

VERY VERY SPECIAL!

V.V.S. LAXMAN PROFILE BY CRAIG BAMFORD



Not all of us can spell, never mind pronounce, the first three names of this Indian batting sensation, but here we go. Vangipurappu Venkata Sai is how we spell it, but for pronouncing it, I think we'll stick to V.V.S. It's much easier!

Despite not knowing how his name is spelt, many of us may also not know that Laxman once played his cricket at Hanging Heaton Cricket Club in the Bradford League.

Being a middle-order batsman, Laxman is known for his superbly timed shots against spin bowlers.

Laxman arrived on the scene in 1996 when he made his Test debut against South Africa, where he smashed a fifty that turned heads.

Laxman felt comfortable in the middle order of the Indian line-up, but couldn't concrete a firm place there and was asked to open the innings for his country.

After doing this for three years with no real success, Laxman scored a huge 167 against the Aussies in what was the highpoint for both himself and country in a demoralising series.

After this, Laxman made his point to the selectors, saying that he wasn't happy at opening the innings, and subsequently he was dropped from the Test side for almost a year.

On his return to the side in 2001 against the Australians, Laxman once again hit the high notes as he passed Sunil Gavaskar's record with 236* in the second innings.

After this, Laxman found himself selected for the one-day side and played some excellent cricket, including three ODI and two Test centuries during the 2003 tour of Australia.

Laxman continued his fine form, and after touring England last year he joined Lancashire in the English County Championship, where he replaced Brad Hodge.

Playing in five games for the Red Rose, he demonstrated his ability, scoring 380 runs in those five matches at an average of 54.28, including two tons and two half-centuries.

His form continued with India as he scored his 12th Test hundred against the Australians.

Currently, V.V.S. Laxman is captaining one of the new teams in the Indian Cricket League, where his current form and experience will come in very useful.

Not surprisingly, his adoring fans claim that 'V.V.S.' stands for 'Very Very Special'.