

Day-night games a good way to revive Tests: Gower

Ramesh Shankar

Prasad.RS@timesgroup.com

Chennai: The eloquent phrases fell from his lips as smoothly as he caressed the ball during his playing days when former England captain David Gower regaled an august gathering in the city on Saturday.

Delivering the inaugural KS Narayanan oration to commemorate the 50th year of the Sanmar family's ties with Jolly Rovers, Gower spoke on selling the sport to future generation, issues plaguing the game today and more. Excerpts:

On selling Test cricket to the next gen: Look, we have to do something to make Test cricket more appealing. One of the things is — those who play currently such as MS Dhoni or Virat Kohli — need to say that Test cricket is important. If a player of the stature of MS says it is important, then everyone will believe it is. Secondly, I believe day-night matches are a



EXPERT TALK: David Gower shares a light moment while delivering the inaugural KS Narayanan oration on Saturday

good way to revive Tests, and I thought the one at Adelaide between Australia and New Zealand did bring the crowds in.

On what continues to set Test cricket apart: Those who love Test cricket will say there are a lot of things that can happen. You will see swing and seam, you will have periods of

play where the batsmen are engaged in good stroke-making. Basically, you get to see all facets of the game.

On BCCI mulling a scaled-down version of DRS in the IPL: It is a good thing. The statistics that ICC provided us suggest there is an improvement in the number of correct

decisions coming via DRS. An improvement is good, but I would want the umpires to still be involved. DRS is not 100% fool-proof and people are working on it.

On how to educate the future generation on issues of fixing: Even with the highest standards of social behavior, there is crime in every part of the world. We all think we understand right and wrong. There is always temptation and it comes from circumstances that are unique. We have moved from match fixing to spot fixing, it means a tough problem to kill. For those found guilty, penalties have to be severe. Having said that, I have

some sympathy for someone like Mohammad Amir. Yes, he should have been briefed, but you have to remember that he was being influenced by the captain of the national side (Salman Butt). For a 18 or 19-year-old, the captain is always a

superior being. Yes, he admitted to his crime and was punished, but those were extraordinary circumstances. Education is a must and players need to be briefed.

On whether Kevin Pietersen (KP) could have been handled better: I agree up to a point. Former England skipper Mike Brearley or an Ian Chappell would have grabbed

tried to suppress the ego. He is an extraordinary talent and you would like to see him play. With the World T20 coming up, fans would want to see him play. Sadly, whatever he did with those text messages under Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook — to his credit — told him 'you can play' and it worked during England's tour of India in 2012-13. But in Australia later, he failed and never found any support. To top that, he came up with a book that literally ruined his chances (of making a comeback).