

# Signature move

Want to make most of the chance, not worried about WC: KL Rahul

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WHEN KESRICK Williams was about 15 and trying to break into age-group tournaments in St Vincent, in the West Indies, he had his first setback at home. For a while, the breakthrough wasn't happening and even his mother, his mentor as she has played cricket for St Vincent, said: "That's it, you aren't going to get money for your cricket now." In his mind, Williams says, he told himself: "One day you are going to be happy, momma."

Williams comes from a small place, 'Spring Village', on the island of St Vincent and had to travel a bit for his cricket training on weekends. His wasn't a rich family and he decided to save up the money he would get to travel to school through the week. "I would starve myself for the week, use that money to travel and play cricket on Saturdays," says Vincent in an interview to a television channel back home. Somehow, despite not getting adequate support in his early years from his cricket association, he preserved to make it on his own.

All through his growing years as a cricketer, he was frequently snubbed by people, who didn't think much of his skills. "I used all that negativity to feed off. More they talked (negative), the more work I hard." When he moved to senior circuit, he would leave the training early to catch the van back to the hinterland and that affected his chances. When his father learnt of it, he used his savings to get him a jeep and "people talked negatively, saying, 'look his first purchase after playing for island is a vehicle; he is so full of himself without realising the reason'. All that motivates me".

It would be interesting to see how he now rebounds from the latest episode with Virat Kohli. Already, cricketing forums in the Caribbean have dissed him a touch: next time, write a sick note in notebook and such digs.

The world now knows what transpired between Kohli and Williams. In 2017, in a game in Jamaica, Williams had Kohli miscuing a catch and he took out his imaginary notebook from the pocket and scribbled away. Two years later, Kohli has not only remembered that 'sight' but decided it was payback time after he played an astonishing drag-scoop flick, a shot that is worth salivating for ages. Kohli this time did the notebook entry, with a bemused Williams looking on closely.

It's not the first time Williams had been at the receiving end. Last year, his closest friend in cricket, Chadwick Walton, had done exactly what Kohli did on Friday. First, it was Williams who had done that notebook scribble after taking out Walton's wicket in a game in the Caribbean Premier League, right in front of the departing batsman's face. His friend, who had already told Williams that revenge would be served soon, smashed a few boundaries in the next face-off and proceeded to return the favour. In fact, after one of the fours, Walton even suggested that the notebook was full as he kept flipping imaginary pages to end of it, and signed off on the bat. Williams and Walton are friends (once, in nets, Williams hit Walton on the helmet crest with a bouncer and said, "Merry Christmas"); it would be interesting to see how he reacts to Kohli in future games.

Kohli isn't the first big batsman to serve out such paybacks on the field over perceived slights. A similar story stars Don Bradman in an exhibition game in club cricket in Sydney. When he had crossed fifty, the opposing captain from Lithgow Pottery cricket team brought on a spinner, Bill Black. Unsure of what the bowler did, Bradman, playing for Blue Mountains team, enquired from the wicketkeeper, who said, "Don't you remember this bloke? He bowled you in the exhibition match at Lithgow a few weeks ago and has been boasting about it ever since at your expense." In that game, even the umpire had reportedly said, "Bill, you got him", when the stumps were disturbed.

Once he was reminded by the 'keeper, Bradman reportedly shook his head, walked up to his partner Wendell Bill and said, "I think I will have a go". In the next three overs,



Virat Kohli mimicked Kesrick Williams's celebration during the first T20 against the West Indies in Hyderabad on Friday. P71

Last year, Williams's closest friend in cricket, Chadwick Walton, had done exactly what Kohli did. First, it was Williams who had done that notebook scribble after taking out Walton's wicket in a CPL game. His friend smashed Williams for a few boundaries in the next face-off and proceeded to return the favour.

he smashed a hundred runs, crashing 33 runs off Black's first over and 29 off his second. After leaking 62 from 2 overs, Black had to plead his captain to take him off.

Though Bradman would later say that he hadn't planned it and it "just happened purely by accident", his peers that time weren't convinced. His contemporary Australian batsman, who wasn't an admirer of Bradman the man, would even write that. "To suggest — and he [Bradman] missed nothing of such suggestions — that a particular bowler had his measure, was to invite that bowler's annihilation."

It wasn't the only time that Bradman piled on a bowler like that. In 1930, on his first tour of England, Yorkshire's feisty seamer George Macaulay, yielding to rumours that the Australian prodigy would be sorted out on English pitches, demanded loudly of his captain: "Let me have a go at this bugger". Bradman smeared him for five fours in his second over and looted 16 from his third. It led to a memorable sledge from a spectator who yelled, "George, tha' should have kept thi' bloody trap shut!".

Closer home, and more recently, Sachin Tendulkar's payback to Henry Olanga is well

known. Having been dismissed by Olanga, Tendulkar smashed him all around the park in the next match. Lesser known is the treatment meted out to Sreesanth.

Sreesanth had taken out Tendulkar in a Challenger tournament and celebrated wildly. The revenge came next year, according to a still awe-struck Sreesanth.

"Paaji is a legend. You know what happened in that Challenger game, I was lucky that he was coming back from an injury and I took my chance. But later on, next year I think, there was a match where I bowled to him. He smashed me for sixes over square-leg and blasted me through the off side. And we both had a laugh about it at the end of the game!" Sreesanth told this newspaper.

Interestingly, Kesrick Williams, known for his dancing celebrations in the CPL and the occasional notebook signages, didn't do any dramatic celebrations after taking his first wicket on his international debut. "But all my team-mates asked me why I wasn't doing them. CPL was like a party, the biggest party in sports. ICC tournaments I had more respect. But everybody said do it do it and so I did it (the dance) after my second wicket."

In that television interview, Williams talks about his love for Soca music and how a chat with Andre Russell made him continue his dancing celebrations. "He came and told me that he liked my dance and to run with it. So I put a little more waist in it, fine tuned it and it became a thing. I saw a couple of times even in IPL, cricketers hashtagged me after dancing like me after taking wickets. It was good to see that those players knew me and tried what I am doing." It would be fascinating to see what happens when he faces off Kohli in the next game and especially if Williams takes Kohli's wicket.

INDIA VS WEST INDIES: 2ND T20 I — LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & 3, 7 PM ONWARDS

## 'Batters did their job, but bowlers lacked discipline'

Hyderabad: West Indies captain Kieron Pollard lauded his batsmen for putting up a good show but came down hard on the bowlers for failing to defend 200-plus score against India in the first T20 International of the three-match series here. West Indies posted a challenging 207 for 5 but Virat Kohli stamped his authority with a career-best 94 not out as India pulled off their highest successful run chase in a T20 International, overhauling the target in 18.4 overs.

India, thus, took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

"I think we batted pretty well. We scored above 200 runs which more often than not you take that. But discipline in bowling and execution let us down tonight," Pollard said at the post-match press conference on Friday night.

"We gave 23 extras, 14 or 15 of those wide deliveries, so when you look at that, those were extra balls and extra overs. When you give a class team like India these many extra deliveries, you are destined for trouble.

"No balls are something we stress on in terms of non-negotiable and we bowled a couple of them tonight. It's something we need to look on."

However, instead of dwelling on the negatives, Pollard preferred to look at the positives that came out of the match.

"You can find negatives out of every situation but life is about positivity, life is about going forward and looking to improve. I must commend the batters the way they went out and executed," he said.

"I don't think dew played much of a part. Obviously, it was a good batting track. That's what the fans want to see, they want runs, they want sixes and they got that. It's just a matter of execution. But it's a long series and

it's a matter of looking at the positives and improve our game.

"(Shimron) Hetmyer getting back into runs, Brandon King scoring some runs, so it's exciting times for us. You won't get everything right overnight but it is a work in progress and I am a pretty contended captain."

For the first time, the third umpire has been entrusted with the responsibility of calling front foot no balls by the ICC in the ongoing T20 series and subsequent ODIs between India and the West Indies on a trial basis.

And the third umpire did intervene on three occasions during the first T20 here with all the decisions going against the West Indies.

"It is what it is, some things you can't control. I can't control what they do or what rules they bring into cricket. So to me that's not a bother and I am not going to fuss about fight over that," the West Indies captain said about the ICC's new rule.

"We need to control what's in our hands and that's playing cricket. We need to keep our foot behind the line, if we do that the umpire upstairs won't come into play."

On way to his unbeaten 94, Kohli hit six fours and as many sixes from the 50 balls that he faced. After hitting Kesrick Williams for a six in the 16th over, a fired up Indian captain also used his bat as an imaginary notebook to "tick" the bowler's name off.

Asked about Kohli's gesture, Pollard said: "He is an animated character, a great batsman and he continues to show the world that he is a world class batsman."

"His theatrics or whatever, it comes as part and parcel of the game. Sometimes you have to be like that to pump yourself to score runs and so I am fine with it."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 7

HANDED A chance to open the innings for India in the T20I series against the West Indies, KL Rahul said he is looking to make the most of the opportunities but doesn't want to worry about sealing his T20 World Cup berth. The India team is continuing its preparations for next year's T20 World Cup in Australia with the three-match series and many players, whose places are not yet secured, are trying to impress the selectors with their performances against the West Indies.

Rahul, who was promoted as an opener in the absence of injured Shikhar Dhawan, grasped the chance with both hands by scoring a 40-ball 62 on Friday.

"It (the World Cup) is a long way honestly. I have got the opportunity to bat top of the order again after a couple of series, so looking forward to just making the best use of it," Rahul said at the post match press conference.

"Today was a good outing, good hit in the middle, and hopefully I can continue the same thing without worrying about October next year. There are a lot of games before that."

The 27-year-old stylish batsman from Karnataka said despite both the teams scoring 200 plus runs, the wicket on offer at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here wasn't the easiest wicket to bat.

Talking about his 100-run second wicket partnership with skipper Virat Kohli, Rahul said: "When you are chasing 200 plus obviously you want to come out hard so sometimes you don't hold your shape. So in the middle 2-3 overs we obviously got it harder to get the boundaries but we knew that once we get a few boundaries it will start, so we just had to stay patient. We just kept the intent going. Our plans were very clear that you have to hit boundaries while chasing 200 runs."

"It obviously was a bit tricky but the best chance for a batsman to score runs was once you are set. Fortunately Virat carried on and finished the game for us," he added.

### 'A fairer game'

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"It was our first game too so, it was interesting. I didn't know what to expect honestly, none of us knew what to expect but fortunately for us we were on the good side this time," Rahul said.

"We got 2-3 decisions to go in our favour. I think it's good to keep the game fair. As a bowler you make the mistake of overstepping and somebody sitting there to see it makes the game more fair."

India won the game by six wickets but they were far from impressive on the field with Rohit Sharma and Washington Sundar dropping a few catches. Rahul said for a fielder it wasn't easy to pick the ball with low flight lights at the ground here.

"I don't think it's the dimensions of the ground, I think the lights are pretty low and sometimes you lose the ball in that light and that's what happened a couple of times," he said. "We have played here before, we have played here for years so we knew what to expect. As a team we don't complain about things like these, it's not in our control."

## Team owner wants betting in TNPL probed thoroughly

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

A DAY after *The Indian Express* highlighted the extent of betting in domestic T20 cricket leagues in India, with a Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) game witnessing Rs 225 crore staked on Betfair, a TNPL team wants the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) to thoroughly investigate the league.

Madurai Panthers, which played the said fixture against Tuti Patriots earlier this year, have said they have complained in writing to the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA), the BCCI and its anti corruption unit (ACU) on "dubious umpiring" in TNPL.

P Damodaran, who owns Panthers, told *The Indian Express*: "Some of the decisions that we saw in our game were dubious -- it happened not once but many times. The way umpiring was done made us more suspicious. We felt something was wrong, but nothing came of it."

In a confidential report by the BCCI ACU submitted to the board's top bosses, it was stated how an unusually high amount was wagered on an Indian state league on Betfair, an international betting site, prompting the

platform to stop taking bets on any matches involving Tuti Patriots. The ACU report didn't find anything suspicious about the Madurai team and solely focused on Tuti Patriots.

It's not the first controversy the TNPL and Tuti Patriots have found themselves in. Earlier, the TNCA conducted an inquiry after *The Indian Express* had reported how a number of players, coaches and officials in the team were allegedly involved in match-fixing.

Sources involved with the probe had said that bookies and match-fixers, "after taking control of a franchise through a deal with the team owner, were running the team in such a way that they were making windfall gains in betting". A month later, TNCA expelled two co-owners of Tuti Patriots.

Damodaran further said: "As an owner, we are worried about what all is happening and what we are reading in media reports. The culprits should be banned for life and should be sent to jail. This needs to end somewhere. A full-fledged investigation is the need of the hour, and if needed, the Indian board should take help of the government in this."

The BCCI ACU has suggested the board to consider pulling the plug on such leagues running all across India by various state associations.

## CSA president refuses to step down, says Smith set to become director of cricket

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
JOHANNESBURG, DECEMBER 7

FORMER TEST captain Graeme Smith is set to become Cricket South Africa's director of cricket, according to CSA president Chris Nenzani, but South African cricket's crisis continued, with Nenzani and his remaining board members refusing to heed calls to resign.

Tony Irish, chief executive of the SA Cricketers Association (SACA), which called on Friday for Nenzani and the entire board to resign, said in a tweet: "Appalled that the president and board of CSA have taken no responsibility for cricket's biggest crisis. Now clinging to power."

Asked for clarification, Irish described his tweet as "my initial reaction." He said SACA was likely to make a detailed response on Sunday or Monday.

Nenzani said that he had spoken to Smith on Saturday morning. "I am happy to announce that we have engaged Graeme Smith and I am confirming that by next week Wednesday all of the negotiations around the contract terms that need to take place would have been concluded," said Nenzani, speak-



Former SA captain Graeme Smith.

ing after a special board meeting of CSA, following a week of crisis for the organisation.

If Smith does agree to take the job he will have just over two weeks to put a selection panel and coaching staff in place before the first of four Tests against England, starting in Centurion on December 26.

Despite calls for their resignation, Nenzani said the board had been mandated by the organisation's members' council -- made up of presidents of the 14 provincial affiliates -- "to continue to guide us through

this period and turn it around".

Saturday's press conference came after a tumultuous week during which five leading journalists had their accreditation withdrawn, a major sponsor announced it would not renew its agreement with CSA and chief executive Thabang Moroe was suspended on charges of misconduct.

Nenzani said a lack of trust in Moroe by Smith was a factor in negotiations which have been conducted sporadically over a period of three months.

Several prominent individuals, as well as the Gauteng cricket board and SACA, called for the board to resign.

However, Nenzani said the issue had not been raised at a meeting of the members' council in a meeting which started on Friday evening and continued until the early hours of Saturday. He brushed off the resignations of three of the board's five independent directors.

"We thank them for their service and will engage in a process to fill the vacancies," he said.

Nenzani said the respected Jacques Faul, the chief executive of the Northern cricket union and a former acting chief executive of CSA, had agreed to again become the acting chief executive with immediate effect.