

The change in Test cricket performance following the introduction of T20 cricket: Implications for tactical strategy

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PURPOSE

International cricket has evolved from predominantly Test cricket, to shorter formats of competition. With the high player overlap between formats, the introduction of T20 cricket is proposed to have influenced Test cricket and therefore the tactical strategies coaches and players should attempt to implement. The aim of this study was to identify the change in specific Test cricket performance metrics following the introduction of T20 cricket across a 20-year period (2000-2020).

SAMPLE

Match statistics from 724 international Test cricket matches involving the top eight Test nations played between the 1st January 2000 and the 31st March 2020 were selected for analysis. Matches were split into pre-T20 (2000-2005) and post T20, with this post T20 period being split into five groups each consisting of 3 years of competition.

OBSERVED CHANGES



SCORING CHANGES

3.1% less of runs scored through fours

■ Comparing 2000-2005 and 2018-2020.

0.8% more runs scored through sixes

■ Comparing 2000-2005 and 2015-2017.

17.1% fewer games ending in draws

■ Comparing 2000-2005 and 2018-2020.

Additionally, a steady but small decrease in the number of days played was observed from 2009-11 (4.5) through 2012-14 (4.4), 2015-17 (4.3), and 2018-20 (4.3).

SIGNIFICANCE

This study provides new and longitudinal insights into the evolution of several performance indicators within Test cricket in relation to the introduction of T20 cricket. Whilst the direct impact of T20 upon Test cricket performance cannot be conclusively known by virtue of the observational nature of the current study, this paper highlights interesting changes in performance post T20 introduction.