

Mr. Rishabh Pant
Indian Cricketer

YT: Cricket is all about personal flair, and every player has their own unique style. How much of your game is a reflection of your natural instincts, and how much has been influenced by the advice and techniques you've gathered from others along the way?

RB: Cricket is definitely about expressing yourself out there. For me, a lot of it is instinctive. For example, when I am batting, I do not overthink things too much. If I see the ball, I hit it. That is just how I have always played, since my childhood days.

But obviously, you learn things along the way. Playing with so many senior players in the Indian team, you pick up so much just by observing them. You try to absorb those qualities.

My coaches, right from my childhood, have also played a huge role. They have helped me refine my technique and taught me how to read different situations in a game. So yeah, it is a mix of both – my natural instincts and the guidance I have received from others.

YT: After taking a significant break from the game, it must have been a challenging time. How did this period away from cricket allow you to reflect on your life, your approach to the game, and even change the way you view yourself?

RB: Being away from the game for so long forces you to look at things differently. Because, when you are constantly in the grind, playing non-stop, you are just reacting, you are in the moment, dealing with what is in front of you.

But when you are suddenly pulled out of that, you get space and time to reflect on the aspects of your life which do not constitute cricket. It gives you time to think. And for me, it was a chance to reflect on everything, not just cricket. On life in general. It made me realize how much I actually love the game, and how much it means to me. I missed being out there, the competition, the feeling of hitting a good shot, and even the pressure.

It also made me think about my approach. Maybe I was taking some things for granted, maybe I was not as focused as I should have been, or maybe I was not looking after myself as well as I should have. It gave me a new perspective on training, on preparation, on everything, really. And yeah, it changed how I view myself a bit too. It made me realize that I am not just a cricketer. There is more to me than that. It gave me time to reconnect with myself, my family, and the important things outside of cricket. It was a tough period, but I think I have come out of it stronger, more mature, and with a clearer understanding of what I want, both on and off the field. It was like a reset button for me. Lastly, it also instilled in me a greater sense of gratitude for life.

YT: With social media becoming an integral part of an athlete's career, do you think it is crucial for players today to build skills outside of cricket in order to develop their personal brand and explore more opportunities?

RB: Social media is a big thing these days. You see everyone on it, but for me, cricket has always been the main focus. That is what I am passionate about, that is what I train for and that is what I have dreamt of playing since my childhood.

However, it is important to, connect with fans and all. They show us so much love and support,

so, it is good to give something back. And social media helps with that. It is a way to stay in touch, share what we are up to and other things.

As for building skills outside of cricket, I think it is good to have other interests. It keeps you grounded. For me, I like spending time with my family, hanging out with my friends, listening to music, playing other sports normal stuff. It helps me switch off from cricket for a while and come back feeling refreshed. I do not think too much before posting, just want to be my natural self.

YT: The commercial side of cricket, with sponsorships and endorsements, can be overwhelming. How do you maintain a balance between managing your image and staying authentic to yourself?

RB: A simplified approach and partnership allows me to focus on things on ground. With brands, I have always wanted to forge a partnership.

For me, it is important to match values and think what is best long-term.

I want to give my best to whoever I am partnering with and to ensure that all the boxes are ticked.

YT: The Indian Premier League (IPL) has become a major platform for young players to showcase their talent. How has your journey in the tournament shaped your career, and which moment stands out as the most defining for you in the IPL?

RB: IPL is a whole different vibe, altogether! It is a great platform for all players, not just youngsters, to compete against the best in the world, under pressure, in front of massive crowds. It gives us the exposure, confidence, and the experience of playing in high-pressure situations. You learn so much just by being in that environment, sharing the dressing room with fresh talent and legends. There is not one memory- the entire journey has been one to remember!

YT: During high-pressure situations with the Indian team, how do you contribute to maintaining a cohesive and motivated team atmosphere, especially when the stakes are at their highest?

RB: High-pressure situations with the Indian team are intense, no doubt. The stakes are always high, especially in big tournaments. But that is what makes it exciting, that is what we live for.

For me, in those moments, it is all about keeping the atmosphere light, keeping the energy positive. I try not to let the pressure get to me. I might crack a joke or two, just to ease the tension a bit. It is important to keep things relaxed, to not overthink things.

I think communication is key as well. Talking to your teammates, discussing the situation, making sure everyone is on the same page. It is about building that trust, that understanding, so that everyone feels comfortable and confident.

And of course, it is about supporting each other. If someone makes a mistake, you do not start pointing fingers. You pick them up, you encourage them, you tell them to keep their chin up. That is what a team is all about, right? Being there for each other, through thick and thin.

YT: With the game evolving rapidly through new formats and technological advancements, where do you see cricket heading in the future, particularly in terms of player roles and the strategies that will define success?

RB: Cricket is changing fast – new formats, improved technology. You have to adapt. It will get way more tactical. Technology is going to get even more precise, maybe even real-time data mid-game. Strategically, we will see even more innovation, maybe shorter formats, and even more focus on quick runs. But at the end of the day, I think the core of the game will always remain the same. It is still about skill and temperament. Technology and new formats will change things, but the fundamentals will always be there. It is about adapting, learning, and staying ahead of the curve. That is what will define success in the future. It is an exciting time to be a cricketer, that is for sure!

YT: Your innings at Gabba is remembered as one of India’s greatest. When you walked out to bat with such a historic moment on the line, what was your mindset or guiding principle in handling such high-pressure circumstances?

RB: It is still a bit of a blur, to be honest. But yeah, walking out there, with so much on the line, it was intense. Everyone knew what was at stake.

But for me, at that moment, it was all about backing my sense. I was not thinking about the series but I just focused on the ball, on what I need to do in that specific moment. For me it was all about staying in the present, in the zone. For me, it was about trusting my instincts, trusting my abilities.

Sometimes, when you simplify things like that, when you just focus on the process, things just fall into place. That day, it just felt right. I was seeing the ball well, I was hitting it cleanly, and I just kept going.

So, my guiding principle in those high-pressure situations is to keep it simple, stay in the present, and back myself. Not overthink things, and not letting the pressure get to me. I just focus on what I need to do in that moment, and have the trust that my skills will take care of the rest. That is what I try to do, anyway. And at the Gabba, thankfully, it worked out pretty well!

YT: Your journey has inspired countless individuals, including students at St. Xavier’s College. What message would you like to share with them as they embark on their own journeys and challenges?

RB: It is really humbling to hear that my journey has inspired anyone, especially students. That means a lot.

So, for the students at St. Xavier’s, as they are starting out on their own journeys. First, believe in yourself. That is the most important thing. You are all capable of achieving great things, but you have to believe that you can do it. Trust your abilities, trust your instincts, and do not let anyone tell you that you cannot achieve your dreams.

Second, do not be afraid to face challenges. Life is full of ups and downs, there will be setbacks, and there will be obstacles. But it is how you respond to those challenges that define you. Learn from your mistakes, pick yourself up when you fall, and keep moving forward. Every challenge is an opportunity to grow, to become stronger.

And third, do not forget to enjoy the journey. It is not just about reaching the destination, it is about the experiences you have along the way. Embrace the challenges, celebrate the successes, and cherish the memories you create.

And most importantly, never give up on your dreams. If you are giving your 100 per cent effort and continue working, people may delay you, but they cannot deny you. All the best! It is all about hard work and believing in yourself, and you guys have got this!