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Made for cricket

Welcome to the first issue of Cricinfo Magazine

It's hard to imagine a sport that indulges the writer more than cricket. It is the grandest of all sports: endlessly fascinating; rich in artistry; full of cerebral and emotional possibilities, subtlety and grace; but hardly lacking in thrill, pace, athleticism and physical combat. Its duration allows character to be revealed, fortunes to twist and turn, and writers to craft fine prose. No wonder cricket boasts a body of literature unrivalled by that of any other sport.

We must be grateful to television for spreading the game and for providing such a close-up view that we can now see the stitches on the seam better than the batsman. In India these days you can wake up to cricket in Australia, spend the day watching a game on the subcontinent, and fall asleep as one plays itself out in England or South Africa. But it is beyond the powers of television to discriminate or distil. It can fill our living rooms with images, yet it fails to provide the big picture. The written word can conjure up images no television screen can. And in the world of the written word, the monthly magazine occupies a special corner: free from the compulsions of immediacy, it can pick and choose, sniff and reflect and ruminate, evoke the past or contemplate the future, and by doing all this it can convey the soul of the game better than most.

The first issue of *Cricinfo Magazine*, which, like its predecessor *Wisden Asia Cricket*, is committed to bringing you the best cricket writing and photography from across the world, provides an example. Our cover features, which run over 12 pages, focus not on the raging controversy that is the backdrop to Rahul Dravid's appointment

as captain, but on the cultural shift that Dravid and Greg Chappell are working to bring about. There's a 20-page special on fast bowling in which some of the world's greatest pacemen take us closer to cricket's most primal and thrilling art. Virender Sehwag provides us with a rare opportunity to look into a batsman's mind during the course of an innings as he talks us through his audacious and luminous 155 against Australia in Chennai the year before the last. In *The Long Room*, which is a space for writing that captures the joys and the beauty of the game, we have Marcus Berkman attempting to answer a question that occasionally flummoxes us: "Why do we love cricket?", Peter Roebuck on the joy of watching Brian Lara bat, Mukul Kesavan looking at the idea of "home advantage" in a new light, and Kamran Abbasi reflecting on the changing role of religion in Pakistan cricket. Elsewhere, there is a look at the exploitation of cricket by television, columns on books and past cricketers, off-the-pitch pieces, and doses of humour.

A good test of a monthly magazine is its shelf life. Our aim is to produce a magazine that will last beyond the month: a magazine that can be read at one go or enjoyed in small helpings, and most importantly, something that you can come back to a few months later. Like the good game itself, we hope to be timeless.

For more than 12 years, cricinfo.com has been a pioneer and pathbreaker in online cricket publishing. From an adventure by a group of possessed volunteers, it has grown to be the world's biggest single-sport website, and touches millions of cricket fans all over the world daily. With *Cricinfo Magazine*, we begin a new journey, a rare one: that of an online brand going print. We are secure in the knowledge that we will have your company.



Tom Shaw/Getty Images