Silly Point

# ICC-Test-Championship and the act of chickening out.

4th Feb 2021

As many of you are already aware, I am an avid cricket fan. And supporter of Indian and English team. In that order. ☺

Everyone would agree with me that the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar trophy was one of the thrilling series in the recent time. Yours truly was up till the wee hours of early morning to watch the exciting and tense sessions. It even got to a stage that the complete daily cycle was turned on its head and the SO[[1]](#footnote-1) was not amused.

Soon after the series was finished, news appeared that [Australia has decided not to tour South Africa citing Covid-19 concerns](https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/cricket-south-africa-disappointed-at-cricket-australia-s-tour-cancellation-1249867).

One important news item that lurked within the previous news item was the fact that now Australia has a fairly good chance of making it to the final of [ICC World Test Championships](https://www.icc-cricket.com/world-test-championship) to be [played @ Lords on](https://www.espncricinfo.com/series/new-zealand-in-england-2021-1249202/new-zealand-vs-tba-final-1249875/live-cricket-score) 18th June 2021.

This does not seem fair.

Considering that the Indian team had comprehensively defeated Australian team at their home turf in the recently concluded series, it did not seem that just. It’s leaving a bad taste in the mouth – but realising that I have bias with my interests, I would like to balance the argument by bringing in the tried-and-tested fallback: Using mathematics and probability.

In order to understand how it’s possible for Australia to qualify for the final, let’s first review the [current points table (as of 4th Feb 2021).](https://www.icc-cricket.com/world-test-championship/standings)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rank | Team | PCT | Points | Series Played | Matches Played | Matches Won | Matches Lost | Matches Drawn | Total Points |
| 1 | India | 71.70% | 430 | 5 | 13 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 600 |
| 2 | New Zealand | 70.00% | 420 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 600 |
| 3 | Australia | 69.20% | 332 | 4 | 14 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 480 |
| 4 | England | 68.70% | 412 | 5 | 17 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 600 |

Table :ICC - Test Championship Points Table [Top 4 Only]

Although, at present, India is at the top position, looking at all the permutations possible across the upcoming India-England series, they will not always be on top. In-fact anything but. Let’s review the various results possible between India-England series and forecast what the PCT will end up for both India and England and ascertain who would qualify for the final.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Series Result | | India PCT | England PCT | India Qualify | England Qualify | Australia Qualify |
| India | **England** |
| 0 | 0 | 65.28% | 62.78% |  |  | Yes |
| 0 | 1 | 63.89% | 65.56% |  |  | Yes |
| 0 | 2 | 62.50% | 68.33% |  |  | Yes |
| 0 | 3 | 61.11% | 71.11% |  | Yes |  |
| 0 | 4 | 59.72% | 73.89% |  | Yes |  |
| 1 | 0 | 68.06% | 61.39% |  |  | Yes |
| 1 | 1 | 66.67% | 64.17% |  |  | Yes |
| 1 | 2 | 65.28% | 66.94% |  |  | Yes |
| 1 | 3 | 63.89% | 69.72% |  | Yes |  |
| 2 | 0 | 70.83% | 60.00% | Yes |  |  |
| 2 | 1 | 69.44% | 62.78% | Yes |  |  |
| 2 | 2 | 68.06% | 65.56% |  |  | Yes |
| 3 | 0 | 73.61% | 58.61% | Yes |  |  |
| 3 | 1 | 72.22% | 61.39% | Yes |  |  |
| 4 | 0 | 76.39% | 57.22% | Yes |  |  |

Table : Forecast PCT after India-England Series

Note: New Zealand have already qualified to the final

* India qualifies for the test championship final if the result is its favour and the score line reads: 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1, 4-0
* England qualifies for the test championship if the result reads 3-0, 4-0, 3-1 in its favour.
* For all the other results, Australia will join New Zealand in the final.
* In pure %age terms, given that there is total 15 outcomes, the chances of India qualifying are 33.34%, that of England 20% and Australia 46.67%.
* If we ignore the edge cases, i.e., dropping the outliers such as 4-0 results for either sides, the probability of India joining New Zealand drops to 30.76%, that of England increases to 30.76% and Australia’s chances of joining its neighbour in the final drops to 38.46%.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Probability of India being in the final | Probability of England in the final | Probability of Australia in the final |
| Including all results | 33.34% | 20% | 46.67% |
| Excluding Edge cases | 30.76% | 30.76% | 38.46% |

Table :Probability of a team joining New Zealand in the final

Now let’s see if this probability remains the same or changes if Australia had decided to go ahead with South Africa tour. Please bear in mind that in this case we have to factor in 10 permutations from the South Africa-Australia tour and 15 combinations possible from India-England tour, thereby fielding us with a total of 150 possible outcomes to derive the results from.

*The spreadsheet containing all the analysis and raw data can be accessed from* [*here*](https://github.com/ninadkan/ICC-Test-Championship-Forecasting/blob/main/ICC-Test-Championship.xlsx)*.*

The resultant table, had Australia decided to travel to South Africa would’ve looked like following

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Probability of India being in the final | Probability of England in the final | Probability of Australia in the final |
| Including all results | 50.00% | 32.00% | 26.00% |
| Excluding Edge cases | 51.92% | 30.77% | 21.15% |

Table : Probability of a team in final had Australia decided to travel to South Africa

Reviewing the previous table, it is quite evident that not-travelling to South Africa, Australia definitely has enhanced its chances to be in Lords come summer in UK and that is mostly at the cost of India.

Losing respect, Australia. ☹

Here's yearning that India takes the matter in their own hand and win by 2-0 or 2-1 in the upcoming series.

1. Significant Other: A very significant other person in every married person life [↑](#footnote-ref-1)