

# Kohli will make 400+: Kapil

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"Mark my words. Virat Kohli will make 400 plus in a Test match," Kapil Dev said. Daring to make such a prophecy on the eve of another Test match in which Kohli leads India, the World Cup-winning skipper explained that indeed Virat was the one who may be destiny's child in having been born at about the right time to become the world's finest triple-format batsman.

"Remember I said this first," Kapil went on while prophesying more 200s, 300s and even a possible 400+ to beat Brian Lara's Test record. "At his age, Sachin Tendulkar was more talented. But then he had that mental block. He would get to a hundred and then get into a rut," was how India's finest all rounder described the champion batsman who played with him for close to four international seasons.

Kapil may have been ascribing Sachin's inability to get into a fuller attacking mode as he was tutored in



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the 'Bombay school of batting', which was to take guard again and settle down to a longer grind on getting to the first landmark. He has often made this critical analysis of Sachin's approach - that he had the talent and the ability to attack the bowling far more than he did in Test matches.

When Kapil wrote an article in *Deccan Chronicle* in

praise of Sachin's hundred centuries in international cricket, he had made the same point about the master batsman not getting on with it after passing an obsessive first major landmark of a Test century. Kohli is a far more evolved batsman. Having honed his approach in the true age of attacking cricket after the advent of T20s, Kohli is a creature of the age who can

challenge the keepers of records by making multiple Test hundreds.

"There has been a tremendous improvement in Kohli. Still, I would say Sachin was more talented. But Kohli is the type who will tear an attack apart. With so many Test matches coming up this season (17 featuring India) I am sure Kohli will find the perfect pitch to his liking on which he could threaten the world record 401. I know many pitches will be turners in the home season, but I am sure Kohli will get one or two perfect pitches. I am sure one day soon the record will be in danger."

A measure of the attacking cricket that today's T20 generation batsmen can play has been made obvious by the speed at which batsmen like Virender Sehwag and Chris Gayle have gone on to triple hundreds in Tests. It is not surprising then that a batsman in that kind of mould with all the attacking strokes in the book like Kohli can make many more multiple

hundreds. It was a bit of a surprise that Kohli was the first Indian Test captain in 84 years to score a double century overseas - in the first Test in Antigua in the ongoing series in the Caribbean. But then as Kapil points out, only uninhibited attacking batsmen of the most modern mould stand a chance of really gigantic Test scores in a meaningful time frame that can also set up victories.

Told about Kohli once getting to 100 from 50 which he had got to only at the end of the 16th over in a record stand with AB de Villiers in a T20 game for RCB against Gujarat Lions, Kapil said, "Exactly. That makes my point. These guys can score at astonishing speed." Truly, Kapil is an ardent admirer of the day's attacking cricket as he is of Kohli's positive intent at the batting crease, which is what makes his Kohli prophecy so believable.