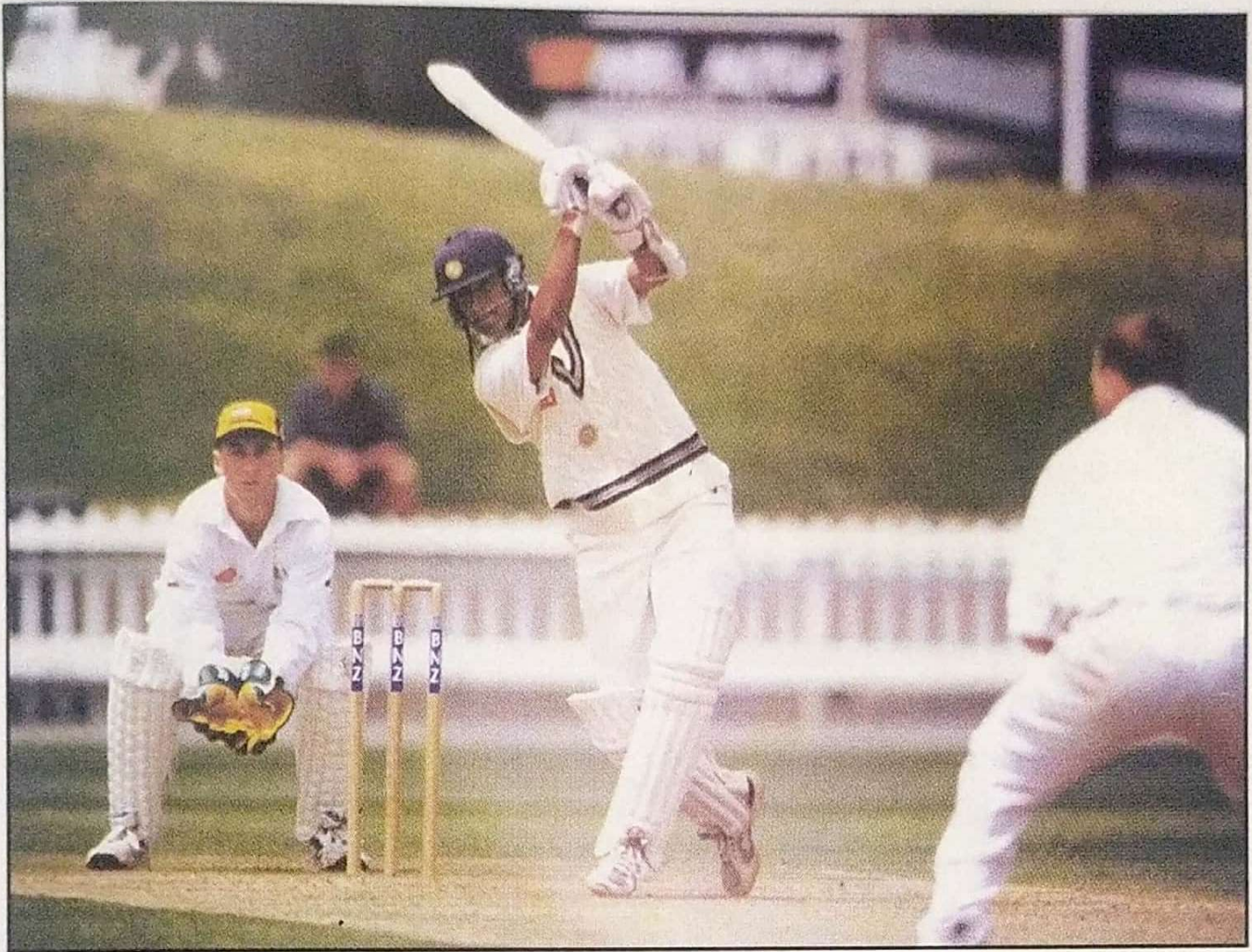


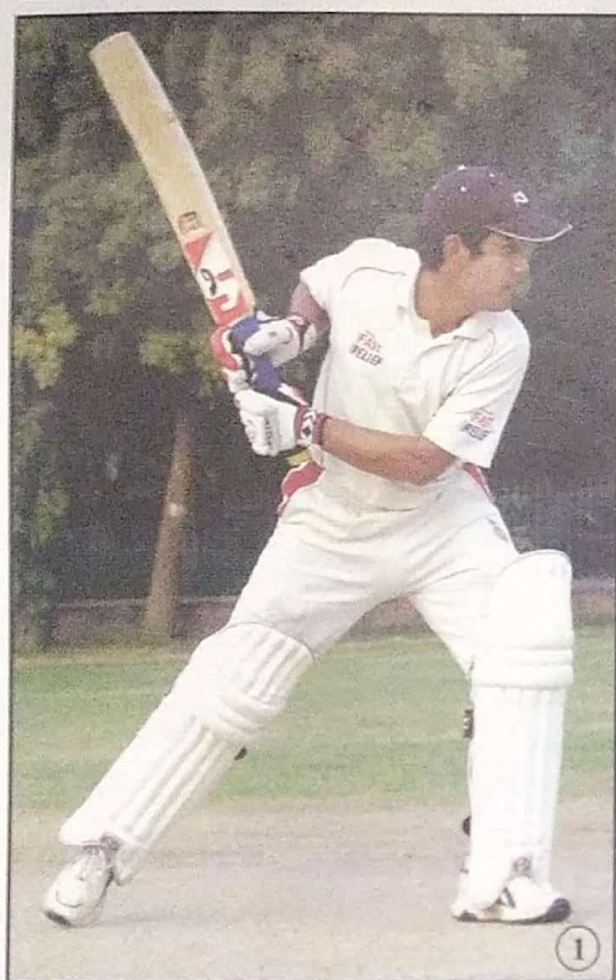
MOVING OUT TO DRIVE



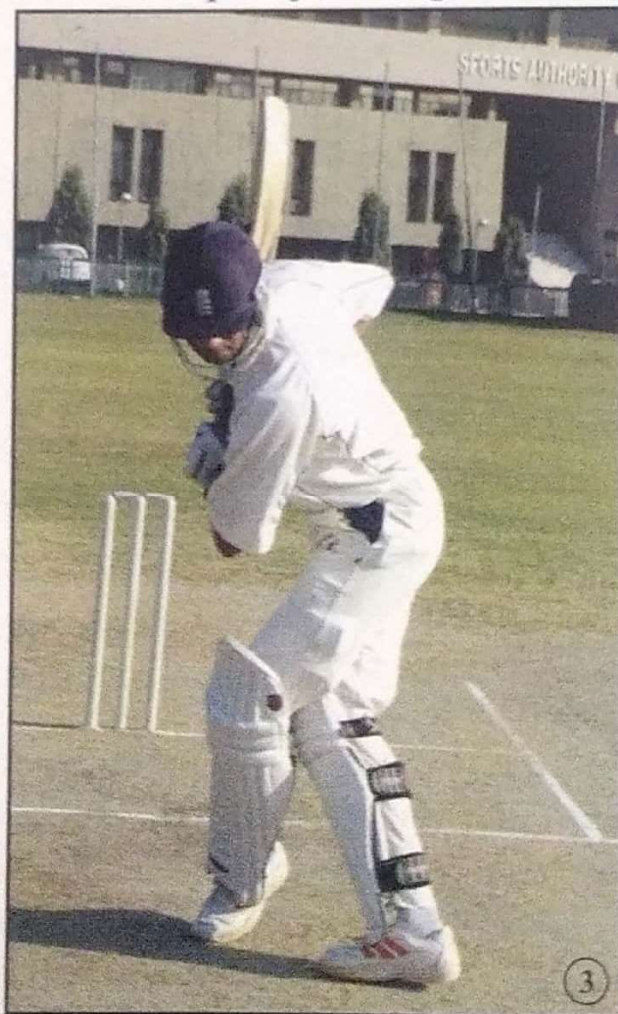
Rahul Dravid can be seen in this picture moving down the pitch to convert a good length ball into half volley & driving with precision & timing.

Watching an accomplished batsman move down the pitch and drive a top class spin bowler is a delightful sight. In any grade of cricket the effective use of feet against a spinner will add power and an element of aggression to your batting. If there is one common factor, that is clearly visible in all top class batsmen, it is correct and quick footwork. By improving this aspect of your batting you can limit the tactics of the bowler and also dominate him by breaking his rhythm.

This stroke is played when the bowler has the initiative to flight the ball _his aim being to get more turn and also create uncertainty in the mind of the batsman about its length. The fleet-footed batsmen can counter this move by moving out and turning what would have been a good length delivery into a half volley or even a full toss. But always



Puneet Bisht, the Delhi Ranji player, demonstrating the correct technique of moving out to drive.



start after estimating the flight of the ball as it is a mistake to rush down the pitch in a hurry. Great batsmen do not give the bowler any clue regarding their intention to move down the pitch even though they are mentally prepared to do so because they wait till the ball leaves the bowler's hand. The movement out of the crease should be as smooth as possible so that the eyes may remain level and continue to focus on the ball. You should glide out as if on skates. Also this movement out of the crease should be definite and pronounced because half-heartedness spells disaster.

As you make a high back-lift you should take a large first step down the wicket to gain distance then move the back foot past and behind the front foot and in the final step the front foot is moved to a position where the ball will land an instant later and then drive it solidly in a normal way. The bat swing should be late and quick to give power and timing.

Always move in a straight line towards the pitch of the ball because the shortest distance between the two points (here the position where batsman stands in his stance and the pitch of the ball) is always in a straight line—the aim of the batsman being to get to the pitch of the ball through the shortest possible route. The front shoulder should be pointed towards the line of the ball. It is essential to move sideways and keep sideways for as long as possible. This will be further helped if the batsman does not allow the back foot heel to pivot.

Sometimes if you move down the pitch and find that you have misjudged the length of the ball, do not panic and lose your bearing; it is far more sensible to check your attacking intention and play forward defensively as if from the crease. Remember, leaving the crease is not a commitment to play an attacking shot but merely an intention, which can be changed.

Do not move out to a ball that is too far outside the off stump or the leg stump. It is also dangerous to move out when you are batting on a turning pitch. The stroke should be practiced with a stationary ball, then with lobbed ball.