

# RUN MACHINE!

## Profile of Wasim Jaffer by Michael Ward

Wasim Jaffer became Spen Victoria's overseas player in 1998. The then 20-year-old enjoyed a highly successful time at Spen Lane scoring many runs and helping the club win the Heavy Woollen Cup. He scored 131 in that famous victory over Hanging Heaton and is remembered as one of the club's finest ever players. During his time at Victoria, Jaffer also broke the record for an unbeaten stand with Andy Bethel - a remarkable 277-run partnership. This was the highest stand in the Bradford League's 95-year history and Jaffer's personal total of 180 was the highest individual score for five years.



Jaffer started his career as an 18-year-old in 1996/97 with Mumbai. He revealed his talent early with an incredible triple century in only his second first-class match, which broke Mumbai's record for an away individual score. The right-handed batter could also bowl right-arm off-breaks and to date he has taken two Test wickets. Jaffer built on the promise he showed at Spen to make his Test debut for India against South Africa in 2000. He was, however, unable to cope with an experienced South African attack, scoring just 46 runs in his four innings.

It was two years before he had the chance to atone for his poor start but he would remember India's tour of the West Indies for all the right reasons. His highest score of 86 in Antigua was enough to ensure his place on the next tour of England. Yet again Jaffer's form deserted him at a crucial time and he was dropped after two Tests. Another three-year break in his international career followed but his excellent club form could not be ignored and after being recalled without playing against Pakistan, he made the side to play against a touring England side. He took this opportunity with both hands making his first century for India in his first game since being dropped at Nagpur.

Jaffer cemented his place in India's test team by becoming India's second highest scorer in the West Indies in the next series. His mammoth 212 came again at Antigua and was enough to earn him a central contract with India. This has seemingly confirmed him as one of the first-choice opening batsmen for his country and at 30 years of age he could have many good years ahead of him.

Despite his good club and Test form, Jaffer has been deemed unsuccessful at One Day Internationals, playing in only two. The first, as with his Test debut, came against South Africa, and to date he has made only 10 runs in this format. Jaffer's other teams have included India 'A', Indian Board President's XI, Mumbai and West Zone. To date, he has not played county cricket but he has played for Scholes C.C. (Holmfirth) in the Huddersfield League, and in 2001 scored 1,379 runs at an average of 100. This is how a former captain of Scholes Paul Wharton, describes him: 'Wasim Jaffer is the finest cricketer I have ever seen in league cricket – and that includes county men, overseas players, the lot. He is incredible.'