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## SACHIN TENDULKAR

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**Interviewer:**

Let's introduce the batting master of the world, Sachin Tendulkar. Well, let's share a few stories, I reckon. Why don't we start right at the beginning?

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

Well, school cricket was exciting and the reason to start playing cricket was a strange one. I mean, I was a notorious child, difficult to manage and I took a lot of pride in that. One of the evenings, they were showing a famous Bollywood film on a TV channel. And in those days, there were not many channels back home in India. So, we friends thought this is the best time to polish off all the mangoes from the tree, which we were not meant to. And we fell down. We also brought the tree down with us. And that was a turning point of my career because my brother and my family, the rest of the family members said, this is enough. And you're not allowing more of these complaints to come home every evening, because that was supposed to be my summer vacations, beginning of my summer vacations.

And they said that we are going to make you burn all your calories on a cricket field. You do what you want, you love cricket, go out and play with a season ball. And that's how my career started. And gradually, I did not know. I mean, I was only 11 years old. I did not know what were the big tournaments, but the dream was there in front of me. I wanted to play for India because as a 10-year-old, I had seen Kapil Dev lift that beautiful trophy at Lords.

1983 world cup. So, I had also joined the celebrations, not knowing the significance of winning the world cup. So, that's how my cricket started. And I always wanted to win the world cup. That was the reason I started. And as the time went by, I started enjoying cricket and I started realising the challenges of cricket. And my coach was instrumental. And along with my brother...

**Interviewer:**

Ajeet.

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

To my elder brother, Ajeet, to make me realise the importance of leading a disciplined life, a focused life, and to make me push harder, they found reasons. And even towards the end of my career, I followed that formula. If I scored runs, let the rest of the world talk about it. I think about the next game. And that right from my school days became an unwritten formula, unwritten law at home that we don't talk about last game, we talk about next game.

And however, many runs I scored, I wanted to go out and score more than that. So, if I didn't score, I would have a restless night. If I scored runs, I would still have a restless night thinking that how am I going to score more? And that's how it all happened. I mean, I normally don't discuss numbers, but this is something that I must share with all of you. I, towards the end of my school cricket career, I already started playing first class cricket. And the last season I can proudly say that I averaged 1000 in 25 because I only got out once in the whole season.

And my brother and my coach were instrumental in that because every time I scored runs, none of them said, well played, to me. And that's why in my farewell speech, I said, to my coach that at least now you can take a chance by saying, well done. There are no more matches in my career. But something that I lived for was appreciation from my coach and my brother, which never happened. I mean, and that was something which, you know, sort of kept me giving my best all the time.

**Interviewer:**

I've asked around the room and we will have a chance to ask some questions after we have our conversation here. Many people have said simple, easy question. What was the best innings ever?

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

The one in Perth, 1992, I was only 18 then. And that was a fast wicket, everyone, I guess, each Aussie know how fast the wicket is, the kind of bounce it generates. So, for someone who had never experienced that kind of pace and bounce, and Australia as usual was playing terrific cricket. So, for me to who go out there and score runs on that pitch was really important. And I can almost say the turning phase of my career, because after that, I was not over confident, but I was confident to play any attack in the world. And I felt I was ready to face any attack in the world.

I was able to challenge many attacks after that in the world. But that one particular inning was the best inning. But the most meaningful innings and something which has stayed with me now and it'll stay with me forever, has to be the one that I played against England in Chennai in 2008. That was a time when Mumbai was hit by that terrible terrorist attack. And the one-day series was cancelled. England went off to Dubai and they graciously came back to play the test series.

And when we turned up in Chennai to play the first test, none of us were in the frame of mind to play test cricket, I mean any form of cricket, because all we kept discussing was how could this happen to our nation? And why did it happen? It was the toughest phase of my career. And I would speak on the behalf of our team, it was really, really tough. And for first three and a half days, we were completely out of ideas, we could not put up a competitive performance. And England gave us a target in the fourth innings of 375 runs, 374 runs.

We were able to win that game. We chased 375 on a difficult track. But to see the entire nation celebrating that victory, even for a second, meant a lot to all of us. And I had played a significant role in that, so that is the most important innings of my life, more than even, you know, the other world cups innings or other important innings that I've been part of. This had a different meaning altogether. So, Chennai match.

**Interviewer:**

Well played. What about some of the characters that did ball to you? I mean, we're talking about very best fast ballers in the world after the last quarter of a century. Why don't we just, you know, go through a few names. What about the first, your first tour against Pakistan and then maybe Donald and McGraw and, and Warren who reckons even today after you smashed him around in charger, that he has nightmares of you hitting him for six. I mean.

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

The first test series was an important series because I was only 16 and I did not know at that time what I was, you know, facing against. I mean, you talk about Imran Khan world class bowler, Wasim Akram, amazing, absolutely super, all time one of the greatest bowlers to have played. Wakar Younis, I would put him in the same league. Abul Kadar, again in the same league. So, it was a world class attack.

And I went out to bat in the first game and straight from school cricket to one season or first-class cricket, and then to play against the best bowling attack in the world. I was clueless. I had no idea. I was getting beaten by the pace. I had never experienced someone bowl at 90-95 miles an hour. And I could actually see the ball, but while I was reacting, the ball was more towards the keeper and not closer to the keeper, rather than it should be closer to me.

But and I said, oh, this is a wrong place. And, you know, you got in the wrong place at the wrong time. And I got out, I got out on 15. While walking back, I somehow controlled my tears. I was only 16 then, so I was allowed to do all that. I went to the bathroom and I cried. And I looked at myself in the mirror, said, this level of cricket is not for you. You know, you're not good enough to do all this. And fortunately, I got about six days in between. So, I ended up speaking to a lot of, the senior players in the team, the coach, and they all said that, you know, you batted as if you're playing the school match. This is not a school match. You need to learn to give respect to these world class bowlers.

And you need to, you need to just hang around there, give yourself some time. And in the next match, I went out, I was just hoping that I get picked for the next game, which I was. And the next game, I decided not to look at the scoreboard. I said, the only time I'm looking in the direction of the scoreboard is to look at the clock because I decided my target was that I'm going to back for half an hour, not worrying about runs. And after half an hour, you know, I got used to that pace. And I said, I can deal with this pace. You know, it's not easy, but it's not impossible. And that changed my thinking. I scored 59 in that test match. And from there on, I never doubted my ability. But the first match, I thought it was my first and the last one.

**Interviewer:**

What about fear in that, you have been able to overcome a lot of pain during your career.

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

In the, in fact, in the same series, in the fourth test match, we were in a bad position. In the second innings, we were 34 for four wickets down and with a day and a half to go. So, I got hit on my nose when I was batting on one. Later on, I realised that I had broken my nose. Everyone gathered and then, you know what happens when Pakistan team is around you. There are bound to be some comments. And Javed Miandad was, you know, a tricky customer. And he said, you've broken your nose. You know, you can't be bating here. You have to go to the hospital knowing that, you know, one batsman goes to the hospital, there again, they start to dominate.

And a doctor came, I iced my nose and I put a bandage and I continued bating. But that was again, I mean, I scored 58 in that match and I batted for four more hours after that, which sort of, you know, helped us draw the series because Pakistan had the most wonderful attack in the world. They were expected to thrash us 4-nil. And to draw the series was kind of a, which I got to know through English guys, it was a moral victory for us. So, I only learned Edward towards the end of my career, but it means a lot. So, it was kind of a moral victory for us and we were able to draw, but I became fearless after that.

**Interviewer:**

Look, I think an interesting question here would be, you've had your highs and your lows and you've been absolutely magnificent right through. How does one get up off the deck when things aren't going well?

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

I would like to share one experience with you here. It's a funny story, but completely out of the box, which we hadn't tried. And it did wonders for our team. We were playing against New Zealand and Chris Cairns was bowling. This was in India, in Mohali. So, in your hometown. It was, the ball was reverse swinging and Chris Cairns was virtually beating us two, three times an over. I was bating with Rahul Dravid, so the main batters were bating. We'd like to believe that we were the main batters and we were getting beaten and we were sort of clueless because we couldn't see the shine. Sometimes the surfaces are such that it becomes a little difficult to figure out which side is the shiny side and which is the rough side.

I mean, I expect all you guys to know what reverse swing is. Reverse swing is wherever the shiny side is, the ball starts to go in that direction. Even if the bowler wants the ball to go in the opposite direction, it'll not go because of the imbalance and the surface of the ball.

So, Chris had started doing that and I met with Raul in the middle of the wicket, in the middle of the over, I said, I've got an idea. And he said, do you want to share it now or after the over. I said, I'll share with you after the over, but it can work. So, Rahul said, okay, tell me now, what is your idea? I said to Rahul, I am closer to the bowler. And when he is walking back on the run up, I need to stand here.

And he is walking back onto his run up. I would be watching him closely and I'd be watching the ball, which side is a shiny side and which side is the rough side. So, Rahul said, then what happens after that? I said, whichever side is the shiny side, I will hold the bat in that hand. If the ball, if he's going to ball an outswinger, the bat is going to be in my left hand, if he's bowling in swinger, the bat is in my right hand at the non-striker's end. So, that's the only time in my career when the batsman is ready to face the ball. He's not watching the bowler; he's watching the bat in my hand. So, he is...

**Interviewer:**

Very good.

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

So, Rahul is watching me and suddenly, and suddenly you see couple of cover drives being hit for boundaries and, you know, on drives passing the, you know, piercing mid-wicket and mid-on, and Chris is like wondering, I mean, these guys were getting beaten couple of times every over, and suddenly I'm giving away couple of boundaries. There's definitely something wrong.

So, all the fielders were watching me because I was, you know, watching Chris and not Rahul. And normally, no batsman stands facing the Bowler. He would be like facing the other batter. And then I would quickly change the bat. And by then they had sort of figured out that there is something fishy and Chris lost his momentum. He lost his rhythm and he held the ball crossing and he bowled a ball. And instead of, you know, looking at Rahul or checking what has happened there, he looks at me and he says, what have you got for this?

Chris didn't realise that I had also warned Rahul that if I don't know what is coming, I'm going to hold the bat in the middle, so that is how the story goes. So, it's just, in short, it's just being a step ahead of your opposition.

**Interviewer:**

Sachin, thank you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, it has been an outstanding night. Thank you so much.

**Sachin Tendulkar:**

Thank you.

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