

Former players salute Kumble as a giant cricketer

Former players Sunday described Anil Kumble as a giant whose contribution to the game goes beyond his cricketing feats. The pride and dignity with which he played the game remains the hallmark of the man, who was fondly called 'Jumbo' by his contemporaries.

Kumble took his colleagues by surprise with his sudden announcement of retirement from international cricket during the fifth and final day of the third Test against Australia Sunday. But the former players feel his days were numbered and frequent injuries were taking a toll on his body.

One of India's greatest spinner, Erapalli Prasanna said Kumble is a role model for younger players.

'I had the impression that he will call it off soon. But I think his injury forced him to take the decision even before the fourth Test. I respect his contribution to Indian cricket. He has been a role model for many youngsters. He has proved that if someone is strong in the basics, he can achieve great results. He has been a fantastic ambassador for cricket.'

Another of India's spin legend, Bishan Singh Bedi, too felt that Kumble's decision to quit came at the right moment.

'It was a writing on the wall. I am not surprised. His injury might have hastened his retirement but it is a very wise decision. There are very few cricketer who have been able to win matches for India on their own. Kumble is one of them. He is a great player.'

Gundappa Viswanath called him 'one of greatest cricketer the world has ever seen.'

Former Australian captain Ian Chappell said Kumble played his game with 'dignity and character'.

'He left the way he played his cricket - with defiance. He was a very determined player. He was very competitive and got respect even from his contemporaries.'

Cricketer turned commentator Ravi Shastri called it a sad day for the Indian cricket.

'He was a true professional and it's only when for couple of weeks we will not hear his name, we will realise what a giant he was. He was a true statesman and the way he handled the team in Sydney Test, reflected his great leadership qualities.'

Former Australian skipper Allan Border said: 'He was fantastic cricketer, but more than that he was a fantastic human being, which is the most important aspect of his legacy. He has friends all over the world from cricket. He played the game in the right spirit and he went on his own terms.'

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