

Suryakumar Yadav confident his time has come

Has shed his tag of inconsistency with his performances of late

CRICKET

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

If there is an award for the best performer with the bat this season in white-ball cricket, Suryakumar Yadav will be a prime contender. Mumbai may not have won a title in both the inter-State tournaments so far but the captain has been in such scintillating touch that fans and experts alike are confident that an India call-up is just around the corner.

Still, as he enters the Ranji Trophy season, Surya has a touch of uncertainty in his mind. Not about his game – he feels he has never been as clear as this all through his career – but the fact that he has to balance the art of leading Mumbai in the red-ball

format while waiting for the call-up to India's squad in the shortest format.

“It is a little difficult when you see there's a lot of white-ball cricket around (in India's calendar) and your name is doing the rounds. But at the end, you have got to stay in the present. If it has to happen, it will anyway, in a few days or weeks or months,” Surya told *The Hindu*.

Job at hand

“For now, the challenge is to play Ranji games, lead the team well, perform with the bat and help the team recover from an average season last year. The thoughts of an India call-up in T20 do keep crossing my mind, but you've got to keep that aside and focus on the job at hand.”

So far this season, Surya has excelled at it. He finished the Vijay Hazare Trophy with an average of 113, the highest in the tournament. The stylish right-hander continued in the same vein in the Mush-taq Ali Trophy. His tally of 392 was the third highest while his strike rate of 169 was the second-best among batsmen with 250 runs in the tournament.

Ever since making his First Class debut in 2010, Surya – just like his Mumbai senior Rohit Sharma in the first half of his international career – has lived with the tag of “talented but inconsistent”. But the maverick who stresses that he has “calmed down having taken to meditation since off-season” hopes that his performances in domestic cricket and the Indian

Premier League over the last couple of seasons have justified his talent.

Never in doubt

“Obviously I used to hear this a lot. But I never doubted my skill. I never had that question mark in my mind, *ki boss kyun nahi kar raha hai, kaise karega, kar sakta hai ki nahi* (why isn't he doing it, how will he do it, whether he will succeed or not). I backed myself in any situation,” Surya said.

“Whatever opportunity I got – be it T20s, one-day or Ranji Trophy – I just tried to enjoy the game as much as possible. Keep batting, keep scoring runs and rest everything will fall in place. Of course it has taken a lot of time. Even I know that. But the time has come.”



In fine form: Even as he waits for an India call-up in the shortest format, Suryakumar Yadav is keen to do well in the Ranji Trophy.
• VIJAY SONEJI

Warne awaits a big pay day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

Shane Warne was given a miniscule stake in IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals during the league's inaugural edition in 2008, a deal that could potentially find the legendary spinner laughing his way to the bank in the coming days.

According to the *Herald Sun*, Warne was paid \$657,000 and given an ownership of 0.75 percent for every year he played after coming out of retirement in 2008.

“Part of my deal (was) because I had retired from international cricket and I came out (of retirement), they asked me to be the captain, coach and run a cricket team the way I



Shane Warne. • GETTY IMAGES

wanted to run it; I was the one-stop shop,” Warne was quoted as saying by the Australian paper.

Warne, who has also been a coach-cum-mentor and then Brand Ambassador of the Royals, led an unheralded bunch of players to an unlikely triumph during the inaugural edition of IPL back in 2008.

In fact, current India

star Ravindra Jadeja was a talented uncapped player back then, whom Warne had backed to the hilt terming him a “rockstar”.

“We were the underdogs, we were the least favoured, no one gave us a chance to win. It was the first ever year of the IPL of franchise cricket where owners bought players and players went into auctions.

Rajasthan Royals franchise is currently worth \$200 million and Warne, according to the report, believes that the valuation will be doubled in next couple of years.

“Three per cent of \$400 million is all right,” said Warne, which effectively means that he could earn up to \$12 million.

IOC set to call the shots in PSPB tennis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

IOC, packed with the leading players of the country, including Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sumit Nagal, Rohan Bopanna, Divij Sharan, Riya Bhatia, Parthana Thombare and Mahak Jain, looks set to dominate the 39th edition of the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) inter-unit tennis meet to be held at the DLTA Complex here from December 9 to 13.

ONGC has the country's best woman player, Ankita Raina, who won a double crown in the \$25,000 ITF women's tournament at Solapur, but does not have a quality second woman player. ONGC has Vishnu Vardhan, V.M. Ranjeet and Vijay Kannan in the men's event. Though it has Yuki

Bhambri in its ranks, he may not compete as he is still recovering from a leg injury.

GAIL will have two strong players – Saketh Myneni and Vijay Sundar Prashanth. The women's team has four-time National champion Prerna Bhambri and Sneha-devi Reddy.

EIL, OIL and HPCL will be the other teams in the fray. Host BPCL has only nominated the veteran players.

On Monday, the men's team quarterfinals will pit EIL against OIL and ONGC against HPCL.

IOC and GAIL have been given a bye and will play in the semifinals directly.

The veterans' competition will also begin with three quarterfinals while defending champion OIL received a bye.

Manchester City condemns ‘racist gesture’ during derby

Police arrest a 41-year-old following the incident

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

Manchester City pledged to take a zero tolerance approach against supporters found to have subjected Manchester United players to racist abuse after the derby defeat on Saturday.

United midfielder Fred was hit by objects thrown from the crowd as he prepared to take a corner in the second half and footage on social media appears to show a City fan mimicking a monkey at the Brazilian.

Later on Sunday, British police arrested a 41-year-

old man for the same.

“Police were called to a report of a supporter making alleged racist gestures and sounds towards players during the Manchester City and Manchester United derby,” said Greater Manchester Police in a statement.

“A 41-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order and remains in custody for questioning.”

United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said both Fred and Jesse Lingard had been “affected” by the alleged abuse.

However, Solskjaer insisted it is the individual concerned, rather than City as a club, who should bear the brunt of any sanctions.

“Why don't we educate him instead? It's not City's fault, it's his. Nothing to do with Man City as a football club,” said the Norwegian.

“He's been caught on camera and he should never be allowed into a football ground again, it's unacceptable.”

The incident comes after England's Euro 2020 qualifier against Bulgaria in October was twice halted due to racist abuse.

Manas emerges champion

NEW DELHI: Fourth seed Ma-

nas Dhamne won the under-12 boys' title in the Eddie Herr international junior tennis tournament, organised by IMG Academy, in Bradenton, Florida, US, on Friday.

Manas, trained by Aditya Madkekar and Kaifi Afzal in Pune and also groomed at Impact Academy in Bangkok, defeated Maxwell Exsted of the United States 3-6, 6-0, [10-6].

However, Manas and his Nepal partner Aarav Samrat Hada were beaten 7-6 (5), 6-2 in the doubles final by the Korean combination of Se Hyuk Cho and Minseok Maeng.

Manas was part of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) team from India, along with Rushil Khosla and Pari Singh.

The results (finals): Under-12: Boys: Manas Dhamne bt Maxwell Exsted (US) 3-6, 6-0, [10-6]. **Doubles:** Se Hyuk Cho & Minseok Maeng (Kor) bt Aarav Samrat Hada (Nep) & Manas Dhamne 7-6(5), 6-2.

Roy Krishna is ISL Hero of the Month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Fiji international Roy Krishna was awarded the ISL Hero of the Month for November after some scintillating performances for his team ATK.

The striker saw off stiff competition from the likes of Jamshedpur FC's Sergio Castel, Odisha FC's Aridane Santana, FC Goa's Mourtada Fall and Bengaluru FC custodian Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

The 32-year-old, who has his roots in India, scored three goals in as many games and also recorded an assist as ATK remained unbeaten throughout November.

Krishna becomes the second successive ATK player to win the Hero of the Month Award this season after strike-partner David Williams bagged the same title in October.

Krishna started the month in emphatic fashion with a brace and an assist against Jamshedpur FC at



Roy Krishna.

• FILE PHOTO: H. VIBHU

the Salt Lake Stadium – also the home ground to ATK, before featuring in a tough away draw with Odisha FC.

He capped off November with another goal in front of his home crowd that turned out to be vital for ATK. Krishna equalised almost with the last touch of the game with ATK trailing 2-1 against Mumbai City FC, making it 2-2.

Russia's fate to be decided in WADA meeting today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LAUSANNE

Russia will discover on Monday whether it will be banished from sporting competitions, including the Olympic Games, for four years when the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) holds a crunch meeting here.

WADA's Executive Committee is expected to approve a recommendation by its Compliance Review Committee that Russia be handed a four-year suspension after accusing Moscow of falsifying laboratory doping data handed over to investigators earlier this year. Such a heavy sanction would see Russia ruled out of next year's Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing.

Russian government officials would be barred from attending any major events, while the country would lose the right to host, or even bid, for tournaments.

Three cheers for Diya Chitale

TABLE TENNIS

SPORTS BUREAU
JAMMU

After starring in Maharashtra's triumph in the junior girls' team championship, Mumbai teenager Diya Chitale added a double crown to her kitty on the concluding day of UTT 81st junior and youth National table tennis championships here on Sunday.

In the final of junior (u-18) girls singles, Diya thrashed Swastika Ghosh in an all-Maharashtra final 11-6, 11-2, 11-9, 11-5. Minutes later, the 16-year-old, who trains extensively in Germany, ward-off Bengal's Surbhi Patwari's challenge 10-12, 11-8, 19-17, 11-6, 11-6.

Diya became the second paddler after Karnataka's Ar-



Way to go: Diya Chitale became the second player after Karnataka's Archana Kamath to be crowned the youth and junior National champion in the same edition.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

chana Kamath to be crowned the youth and junior National champion in the same edition. Earlier, she

had partnered Swastika to clinch the silver in the junior girls' doubles final.

Maharashtra bagged five

gold, three silver and five bronze medals.

The results (finals): Boys: Youth: S.F.R. Snehit (TS) bt Shreyaans Goel (Del) 11-4, 11-6, 11-5, 11-7; **Doubles:** Chinmaya Somaia & Deepit Patil (Mah) bt Raegan Albuquerque & Mandar Hardikar (Mah) 11-6, 11-2, 11-9.

Juniors: Payas Jain (Del) bt Yashansh Malik (Del) 11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7; **Doubles:** Aadarsh Chetri & Payas bt Alberto Lrruata & H. Jebo (Miz) 6-11, 3-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-8.

Girls: Youth: Diya Chitale (Mah) bt Surbhi Patwari (Ben) 12-14, 11-8, 19-17, 11-6, 11-6; **Doubles:** Surbhi & Poymantee Baisya (Ben) bt S. Selenadeepthi & Kowshika Venkatesan (TN) 9-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-4.

Juniors: Diya bt Swastika Ghosh (Mah) 11-6, 11-2, 11-9, 11-5; **Doubles:** Yashaswini Ghorpade & Anargya Manjunath (Kar) bt Diya & Swastika 8-11, 13-11, 11-8, 14-12.