

Mithali Raj: The first and biggest superstar of women's cricket



The first superstar of women's cricket, arguably the most correct batter in the game, a trailblazer -- these sobriquets aptly describe Mithali Raj.

Long before she arrived on to the international scene as a 16-year-old and scored a hundred on her India debut (against Ireland in an ODI in June 1999), Mithali was destined to be a great of the game.

Her cover drives and back foot punches that the cricketing world relished for years, came naturally to her and to add to that flair, she developed a water-tight technique that few could breach.

In terms of longevity, Mithali's 23-year-old international career is also awe-inspiring and rivals Sachin Tendulkar's 24-year-run at the top of his game.

Shantha Rangaswamy, who led India to its first ever Test win in 1976, had no hesitation in calling Mithali the best female batter the country has produced.

Mithali began her career long after Rangaswamy played her last game for India but she tracked her career closely as a commentator, selector and a "fan" of her artistry.

"When you talk about batters with the most sound technique, there are only two names that pop into the head: Sunil Gavaskar and Mithali."

"I was commentating during the 2000 World Cup in New Zealand. I saw her bat in the game against South Africa and I was amazed with the technique she possessed. Fellow commentators described it as poetry in motion."

"What is remarkable is even after 20 years in the business, she remained at the top of her game. To me, she is by far the best batter to have played for the Indian women's team," said Rangaswamy.

Mithali had a defence background with her father serving in the Indian Air Force and probably that was one of the reasons behind the unwavering discipline in her batting.

Growing up, she was passionate about Bharatnatyam but since she could not pursue that dance form further, she brought that nimble footwork into her game.

In domestic cricket, she played briefly for Andhra Pradesh before joining Air India and Railways thereafter.

Former India captain Diana Edulji was at the fag end of her career when she got Mithali into the Railways team. Not only she played for the strongest team on the domestic circuit, she also landed a proper job as a teenager.

Another former India captain Anjum Chopra, who was a part of the Indian team alongside Mithali on the memorable tour of England in 1999, said there was little doubt about the talent of the 16-year-old even though she did not have the best of times on her maiden trip to the UK.

"She did not do well against England in the two ODIs but in the nets, she was very pleasing to the eye. When we came back, she did well. We had also heard about her performances on the domestic tour, so we all knew about her rare talent."

"And by the time I stopped playing the game in 2012, Mithali had already become a star. Then the watershed moment came in 2017 (when India reached the ODI World Cup final under Mithali's captaincy), which helped our sport's popularity and Mithali became an even bigger star," said Chopra.

With women's cricket getting under the BCCI umbrella in 2006, Mithali also oversaw the game's fortunes change drastically as an amateur sport got the much-needed professionalism to survive.

From travelling in trains to globetrotting in business class, Mithali was the constant in a rather roller-coaster journey.

As Mithali shattered one record after another, there were also a few lows that came along the way.

Her fallout with head coach Ramesh Powar during the 2018 T20 World Cup in the West Indies, where she was dropped from the semifinal line-up, hastened her retirement in the shortest format.

For someone who holds the record for smashing seven fifties in a row, Mithali managed to maintain her staggering consistency levels even till the last tournament she played: the ODI World Cup in New Zealand as she shut the "outside noise" around her strike rate.

There were murmurs of 'all is not well' in the Indian team's dressing room but being the leader of the side, she kept her calm and went on with her business.

She deserved a fairy tale ending -- a World Cup trophy -- for her long service to Indian cricket but it wasn't to be.

THE FACT CORNER



Cats do not meow to communicate with other cats. Cats **meow** to communicate with humans



Crows have 250 different **warning** calls: including one for cats, one for hawks, and another for humans



Krubera Cave is the deepest known cave on Earth



The Australian **quokka** is said to be the **happiest animal** in the world due to their permanent grin

BRAIN TEASERS

1 Q. Divide 30 by $\frac{1}{2}$ and add 10. What's the answer?

pair?

2 Q. A clerk at the butcher shop is six feet tall and wears size 10 shoes. What does he weigh?

You planted sunflower seeds in your back garden. Every day, the number of flowers doubles. If it takes 52 days for the flowers to fill the garden, how many days would it take for them to fill half the garden?

3 Q. A farmer has 19 sheep on his land. One day, a big storm hits and all but seven run away. How many sheep does the farmer have left?

Using only addition, how can you use eight eights to get the number 1,000?

4 Q. Your sock drawer only contains 18 white socks and 18 blue socks. How many times do you need to reach inside the drawer and take out a sock to guarantee a matching

When Ashley was 15, her mother was 37. Now, her mother is twice her age. How old is Ashley?

22 years older, so when Ashley is 22, she's now half her mother's age.

It would take 51 days.

5. Three times.

6. $88 + 88 + 8 + 8 + 8$

7. Ashley is 22. Her mother is 44.

8. Seven.

9. Meat.

10. It's 70.

11. Seven.

12. Mother's age.

13. Mother's age.

14. Three times.

15. It would take 51 days.

16. Seven.

17. Ashley is 22. Her mother is 44.

18. Seven.

19. Meat.

20. It's 70.

21. Seven.

22. Mother's age.

23. Seven.

24. Meat.

25. It would take 51 days.

26. Seven.

27. Seven.

28. Meat.

29. It's 70.

30. Seven.

31. Seven.

32. Meat.

33. It would take 51 days.

34. Seven.

35. Meat.

36. It's 70.

37. Seven.

38. Meat.

39. It would take 51 days.

40. Seven.

41. Meat.

42. It's 70.

43. Seven.

44. Meat.

45. It would take 51 days.

46. Seven.

47. Meat.

48. It's 70.

49. Seven.

50. Meat.

51. It would take 51 days.

52. Seven.

53. Meat.

54. It's 70.

55. Seven.

56. Meat.

57. It would take 51 days.

58. Seven.

59. Meat.

60. It's 70.

61. Seven.

62. Meat.

63. It would take 51 days.

64. Seven.

65. Meat.

66. It's 70.

67. Seven.

68. Meat.

69. It would take 51 days.

70. Seven.

71. Meat.

72. It's 70.

73. Seven.

74. Meat.

75. It would take 51 days.

76. Seven.

77. Meat.

78. It's 70.

79. Seven.

80. Meat.

81. It would take 51 days.

82. Seven.

83. Meat.

84. It's 70.

85. Seven.

86. Meat.

87. It would take 51 days.

88. Seven.

89. Meat.

90. It's 70.

91. Seven.

92. Meat.

93. It would take 51 days.

94. Seven.

95. Meat.

96. It's 70.

97. Seven.

98. Meat.

99. It would take 51 days.

100. Seven.

English Proverbs and Meanings

* April showers bring May flowers.

Something bad or unpleasant today may bring good things in the future.

* A bad workman blames his tools.

Blaming the tools for bad workmanship is an excuse for lack of skill.

* A burnt child dreads the fire.

A bad experience will make people stay away from certain things.

* A fool at forty is a fool forever.

If a person hasn't matured by

the age of 40, they never will.

* A friend to all is a friend to none.

Someone who is a friend to everyone makes none of them feel special.

* A good beginning makes a good end.

If a task is carefully planned, there's a better chance that it will be done well.

* A leopard cannot change its spots.

It is not possible for a bad or unpleasant person to become good or pleasant.

Waffle Sandwich



Ingredients:

1 large egg
1 green onion, chopped<br