

Despite the bright start, Kapil feels it is too early to assess Kohli's abilities as a skipper.

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31 Jul 2016, 14:58 IST

Updated : 01 Aug 2016, 09:24 IST

sportskeeda

Kapil Dev: Ravichandran Ashwin has done better than Ian Botham so far



Kapil Dev feels Ashwin's all-round abilities is crucial to Kohli's successful adoption of the five-bowler strategy

Heaping lavish praise on Ravichandran Ashwin, legendary Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev claimed that the 29-year-old has even surpassed the feats achieved by English all-rounder Ian Botham. The former Indian captain feels having a player of Ashwin's abilities was helping Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli adopt his preferred five-bowler strategy in a seamless manner.

Ashwin has made an impressive start to the West Indies tour so far picking up 12 wickets with the ball and has also contributed with the bat scoring a century in the first Test which India won by an innings and 92 runs thus helping him outgun his skipper Kohli, who had scored his maiden first-class double hundred, for the Man-of-the-Match award.

While former West Indies cricketer Ian Bishop commented that Ashwin, who has got all his three Test centuries so far against the West Indies, should perform against other nations as well with the bat to be considered a proper all-rounder, Kapil feels the Tamil Nadu cricketer has already proven his credentials.

"I think he has shown that already," Kapil responded when asked whether Ashwin can be considered as a competent

all-rounder. "In such short time, he has achieved everything that no other all-rounder has done. He has got 1000 runs and 100 wickets and I think he has done better than Ian Botham in terms of the number of matches."

Kapil feels Ashwin's performances as an all-rounder has given skipper Virat Kohli the freedom to go ahead with his plan of fielding five specialist bowlers in the Test side but nevertheless praised the 27-year-old's aggressive captaincy. "It takes guts to go in with five bowlers but if Ashwin can bat like he showed in the first Test, that is great. You do need quality all-rounders so that the management can build a great team," he said.

Though Kohli has made a good start as Indian Test skipper, the 1983-World Cup winning captain feels it is too early to assess Kohli's abilities as a skipper but added that he has the potential to become one of India's best ever skippers.

"I think it is too early to assess him. We need to give him a few series before assessing and comparing him. He has shown good potential and has a mind of his own which is very good," Kapil said.

that India is looking to win rather than draw matches off late and is especially pleased with the fact that a good crop of young fast bowlers has come up taking the over-dependency on spinners, out of the equation for India.

"In the last 10-15 years, the thought process has changed from not wanting to lose to wanting to win. I think compared to the 70s and 80s, we have to say hats off that India is depending on fast bowlers," he said.

Though India has enjoyed considerable success in the Test arena off late, Kapil feels the young team needs to mature even more to replace the legendary Indian batsmen who have retired from the format over the past five years or so.

"I think the team needs some time to get mature. For the last 10-15 years, we had a very strong team. So when the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, M.S. Dhoni leave, it is not enough to fill in those gaps. It takes time to build a team to replace these players," Kapil said.