

**AGUERO STRIKES TWICE AS CITY ROUT SCHALKE
7-0, REACH CL QUARTERFINALS IN STYLE | 20****WORLD NO. 1 DJOKOVIC BUNDLED OUT OF
INDIAN WELLS EVENT BY KOHLSCHREIBER | 22****INDIA LOSING
BILATERAL ODI
SERIES UNDER KOHLI**2018 to England by **1-2**
in England | 2018-19 to Australia by **2-3**
in India**Instances of India losing
three ODIs in succession at
home (since 2009)****1 vs Australia**
Mohali, Hyderabad
and Guwahati in
November 2009

This is the first time India have lost three ODIs in succession under Kohli's captaincy

**AUSTRALIA'S FIRST
BILATERAL SERIES WIN IN
ODIS SINCE JAN 30, 2017**

Australia ended their nightmarish run of six back-to-back series losses with 3-2 win over India on Wednesday. A list of the streak and the end of it...

Series	Win	Lost
Lost to NZ 2017 (Away)	0	2
Lost to India 2017 (Away)	1	4
Lost to England 2018 (Home)	1	4
Lost to England 2018 (Away)	0	5
Lost to SA 2018 (Home)	1	2
Lost to India 2019 (Home)	1	2
Beat India Mar 13, 2019 (Away)	3	2

QUICKEST TO 8,000 ODI RUNS

Ins	Time Taken to reach milestone	Player
175	8 years 301 days	Virat Kohli (Ind)
182	10 years 205 days	AB de Villiers (SA)
200	10 years 302 days	S Ganguly (Ind)
200	11 years 263 days	Rohit Sharma (Ind)
203	12 years 356 days	Ross Taylor (NZ)

Stat: Rajesh Kumar

GALLERY**SA beat Sri Lanka by six
wickets in fourth ODI**

Port Elizabeth: South Africa defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets in the fourth ODI at St George's Park on Wednesday. After restricting Lanka to 189 in 39.2 overs, South Africa reached the target with six wickets and more than 17 overs to spare. Earlier, Tailender Isuru Udana hit a rapid half-century to lift a poor Sri Lankan batting performance. Batting at No. 9, Udana hit 78 to help the visitors recover from 97 for seven after being sent in to bat.

BRIEF SCORES: Sri Lanka 189 in 39.2 overs (I Udana 78; A Nortje 3-57) vs South Africa 190/4 in 32.5 overs (Q de Kock 51, F du Plessis 43; D de Silva 3-41)

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: Houston vs Golden State, 7 am (Live on Sony ESPN)

CRICKET: Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Final: Maharashtra vs Karnataka, 5.30 pm

FOOTBALL: Europa League: Krasnodar vs Valencia; Salzburg vs Napoli; Dynamo Kyiv vs Chelsea, 11.30 pm Arsenal vs Rennes; Inter vs Frankfurt, 1.30 am Friday (Live on Sony TEN 1 & 2)

TENNIS: ATP 1000: Day 8: quarterfinals, 1.30 am Friday (Live on Sony ESPN)

THE BUBBLE BURSTS

Fancied India Lose ODI Series To Oz, Their First At Home Since 2009

Hindol.Basu@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Chinks in the armour exposed, a home One-day International series lost, their aura of invincibility gone, and big question marks over the composition of the team ahead of the World Cup... Team India suddenly finds itself in more than a spot of bother.

How rational was it to go into a decider with just three specialist batsmen? What about the perennial problem surrounding the No. 4 position in the batting line-up? Why make Yuzvendra Chahal the scapegoat for the Mohali ODI loss and drop him on a slow Kotla wicket? Where are the finishers who will get the team across the line?

These questions have largely remained unanswered. And without MS Dhoni in the middle, not only the Indian spinners look disoriented but skipper Virat Kohli's captaincy looks less convincing.

The consequence of several goofs-ups was the 35-run loss to Australia at the Kotla on Wednesday with which the series too was gone 2-3. For Australia, it was their first ODI

series win in India since 2009. The green and golds also achieved a first; the team had never won a bilateral series after being 0-2 down.

While the victory in the fifth ODI was fashioned by opener Usman Khawaja (100 off 106b; 10x4, 2x6), who hit his second ton of the series, and leggie Adam Zampa (3-46), the series saw Australia's fringe players come to the party and leave an indelible imprint.

Khawaja, Peter Handscomb (52 off 60b; 4x4), who followed his match-winning hundred in Mohali with a well-constructed fifty, Ashton Turner and Jhye Richardson have thrown their hats in Australia's World Cup selection mix with handsome contributions on different occasions during the series.

Even Zampa's spot in the first eleven wasn't a given; quite often he has had to vie with Nathan Lyon or Ashton Agar. But, eleven wickets in the series has firmly made Zampa the No.1 Aussie spinner in the 50-over format.

As skipper Aaron Finch said in the post-match presen-

tation, the Australian team showed "resilience and fight after being 0-2 down" in the series. Besides resilience, the Aussies also showcased skill and adroitness.

The way Khawaja and Handscomb handled the Indian spinners – especially Kuldeep Yadav – during a 99-run second-wicket partnership was exemplary. The duo brought out their sweeps, reverse sweeps and lofted shots at opportune occasions to nullify Kuldeep's variations. The mental toughness of the Australian team was also on show when Jhye Richardson and Pat Cummins were involved in a quickfire 34-run partnership towards the end after the team had lost six wickets in the middle period.

In the modern day scenario, the 273-run target was at best a par score that the Indians were chasing. The Aussies, though, bowled with discipline giving nothing away in the initial overs. As pressure started building, India kept on losing wickets. It was Cummins, who gave the Australians the initial breakthrough with Shikhar Dhawan's wicket; Marcus Stoinis then got the prized scalp of Virat Kohli – both getting caught behind with the ball bouncing that extra bit.

Rishabh Pant and Vijay Shankar – two men who are in the World Cup mix – couldn't seal the deal. Both were dismissed for 16; a match-winning contribution by either would have ensured a seat in the flight to London in May.

Zampa nipped out India's middle-order and Rohit Sharma (56 off 89b; 4x4), who has often been troubled by the Aussie leg-spinner. Kedar Jadhav and Bhuvneshwar Kumar gave a glimmer of hope with a 91-run stand, but Kumar's wicket hastened the end.

**TAME END:** Kohli returns to the pavilion after being dismissed by Stoinis on Wednesday

1 India became the first and only team to lose an ODI bilateral series of five or more matches after leading 2-0 twice – the first instance being against Pakistan in 2004-05 in India. Pakistan had lost the first two matches but won the next four.

14 Cummins' wickets' tally at 15.71 runs apiece in 5 matches is a new record in India-Australia ODI series, bettering the 14 in 7 ties (at 18.57) by Mitchell Johnson in 2007-08.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: U Khawaja c Kohli b Bhuvneshwar 100, A Finch b Jadeja 27, P Handscomb c Pant b Shami 52, G Maxwell c Kohli b Jadeja 1, M Stoinis b Bhuvneshwar 20, A Turner c Jadeja b Kuldeep 20, A Carey c Pant b Shami 3, J Richardson run out 29, P Cummins c & b Bhuvneshwar 15, N Lyon not out 1; **Extras:** (b1, w3) 4; **Total:** (9 wkts) **272; FoW:** 1-76, 2-175, 3-178, 4-182, 5-210, 6-225, 7-229, 8-263, 9-272; **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar 10-0-48-3, Shami 9-0-57-2, Bumrah 10-0-39-0, Yadav 10-0-74-1, Jadeja 10-0-45-2, Jadhav 1-0-0-0.

INDIA: R Sharma st Carey b Zampa 56, S Dhawan c Carey b Cummins 12, V Kohli c Carey b Stoinis 20, R Pant c Turner b Lyon 16, V Shankar c Khawaja b Zampa 16, K Jadhav c Maxwell b Richardson 44, R Jadeja st Carey b Zampa 0, B Kumar c Finch b Cummins 46, M Shami c & b Richardson 3, K Yadav b Stoinis 9, J Bumrah not out 1; **Extras:** (lb6, w6) 14; **Total:** **237; FoW:** 1-15, 2-68, 3-91, 4-120, 5-132, 6-132, 7-223, 8-223, 9-230; **Bowling:** Cummins 10-1-38-2, Richardson 10-0-48-2, Stoinis 4-0-31-2, Lyon 10-1-34-1, Zampa 10-1-46-3, Maxwell 6-0-34-0.

Bhuvi wins perception battle

**All-Rounder Shows
Worth With Bat, Ball**

Hindol.Basu@TIMESGROUP.COM

New Delhi: Bhuvneshwar Kumar has often found himself at the receiving end of sharp criticism from cricket connoisseurs. They say he doesn't possess the pace required to trouble international batsmen, he is effective only with the new ball, and he is just a "hit me" bowler when the ball doesn't swing. They also say he isn't an out-and-out wicket-taker like a Jasprit Bumrah or a Mohammed Shami.

Bhuvneshwar has been fighting the 'perception' battle. Even the Indian team management probably thinks on these lines even though Bhuvneshwar has been a consistent performer in all three formats of the game. Time and again he has had to sit out – especially in the longer format – after a substantial performance.

The criticism can cause pressure to build on a player but Bhuvneshwar, more often than not, has let the ball do the talking. Bhuvi is one of the few modern-day bowlers who can swing the ball both in and out, that too with an upright seam. Perhaps, Jimmy Anderson is a better exponent, but Bhuvneshwar holds his own too.

Wednesday was no different. Bhuvneshwar was under pressure after failing to make an impact in the Mohali ODI – his 9 overs cost



India 67 runs. In the Delhi ODI too, he went wicket-less in the first spell, conceding 26 runs off his 5 overs.

The comeback, however, was telling. In his second spell, Bhuvneshwar got rid of century-maker Usman Khawaja. The spell lasted two overs and Bhuvi gave away just two runs. In his third and final spell, the 29-year-old sent the dangerous Marcus Stoinis back to the pavilion.

A third wicket of Pat Cummins was the result of intelligent use of the variations he has in his repertoire. He nailed his yorkers, hit those hard lengths with precision and cleverly used the slower ones. By the end, 3-48 in his quota of 10 overs once again underlined Bhuvi's importance in the Indian team. His performance made sure the Aussies didn't run away with the game.

In his last 10 ODI matches, Bhuvi has picked 19 wickets at an average of 22.36. His strike-rate has been

25.6 and his economy-rate is 5.23. The numbers prove that Bhuvi should be an automatic choice in India's first eleven.

Former India cricketer Chetan Sharma endorses that view. "For me, Bhuvi is the second name I will pen down after (Jasprit) Bumrah. I don't understand why there is a sword hanging over his head. He is good with the new ball as well as in the death overs," Sharma told TOI. "In England, if the ball swings he will be lethal and even if it doesn't swing he has the variations to keep the batsmen in check."

Sharma also felt Bhuvneshwar brings the "right kind of balance" to the Indian team. "His batting is a plus. Playing him allows us to play both the wrist-spinners."

Coincidentally, Bhuvi lived up to Sharma's words with a 54-ball 46 which gave India a whiff of a chance in the fifth ODI.

Opener Khawaja ensures he'll be in Australia's World Cup mix

Sabi.Hussain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Before landing in India for the five-match ODI series, Australian opener Usman Khawaja had nothing to lose in terms of how his limited-overs career was shaping up. However, on the concluding day of an absorbing series on Wednesday, Khawaja ended up doing enough to show he is an important part of Australia's 50-overs set-up.

The Queenslanders will be leaving Indian shores with two international hundreds, several milestones, a man-of-the-series award, and, in all probability, a coveted World Cup ticket in his bag. An extremely successful tour of India has provided Khawaja an opportunity to tell the world that he isn't a one-dimensional player – just a Test specialist.

After his series-saving maiden international century in the third ODI in Ranchi, Khawaja had said that "the first one is always the hardest to come by". On Wednesday, at the Kotla here, Khawaja struck his second ODI ton – a classy and flawless hundred which showed that he's ready to spearhead Australia's challenge at the World Cup in England.

Khawaja's 100 off 106 balls had all the ingredients of a clas-



Usman Khawaja celebrates his century on Wednesday

sic top-of-the-innings knock. A couple of drives off Bhuvneshwar Kumar, sensational pull shots off Mohammed Shami, facing the spin challenge of Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav with a straight bat and occasional sweeps reminded the cricket aficionados of old school batting. The two spinners bowled shorter lengths and quicker in the air, but Khawaja quelled that challenge with steadfast concentration.

Khawaja was on top of his game, looking to carry the momentum which a career-changing series provided to him. Rather than going for individual glory, he committed himself to the team's cause, looking to build partnerships.

On way to his century, Khawaja broke several records – New Zealand skipper Kane

Williamson's record of most runs (361 runs in 2014) in a five-match ODI series against India, retired South African great AB de Villiers' record of most runs (353 runs in 2015) in a five-match ODI series against India in India, and also equalled Virat Kohli and de Villiers' record of three or more 90-plus innings in succession in ODIs in India.

Khawaja's series scores read 50, 38, 104, 91 and 100 as he finished the series with 383 runs in his bag. While he fell just three short of breaking teammate David Warner's record of most runs in a five-match ODI series (386 runs) for Australia, Khawaja ensured that the Australian selectors will have a happy headache when making a choice for opener between him and Warner or opting for both of them at the WC.

MCC committee seeks to shore up Test cricket

London: A shot clock to prevent time wasting, standard ball for the inaugural World Test Championship and free hit for a no ball are among the steps proposed by the MCC World Cricket Committee to spice up the longest format. The Committee, chaired by former England captain Mike Gatting and which also includes former India captain Sourav Ganguly, suggested some changes for the Test cricket in a meeting held last week. The proposals were put out by the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) on its website on Tuesday night here.

Slow over-rate is a regular phenomenon in the five-day format and has contributed to driving away fans, said the MCC Committee on the need for introducing a shot clock. AGENCIES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- A timer, to be shown on the scoreboard, to count down from 45 seconds from the call of "Over". (This would be increased to 60 seconds for a new batsman on strike and 80 seconds for a change of bowler). If either side is not ready to play when the clock reaches zero, they would receive a warning.
- A similar timer to be used at the fall of wickets, potentially with variable times, depending on the distance from the dressing rooms to the pitch, and at drinks breaks.
- During DRS reviews, the standard protocol should be cut short as soon as the TV production team is aware that

it will be Not out. For example, time is often spent trying to discern an inside edge for LBWs, only to see, for example, that the ball was missing the stumps. As soon as the ball tracking has been loaded, if it will result in a Not out decision, the TV umpire should be informed immediately.

- Use of a standard ball in the World Test Championship which will begin in May-July. At the moment, SG ball is used in India, Dukes in England and West Indies, and Kookaburra in other countries.
- The Committee also suggested that free hits be introduced after no balls in Test matches.

Smith, Warner to spend time with Oz squad

New Delhi: Former Australia captain Steve Smith and David Warner might not be a part of the ODI squad for the series against Pakistan, but coach Justin Langer wants both the players to spend some quality time with the squad in Dubai before they head to India to join their respective Indian Premier League (IPL) teams.

While Smith is set to play for Rajasthan Royals, Warner will play his trade for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"Justin Langer wants the duo to join the squad in Dubai so that they can mix with the boys and the process of integration is smooth. The World Cup is coming up and there should be complete bonhomie in the camp as Australia look to defend the title," he explained. ANS

We're clear about WC playing XI: Kohli

Sabi.Hussain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Despite the bitter series loss against the Australians, Indian skipper Virat Kohli insisted after the match here on Wednesday that the team management is "very clear" about the playing eleven it would like to field at the upcoming World Cup (WC) in England.

However, Kohli revealed that "one spot" is yet to be decided. Kohli didn't disclose which one, but the general view is it's the crucial No. 4 position, for which as many as five players have been tried in recent times – Ambati Rayudu, Dinesh Karthik, MS Dhoni, Vijay Shankar and Rishabh Pant.

"We are very clear about the eleven we want to play (at the WC)," Kohli said at the post-match press conference here on Wednesday. "We know the World Cup combinations. It's about breaking down on decisions which we took during the last three games of the ODI series. We have to take decisions on how to deal with pressure situations. We exposed our players to pressure situations as we wanted to do that during these games and to see how they react," he added.

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Earlier, at the post-match presentation ceremony, Kohli stated that the team was more or less sorted for the WC. "Now it's about giving guys their roles and (we would) expect them to stand up. May be, there's just one spot which we have to discuss. No excuses (for the loss). We were expected to raise our standard of cricket. The changes will never be an excuse. We will take a lot of confidence going into the WC."

While congratulating Australia on their win, Kohli said none in the Indian dressing room is worried over the series loss. "It's not like something off has happened. None of our guys is panick-

ing. The support staff is not down at all. Our side is pretty balanced. It's just that the other side was more energetic, passionate and braver during pressure situations."

Man-of-the-series Usman Khawaja, who finished the five ODI assignment with a century at the Kotla, said it was a "huge win" for them and will certainly give the group confidence heading into the WC. "There's been a lot of good all-round performances. We always had the confidence to turn it around after being down 0-2 in the series. India is always a tough place to play cricket and we are happy about our win."