

# Kohli and Dhoni named captains of Test, ODI teams of decade



**Leaders par excellence:** Cricket Australia has recognised the leadership qualities of M.S. Dhoni and Virat Kohli • FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

The two sides have been picked by Cricket Australia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MELBOURNE

Virat Kohli has been named captain of the Test XI of the decade by Cricket Australia's official news website, while Mahendra Singh Dhoni was chosen leader of its ODI team of the decade.

No surprise

It is not a surprise that Kohli finds himself in both the Test and ODI teams. The 31-year-old has arguably been the best batsman over the last decade.

He has already amassed 70 international hundreds and is only behind Ricky Ponting (71) and Sachin Tendulkar (100).

Kohli, who averages more than 50 in all formats, is also third in the list of leading run-scorers of all time with 21,444 runs, behind Ponting (27,483) and Tendulkar (34,357).

The India skipper has scored runs all around the world but Australia has been a special place for him, hav-

ing scored nine hundreds (six in Tests, three in ODIs) Down Under.

Kohli is primed to shatter more records, having ended 2019 as the leading run-getter.

The others in the Test XI of the decade include Alastair Cook, David Warner, Kane Williamson, Steve Smith, A.B. de Villiers, Ben Stokes, Dale Steyn, Stuart Broad, Nathan Lyon and James Anderson, 'cricket.com.au' posted.

The website's ODI team of the decade is led by Dhoni, who captained India to two World titles, in 2007 and 2011, respectively.

Rohit Sharma, who had a memorable 2019, which included five hundreds in the World Cup, is one of the openers in the team alongside Hashim Amla.

Kohli is the number three, followed by de Villiers, Shakib Al Hasan, Jos Buttler, Dhoni, Rashid Khan, Mitchell Starc, Trent Boult and Lasith Malinga.

# Kiwis look to stop Aussie juggernaut



**Will he, won't he?** Matt Henry and Tim Southee will be waiting anxiously on news of Trent Boult's availability for the Boxing Day Test. • GETTY IMAGES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MELBOURNE

New Zealand is hopeful of having pace spearhead Trent Boult back to help halt a rampant Australia in the Black Caps' first Boxing Day Test at the MCG in more than 30 years.

The veteran, suffering a side strain, was badly missed during the opening Test in Perth, when the visitors were thrashed by 296 runs in stifling conditions.

But he has been toiling in the nets and expects to be ready for a rare appearance by his country on one of the best-known dates on the

cricket calendar.

The last time New Zealand faced Australia in a Boxing Day Test was in 1987 with the home side holding on for a draw despite blistering bowling from the legendary Richard Hadlee.

What sort of wicket on Thursday is the great unknown. Only a fortnight ago, play was abandoned during a domestic Sheffield Shield game at the ground due to a dangerous pitch, with erratic bounce seeing balls rise sharply and unexpectedly to pummel the batsmen.

Australia goes into the second Test without Josh Ha-

zlewood who was injured in Perth. James Pattinson is set to play alongside Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc.

**The teams (from): Australia:** Tim Paine (Capt.), David Warner, Joe Burns, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Matthew Wade, Travis Head, Pat Cummins, Mitch Starc, Nathan Lyon, James Pattinson, Michael Neser and Peter Siddle.

**New Zealand:** Kane Williamson (Capt.), Todd Astle, Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Jeet Raval, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, B-J. Watling, and Neil Wagner.

# Ganguly hails Ashwin

Says his efforts go unnoticed at times

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

BCCI president and former India skipper Sourav Ganguly, on Tuesday, hailed R. Ashwin for finishing the decade as the highest wicket-taker in international cricket, but feels his achievement has not got the recognition it deserves.

Ganguly's tweet came after the International Cricket Council (ICC) listed the top wicket-takers of the decade.

Ashwin is on top with 564 scalps and is the only spinner in the list. England duo James Anderson and Stuart Broad followed him with 535 and 525 wickets while New Zealand's Tim Southee (472) and Trent Boult (458) are fourth and fifth.

"Most international wickets for ashwin this decade @ashwinravi99



R. Ashwin.  
• V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

@bcci .. what an effort .. just get a Feeling it goes unnoticed at times .. super stuff .. (sic.)," Ganguly tweeted.

Ashwin lost his place in white-ball cricket in 2017 after the rise of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal.

# Kumble happy with KXIP's new acquisitions

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
NEW DELHI

Experts believe that Kings XI Punjab appears the strongest and most balanced team, on paper, in IPL 2020.

For Anil Kumble, KXIP director of cricket operations, the presence of West Indies left-arm fast bowler Sheldon Cottrell and hard-hitting Australian Glenn Maxwell could be the crucial factor, along with Rahul being at the helm.

Covering the bases

"The auction went well. The idea was to cover all bases and make sure you have enough to take care of any situation, any opposition, any surface. So I think, it has a blend of raw talent, experience and some wonderful young players who have performed at the highest level.

"We are happy that we were able to get Cottrell and (James) Neesham, who will be the all-rounder and has the experience of not just playing international cricket but also in India. We were also able to get (Glenn) Maxwell back because he's done well for KXIP



Glenn Maxwell. • GETTY IMAGES



Sheldon Cottrell. • AP

in the past," Kumble told *The Hindu*.

On the foreign players, Kumble said, "The four foreigners we have will complement the others – Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Nicholas Pooran and, of course, the 'Universe Boss' (Chris Gayle)."

Kumble was pleased with the Indian contingent too. "We have picked those with experience who can play No. 5 or 6 and also bowl a bit. We

have Deepak Hooda to play that role. In a T20 game, playing at No. 5 or 6 is never easy but he has the potential. We also have Mandeep (Singh) and Sarfaraz (Ahmed) along with Karun Nair."

The bowling, insisted Kumble, looked healthy too. "Ishan Porel has shown a lot of promise in domestic cricket, has a mature head. We expect him to do really well. The other advantage is that he and



Anil Kumble. • RAJEEV BHATT

Mohammed Shami play for the same team (Bengal).

"Then we have Arshdeep Singh. We wanted a young all-rounder and that's why we picked (Darshan) Nalkande. Ravi Bishnoi is a good wrist-spinner. We wanted to give a chance to (batsman) Simran Singh, wanted to promote local talent. Have heard good things about him and looking forward to working with all of them."

# Kohli stays on top, Rahane slips



Jadeja, the No. 2 all-rounder. • FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI

India skipper Virat Kohli will end the year as the top-ranked batsman while Ajinkya Rahane slipped a rung to be seventh in the ICC Test rankings issued on Tuesday.

Kohli (928) remained 17 points ahead of Australia's Steve Smith who occupied the second spot while New Zealand captain Kane Williamson (864) ends the year at No. 3.

Cheteshwar Pujara (791) retained his fourth spot.

Mayank Agarwal and Rohit Sharma wrapped up the top 20, occupying the 12th and 15th spots.

Jasprit Bumrah retained his sixth spot in the bowlers' list headed by Australia's Pat Cummins.

Among Test all-rounders, Ravindra Jadeja stayed at No. 2 behind West Indies' Jason Holder.

# Unwritten books to mull over as the year winds to a close



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

As the year draws to a close, and lists of the best and worst books are compiled, let us look at a third category : books that haven't been written yet.

*In A League of Their Own:* The story of great clubs in leagues around the world, teams often inspired by the formidable club cricketer rather than the international.

*The Many Ups and Downs of Venkatraghavan:* India's great off-spinner had a fascinating career. He was a student of the game and could have been one of India's best captains. But he led in just five Tests, and had the mortification of hearing of his sacking from the pilot on the flight home from the England tour of 1979. He first led against the West Indies in 1974-75 following much drama ahead of the Delhi Test, and was made 12th man in the next Test. Post-retirement, he took up umpiring to serve the game he loved. He became secretary of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, and played league cricket well into his forties.

*What Really Happened in 1974:* It is 45 years since *that* tour of England, when India lost all the Tests, were bowled out for 42 at Lord's, were chided by the High Commissioner, had to deal with a shop lifting case, all apart from the personnel issues. Skipper Ajit Wa-

dekar and Bishan Bedi were at loggerheads, two players went at each other with cricket bats. Sunil Gavaskar wrote, "It was a totally disastrous series and the tour was one of the worst I made."

*The Philosophy of Cricket:* There have been recent books on the subject by Mike Brearley (*On Form*), Gary Cox (*Cricket Ball*), while other philosophers have written on the game including David Stove, David Papieau, Samir Chopra and Edward Craig. Yet the definitive book is yet to be written.

*The Real Sachin Tendulkar:* Is India's greatest batsman the perfect man all of us have made him out to be? Did he have no weak spots as batsman or person? What corners did he cut, and what was the impact when he stepped out of his public persona? Not so much tearing down a national hero as introducing some balance. No genius existed without a touch of madness, the philosopher Aristotle told us. What about a touch of frailty?

*Bradman v Fingleton, Gavaskar v Bedi: Personality Clashes in the Game:* There are books on the former, not on the latter. Some clashes can be put down to the ego, others to the result of grown men spending days and weeks together on tour when what's bubbling beneath can often come to the surface. Teams win without team spirit – its useful to be reminded of this.

*Hypocrisy as Art – The story of the BCCI:* India's governing body has been called out on many occasions, most notably when the Supreme Court attempted to clean it up recently. Yet there is something about the air the administrators breathe that seems to make them impervious to criticism, and even the law. What is this magic? A

history of the politics and principles (or lack thereof ) since the BCCI was formed in December 1928.

*Taking What Was Left – The Story of Vijaykrishna:* Bharamaiah Vijaykrishna, who turned 70 this year, was a left-arm spinner and batsman who played a key role in Karnataka's first Ranji Trophy triumph. He played 80 matches, and picked up 194 wickets, which was remarkable in a team which for the most part relied on Erapalli Prasanna and Bhagwat Chandrasekhar. He was a maverick, and the focal point of some excellent anecdotes.

*How I Invented the Doosra by Saqlain Mushtaq:* The Pakistani off-spinner is credited with inventing the doosra, the off-spin bowler's variation which spins from leg to off. Saqlain chanced upon it while playing with a table tennis ball, and has claimed it can be delivered with a legitimate bowling action if one masters it. The previous 'new' delivery for spin, the googly, was invented by Bernard Bosanquet who also developed it from a table-top game called Twisti-Twosti. The object was to bounce a tennis ball on a table so that it could not be caught by an opposing player.

*The Complete Story of Match-fixing at the Turn of the Century:* How many players were involved besides Hansie Cronje and Mohammad Azharuddin? How deep did the malaise go? When did it all start? Which are the fixed games we know nothing of? Who was pulling the strings from the outside? How did the various actors in the drama communicate?

*I Am a Woman, Sue Me:* Women are no longer second class citizens of the cricketing world. How and when did this come about, especially in Asia?

# 2020 Sportstar ACES Awards

Readers will have a chance to pick their favourites for the 10 Popular Choice Awards. The top two contenders from each category, based on popular vote, will be sent to a jury, which will decide the winner

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AMIT PANGHAL (BOXING)

After switching from the 49kg to the 52kg category this year, Amit Panghal secured gold medals at the Asian Championships in Bangkok and the India Open in Guwahati before becoming the first Indian man to win a silver medal at the World Boxing Championships in Ekaterinburg in October. The 24-year-old lost to Olympic champion Shakhobidin Zoirov of Uzbekistan in the final. He is regarded as one of the brightest prospects for India at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics



BAJRANG PUNIA (WRESTLING)

Bajrang Punia underlined his class by winning an Olympic quota place and his third World Wrestling Championships medal at Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. He beat Tulga Tumur of Mongolia to finish with a bronze medal, his second World Championships bronze, and emerge as the most successful Indian in the event by a mile. The 25-year-old also bagged gold medals at top-level events including the Dan Kolov-Nikola Petrov tournament, the Asian Championships (his second continental title), the Ali Aliev tournament and the Tbilisi Grand Prix



PANKAJ ADVANI (BILLIARDS)

Since returning to India from his UK professional snooker stint in 2014, Pankaj Advani has claimed at least one International Billiards and Snooker Federation world title every calendar year, and 2019 followed the same trend, with Advani winning the world billiards (150-up format) and world snooker team trophies. The twin triumphs took the 34-year-old Advani's world title tally to 23. He is currently the only player to win World titles in both the long and short formats of snooker (15-red standard and 6-red) and both formats of English billiards (time and point)

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