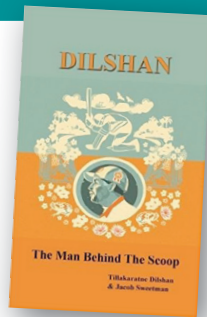




BOOK REVIEW

DILSHAN: THE MAN BEHIND THE SCOOP



BY TILLAKARATNE DILSHAN & JACOB SWEETMAN
WIBBLE PUBLISHING, £9.99 (£4.96 ON KINDLE)

Tillakaratne Dilshan, the inventor of the Dilscoop, is anything but ordinary and his new autobiography, co-authored by Jacob Sweetman, sheds new light on a driven and ambitious character.

From the outset you get a clear sense of Dilshan's relentless determination to make his mark on the game. This is partly a reflection of his quest for individual recognition but predominantly borne out of his patriotism and desire to help his homeland scale new heights.

Dilshan's interjections throughout the text show just how much pride he has for his 'Resplendent Land' (Sri Lanka in Sanskrit) and the book culminates with the proudest moment of his career, as he helps his country lift the World T20 title in 2014.

"It was the finest moment in my career," says Dilshan. "It's what everything had building towards [sic], because it wasn't about me. It wasn't about Sanga and it wasn't about Mahela, it was about home, Serendip. I was so proud that I had given something tangible back to my country. I cried like a baby that night."

Sweetman steers the book by providing depth and context to events while Dilshan's vivid accounts add the colour. As the text flicks between the Sri Lankan's playing career and his time growing up in Kalutara, the struggles he has faced to reach the pinnacle of the game become clear.

He gives moving accounts of the destruction caused by the tsunami in 2004, the Sri Lankan Civil War, and the terrorist attack on the team bus in 2009. These harrowing experiences hardened Dilshan's resolve to succeed and live life to the fullest. Cricket's basic enjoyment but relative unimportance in the context of these events is a clear theme throughout.

Dilshan's modest upbringing and the effect his background had on his relationship with the Sri Lankan cricket board is fascinating. Despite his status as one of his country's most celebrated cricketers, he felt like an outsider whose face never quite fitted as far as the selectors were concerned. This became particularly pertinent during his problematic time as national captain, which was cut short after only nine months.

"I couldn't really believe that after all these years I was still having to prove myself more than others because of the school I went to, because of my poor background," he says. "I was always an outsider, I knew that, but I was appalled at my treatment. I couldn't believe it."

Dilshan: The Man Behind The Scoop provides an insightful, and to many unseen, take on Sri Lanka's great innovator. **BW**



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