

India's vital cogs in fine fettle

If the batting was all about dominance, the bowling arm was equally in sync



REVIEW

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LONDON

India's World Cup campaign has been a steady accumulation of incremental steps. It commenced with a loss to New Zealand in a warm-up fixture, then came the win over Bangladesh in the second practice-game and when the championship started, Virat Kohli's men were ready with their big-boys act!

South Africa was lorded over at Southampton and the crucial Sunday clash against Australia at the Oval proved to be a one-way street once India's batting might was amply reflected through its 352 for five.

Still it remains a long road and Kohli struck a cautionary note: "It's too early to decide (the semifinalists). After about six games we will be in a better position to know where we stand in the tournament, where we stand in the table, but we couldn't have asked for a better start against two strong sides."

Defeating a defending champion and that too Australia is never easy, but India stepped in with confidence and had a perfect day. The runs were accumulated, steadily at the start and then with break-neck speed towards the end. And when Aaron Finch's men buckled down to the chase, the Indian attack proved restrictive. The 36-run triumph may seem close



Perfect day: Virat Kohli's men had plenty to cheer about in the game against Australia. ■ REUTERS

but Australia was out of the contest in the last 10 overs.

Before the World Cup started, there were worries about Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan as they had failed in the warm-ups. But, as Kohli pointed out, the openers are big-match players. Once the smell of a tough contest reached their nostrils, the two were back at their best. Rohit's hundred against South Africa and Dhawan's century at Australia's expense were solid building-blocks.

A few months back, there was ambiguity around who would turn up at No. 4. K.L. Rahul did enough in the game against South Africa to reiterate that the slot is his. In the tussle involving Australia, India had enough runs in its kitty and more overs to bat, and hence the team-management employed Hardik Pandya as a floater and promoted him to No. 4. He didn't disappoint and used his li-

cence to strike big with nonchalance.

Icing on the cake

The icing on the cake was about how Rahul shaped up at the death. Following the fine efforts of Dhawan, Rohit, Kohli, Pandya and M.S. Dhoni, he walked to the crease in the 50th over and immediately struck a six. For a traditional opener expected to display the classical virtue of patience, Rahul has been equally adept in hammering the bowling, especially in the shorter formats.

If the batting was all about dominance, the bowling arm was equally in sync, and India prospered. Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar have struck a fine tandem and Pandya, too, chipped in as the third seamer. Spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav did reasonably well and going ahead, India will stride in with the knowledge of having most of its

cogs in fine fettle.

But sport isn't about the sweat and success, it is also about empathy and appreciation. Kohli can be a brash competitor, but he also revealed that he has a heart. His act of requesting the Indian fans to stop booing Steve Smith will be remembered for long.

"Just because there are so many Indian fans here, I just didn't want them to set a bad example. I told him sorry on behalf of the crowd because I have seen that happen in a few earlier games, and in my opinion that's not acceptable," said Kohli.

Rough time

Smith and David Warner have had a rough time ever since they returned after a one-year ban following the ball-tampering crisis but they deserve a shot at redemption. Kohli has recognised that need, and it is heartening.

2011 World Cup hero Yuvraj bids adieu

He was the architect of two ICC titles over the last 12 years

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Yuvraj Singh, the player-of-the-tournament in India's triumphant 2011 World Cup campaign, announced his retirement from the game here on Monday. Yuvraj has featured in 23 domestic seasons and will be remembered as one of the most skillful white-ball cricketers.

The architect of India's two ICC titles over the last 12 years, Yuvraj hopes to continue plying his trade in franchise overseas leagues for the next few years.

"I want to play T20s. At this age I can manage to play some kind of fun cricket. It's been too stressful just thinking about my international career, performing in big tournaments like the IPL," Yuvraj said in an interaction with the media after an emotional retirement speech in the presence of his family.

"Now I would like to enjoy myself. With BCCI's permission, I would like to go and play (in overseas leagues). It's been a very long and hard journey and I think I deserve that."

Yuvraj admitted that having consulted his friends and mentors, he had decided that the 2019 IPL, where he played a limited role in Mumbai Indians' road to victory, would be his last.

The southpaw revealed that he declined the "farewell game" offer last year, in-

What a fantastic career you have had Yuvi. You have come out as a true champ everytime the team needed you. Best of luck for your 2nd innings & thanks for all that you have done for Indian Cricket
SACHIN TENDULKAR

stead making himself available for selection.

"I was told that if you are not able to pass the Yo-Yo test, I would get a farewell game. I did not tell anyone in the BCCI that I have to play the last match," he said.

"If I was good enough, I would have retired on the ground. I don't like to ask for a game, I have never played the game with that mindset, so I told them I don't want a farewell game, if I don't clear the Yo-Yo test, I will quietly head back home. I cleared the test and then, rest is not my call."

Note to youngsters

Yuvraj signed off with a word of advice for youngsters. "I see a lot of younger guys getting a lot of money in IPL. Sometime they are getting money a bit too easily, without really appreciating it," he said.

"When you talk to them, they don't listen. Honestly, 20 years ago, I also did not listen. It's a learning process, they will learn themselves. It is important that they focus on cricket and on playing for India."

Yuvraj by the numbers

Batting	M	I	R	HS	Avg	SR	100s	50s
Tests	40	62	1,900	169	33.92	57.9	3	11
ODIs	304	278	8,701	150	36.55	87.6	14	52
T20Is	58	51	1,177	77*	28.02	136.3	0	8

Bowling	M	I	Wkts	Avg	Eco	SR	BBIs
Tests	40	35	9	60.77	3.52	103.4	2/9
ODIs	304	161	111	38.68	5.1	45.4	5/31
T20Is	58	31	28	17.82	7.06	15.1	3/17



Pillars of support: Yuvraj with the two women who matter the most: wife Hazel, left, and mother Shabnam. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

What a fantastic career you have had Yuvi. You have come out as a true champ everytime the team needed you. Best of luck for your 2nd innings & thanks for all that you have done for Indian Cricket
SACHIN TENDULKAR

Players will come and go, but players like @YUVSTRONGI2 are very rare to find. Gone through many difficult times but thrashed disease, thrashed bowlers & won hearts
VIRENDER SEHWAG

My Warrior Prince – A true fighter on and off the field...your stories will forever live on love always brother @YUVSTRONGI2 #Sixerking#Brother #Legend
HARBHAJAN SINGH

Enjoy retirement legend
STUART BROAD

You gave us so many memories and victories and I wish you the best for life and everything ahead. Absolute champion. @YUVSTRONGI2
VIRAT KOHLI

Happy retirement. Pie Chucker. You showed resilience, courage & pure brilliance. Love ya
KEVIN PIETERSEN

WI-SA match abandoned

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SOUTHAMPTON

The South Africa-West Indies match was abandoned after persistent heavy rain on Monday. Both sides earned a point each.

Earlier, West Indies pacesman Sheldon Cottrell reduced Faf du Plessis' team to 29 for two before rain stopped play.

West Indies is fifth in the table with three points after three matches, while South Africa is second from bottom after four games, leaving its hopes of making the semifinals hanging by a thread.

Arun pleased with his wards

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LONDON

India's bowlers have delivered in the two games so far and behind-the-scenes guide Bharat Arun is extremely pleased with the progress of his wards. After another command performance that laid the Aussies low at the Oval on Sunday, Arun lauded his pace unit, especially Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who shared six wickets.

Speaking to correspondents in the ICC mixed media zone on Sunday, Arun said: "It's a dream to have a bowler like him (Bumrah). He is one of the best in the world, both at the beginning and at the death."

"My job is to remind him and Bhuvi about their plans and also about what they have done well in the past." Arun stressed that opening the attack with Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar was an essential strategy. "It was always our plan to open with

Bumrah and Bhuvi."

As for Mohammed Shami, who is yet to play, the bowling coach said: "You have to wait for your chance and be ready to grab the opportunities." Australia was always a step behind in the chase and Arun explained the bowling approach. "We had plans about not giving the batsmen any width and also to take the pace off the ball and we executed them well. It was a conscious plan to bowl short to Warner and he wasn't very comfortable with it."

Kuldeep's form

The burly former India seamer also backed spinner Kuldeep Yadav to return to form. "Every bowler goes through a stage where they get hit. I remind him about all the good things he has done in the past and build his confidence."

MORTAZA

THE FACE-OFF
Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
BRISTOL

KARUNARATNE

	Matches	Ban	SL	Tied	NR
Overall	45	7	36	0	2
World Cup	3	0	3	0	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

'Getting the Aussies all out a big boost'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LONDON

Nagging on the pitch and a mild voice off it, Bhuvneshwar Kumar prefers to be low-profile. After bagging three wickets at the Oval on Sunday, the seamer spoke to the media. **Excerpts:** **That winning feeling:** The conditions favoured the batsmen and there was nothing in the wicket (for bowlers). Winning the match and getting them (Australia) all out is a good boost for the bowlers.

Countering David Warner: We didn't want to give him room as that's his strength. We just kept it tight and luckily he didn't get away.

Steve Smith's dismissal: Just bowled a slow ball and he missed it, that's all. He shuffles and that's his strength as well. He scores runs and also gets out in that area. Getting him out was good for us.

Tale of bashful bails

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LONDON

Cartwheeling stumps and flying bails are intrinsic to cricketing lore.

But, strangely, in the current World Cup bails have turned coy and seemingly refuse to respect Newton's law of gravity when the ball rolls onto the stumps.

It happened yet again when Jasprit Bumrah got one to sneak past David Warner's inner edge at the Oval on Sunday.

One of the theories is that the lights affixed to the bails, have added to the weight and if the ball makes feathery contact with the timber, nothing stirs.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar reflected a bowler's angst when he said: "I want them to dislodge. That's something the ICC should look at. I want the bails to be very, very light."

Rival captains Virat Kohli and Aaron Finch too weighed in. "This is not something you expect at the interna-



Bailed out! The bails stay put despite the ball hitting David Warner's stumps. ■ AFP

tional level. The technology is great and the lights come on and you know it's very precise when you actually make something happen with the stumps.

"But you literally have to smash the stumps really hard. And these are fast bowlers. These are not your medium-paced bowlers. I don't know what's actually wrong with the stump,"

Kohli said.

His Australian counterpart Finch added: "It's a bit unfair at times. But it does seem to be happening more and more, which is unfortunate, because you would hate to see something like that happen in a World Cup final or a semifinal."

"I don't know how much lighter they can make the bails."

Each innings a quest for nirvana

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
MUMBAI

Flamboyance? "It was natural," he would quip. Swagger? "Not put on."

His cricket, as Yuvraj Singh wanted the world to know, was his "life". His cricket a magical combination of flamboyance and life lessons, adding to the lustre that he brought to his batting.

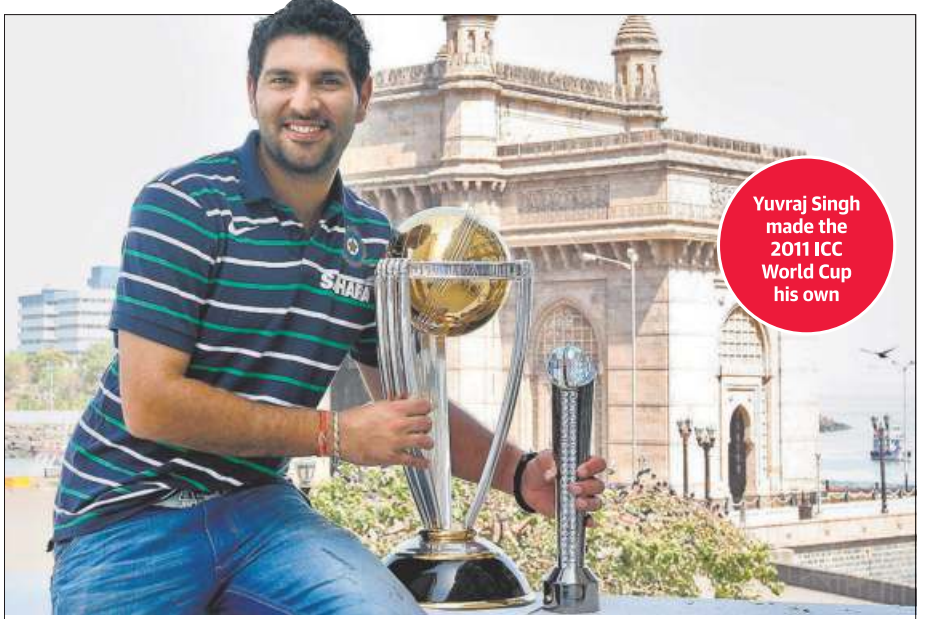
"Take things as they come," he often told himself whenever cricket seemed to be ebbing away from his life. He fought those demons, waged a furious duel to arrest the threat of cancer, and lived to "live" his father's dream of winning the World Cup. Yuvraj, 37, has been an enigma. You tell him he has been an under-achiever, he would counter, "How?"

Three hundred and four ODIs and not even 50 Tests. It still pains him. Perhaps the only "regret" of his life. He watched 40 Tests from the dressing room. It was frustrating, but also pressed him to push himself.

He did not mind carrying drinks because it meant he could step on to the field. Nothing could keep him away from cricket once he decided, on father Yograj Singh's dictat, to give up his first love in sports – roller skating. A 'complete' cricketer, Yuvraj left his mark on the game. He was a batsman who could make a mockery of the field set for him. If the gaps were tough to pierce he would go over the top. He had the ability to do that and he did so frequently, daring the fielders and the bowlers.

For Yuvraj, batting was romancing with the game, giving vent to his emotions, each innings his quest for "nirvana". He never shied away from his natural game, which was entertainment at its best.

The game has seen few fearless strikers of the ball like Yuvraj. He was good at picking the length early and learnt from Virender Sehwag not to curtail what came to him naturally. Hit the ball and hit it hard.



Yuvraj Singh made the 2011 ICC World Cup his own

The Yuvi moments

84 vs AUSTRALIA (Nairobi, ICC Knockout tournament, 2000)

■ Playing in only his second ODI and his first International innings, he took apart a feared Australian attack of McGrath, Lee and Gillespie to make 84 off just 80 balls. His knock enabled India snap a seven-match losing streak against the Aussies in ODIs

69 vs ENGLAND (Lord's, 2002, Natwest final)

■ Chasing a mammoth 326, India was on the ropes after losing Sehwag, Ganguly, Dravid and Tendulkar. In walked Yuvraj and took charge. With Kaif for company, he counterattacked. The two added 121 off just 106 balls to put the team back on the rails before Kaif helped India script a sensational win

58 vs ENGLAND (Durban, 2007, World T20)

■ Arguably one of the most famous T20 knocks in history, Yuvraj entered the record books, unleashing a repertoire of shots while smashing sixes off a Stuart Broad over. A run-in with Flintoff, before the over began, seemed to have fired up the Indian



85* vs ENGLAND (2008, Chennai Test)

■ The Test, played in the aftermath of the Mumbai terror attacks, saw India chase an improbable 387 in the fourth innings. While Sehwag and Tendulkar stole the headlines, Yuvraj chipped in with a crucial knock

57* vs AUSTRALIA (Ahmedabad, 2011 WC quarterfinal)

■ India, pursuing a target of 261, had slipped to 187 for five in the 38th over. Yuvraj and Raina held their nerve and guided the team home in the 48th over. The southpaw's flying cover drive off Lee for the winning runs and slashing his bat in delight will be etched in memory forever

to repeat the mistake. **No regrets** As he moves away from cricket, Yuvraj has no regrets. May be just one – not being able to play more than 40 Tests. Ever since making Mumbai his permanent resi-

dence, proximity to the Arabian Sea has made him a serene individual. "I love the calmness of the sea." He has made peace with himself, thanks to mother Shabnam and wife Hazel. A new life beckons Yuvraj. A life outside cricket.

Compiled by Aashin Prasad

Lacklustre India steamrollers Uzbekistan

USA books a direct ticket to the semifinals on basis of goal difference

HSF

UTHRA GANESAN
BHUBANESWAR
It was expected to be a cake-walk and India duly made it one, thrashing minnow Uzbekistan 10-0 in its final Pool B game of the Hockey Series Finals here on Monday.

The host finished firmly on top of its pool with the result and would now await the winner of the cross-over game between Japan and Poland in the semifinal.

Slow start

It was an inconsequential game but despite the huge gap in rankings and stature — wIndia is fifth while the Uzbeks 43rd — the host started slowly, which meant it scored only three goals in the first 15 minutes, all through penalty corners. But it also wasted four of them, and a handful of open chances.

The second quarter was better, India finally started getting its basics in place and slammed in four more.

Through the first 30 minutes, the ball entered the Indian circle once, when it sped away past a bored P.R. Sreejesh, who took turns with Krishan Pathak under the bar every quarter but had little to do except stroll



In control: Akashdeep Singh scored thrice as India swamped Uzbekistan to finish on top of its pool • BISWARANJAN ROUT

inside the circle to stay alert.

The second half was more of the same, a sedate 3rd quarter and decent fourth one but even though it mattered not, the number of goals scored would not have made coach Graham Reid happy.

More disappointing was

the completely lackadaisical manner in which the Indians went about their jobs.

Lacking coordination

There was little co-ordination, there were glaring basic errors in passing and trapping and the forwards were more often than not out of

position.

The Uzbeks, predictably, were all about defence but despite that, left enough gaps for India to walk through and score.

The defence had little to do for India and the midfield was almost up into the Uzbek third of field but the sharp-

ness was just not there.

It would be easy to defend the performance as dependent on the opposition but the best sides stay within their structure and plan regardless of everything.

Reid's challenge

Getting India in that zone

Srikanth bats for bringing Jadeja in place of Jadhav

The 1983 World Cup-winner says impact players and game-changers like Yuvraj are rare

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

As India's World Cup campaign progresses and the pitches get more worn out, India would do well to include Ravindra Jadeja for Kedar Jadhav in the eleven, believes former India captain K. Srikanth.

"I have always had an attacking mindset. Bowlers win matches. The inclusion of Jadeja will give India a left-arm spinner who can bowl with control. He would be the spin back-up that India needs just in case one of the two wrist spinners has an off-day."

And Srikanth, one of the heroes in India's 1983 World Cup triumph, added, "And Jadeja is a capable left-handed bat apart from being a terrific fielder."

ICC ambassador

Srikanth will be travelling to England as one of ICC's ambassadors for the World Cup and attending India's matches against the West Indies, England and Bangladesh.

He said, "This Indian team looks very good. Everybody is contributing, there is co-



Versatile: Srikanth feels Ravindra Jadeja should be in the Indian XI because of his excellent all-round skills. • AFP

hesion in the side and the fielding has been outstanding. Only Kuldeep Yadav needs to gain in confidence a little bit. As for being an ICC ambassador, I am honoured."

The former India captain felt India, England and Australia were in line to qualify

for the semifinals. "These three teams look very good. For the fourth place, it could be a toss up between New Zealand and the West Indies."

Shami a key player

Srikanth expected Mohammed Shami to play a key

role for India as the competition enters the climactic phase.

"He's got the pace, movement and gets the ball to skid around. Shami's a testing bowler. If the conditions favour pacemen, he could come in for Kuldeep."

Turning his attention to



K. Srikanth. • FILE PHOTO

Yuvraj Singh's retirement from the game, Srikanth said, "He was a game-changer and match-winners such as him come rare. An explosive left-hander, he was a very handy left-arm spinner in limited overs cricket. And he could be electric on the field."

Srikanth, who was the chairman of selectors when India triumphed in the 2011 World Cup, said "Yuvraj's contribution to that victory was huge, with the bat and the ball. A gifted player, he could change the course of a match so easily."

Srikanth feels Virat Kohli and his men have the cricketing ability and the mental strength to give India its third World Cup conquest.

Parris puts spring in England's step

The player looks ready to make a big impact at the competition

WOMEN'S WC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NICE

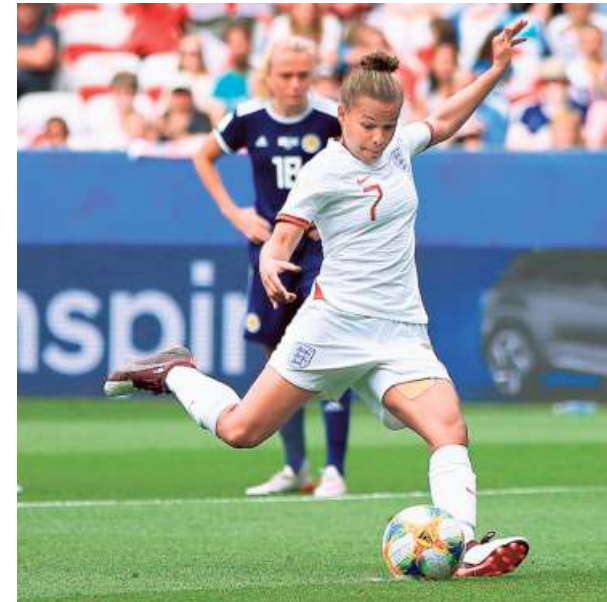
England coach Phil Neville did not hold back in his praise for Nikita Parris after the forward was named player-of-the-match in her side's 2-1 win over Scotland in the Women's World Cup on Sunday.

The 25-year-old scored England's opener from the penalty spot and tormented the Scottish defence from the right flank as the Lionesses got their campaign off to an ideal start.

"Nikita is the example of the work that England have done, that Manchester City have done, and what Nikita herself has applied over the last 16 months," said Neville, who became coach in early 2018.

Parris looks ready to make a big impact at the competition after her prolific form in the Women's Super League (WSL) for City secured a move to Champions League winner Lyon.

"We have seen a player develop from being a really, really good WSL player, to



In the zone: Nikita Parris scored England's opener from the penalty spot. • PHOTO: MARC ATKINS/GETTY IMAGES

signing for the best team in the world in Lyon, scoring goals in the WSL, making an impact in the big games on the big occasions," said Neville.

"She is someone that has still got another five or 10% left in her," he added as he called the forward from Liverpool "a special player".

One highlight of Parris's

display came when she nutmegged Scotland defender Nicola Docherty in her own half.

It was a difficult day for Docherty, whose handball gave Parris the chance to open the scoring before Ellen White made it 2-0. Claire Emslie got a goal back, but England held on despite the rocky finish.

Squash National camp under Ryder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GREATER NOIDA

The National training camp, to prepare the Indian players for the 26th Asian junior championship, started at the Shiv Nadar University here on Monday.

32 players

The camp, hosted by HCL, featuring 32 players, has Chris Ryder of England as the coach, to impart high performance training, with suitable scientific support.

Apart from the Asian ju-

nior championship, the camp will also prepare the Indian players for the World under-19 championship to be held in Malaysia from July 30 to August 4.

HCL, the global information technology giant, has taken up the responsibility of supporting Indian squash, and has in fact come up with the HCL Squash Podium Program, in its attempt to improve the standard of the players and the coaching system in the country.

Ankita loses final qualifying round

SPORTS BUREAU
NOTTINGHAM

Ellen Perez of Australia stopped Ankita Raina 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 in the second and final qualifying round of the \$250,000 WTA tennis tournament on grass in Nottingham.

Ankita had earlier beaten Zhang Kai-Lin of China, as the latter retired after losing the first set.

In the €92,040 Challen-

ger in France, Sumit Nagal beat Hugo Nys of Montenegro 6-4, 6-2 in the first round.

The results: \$250,000 WTA, Nottingham: Qualifying singles (second and final round): Ellen Perez (Aus) bt Ankita Raina 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

First round: Ankita bt Zhang Kai-Lin (Chn) 6-3 (ret'd).

€ 92,040 Challenger, Lyon: First round: Sumit Nagal bt Hugo Nys (Mne) 6-4, 6-2.

Nadal not obsessed with Federer Slam record

By his own estimates, his career-long battles against knee and wrist injuries have cost him some Majors

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Rafael Nadal insists he is not obsessed with beating Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slams, claiming "you can't be frustrated all the time because your neighbour has a bigger house than you or a bigger TV or better garden."

Nadal swept to an historic 12th Roland Garros title with a 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 victory over Austria's Dominic Thiem on Sunday.

That took him to 18 majors, just two behind Federer.

At 33, Nadal is the best part of five years younger than the Swiss veteran but with a career blighted by injuries, he refuses to target the all-time record.

"That's not the way that I see the life," said the Spaniard. "It's a motivation, yes, but it's not my obsession."

"It's not what makes me get up every morning or go and train and play."

Nadal's caution is well-founded.

By his own estimates, his career-long battles against knee and wrist injuries have cost him "around 15 or even more Grand Slams."

In the aftermath of his latest Roland Garros triumph,

he admitted that after an injury-hit start to 2019, he felt "down mentally and physically" and questioned his love for the sport.

'Not enjoying it'

"I was not enjoying it too much, I was worried about my health. I was down mentally and physically after Indian Wells," said Nadal.

"I was too negative. After Madrid and Barcelona, I was thinking about what I needed to do. I could stop for a while and recover or change my attitude and recover."

After a loss in the Australian Open final to Novak Djokovic, where he won just eight games, a second round exit in Acapulco was followed by a withdrawal from the semifinals in Indian Wells, when a knee injury meant that an eagerly-awaited clash with Federer was shelved.

His return in the clay court season saw semifinals losses in Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid before a much needed title triumph in Rome.

"In 2018, I played nine events and finished just seven of them," Nadal added.

"I had issues with my knee



A King's reception: Rafael Nadal is congratulated by the ball boys and girls following his French Open final win • CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

and surgery on my foot, so many issues in the last 18 months that have made the last few weeks very special."

Nadal revealed that in Barcelona, he had even locked himself away, questioning where his season was heading.

"Mentally, I lost a little bit of energy, because I had too many issues in a row. It is tough when you receive one

after another, and then sometimes you are groggy," he explained.

"In Barcelona, I was able to stay alone for a couple of hours in the room and think about what's going on, what I need to do.

"One possibility was to stop for a while and recover my body. And the other was change drastically my attitude and my mentality to

play the next couple of weeks.

"Thinking a lot, finally I think I was able to change and was able to fight back for every small improvement."

On Sunday, Nadal took his Roland Garros record to an astonishing 93 wins and just two losses having previously won the title in 2005-2008, 2010-2014, 2017 and 2018.

It also gave him an 82nd

career title and 950th match win.

"All the things that I went through probably give me that extra passion when I am playing, because I know I will not be here forever.

"So I just try to be positive, to be intense, and to be passionate about what I am doing."

Next up for Nadal is his latest assault on Wimbledon, where he has twice been champion, in 2008 and 2010.

However, the All England Club has also been the site of some spectacular lows.

He lost four years in succession to players outside the top 100 — Lukas Rosol, Steve Darcis, Nick Kyrgios and Dustin Brown — from 2012-2015.

In 2017, he was knocked out in the last 16 by Gilles Muller, 15-13 in the final set.

Last year, he lost a marathon semifinal to Novak Djokovic by dropping the last set 10-8. "I played a great event last year. I have been able to be very close to win another title there. As everybody knows, I love to play on grass," said Nadal who added he will not play a warm-up event before Wimbledon.