

Jonathan Agnew



It has been a crazy 12 months to be the BBC cricket correspondent. We have celebrated an Ashes win followed by a massive Ashes defeat, then there was the Kevin Pietersen

affair in which England controversially sacked its best player, and our first ever defeat to Sri Lanka. Little wonder when England then went 1-0 down to India, that many supporters and former captains lost faith in the current captain, Alastair Cook, and urged the Board to sack him. But sport is all about luck and seizing an opportunity, and thanks to a huge slice of good fortune Cook got amongst the runs again and his team rebounded magnificently to trounce India 3-1.

Cook was a St Paul's Cathedral chorister and is the most easy going of men. But he is also an immensely tough, stubborn individual so it was lovely to hear him pay public tribute to his wife, Alice, for helping him through the trials and tribulations of the summer. Not enough sportsmen speak so personally and with such warmth these days.

With the arduous Test series over, there was a good argument for giving Cook a rest for the five one-day matches that follow but such is the schedule of modern cricket that the next big challenge is just around the corner.

The World Cup is staged in Australia and New Zealand in February

and March 2015 and for once, England have planned ideal preparation to take them into the tournament, which they have never won. With no test cricket to distract the build up between now and then, England can focus properly on the challenge for the first time. But to succeed, they need to be bold: an attribute that has spectacularly passed English cricket by in the past. One-day cricket needs big hitters up front, like Australia's Aaron Finch

and Chris Gayle of West Indies, and finally England have chosen Nottinghamshire's Alex Hales, who scored a brutal T20 hundred against Sri Lanka earlier this year, to get out there and take the attack to the opposition.

This is easier said than done because it is a risky policy to go out swinging your bat from the start, but just as England held their nerve and stuck with their Test match formula, they must give Hales a proper opportunity. To win the World Cup, England need to be aggressive and imaginative, and so the hard work starts now.

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