

## Bowled Over

**Ben says England have little chance of retaining the Ashes, and should instead start planning for the next series in 2008.**

I can't ignore the dire performance of the England Cricket team 'down under' this past week. They should start building now for the next Ashes series and forget about this one. It is now time for a change before it is too late for this time next year.

After their heroics in the Ashes last summer English cricket fans had high hopes and expectations for their team this year. Sadly that appears to be all but over after a couple of poor performances from last years all conquering heroes.

After failing miserably in the ICC Champions trophy and missing some of their major players, including Vaughn and Jones, England went to Australia in the seemingly futile hope of retaining the Ashes. With the hero of 2005, Freddie Flintoff as captain England was expecting to end Australia's dominance of the Ashes once and for all. I fear that England "expects" too much. They had hoped to prove that last year's victory was more than just a flash in the pan.

All those well made plans went down the drain when England got hammered in the first test with Ricky Pointing and Shane Warne the main protagonists. Things looked brighter in the second test with England looking to even the score. England started well, winning the toss and choosing to bat. Everything was looking peachy and all England had to do was hold on. Funnily enough they didn't and the Aussies won by six wickets.

Now England are in real trouble, in order for them to stand any chance in this series England must win the next test. Australia are on a roll and, after their victory in the ICC, it is my belief that the English cricketers should just give it up and go home now before they are well and truly humiliated.

There is discontent in ranks and anger towards the coach's (Darren Fletcher) selection of Giles over Monty Panesar. Although Fletcher argues that Panesar can't bat it is also fair to say that Giles cannot bowl (he has taken only one wicket so far) and it's time for a change.

Monty Panesar is being touted, by the media amongst others, as the brave new future of English cricket yet he isn't being given a chance.

I feel that England should give up on this Ashes series and concentrate on rebuilding the squad for next time. It would take a miracle for them even to draw this series.

Australia are too strong and Freddie's men don't look up for much after the early pasting. They've managed to throw away a test that was well within their grasp, all they had to do was hold on, to get some wickets, but they failed.

In all honesty the nightmare will continue and they should use the test match experience to blood some of the younger and less experienced squad members. Not least, Monty Panesar who is, without a doubt, one for the future.

### About this article

This article was written by Ben Ritchie from our Belfast newsroom. It was published on the [Reach for the Sky](#) website.

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