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20

PLAY

Lazy Elegance, Jolly Evening for Cricketers and Commoners

by Ashok Venugopal

Chennai: David Gower was known for lazy elegance at the crease. Delivering the KS Narayanan Oration on 'Lessons from the Cricket Field', as part of the Jolly Rovers Club's 50-year celebrations, the former England captain proved he can be equally elegant off the field too.

Gower enthralled the packed audience with wit and humour. Once labelled a 'preacher' by Sunil Gavaskar — the former India captain didn't like Gower's suggestion that his team

could have declared a bit early in a Test match — he did not preach during Saturday's lecture.

But he succinctly put his points across to the crowd — including the likes of former India captain S Venkataraman, Brijesh Patel, TA Sekar, Bharat Reddy, VV Kumar, CD Gopinath — that one should enjoy the game and play in the right spirit.

Hemant Kumar, captain of Jolly Rovers and Ranji Trophy selector, was impressed. "Gower said that as a captain one must be himself. He also mentioned how a player



England cricket legend David Gower (C) in conversation with former India opener Aakash Chopra in Chennai on Saturday | D SAMPATHKUMAR

must enjoy and have fun and not be rigid or serious. His advice that if you be relaxed

performance will improve, impressed me."

U Prabhakar Rao, TNCA

vice-president and one of oldest first-class cricketers in the country, felt Gower's take on captaincy was a pearl of wisdom for youngsters.

"It was very interesting. The bit about how it is a captain's duty to bring out the best from every player was valuable. He also rightly mentioned it's in the captain's hands, how he boosts the confidence of a player," said Prabhakar Rao.

Gower had an open discussion session with former India cricketer Aakash Chopra. Many believe T20 is taking the sheen off Test cricket.

"It's important for cricketers like MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli to tell cricketers (aspiring) how important Test cricket is. It's also imperative that parents of every budding cricketer must let them know the importance of Test cricket."

Chopra asked whether

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there was a trend in the last few years that teams are tigers only at home. "Adjusting in different conditions, it's mainly in the mind. Confidence is very important. Recent example is England's performance in South Africa," said Gower.

The former batsman is for use of DRS. "No doubt DRS has helped. Quality of decisions have been better. But in certain decisions like a hand caressing the grass while taking a low catch even DRS may prove inconclusive. Here is where comes morality," insisted Gower.