Chance for India to set the record straight

Onus on the batsmen as Kohli and de Kock experiment with inexperienced bowlers

SA IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO DHARAMSHALA

In home conditions, Indian cricket wears a different look. There is almost a touch of invincibility to it. The growth in confidence has also reflected in the improved results overseas, particularly in the shorter format.

But India's home record in T20s against South Africa surely needs improvement. India lost both decisive matches in the lone threematch series in 2015. In fact, India did avenge the loss in South Africa in February last year.

For skipper Virat Kohli, who never stops saying, "We want to win every match in every format, no matter where we play," it is an opportunity to set the record straight in the T20 series commencing here Sunday

Easier to handle

The members of this South African team, under wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock, appear easier to deal with, than their predecessors. But Kohli needs no reminding that shorter the format, brighter the chances of an upset.

For India, the trusted batting options are all there. Though back on familiar terrain, the top-order will have to bring out its best against an attack led by Kagiso Raba-

After all, given the inexperience of the chosen bowlers, the onus to play match-winning roles lies heavily on the batsmen.

Meanwhile, the possibility of rain hampering the match cannot be ruled out. There BLAST FROM THE PAST

for a T20I series in India

■ India has not won a T2OI game (bilateral series) against

South Africa at home, losing both matches of the 2015 series (the third game in Kolkata was washed out)

■ Though India and South Africa began playing each other in

T20Is since 2006, this is just the second visit by the Proteas

■ India has toured the Southern Cape four times, figuring in

2012 (lost) and a three-match series in 2018 (won 2-1)

three one-off matches [series] in 2006 (won), 2011 (won) and

The Men in Blue's T20 International debut came against South Africa, in Johannesburg

■ India made a memorable start in the shortest format, winning a delivery to spare

■ After Zaheer Khan (2-15) and Ajit Agarkar (2-10) had restricted the Proteas to 126, Virender Sehwag (34), Dinesh Mongia (38) and Man-of-the-Match Dinesh Karthik (31 not out) were the architects of the chase.

■ Virat Kohli opened the batting for the first time in his T20I career, against South Africa. Rohit Sharma, who walked in at No. 3 in the same game, won the MoM award for his 53 as India won the 2011 Durban game by 21 runs. Cut to the present, it's Rohit who opens the batting while his skipper bats at No. 3 ■ Kohli is yet to score a half-century in a

T20I against South

Africa. He has 99

runs from five

Sept. 22, Bengaluru

All matches start at 7 p.m.

was a heavy shower on Saturday afternoon that left the lush green outfield very soggy. Though more rain is forecast on Sunday, the groundsmen were confident of play.

For the South Africans, some of whom have played in India as part of the country's 'A' teams, the series offers opportunities to build some confidence.

Among the experienced, David Miller, de Kock and Rabada can make things difficult for the Indians. Pacebowling all-rounders Dwaine Pretorius and Andile Phehlukwayo could provide some surprises.

Kohli indicated that India has around 30 matches leading to the next T20 World Cup. On offer were opportunities "to check out the guys are up and coming."

That also means the batting line-up could see a few regular names making way for new ones.

Weak spot

Lance Klusener, former allrounder who is here as assistant batting coach, saw a chance for the South Africans against India's inexperienced bowling. "That (inexperience of Indian bowlers) is an area we are going to take advantage of."

The visiting team can also draw some confidence from the fact that the only time South Africa played the series-opener here, in 2015, it won by seven wickets. Interestingly, only Rohit, Dhawan, Kohli, Miller and Rabada are the surviving members from the 22 involved in that match.

Since then, how much more has changed will be known on Sunday.

The teams (from):

India: Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, Krunal Pandya, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Deepak Chahar, Rahul Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed and Navdeep

South Africa: Quinton de Kock (Capt.), Rassie van der Dussen, Temba Bavuma, Reeza Hendricks, George Linde, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Junior Dala, Bjorn Fortuin, Hendricks, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada and Ta-

Match starts at 7 p.m.

India is the continental champ

Atharva derails Bangladesh's chase of a low total

U-19 ASIA CUP

AGENCIES

Left-arm spinner Atharva Ankolekar returned with a five-wicket haul to help India clinch the U-19 Asia Cup with a thrilling five-run win over Bangladesh in a low-scoring final here on Saturday.

Defending 106, India dismissed Bangladesh for 101 in 33 overs, courtesy 18-yearold Ankolekar, who emerged the star with figures of five for 28 from eight overs.

While Ankolekar spun a web to derail Bangladesh's chase, he was supported well by pacer Akash Singh, who accounted for three wickets. Vidyadhar Patil and Sushant Mishra also chipped in with a wicket each.

Bad start

Bangladesh started badly, losing both openers in the first two overs. Skipper Akbar Ali (23) and Mrittunjoy Chowdhury (21) kept the team in the hunt and after their fall, Tanzim Hasan Sakib (12) and Rakibul Hasan (11) raised hopes of a Bangladesh win before India fought back with Ankolekar reducing the team to 78 for seven.

Ankolekar wrapped up the Bangladesh innings by dismissing the last two batsmen in the 33rd over as the Tigers fell five runs short of the target.

Earlier, skipper Dhruv Jurel (33) and lower-order batsman Karan Lal (37) came up with useful contributions to help India cross the 100-run mark.

India's decision to bat first seemed to backfire as leftarm pacer Mrittunjoy Chowdhury (three for 18) and off-spinner Shamim Hossain (three for eight) wreaked havoc. Karan was the last batsman to be dismissed as the team managed 106 in 32.4 overs. However, India had the last laugh as the bowlers got going.

The scores:

India Under-19: Suved Parkar run out 4, Arjun Azad c Akbar b Tanzim Hasan O. Tilak Varma c Akbar b Mrittunjoy 2, Dhruv Jurel c Mrittunjoy b Shamim 33, Shashwat Rawat lbw b Shamim 19, Varun Lavande c Mrittunjoy b Shamim O, Atharva Ankolekar run out 2, Karan Lal c Mahmudul b Mrittunjoy 37, Sushant Mishra c Akbar b Alam 3, Vidyadhar Patil c Akbar b Mrittunjoy O, Akash Singh (not out) 2; Extras (w-4): 4; Total (in 32.4

overs): 106. Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-6, 3-8, 4-53, 5-53, 6-61, 7-62, 8-82,

Bangladesh Under-19 bowling: Tanzim 7-0-22-1, Mrittunjoy 7.4-0-18-3, Alam 4.5-0-26-1, Rakibul 7-0-31-0, Shamim 6-2-8-3. Towhid 0.1-0-1-0.

Bangladesh Under-19: Tanzid Hasan lbw b Akash O, Parvez Hossain Emon c Lavande b Patil 5, Mahmudul Hasan Joy c Jurel b Akash 1, Towhid Hridoy b Akash O, Shahadat Hossain c Jurel b Ankolekar 3, Akbar Ali c & b Ankolekar 23, Shamim Hossain c Lavande b Ankolekar 7, Mrittunjoy Chowdhury c Tilak b Mishra 21. Tanzim Hasan Sakib lbw b Ankolekar 12. Rakibul Hasan (not out) 11, Shahin Alam b Ankolekar O; Extras (lb-6, w-12): 18; Total (in 33 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-13, 3-13, 4-16, 5-40, 6-51, 7-78, 8-78,

India Under-19 bowling: Akash 5-0-12-3, Patil 8-0-25-1, Ankolekar 8-2-28-5, Mishra 9-2-27-1. Karan Lal 3-1-3-0. Toss: India Under-19.

India Under-19 won by five runs to clinch the title.

Hari Krishna

moves up



Bright stars: The India u-19 team that lifted the Asia Cup. • COURTESY BCCI/TWITTER

Much ado about a photo!

RAKESH RAO DHARAMSHALA

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's contribution to the Indian team and Virat Kohli's success as captain is well known.

Skipper Kohli has immense respect for Dhoni's inputs, and the value-addition they bring.

Saturday witnessed one made his admiration for Dhoni known, loud and clear, during the pre-match press conference here.

Asked about his recent photo-tweet of Dhoni and him, taken during India's successful run-chase against Australia in the 2016 T20 World Cup match in Mohali, that sparked off speculation of the latter's retirement, Kohli said: "I was sitting at home and I, normally, put out a photograph and it became a news item.

"I think it was a lesson for me, that the way I think, the



Team man: Skipper Kohli has immense respect for Dhoni's inputs, and the value-addition they bring. ■FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

whole world doesn't think that way. There was nothing in farthest stretch of my imagination (to hint Dhoni's retirement) while putting that pic out on social media. Like what did I write. I remember that game even

now..., every now and then. I never spoke about that game and so I thought I will put up a post. Now people interpreted it in a different manner in which there wasn't even an iota of truth.

On the same page

"Numerous times people have given up on sportsmen and they have proved people wrong. He (Dhoni) has done that many times in his career. So, one great thing about him is that he thinks of Indian cricket. And whatever we think, he is on the same page. The alignment is there. The kind of mindset he has, to groom youngsters and give them opportunities.

"When you decide to stop playing is an absolutely individual thing, and no one else should have an opinion on it. That's what I think. As long as he is available and continues to play, he is going to be very, very valuable."

Making mother and country proud

Couldn't have asked for anything better, says Vaidehi

AMOL KARHADKAR

Vaidehi Ankolekar, a BEST (The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport) conductor here, was busy with her duties in a municipal bus on Saturday morning; but was also constantly checking her phone for updates on the Under-19 Asia Cup final in Colombo.

The moment India was bowled out for 106, she sought permission from her depot seniors and rushed home.

A mother of two teenaged cricketers - the elder of whom, left-arm spinner Atharva, was donning India colts' blues in Colombo -Vaidehi wasn't sure whether her son would spin a web around the Bangladesh batsmen.

Delighted

"Once the pacers earned four quick wickets, I was



Atharva Ankolekar.

hoping that Atharva will see the team through. Just couldn't have asked for anything better than him wrapping up the match with two quick wickets," Vaidehi told The Hindu, while taking a break from her primary school students' tuition at her home.

The lanky Atharva may have emerged as the toast of the nation with his dream run in the Asia Cup, culminating in a match-winning performance in the final. But he has had to struggle ever since starting to ply his trade as a kid.

When he was nine, his father Vinod - also a BEST conductor who hoped his unfulfilled desire to be a cricketer would be accomplished by his sons – died in 2010. It forced his mother to double up as the breadwinner besides raising Atharva and his younger brother Parth, who is now in Mum-

bai's under-14 probables. Vaidehi says while she juggled with the dual responsibility, Atharva matured as an individual fast. "I was struggling to keep the house running, so couldn't give as much attention to the kids as I wished, but Atharva looked after himself and young Parth," she says. "His maturity comes to the fore on and off the field."

bonus points). Going into

the game with only four

wins in 14 appearances this

season, Paltan came up with

a fine team effort. Balasaheb

Jadhav (five points from five

tackles, two Super Tackles).

captain P.O. Surject (five)

and all-rounder Manjeet (se-

main

ven) were the

contributors.

SPORTS BUREAU KHANTY MANSIYSK (RUSSIA) P. Hari Krishna and Vidit Gujrathi followed different routes to the third round of World Cup chess tournament here on Sunday.

On a day when B. Adhiban drew again and Nihal Sarin suffered his first loss to go into Sunday's tiebreak games, Aravindh Chithambaram's campaign ended following a draw in a must-win game. Hari became the first In-

P. Hari Krishna. ■ FILE РНОТО

CHESS WC

dian to advance to the third round after drawing in 60 moves against Russia's Vladimir Fedoseev in Game Two of the second round. Since Hari won their first game on Friday, he was declared winner by 1.5-0.5.

Gujrathi worked his way to a 62-move victory over Russia's Alexandr Rakhmonov. Friday's game had been drawn. Gujrathi plays Wesley So in the third round.

Adhiban drew again with formidable Chinese Yu Yangyi to go into the tiebreak games.

After posting three successive wins in the premier competition, Sarin suffered his first loss owing to mistakes committed under severe time-pressure.

The results (involving Indians): Round two, game two: Vladimir Fedoseev (Rus, 0.5) drew with P. Hari Krishna (1.5); Aleksandr Rakhmanov (Rus, 0.5) lost to Vidit Gujrathi (1.5); Yu Yangyi (Chn, 1) drew with B. Adhiban (1); Eltaj Safarli (Aze, 1) bt Nihal Sarin (1); Evgeny Tomashevsky (Rus, 1.5) drew with Aravindh Chithambaram (0.5).

(Tie-break games on Sunday will decide the matches locked 1-1).

M ND-NDE

It's about finding right balance: Kohli

RAKESH RAO

With an eye on the 2020 T20 World Cup in Australia, it is experiment time for the Indian selectors and the team's think-tank.

Captain Virat Kohli is excited about the prospects. Talking to the media ahead of India's first T20 match against South Africa in the three-match series here on Saturday, Kohli said, "Whenever there is a world tournament coming up, it is like a milestone and you start preparing from backwards.

Time to experiment

"These are opportunities where we can try various combinations with new people around - check their ability, character and composure to perform at the international level.

"So I think it's about finding the best balance that we can as a side and not necessarily stick to one combination. If all teams across the world are batting till No. 9, 10 why can't we?'

David Miller, the most experienced player in the



said he was willing to lend whatever support captain Quinton de Kock requires. • AKHILESH KUMAR

Bilateral T20I record			
	Matches	India	South Africa
Overall	8	4	4
In India	2	0	2
In South Africa	6	4	2

to do.

South African squad looked at the brighter side of the young team.

"We've got a lot of energy in the squad. There are actually a lot of guys who have played a lot of cricket, in the A-side and domestically.

"We've come here to win and we're looking forward to making our mark." Asked about Quinton's de

Kock's captaincy, Miller said, "He's been around for many years, and he's got an incredible cricketing brain. It's really nice to be alongside him and supporting him in

whatever role he wants me

England in driving seat

THE ASHES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

England seized control on the third day of the fifth Ashes Test on Saturday, building a likely match-winning lead of 382.

With two days of play to come and the weather in London set fair, the home side, on 313 for eight in its second innings, appears certain to pull level at 2-2 barring a miracle.

Nathan Lyon slowed England's progress in the morning session, nailing Rory Burns and captain Joe Root but those were rare early bright spots for the vis-



Joe Denly... in fine nick.

itors. Opener Joe Denly and Ben Stokesput on 127 for the third wicket as a tiring Australian attack ran out of steam.

SCOREBOARD England - 1st innings: 294.

Australia - 1st innings: 225. England - 2nd innings: Rory Burns c Paine b Lyon 20, Joe Denly c Smith b Siddle 94, Joe Root c Smith b Lyon 21, Ben Stokes b Lvon 67. Jonny Bairstow c Smith b Marsh 14. Jos

Buttler c Labuschagne b Siddle

47, Sam Curran c Paine b Cum-

Marsh 6, Jofra Archer (not out)

3; Jack Leach (not out) 5; Extras (nb-1, b-7, lb-11): 19; Total (eight wkts. in 91 overs): 313. Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-87, 3-

214, 4-222, 5-249, 6-279, 7-305, 8-305.

Australia bowling: Cummins 19-4-55-1, Hazlewood 19-5-57-0, Lyon 22-4-65-3, Siddle mins 17, Chris Woakes c Smith b 13-4-52-2, Marsh 11-1-40-2, Labuschagne 7-1-26-0

Paltan back to winning ways

PKL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Puneri Paltan set off the home leg in ProKabaddi League Season-7 on an electrifying note, beating formidable Gujarat Fortunegiants 43-33 at the Balewadi indoor stadium on Saturday.

Nitin Tomar switched to match-winner mode, making up for time lost during recovery from injury. Starting with a bonus point at the start, his class and craft came through in 11 raid points from 18 forays (two

The results: Puneri Paltan 43 (Nitin Tomar 11, Manjit 7, P.O. Surjeet 5, Balasaheb Jadhav 5) bt Gujarat Fortunegiants 33 (Sachin Tanwar 10); Haryana Steelers 43 (Vikas Khandola 13, Vinav 10. Vikas Kale 4) bt Tamil Thalaivas 35 (Rahul Chaudhari 10, Ajith Kumar 9).



Reaching out: Puneri Paltan raider Pankaj Mohite on the move against Gujarat Fortunegiants. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT