

# JONATHAN AGNEW



unquestionably produces the worthy winner. Unfortunately, the women's game has become almost exclusively one day limited overs cricket, which has encouraged more positive batting and greater entertainment for spectators, but has left the players frustrated at the lack of exposure to the unique challenge of Test cricket.

So this year we have a compromise which, if successful, might easily be introduced to the men's game either in the parts of the world where Test cricket has lost its appeal, or to countries on the second international tier who want to introduce Tests to their programme.

This year's Women's Ashes will consist of both Test and one day cricket, with points awarded for winning each of the seven matches. The Ashes will be awarded at the end of the series to the team with the most points. The greatest incentive will be on winning the Test – that is worth six points – with two points awarded to the winner of each one day game. I think it is a brilliant concept that might easily be repeated in

the men's game between Ireland and Scotland, for example, or even fully fledged Test-playing nations such as Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

The Women's Ashes should be fiercely competitive, with Australia, the current holders, starting out as narrow favourites. Their fast bowler, Ellyse Perry, is the most recognisable player in the series – she also repre-

sents Australia at football and this has forced Cricket Australia to increase her salary considerably to £50,000 per year so they can have first call on her services.

England, meanwhile, will be looking to their long-serving captain, Charlotte Edwards, to continue her prolific run

scoring, while there is no better fielder in the game than Lydia Greenway. But England's real strength lies in their fast bowling, with Anya Shrubsole and Barnsley's fiery Katherine Brunt both capable of producing the pace, bounce and hostility that many men would be reluctant to face.

***'It's a  
shame the  
women's  
Ashes  
has only  
one Test'***

Now that England's men have retained the Ashes with two Tests still to play, our attention can focus on the women whose series against Australia begins at Wormsley on Sunday.

It is a great shame that the women's Ashes consists of only one Test match – the longer form of the game usually provides a true reflection of the strength of the teams, and therefore