

Cricket 106

Chapter 106

The excitement in my heart was unmatched. It had been a month since India had won the World Cup, a moment that would live in history forever. But for me, another dream was about to come true.

I had been selected for India's T20I squad for the West Indies tour. The news had come a few days ago, and I could still feel the rush of emotions from that moment. This wasn't just about playing cricket; this was about wearing that blue jersey with the Indian emblem on my chest, about representing a billion people, about making my family and my country proud.

The morning of my departure was filled with emotions. My mother hugged me tightly, whispering prayers for my success. My father, always the strong and silent one, patted my back and said, "Go show them what you're made of, beta."

With their blessings, I picked up my bag, my bat, and my dreams, and walked out of my home, stepping into a new chapter of my life.

As soon as I entered the BCCI Cricket Camp, I felt an electrifying atmosphere. This was the place where legends trained, where warriors were forged, and where India's best prepared to conquer the world.

And then, I saw them everyone, casually talking and joking around.

I looked around and spotted Pant, being his usual energetic self, cracking jokes with Krunal Pandya and Sundar.

Navdeep Saini—someone I had played with at different levels, and seeing a familiar face gave me a sense of ease.

Navdeep: "Bro we are goanna share Indian Dressing room together!"

I fist-bumped him, feeling a mix of pride and excitement.

We were boarding the flight to Lauderhill, West Indies, for our first match. The excitement was high, but so was the responsibility.

On the flight, the energy was lighthearted. Rishabh Pant was cracking jokes as usual, keeping everyone entertained. Shikhar Dhawan was busy taking selfies, while Jadeja and Krunal Pandya were sleeping. Virat bhaiya and Rohit bhaiya sat together, casually chatting.

We all laughed, but deep down, I knew the gravity of the situation. Tomorrow was the biggest day of my life.

Match Day – The Playing XI is Announced

The next morning, we had a final training session before the match. We practiced fielding drills, batting in the nets, and strategizing for the conditions.

After the training, Virat bhaiya gathered everyone in the team meeting.

"Boys, this is our first game on this tour. Conditions are different, but we adapt. We play aggressive, fearless cricket."

Then, he took out a sheet of paper and started announcing the Playing XI.

Rohit Sharma

Shikhar Dhawan

Virat Kohli

Aarav Pathak

Rishabh Pant

Krunal Pandya

Ravindra Jadeja

Washington Sundar

Bhuvneshwar Kumar

Khaleel Ahmed

Navdeep Saini

My name had been called. I was playing my debut T20 match for India.

I looked around, and everyone was smiling. Pant nudged me.

"Bro, finally you had your T20I debut!"

Rohit bhaiya walked toward me, holding a cap. This was my India cap.

"This is special, Aarav," he said, handing it over.

"Every cricketer dreams of this moment. But only a few get it. Wear this with pride, play with heart, and remember—you're not just playing for yourself. You're playing for the country."

I felt a lump in my throat. The emotions were overwhelming. Taking the cap in my hands, I looked at the India emblem embroidered on it.

"Thank you, bhaiya. I won't let the team down," I said, my voice filled with determination.

Everyone clapped, and I felt the warmest welcome possible. Virat bhaiya patted my back.

I smiled. I was ready.

Jatin Sapru: "Welcome, folks! It's a bright day here in Lauderhill, and we are all set for the first T20I between India and West Indies. The Indian team has won the toss and elected to field first. A young debutant, Aarav Pathak, gets his first international T20I game today, and all eyes will be on him. A big moment indeed!"

Aakash Chopra: "Bilkul! Pehli baar India ke liye khelna har kisi ka sapna hota hai, aur jab wo sapna haqeeqat banta hai, toh jazbaat alag level pe hote hain! Dekhna hoga ki yeh debutant kaise perform karta hai!"

("Absolutely! Playing for India for the very first time is a dream for everyone, and when that dream turns into reality, the emotions reach an entirely different level! It's going to be exciting to see how this debutant performs!")

West Indies Innings

Openers: John Campbell & Evin Lewis

Bowler: Bhuvneshwar Kumar

Jatin Sapru: "Bhuvi with the new ball! The king of swing is ready. Here he comes... first ball... and it's a gentle out-swing to start with. A watchful push from Campbell and a dot ball."

Aakash Chopra: "Bhuvi ki line aur length hai on point,

Inke samne ballebaaz ho jaaye disappoint!"

("Bhuvi's line and length are absolutely on point,

Against him, any batsman is bound to be disappointed!")

Jatin Sapru: "Second ball... just a little outside off... Campbell lets it go. Bhuvneshwar Kumar keeping things tight here."

Jatin Sapru: "A single on the third ball, a couple on the last one... and that's the first over done. Just three runs off it!"

Over 2 – Aarav Pathak to Bowl His First Over in International Cricket

Jatin Sapru: "AND HERE COMES AARAV PATHAK! The debutant! What a moment! His first ball in international cricket!"

Jatin Sapru: "AND HE STRIKES FIRST BALL! Edge! Gone! Slips takes it! WHAT A START TO HIS INTERNATIONAL CAREER! EVIN LEWIS IS OUT!"

Aakash Chopra: "Aarav bharat ka gaurav,

Pehli hi ball pe laaya shaan aur shaurav!

Tez gati, sahi line,

Ballebaaz ka ab kya hoga bhai?"

("Aarav, the pride of India,

On his very first ball, he brought glory and grace!"

""With pace and precision, the line is just right,

What will happen to the batsman now, tonight?""")

Jatin Sapru: "The Indian team erupts in celebration! Aarav Pathak—you beauty! A wicket on his very first ball for India! He couldn't have dreamt of a better start!"

New Batsman – Nicholas Pooran

Jatin Sapru: "Alright, here comes Nicholas Pooran, one of West Indies' s new and most dangerous hitters. Aarav steaming in for the second delivery..."

Ball 2 – Dot Ball

Ball 3 – Another Dot Ball!

Ball 4 – Pooran Goes for the Big Hit... AND HE'S OUT!

Jatin Sapru: "AND TAKEN!! WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? TWO WICKETS IN HIS FIRST OVER! Nicholas Pooran tries to go big... but he finds Krunal Pandya in the deep! Aarav Pathak, remember the name!"

Aakash Chopra: "Baarish ho ya dhoop ho,

Aarav ki bowling kar rahi hai sabko choop!"

("Whether it's rain or shine,

Aarav's bowling is leaving everyone silent, every time!")

Ball 5 – Dot Ball

Jatin Sapru: "Tight bowling! No room for the batter!"

Ball 6 – Another Dot! End of a Sensational Over!

Jatin Sapru: "That's the over! What an over! A wicket on the first ball and another one on the fourth! India is on fire!"

🔥 What a fiery start from Aarav Pathak! The debutant has shaken West Indies early, and India is on top!
🏏🔥

Over 10 – Aarav Pathak to Kieron Pollard

Jatin Sapru: "Alright, here we go again! Aarav Pathak steaming in... and facing him is the big man, Kieron Pollard."

Ball 1 – Dot Ball!

Ball 2 – Short Ball... AND HE'S GONE! POLLARD HOLES OUT!

Jatin Sapru: "GONEEEE!!! This is a dream spell! Short ball into the body, Pollard goes for the pull... but straight into the hands of deep square leg! Aarav Pathak is on fire!"

Over 14 – Aarav to Sunil Narine

Jatin Sapru: "Here's Sunil Narine, trying to hang in there. But with the way Aarav is bowling today, it's not going to be easy!"

Ball 1 – Yorker! Dot Ball!

Ball 2 – Clean Bowled! Timber! Narine Gone!

Jatin Sapru: "KNOCKED HIM OVER! OH, WHAT A DELIVERY! That is as good as it gets! Aarav Pathak with a scorching yorker, and the stumps are rattled!"

Final Spell Summary – Aarav Pathak

👑 Overs: 4

🔥 Runs Conceded: 13

🏏 Wickets: 4 (Evin Lewis, Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard, Sunil Narine)

Jatin Sapru: "Take a bow, young man! What a spell! This is what dreams are made of! On debut, Aarav Pathak delivers a magical performance, destroying the West Indies batting lineup!"

Jatin Sapru: "West Indies finish with just 95/9 in their 20 overs, and India will fancy their chances of chasing this down comfortably. But tonight, it's all about one name—Aarav Pathak! What a debut!"

🔥 A debut to remember! Aarav Pathak's spell will go down in history! 🏏🔥

Alex: "Welcome back, folks! India need 96 runs to win, and out come the openers—Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan. Leading the attack for West Indies is the left-arm quick, Sheldon Cottrell."

First Over – Cottrell to Dhawan

Ball 1 – Dot Ball

Naman: "Cottrell runs in, bowls a good-length delivery outside off... and Dhawan shoulders arms. A watchful start."

Ball 2 – OUT! LBW! Dhawan's Gone!

Alex: "GOT HIM! That's plumb! No need to review that! Dhawan with an ungainly swipe across the line, misses completely, and it's crashing into middle and leg. The umpire raises the finger in a flash! India lose their first wicket at zero."

Naman: "That's the danger of playing across the line early. Dhawan knew it the moment he missed it. No review, no second chances—he's walking back!"

Alex: "And here he comes! The backbone of Indian batting, the man who thrives in run chases—Virat Kohli! The crowd roars as he takes guard!"

Naman: "Absolutely! He loves a challenge, and with a small target, he'll look to finish this early. Joining him at the other end is Rohit Sharma, who's got that elegance and timing we all love."

Alex: "India recovering well after that early setback. Both Rohit and Virat are finding the gaps beautifully, rotating strike, and putting away the bad balls."

Naman: "This is class batting. No risks, just pure timing and placement. The West Indies bowlers need a breakthrough soon, or this pair will take the game away."

Alex: "Oh no, he's edged it! Rohit Sharma goes for the drive, but there's a faint nick, and the keeper makes no mistake! A huge wicket for the Windies!"

Naman: "Rohit was looking good, but he falls just short of a big score. West Indies get the breakthrough, and now... a special moment, folks!"

Alex: "And look who's walking in! The young man, Aarav Pathak! Debut match, and after a brilliant bowling performance, he now gets his chance with the bat!"

Naman: "Look at that confidence! Jogging to the crease, twirling his MRF bat—this is the moment every young cricketer dreams of. The crowd is up on their feet!"

Alex: "There's something about this young man. Four wickets earlier, and now, a chance to show what he can do with the bat. Can he finish the game for India?"

🔥 India 47/2 – Aarav Pathak takes strike. The stage is set! 🏏🔥

Alex: "Alright, folks, buckle up! Young Aarav Pathak, on debut, is ready to face his first ball in international cricket. And guess who's bowling? The mystery man—Sunil Narine!"

Naman: "What a challenge for the youngster! Narine, with all his variations, will test him right away. Can the debutant handle the heat?"

Ball 1 – SIX! WHAT A START!

Alex: "OH, TAKE THAT! FIRST BALL IN INTERNATIONAL CRICKET... AND IT'S DEPOSITED OVER LONG-ON FOR A SIX! Aarav Pathak, welcome to international cricket in style!"

Naman: "My word, what a statement! Flighted ball, right in the slot, and Aarav has absolutely slogged it! Clean as a whistle! The crowd is loving this!"

Ball 2 – SIX! REVERSE SWEEP! LOOKING LIKE ABD!

Alex: "ARE YOU KIDDING ME? REVERSE SWEEP... AND IT'S GONE FOR SIX! THIS IS NOT A DEBUT, THIS IS A STATEMENT!"

Naman: "That's outrageous! A spinner's nightmare! Narine gives it a little air, and Pathak flips the script—switches his stance and ramps it over third man! Reverse Sweep for Six!"

Ball 3 – ANOTHER SIX! WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

Alex: "UNBELIEVABLE! THREE BALLS, THREE MASSIVE BLOWS! This time, he plays it behind him, almost like a ramp shot, and it flies over fine leg for another six!"

Naman: "The youngster is playing like he's been here for years! A touch of AB de Villiers in that stroke! He's reading Narine like a book!"

Ball 4 – FOUR! THIS IS BRUTAL!

Alex: "Oh, now he's toying with the field! A classy cover drive, along the carpet, races to the boundary for four! Narine is under immense pressure now!"

Naman: "Pure class! This is not just power, this is timing, this is precision! The debutant is showing the world he belongs at this level!"

Ball 5 – Dot Ball.

Alex: "Narine finally manages to sneak in a dot! A flatter one, Aarav tries to cut but finds the fielder at point. That's a small victory for Narine, but the damage is done!"

Naman: "He needed that! Narine under the pump, but he finally keeps the young gun quiet for a ball. One delivery to go in this over!"

Ball 6 – Single. Strike Rotated.

Alex: "Smart batting! Just nudges it to mid-wicket for a quick single. Ends the over on 23 off just six balls!"

Naman: "What a debut innings this is turning out to be! The confidence, the flair, the fearlessness—Aarav Pathak is playing like a superstar in the making!"

🔥 India now at 70/2 – Aarav Pathak taking the game away from West Indies! 🔥

Aakash Chopra (excitedly): "Aarav on strike, Brathwaite charges in... straight drive! Pure elegance! This is straight out of a coaching manual! The ball races past the bowler, and it's four runs! This young man is showing class!"

Navjot Singh Sidhu (animated): "Oh-ho! This is not just a shot; this is a poetry in motion! The timing, the placement, the execution—if cricket was an art, this man would be the Picasso of batting!"

Aakash Chopra: "Next ball... cover drive! And it's another four! Aarav playing a picture-perfect cover drive in front of Virat Kohli—what a moment! The king nods in approval, and that tells you everything!"

Sidhu: "Guru, this is like offering prayers at the temple of cricket! The ball kisses the turf and rushes to the boundary like a child running towards an ice cream cart!"

Aakash Chopra: "Brathwaite under pressure now... full toss—AND SMOKED FOR SIX! That's out of the park!"

Sidhu (laughing): "Uff! Yeh koi Pathak nahi, Patakha hai! (He's not just Pathak, he's a firecracker!) The West Indian bowlers must be feeling like they are in a storm with no umbrella!"

Aakash Chopra: "Short ball now—PULLED AWAY! And that's another six! He's merciless! The ball lands deep in the stands! This is turning into a nightmare for Brathwaite!"

Sidhu (shouting): "Oye hoye! This is Dill ka launda, playing like a king in the Caribbean! Masti bhi hai, maza bhi hai, aur tabahi bhi hai!"

Aakash Chopra: "Brathwaite with the fifth delivery... CRACKED! Flat and hard over long-on! Another six! Aarav Pathak, take a bow! This is unbelievable hitting!"

Sidhu: "Arre Sher ka bachcha hai yeh! (He's the son of a lion!) This isn't just batting—this is destruction with a smile! West Indies, be afraid, be very afraid!"

Harsha Bhogle (smiling): Ladies and gentlemen, what a match we just witnessed! India start their series with a commanding win, and the man of the moment is none other than the debutant—Aarav Pathak!

A dream debut—4 overs, just 13 runs, and 4 big wickets! And if that wasn't enough, he walked in and played a breathtaking knock with the bat!

Aarav, first of all, congratulations on winning the Man of the Match award in your very first international match! You received the trophy from the great Nigel Duguid himself—how are you feeling?

Aarav (grinning, holding the trophy): Thank you so much, sir! This is a surreal feeling. Wearing the India jersey was a dream, but to start my journey like this... I couldn't have asked for anything more. Getting this trophy from a legend like Nigel Duguid just makes it even more special.

Harsha Bhogle: Let's talk about your bowling first. You got a wicket on the very first ball of your international career! Evin Lewis—gone! Walk us through that moment.

Aarav (laughs): I still can't believe it! I was a bit nervous, but Rohit bhaiya told me, "Just back yourself and bowl with confidence." I ran in, bowled my natural length, and got the edge straight to slip. The moment the catch was taken, I was just screaming in joy!

Harsha Bhogle: And then you didn't stop there! You picked up Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard, and Sunil Narine. That Pollard wicket was huge—what was the plan?

Aarav: Pollard is a dangerous player, so I wanted to keep it tight. I knew he would try to attack me. I bowled a slower one at good length, he mistimed it, and Krunal bhai took a brilliant catch. It was a relief because if he stayed, the total could've been much higher!

Harsha Bhogle: Now, let's talk about that batting masterclass! India lost Dhawan and Rohit early, and you walked in with Virat Kohli at the other end. And what a start! Slog-sweep six, reverse-sweep six, and then a shot behind for another six—all in one over! Were you in the zone?

Aarav (laughs): I was just seeing the ball and hitting it! So when I saw the ball in my slot, I just went for it. The reverse sweep six—I wasn't even planning that, it just happened in the moment!

Harsha Bhogle: And then against Carlos Brathwaite—you played the most beautiful cover drive right in front of Virat Kohli! He was smiling after that shot—did he say anything?

Aarav: (laughs) Yeah, after that shot, he walked up to me and said, "Arey waah, cover drive toh sikhana padega tujhe!" That moment was special. Playing a cover drive and getting a nod from the best in the business—it was unreal!

Harsha Bhogle: Next over, only a few runs left, but you finished it in grand style! A flat six over long-on! What was going through your mind?

Aarav: I just wanted to finish the game there itself. I knew if I timed it well, it would clear the ropes, and thankfully, it did! That feeling of seeing the ball sail into the stands, knowing we had won—it was incredible!

Harsha Bhogle: Aarav, you couldn't have asked for a better debut—4 wickets, a match-winning knock, and the Man of the Match award! Any message for the fans?

Aarav: Just a big thank you! The support has been overwhelming, and I'm just grateful to be here, representing India. This is just the beginning, and I'll keep working hard to give my best for the country!

Harsha Bhogle: Well, what a night for Indian cricket! Aarav Pathak, take a bow—this was a debut to remember! Congratulations once again!

Aarav: Thank you so much, sir!