he had taken 376 scalps from 81 Tests. His economy rate of 3.53 in ODIs with average of 26.96 and 157 wickets boasts about his bowling ability.



Kapil Dev (1978 -1994) – Kapil Dev was the first Indian captain to have won the World Cup in 1983. He served Indian cricket for 15 years and was highly accorded as one of the best all-round players in the likes of Imran Khan, Botham, and Hadlee. He scored more than 5000 runs in Test and picked 434 wickets. He was the leading wicket taker for several years after breaking the world record of 433 wickets by Hadlee. His tryst with ODI was equally good with 3783 runs and 253 wickets from 225 matches. His score of 175 against Zimbabwe in World Cup is regarded as one of the best innings in ODI history.



Sunil Gavaskar (1971 - 1987) – Sunil Gavaskar played 125 Tests and 108 ODIs for India. Gavaskar was a prominent batsman who first reached 10,000 run landmark in Tests. He did it at an average of 51.12. He was well known for his aggressive batting style against the mighty West Indian attack. He was also the first player to break Bradman's record of 29 centuries and went on to score 32 in Test.



Imran Khan (1971 - 1992) – Imran Khan was the greatest all-rounder Pakistan had ever produced. He was equally good with both bat and ball. He took 362 wickets in 88 Tests and 182 wickets in 175 ODIs. He made more than 3500 runs in both formats with average above 30. Apart from this, he was one of the best captains in the world with 1992 World Cup to his kitty.



Ian Botham (1976 - 1992) – Talking of all round players, it would be unfair to not include Ian Botham who was best amongst his peers. The Englishman served his country for 15 years. Botham was a prolific batsman and a magnificent bowler. He played a crucial role to lift 1981 Ashes trophy against Australia. Overall, he took 383 wickets in Tests and 145 in ODIs at an average just above 28. With bat, he made 5200 runs in 102 Tests that he played and over 2000 runs in ODIs.



Wasim Akram (1984-2001) – Akram was Pakistan's finest left-arm fast bowler in cricket history. He swung the ball both ways and made lives difficult for the best batsmen in the world. He was the first bowler to reach 500 wickets in ODIs. He averaged 23.5 in Tests and ODIs with 414 and 502 wickets respectively. The duo of Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram were considered the best fast bowlers in the 21st century.



Brian Lara (1990 - 2007) – Brian Lara represented West Indies for 17 years. He was the best left-arm batsman (southpaw) in the history of cricket. He amassed the highest number of Test runs and centuries, breaking Gavaskar's record. He still holds the highest individual score in an innings of 400 runs. At an average of 52.88, Lara scored 11,953 runs in Tests and 10,408 runs in ODIs at average of 40.48.



Sachin Tendulkar (1989 - 2013) – Sachin Tendulkar, the run machine of Indian Cricket. He is the only player in the world to have played 24 years at the highest level. He has broken almost every batting record in the history. His stats speak high of his batting ability; 15921 runs at an average of 53.78 in Tests and 18,426 runs in ODIs with highest number of centuries in both formats. He is the only player to have played 200 Tests in cricket history and also the highest number of ODIs. He was a decent bowler in shorter format of the game with 154 wickets. His tally of runs in first-class and List-A matches is more than 46,000. His batting prowess was praised and matched that of Sir Donald Bradman. However, he is yet to be included in the Hall of Fame by ICC.



Shane Warne (1992 - 2007) – The art of leg-spin that was dying got reintroduced by this Australian genius. Warne was the best spinner of leather during most part of his playing career. He had a healthy competition with Sri Lankan counterpart, Muttiah Muralitharan. Warne's cricketing career lasted 15 years during which he took 708 Test wickets and 293 wickets in ODIs with exceptional bowling average. He also holds the record for bowling "ball of the century" that got England captain, Graham Gooch bowled around his legs.



Muttiah Muralitharan (1992 - 2011) – Like Tendulkar has broken all the batting records, Muralitharan did the same for bowling. Muralitharan, former Sri Lankan off-spinner holds the record for highest number of wickets in Tests and ODIs at an average below 23. He also has the number of five-fors in an innings of both formats and maximum number of ten wickets in a Test match. Overall, he has 800 scalps in Tests and 534 in ODIs. However, he is yet to be included in the ICC Hall of Fame.



Ricky Ponting (1995 - 2012) – Ponting is another premier batsman of Australian cricket. He has also been the most successful captain for Australia and led the team most number of successive wins in Tests and ODIs. He is next to Clive Lolyd to lift the World Cup twice. Talking of his batting ability, he has scored more than 13,000 runs in Tests and ODIs. His tally of runs in first-class and List-A matches is above 40,000.

