

WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW HIGUAIN TO FEEL COMFORTABLE, SAYS CITY STRIKER AGUERO | 24

TOP SEED PRAJNESH LOSES TO UNSEED HARRIS IN CHENNAI OPEN ATP CHALLENGER | 23

GALLERY



Keemo Paul (left) and Roston Chase celebrate the dismissal of Keaton Jennings

England lose Jennings early in final Test

St. Lucia: Keemo Paul took a wicket with his first ball but England otherwise survived the first session to be 46/1 at lunch on Day One of the third Test against West Indies in St. Lucia on Saturday. Keaton Jennings was the man dismissed, caught for eight in the slips off what was little more than a looser from Paul. Rory Burns (27) and Joe Denly (four) were unbeaten, though Denly was almost out in the last over before the break when he gloved a Shannon Gabriel delivery to the wicketkeeper down the legside. The on-field umpire gave not out, prompting West Indies to call for a video review, which revealed that while the ball had indeed brushed a glove, Denly had pulled his hand off the bat handle in time, so the original decision stood. West Indies bowled well and beat the bat regularly as England rode their luck at times, a dropped catch and a missed run-out opportunity restricting the damage. West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite won the toss and sent England in at Gros Islet, hoping his four-pronged pace battery would tear through the top order in a similar manner to the previous Test.

Arjun Tendulkar makes it to Mumbai under-23 team: Arjun Tendulkar, son of batting legend Sachin Tendulkar has been selected for the Mumbai Under-23 team for the under-23 One-Day League on Saturday. The tournament will be played from February 14 to March 4 at Jaipur. Arjun, a left-arm pacer, has shown good form in a couple of local tournaments of late. The youngster took two for 37 for DY Patil B, as his team lost to Canara Bank in a DY Patil T20 Cup match at Talegaon. On Wednesday, he picked three wickets while playing for the Cricket Club of India (CCI) against Islam Gymkhana in the RFS Talyarkhan Memorial Invitation Cricket Tournament.

Coulter-Nile suffers vertigo bout during BBL game: Nathan Coulter-Nile, who was picked this week for Australia's one-day and Twenty20 tour of India, was taken to hospital Saturday after a bout of vertigo during a Big Bash League game. The Perth Scorchers fast bowler had delivered the fifth ball of his final over late in the Twenty20 match against the Adelaide Strikers when he signalled that all was not well. After consulting with Perth captain Mitchell Marsh, he bowled the sixth ball, which was hit for six, before sinking to his haunches and sitting on the ground.

Amir all set for Essex return: Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir is all set to re-join Essex County Cricket Club for the upcoming 2019 Vitality Blast. The 26-year-old, who helped Essex lift the first-class County Championship in 2017, will be available for eight games in the Vitality Blast tournament including their opening match against Middlesex at Lord's on July 18.

Renshaw signs up with Kent for early season spell: Australian cricketer Matt Renshaw has signed up for Kent County Cricket Club for the first weeks of the 2019 season. The 22-year-old played for Somerset during last season of County Championship Division One where he scored runs with an average of 51.30 that includes two century knocks as well. His inclusion in the team will act as a cover for Joe Denly and Sam Billings who will not be the part of the due to their IPL commitments.

Guptill set to return for NZ, Bangladesh to miss Shakib: New Zealand opener Martin Guptill is set to return from a back injury for the upcoming ODI series against Bangladesh, selectors said on Saturday. Guptill was ruled out of the ongoing Twenty20 series against India after aggravating a disc in his lower back, but was named for the three-game series against Bangladesh, which starts in Napier on Wednesday. Bangladesh will be without all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who has been ruled out of the series after fracturing a finger during the Bangladesh Premier League final on Friday.

NZ squad: Kane Williamson (captain), Todd Astle, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Colin Munro, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Ross Taylor, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: NBA: Houston vs Oklahoma City, 7 am (Live on Ten 1)
CRICKET: NZ vs India, 3rd Women's T20, 8.30 am (Live on Star Sports 1); NZ vs India, 3rd Men's T20, 12.30 pm (Live on Star Sports 1); WI vs Eng, 3rd Test, Day 2, 7.30 pm (Live on Sony ESPN)
FOOTBALL: EPL: Spurs vs Leicester, 7 pm; Man City vs Chelsea, 9.30 pm (Live on SS Select 1); Serie A: Sassuolo vs Juventus, 10.30 pm (Live on Ten 2); ISL: Pune City vs ATK, 7.30 pm (Live on Star Sports)

'We have made up our minds on the core World Cup team'

Chief Selector MSK Prasad Talks To TOI About India's World Cup Plans, The Importance Of A Proper Rotation Policy & The Need To Strike A Perfect Balance Between Youth & Experience...

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How do you see the team shaping up post the England tour?

The end result of that England tour was not the true picture or the right reflection of the quality of cricket we played. Having said that, the lessons we learnt from that tour were invaluable and they helped us in winning the series in Australia.

What needs to be done to keep this winning run going overseas?

The most important thing that we need to focus on is to have the right mix of players for different formats. We need to keep planning for every tour well in advance by keeping our players fit and fresh through proper rotation. Since we have created enough bench strength across formats, I have no doubt about the success of our rotation policy.

Generally, teams zero in on their World Cup squads during the last



series they play before the big event. How important is the IPL in this context, since it's a T20 tournament?

Like most other teams, we have made up our minds with regard to the core team that will figure in the World Cup. The IPL is a major tournament that

throws up a variety of challenges. I'm sure the IPL will help (selected) players with their form and also keep their minds in good shape ahead of the World Cup.

There has been a lot of unease surrounding India's middle order over the past 18 months. Do you think the debate has been settled in the last two series in Australia and New Zealand, with Kedar Jadhav and MS Dhoni coming good?

Yes, the performance of certain players in these series has helped us to seal those spots which were otherwise a bit of a concern.

Youngsters like Rishabh Pant, Khaleel, Prithvi Shaw and Shubman Gill have been handed debuts over the past six months. How cautious will you be in maintaining the right balance between youth and experience for the upcoming World Cup?

To win mega events we need

KL RAHUL HAS BEEN STRUGGLING FOR RUNS FOR SOME TIME. HOW IMPORTANT IS HE AS A THIRD OPENER?

His form has become a big cause of concern. He is too good a player and I am sure he is working hard to be back among the runs. We have put him in the India 'A' squad to play against the England Lions so that he can spend some time in the middle and get back in some form.



MSK PRASAD

a finger spinner as well in the shorter formats of the game?

Kuldeep and Chahal have done extremely well in the last one year or so. We (have) tried to

HOW PLEASING HAS IT BEEN TO SEE THE RESURGENCE OF PACER MOHAMMED SHAMI ACROSS FORMATS?

It is wonderful to see Shami's form in both the longer and shorter formats. What was missing in him earlier was his fitness. Credit should be given to the trainer Shankar Basu and physio Patrick (Farhart), who have put him on a certain fitness programme. We can't take anything away from Bharat Arun (bowling coach).

increase the bench strength in the spin department. In T20 formats, we have also given opportunities to Washington Sundhar and Krunal Pandya apart from the four top spinners (Ashwin, Jadeja, Kuldeep and Chahal) and they have done well in that particular format.

How do you see Kuldeep and Chahal evolving as Test spinners?

Kuldeep has bowled extremely well in the opportunities he has had. He is definitely a bright prospect across all formats. We have tried Chahal in the longer formats but he seems to be more comfortable with the white ball. Having said that, if he is willing to put in the hard yards in red-ball cricket, he is most welcome to do so and we will monitor his progress.

How pleasing has been the emergence of Mayank Agarwal?

We have formed a consortium of selectors and team management, consisting of Virat, Ravi Shastri and his support staff and Rahul Dravid. Because of the efforts of this consortium, we are seeing players make a smooth transition from India 'A' levels to the senior side. Prithvi, Mayank, Vihari, Rishabh, Vijay Shankar are some of the examples.

How do you see Virat Kohli's captaincy evolving?

India is blessed to have a captain like Virat. He shares a healthy relationship with head coach Ravi Shastri, which is very important for the team's success.

Panchal, Bharat give India 'A' upper hand against Lions

Wayanad: A brilliant double century by Priyank Panchal (206) and a quickfire ton by wicketkeeper KS Bharat (142 off 139 balls) helped India 'A' take control against England Lions on the third day of the first unofficial Test here Saturday.

India 'A' declared their innings at 540 for 6 in reply to England Lions' 340 to gain a massive 200-run lead, thanks to Panchal's marathon knock, which came off 313 balls and Bharat's blistering innings that was studded with 11 fours and eight

hits over the boundary.

Out-of-favour KL Rahul, who had a dismal tour of Australia, finally found his touch and was unbeaten on 88 on Friday.

But he could add only one run to his overnight score before spooning a catch to substitute Jamie Overton to give left-arm spinner Danny Briggs his first wicket.

Panchal, 89 not out overnight, continued his imperious form and played some eye-catching shots. He reached his 20th first class century and continued to tor-



PROLIFIC: Priyank Panchal

ment the visiting bowlers with his defence and stroke-making.

Though skipper Ankit Bawne, who nicked one to his counterpart Sam Billings off Zak Chappell and Ricky Bhui (66) didn't last long, Panchal was at his best.

In reply, England reached 20 without loss before rain Gods intervened and ended the day's proceedings.

Brief scores: England Lions 340 & 20/0 vs India 'A' 540/6 dec (Priyank Panchal 206, KS Bharat 142, KL Rahul 89; Zak Chappell 3/105)

A CHANCE TO BAG ANOTHER SERIES

Men In Blue Look To Win Final T20I To Cap Off Memorable Overseas Season

Hamilton: In a season of many firsts for the Indian cricket team, Rohit Sharma's men will be aiming to win a T20 International series in New Zealand when the two sides clash in the final match here Sunday. The past three months have made for a memorable phase for the Indian cricket team, which won its first Test and bilateral ODI series in Australia followed by the biggest one-day series win in New Zealand. A first T20 series victory in New Zealand will be the icing on the cake for the 'Men in Blue', who have far exceeded expectations during their three-month sojourn in this part of the world.

With the series locked at 1-1, there is everything to play for in the decider which promises to be a cracker of a contest on a 'Super Sunday' with a spicy Seddon Park pitch in the offing.

India will do well to remember the nightmare that they endured during the fourth ODI at this venue where they were shot out for 92 in the wake of some quality swing bowling from Trent Boult.

However, Sunday will be a different day and there can't be a bigger motivation than winning yet another series in challenging overseas conditions.

"We have played in Hamilton and there won't be any surprise elements as far as the pitch is concerned. Also having won the second game gives us confidence going into the final match," left-arm speedster Khaleel Ahmed had said after series leveling second T20I, when asked about the

Hamilton game. "We have rectified some of our mistakes from the first game and hopefully a few which are there will also be corrected," Khaleel added.

India played the same XI in the first two games and in all likelihood, will maintain continuity unless there are some niggles.

In case the team management gives change a thought, it could be like like replacement with Kuldeep Yadav coming in place of Yuzvendra Chahal as the wrist spinner. However, a look at India's T20 playing XIs will indicate that Chahal has been their preferred shortest format bowler on most occasions.

The Indian bowling unit will look to replicate their good show from the last match where they found their rhythm after a pasting in the opener from Tim Seifert. Krunal Pandya has once again punched above his weight with some gritty performances in the two games.

Not considered the most talented player in the set-up, Krunal makes up his with hard work and discipline. His accuracy is one of the biggest positives going into Sunday's match along with the intelligence of senior seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

Khaleel also stuck to his brief in the last game where skipper Rohit Sharma had instructed him to bowl back of the length to avoid being hit for boundaries. There will be a similar plan in place on Sunday also.



KEEPING IT TOGETHER: India have not lost a series in any format in Australia and New Zealand this season

The stand-in captain, who is now the world's top run-getter in T20 Internationals, will like to better the 29-ball-50 of the previous match, which can well spell doom for the Black Caps.

With Shikhar Dhawan for company, a good opening will solve half the problems for the visitors as it has been the case during the last four years.

The middle-order has also shown solidity with the experience of Mahendra Singh Dhoni and the exuberance of Rishabh Pant combining well as was evident in Auckland.

For New Zealand, a better batting effort in the middle overs is what they would be looking for.

Skipper Kane Williamson has endured a quiet limited overs series by his standards and senior batsman Ross Taylor has also blown hot and cold during the last three weeks.

Among bowlers, Tim Southee was impressive in the first game and pretty ordinary in the second along with Scott Kugeleijn, who also went for a fair amount of runs.

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS, 12.30 PM

2 Number of sixes required by Rohit Sharma (102) to overtake the tallies of 103 each by Chris Gayle (WI) and Martin Guptill (NZ) and to set a record for most sixes by a batsman in T20Is

748 Run aggregate at an average of 39.36, including six fifties, in 20 matches accomplished by Shikhar Dhawan — the highest by a batsman in T20Is since January 2018.

8 Number of T20Is played by New Zealand, winning six and losing two at Seddon Park, Hamilton. India would be playing a T20I at this venue for the first time.

—Rajesh Kumar

India women look to pull one back

Hamilton: An improved batting performance will be on skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's mind as India women, eyeing a consolation victory, take on New Zealand in the third and final T20 International here Sunday. After winning the ODI series 2-1, Indian women lost momentum and subsequently the T20 series.

With an aim to build a squad for ICC World T20 in 2020, the Indian team management decided to drop team's senior batswoman Mithali Raj, who is no longer considered a force to reckon with in the shortest format. Only time will tell whether this inspired call pays dividends in the long run but the results have been far from encouraging in the first two matches which India lost by 23 runs and four wickets respectively. "We are building a team. Today we may be facing difficulties but in future we will do well as the young players gain experience. I think the future is good for the team and results will follow," skipper Harmanpreet had said after conceding the series.

In both games, chasing or batting first, India are stuck in the less than 140-run mark, which is below-par against a top team like New Zealand.

Kalpna back after 3 years

New Delhi: Wicketkeeper R Kalpna made a comeback to the Indian women's team after three years when she was included in the squad, led by skipper Mithali Raj, for the upcoming three-match ODI series against England from Feb 22.

Squad: Mithali Raj (Captain), Jhulan Goswami, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harmanpreet Kaur, Deepti Sharma, Taniya Bhatia (wk), R Kalpna (wk), Mona Meshram, Ekta Bisht, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Shikha Pandey, Mansi Joshi, Punam Raut.