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Often portrayed as a one-dimensional Test player, Amla finally proved his class in all forms of the game and was duly nominated as ICC Cricketer of the Year in 2010. When queried on which form of the game he preferred, Amla replied "I enjoy all formats as they test different skills. Test matches however have a special place." For the 2010 calendar year, Amla averaged 79.6 with the bat in Test cricket, the highlight of which was an impressive 253\* as South Africa handed India an innings defeat at Nagpur. His most memorable innings though was the 176\* he hit against New Zealand in 2007. "It came at a time when I was about to be dropped and also the conditions were very difficult," said Amla, referring to the conditions at the New Wanderers Stadium.

It has often been Amla's religion which has grabbed the headlines, but through it all the Durban born cricketer has remained a proud ambassador of his faith. In 2006, commentator and ex-Australian cricketer Dean Jones called Amla a terrorist during live coverage of an ODI against Sri Lanka, which resulted in a sacking for Jones. Amla never retaliated and later accepted the Australian's apology. Promoting alcohol is against the preaching of Islam and having Castle Beer as a major sponsor for South African cricket proved another obstacle. Amla remained firm, and requested permission for the removal of all logos on his gear as well as deciding not to collect his match fees for any matches sponsored by alcoholic beverages. His team mates and the South African board have been very accepting of his beliefs, and he was grateful for their support. "The South African team is very diverse and the multi-cultural nature is an advantage in many ways. It allows us all to develop our understanding and see the world in a broader light."

It is such strong character and faith which could help the Pakistani team as it looks to rebound back after a disastrous and controversial tour to the UK. The spot-fixing allegations have hurt the game of cricket and the South African players have kept a close eye on the developments as they approached the series against Pakistan. "The players still respect the Pakistani team as they have some very good players. These controversies do not change the fact that the tour will be a tough one," Amla said.

The elegant right handed batsman himself will be looking at improving his average against Pakistan which is a lowly 28.77 thanks largely due to his tormentor Mohammad Asif who has captured Amla's wicket 5 times in 10 innings. Asif is no longer part of the squad, but Amla was still cautious of the strong challenge from Pakistan. "There are some quality players. The likes of

Shoaib Akhtar, Afridi, Gul etc are all highly experienced campaigners who have proven their worth for many years.”

As far as whom the South Africans will be looking at as their prize scalp when bowling, Amla was in no doubt as to the mainstay for the Pakistani batting lineup. “Mohammad Yousuf has proven his class for a while, and is a key player for them in the middle order.”

Having secured his spot as South Africa’s premier No. 3 batsman for the time being, Amla is not willing to take a back seat. When queried on his cricketing ambitions, Amla said he hopes “to be part of a winning team and leave a positive legacy for others to continue and improve on.” Inspirational words from a fast maturing and globally admired sportsman.