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Rohit deserves place in the Test squad: Amre

Derek Abraham | TNN

*Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door
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Mumbai: Rohit Sharma may well be humming this all-time favourite Bob Dylan number after scoring his second hundred of the match in the Ranji Trophy final against Uttar Pradesh on Thursday.

The 21-year-old who became the member of an elite club (*see box*) by scoring a ton in each innings may well have booked a ticket to New Zealand for the three-Test series. Unlike last time where he was picked for the tour of Sri Lanka and ended up warming the bench, it's could be seri-

ous business for the dashing ODI regular this time.

Rohit is a much-improved batsman now as his five recent hundreds—against the visiting Aussies at Hyderabad, in the Challengers and in the Ranji Trophy (three)—suggest. They were in fact fitting replies to notions that he's fit only for the shorter version of the game.

Mumbai coach Praveen Amre says the youngster has done enough to vouch for a place in the Test team. "Two hundreds in a Ranji final prove that he's ready for Tests." What impressed the former India middle-order batsman most is Rohit's temperament. "The first innings hundred wasn't a Rohit-like innings at all. It was good to see him consolidate. He batted cautiously and got to

THE CENTURION CLUB

Batsmen who have scored a century in each innings of a Ranji final

PLAYER	FOR	AGAINST	SEASON	SCORES
Mushtaq Ali	Holkar	Bombay	1944-45	109 & 130
Vijay Hazare	Baroda	Holkar	1949-50	30 & 101
Hanumant Singh	Rajasthan	Bombay	1966-67	109 & 213*
Surinder Khanna	Delhi	Karnataka	1978-79	111 & 128
Sachin Tendulkar	Bombay	Punjab	1994-95	140 & 139
Rohit Sharma	Mumbai	UP	2008-09	141 & 108

his hundred in 180 balls and that shows he's got the mindset to play Tests. Even in the second innings, he took his time and scored his first run after facing 20 balls," Amre reasoned, quickly adding that the youngster has done all that he is supposed to. "It's up to the selectors now to give him the opportunity."

Former India coach Anshuman Gaekwad goes a step ahead to say that the stylish right-hander is the ideal man to replace Rahul Dravid in the playing XI. "If there is one man who can take Dravid's place, then it's Rohit." Gaekwad goes on to value the hard work of Cheteshwar Pujara and S Badrinath among others

but he feels Rohit has an edge over them. "Pujara and Badrinath are no doubt good but I'll pick Rohit as he's already got a feel of international cricket."

Former India opener Arun Lal thinks otherwise. "There's no way you can drop Dravid for the New Zealand tour. Dravid just got a hundred and he is still one of our best batsmen. Rohit has to wait before he takes Dravid's place."

Former India captain and chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar put the onus on the selectors. "I think Rohit has proven time and again that he is capable to playing well in all formats of the game. He certainly deserves to be in the Test team." However, when asked if the Mumbaiaikaar could take Dravid's place, Vengsarkar said, "no comments."