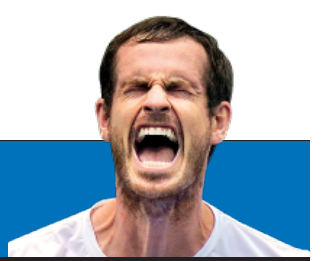




STEVE SMITH ON TRACK TO RETURN FOR THE DECIDER AGAINST ENGLAND AFTER HEAD KNOCK

ANDY MURRAY GIVEN WILD CARD ENTRY FOR FRENCH OPEN BEGINNING ON SEPTEMBER 27



GALLERY

James' stunner helps Chelsea sink Brighton

Chelsea got their Premier League campaign on track after 20-year-old right back Reece James helped them to a 3-1 win at Brighton & Hove Albion with a spectacular goal on Monday. Timo Werner and Kai Havertz made their debuts up front after the German internationals joined Frank Lampard's side from the Bundesliga during the close season. But it was James who gave the visitors a 2-1 lead with a thunderbolt into the top corner from 25 metres before a deflected shot by central defender Kurt Zouma sealed the points.

Results: Brighton 1 (Trossard 54), Chelsea 3 (Jorginho 23-pen, James 56, Zouma 66), Sheffield United 0, Wolves 2 (Jimenez 3, Saiss 6).

Messi tops wealth league ahead of Ronaldo: Lionel Messi was denied a potentially money-spinning move away from Barcelona this month after a contract-dispute but the Argentine maestro remains the world's richest soccer player. According to a list compiled by Forbes, Messi's total earnings this year are \$126 million - \$92 million from his salary and \$34 million in endorsements. Not surprisingly Cristiano Ronaldo comes in second although earnings of \$117 million will soften the blow for the Juventus forward.

FIFA to help fund anti-corruption agency for sports: FIFA would help fund a global agency to tackle corruption in sport, its president Gianni Infantino said on Monday. Creating a body like the World Anti-Doping Agency to address financial corruption, match-fixing and the influence of organized crime in sport has been talked about for more than a decade.

ECB plans to make 62 jobs redundant due to covid-19: England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is planning to make 62 positions within the organisation redundant due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, chief executive Tom Harrison said on Tuesday. With professional cricket in the country suspended for several months due to the coronavirus, Harrison said the game had sustained losses of more than (\$128.92 million).

Aubameyang signs new contract with Arsenal: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang ended speculation over his Arsenal future on Tuesday as the Gunners captain signed a new three-year contract with the FA Cup holders. Aubameyang's contract saga had dragged on since last season amid speculation he wanted to join a club in the Champions League. AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: NBA: Conference semifinals: LA Clippers vs Denver, 6.30 am (Sony Six); **CRICKET:** England vs Australia: 3rd ODI, 5.30 pm (Sony Six); **CYCLING:** Tour de France: Stage 17, 4 pm (Eurosport). TNN

Roglic maintains lead; Kamna claims stage

Villard-de-Lans (France): Primoz Roglic maintained the overall lead in the Tour de France on Tuesday as Bora's German all-rounder Lennard Kamna won the medium mountain stage 16. Kamna came good after a long range breakaway, defeating Ineos rider Richard Carapaz over the final kilometres after the pair had been part of a rare large escape group.

The victory was just reward for the 24-year-old who was pipped to the line on the Puy Mary mountain last week. It was his first Tour de France stage win, and Bora's first of this Tour. Fifteen minutes further down the mountain the yellow jersey group ascended together with only Tadej Pogacar trying to upset Roglic and his Jumbo team.

Colombia's Miguel Angel Lopez powered past them all over the final 200m but was followed closely over the line with no change at the top except for Nairo Quintana losing a little time. Roglic leads Pogacar by 40 seconds with five stages remaining. AFP

Flurry of changes as HFC prepare for new season

Aditya.Singh@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: As the delayed 2020-21 ISL season looms, Hyderabad FC has undergone many changes. The club management has sought to rebuild the club, unveiling a new logo on August 11.

Varun Tripuraneni, co-owner of Hyderabad FC said, "It's extremely crucial to build a robust model that benefits us on-and-off the field. We have plans of setting up a residential school for young footballers."

In a blow for Hyderabad FC in its sophomore season, head coach Albert Roca decided to leave the club on August 29 after a mutual termination of his two-year contract. The 57-year-old, who had taken charge as the club's head coach in June, submitted a request to be relieved of his duties following FC Barcelona approaching him to join as a coach for the first team.

On August 31, the club appointed Manuel Marquez as the new head coach on a one-year deal. "The club has already been preparing and working on a

lot of things over the last few months so that makes it a comparatively smoother process for me to settle in," Marquez said. The club has signed nine players whereas 13 players have

left so far in this transfer window. A new captain is set to be named after previous captain Kamaljit Singh departed for Odisha FC. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019-20 ISL season will be played entirely in Goa. Tilak Maidan, Vasco da Gama will serve as the home stadium for Hyderabad FC. The next edition of the league will kick off on November 21.

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MAJOR TRANSFERS

ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES
 <p>Subrata Paul 33, Goalkeeper Left Jamshepur FC Indian Super League</p>	 <p>Marko Stankovic 34, Central Midfield Joined Without Club</p>
 <p>João Victor 31, Defensive Midfield Left OFI Crete, Super League 1</p>	 <p>Gurtej Singh 30, Centre-Back Joined East Bengal FC, I-League</p>
 <p>Chinglensana Singh 23, Centre-Back Left FC Goa, Indian Super League</p>	 <p>Matthew Kilgallon 36, Centre-Back Joined Buxton FC, England</p>
 <p>Lluís Sastre 34, Left Winger Left AEK Larnaca, Protathlima Cyta</p>	 <p>Marcelinho 33, Left Winger Joined Odisha, Indian Super League</p>
 <p>Joel Chianese 30, Right Winger Left Perth Glory, A-League</p>	 <p>Bobó 35, Centre-Forward Joined Oeste, Campeonato Brasileiro Série B</p>

THOMAS & UBER CUP POSTPONED TO 2021

Manne.Ratnakar@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: The Badminton World Federation's (BWF) plan to kick-start the international calendar next month suffered a setback as it was forced to postpone the Thomas and Uber Cup (TUC).

"BWF in full consultation and agreement with local host Badminton Denmark, has made the

IN FOCUS

tough decision to postpone the TUC. The decision comes following the withdrawal of a number of participating teams," BWF said in the statement on Tuesday. The world body, however, did not announce the new dates for this tournament. "BWF is looking into possible alternative dates to reschedule the world men's and women's team championships, but on dates not before into 2021."

The season was suspended after the All England Championships on March 15 and was expected to resume with the TUC. However,



THE WAIT CONTINUES: World champion PV Sindhu

with several countries pulling out of the event, concerned with the safety of their players, BWF had no option but to defer the event. Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and South Korea led the spate of withdrawals. Though BWF put up a brave face and decided to go ahead, the pull out of multiple champions Indonesia worsened the situation.

However, the Danisa Denmark Open would be held as per schedule from October 13 to 18.

But the second tournament in Denmark (October 20-25) has been cancelled. The Asian leg of the adjusted BWF World Tour to be held in November is yet to be finalised. Welcoming BWF's decision, Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania said, "We stand by this decision taken by BWF considering the challenges in the ongoing time and the health and safety of all concerned."

The response of Asian countries disappointing

Postponement A Big Setback For The Sport

U Vimal Kumar

I feel sad for the sport. This is the third time the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals have been postponed.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) did everything possible to reboot the sport. The team championships and the two World Tour events thereafter would have served as the ideal platform for a restart. But there is only so much that the world body can do. I am disappointed by the way many of the top Asian players and nations responded to BWF's call.

They are responsible for the postponement. None of the Asian countries which pulled out of the event have an issue with the pandemic. Their local and national circuits are run-



ning fine. Thailand just completed their national championships. China's internal league is currently on. Malaysia conducted their league and the national team has been training for a while. Ditto with Korea and Chinese Taipei. Yet, Chinese Taipei was the first to pull out.

Obviously Indonesia's decision to withdraw came as a big blow. Badminton is a top sport there. Their team won the Thomas Cup zonals in Manila when the pandemic was beginning to spread in the Philippines earlier this year. So, why are they reluctant to play in a safe country like Denmark and that too in a bio-secure environment?

This instance proves once again that Asians, particularly in badminton, have a lot to

learn from Europe and the USA in professional management of sport. Take tennis. The maximum number of Covid cases are in the United States but they conducted the US Open very well.

It was a good start for tennis. Now the Italian Open is on in a country which suffered a lot owing to the pandemic in March and April. Next is the French Open. Players are positive and ready to play. Golf and NBA too are up and running.

Take cricket. I will give a lot of credit to (BCCI president) Sourav Ganguly in conducting the IPL in the UAE. The BCCI has led from the front in showing that it was keen on kick-starting the sport. In comparison, what has badminton done? It missed a golden opportunity to return to action. This is a big setback. We have to now wait for another year for the team championships. As for the other events this year, given the attitude, we don't know what their fate will be.

—As told to V Narayan Swamy

'Bumrah, the best T20 bowler in the world'

Abu Dhabi: Mumbai Indians' Australian recruit James Pattinson has called Jasprit Bumrah the best T20 bowler in the world and said he was looking forward to work along side the India pace spearhead in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL). The IPL starts in the UAE from September 19 and will conclude on November 10. "Personally, it's just fantastic to work with some of the best bowlers in the world. Obviously, Bumrah is probably the best T20 bowler in the world. And Boult (Trent Boult) is up there as well. So, for me it will be a great experience to be around those guys," Pattinson said in a video shared on Mumbai Indians' official handle.

Players want quarantine reduced Australia and England's stars, who are supposed to undergo a six-day quarantine after arriving in the UAE for the Indian Premier League (IPL), have requested the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to reduce the duration to three days to ensure their availability from the start of the tournament. Around 21 players, currently part of an England-Australia white-ball series,

will be boarding a chartered flight from Manchester to Dubai, touching base on September 17. They can only be available from September 23, while tournament gets underway from September 19. "Yes, the BCCI president has received a request. It may have been written by one of the players but it is something that all the English and Australian players, who are coming from the UK, feel," a senior IPL source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

RR not sure of Stokes' availability Rajasthan Royals head coach Andrew McDonald says the franchise is not sure about the availability of star all-rounder Ben Stokes in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) as he is tending to his ailing father in New Zealand. "It's a difficult scenario, so we're giving him as much time as he needs, and connecting with him as best we can," McDonald was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "So yeah, we're not sure where Stokes's at right now, but once it has played out, then we can make our decisions from there. But I don't want to second-guess what will happen with him just yet." AGENCIES

Kerber succumbs at first hurdle; easy for Rublev

Rome: Former world No.1 Angelique Kerber fell to a straight sets defeat to Czech Katerina Siniakova in the Italian Open on Tuesday as Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev eased through to the second round of the men's tournament. Three-time Grand Slam winner Kerber, seeded 15th in the Rome clay-court tournament being played behind closed doors at the Foro Italico, crashed out 6-3, 6-1 in 68 minutes.

Top women's seed Simona Halep opens against Italian wildcard Jasmine Paolini, with the Romanian warming up in the doubles on Tuesday, having skipped the US tournaments.

The switch from hard court at the US Open to clay proved tricky for Kerber, who reached the fourth round at Flushing Meadows. The Rome tournament is a warm-up for the French Open on September 27, the only Grand Slam

tournament which Kerber has not won. She paid for 23 unforced errors, twice as many as her Czech rival, although she saved three match points to hold serve in the second set. Elsewhere, Czech 12th seed Marketa Vondrousova, last year's Roland Garros runner-up, dropped a set before seeing off Japan's Misaki Doi 6-1, 4-6, 6-4.

In the men's event, US Open quarter-finalist Rublev, eased past Argentine qualifier Facundo Bagnis 6-4, 6-4 and next meets Poland's Hubert Hurkacz. Rublev hit 25 winners for his 20th match win of the season, winning two ATP Tour titles this year in Qatar and Adelaide before the season was suspended. Australian John Millman recovered from 2-4 down in the second set to overcome lucky loser Joao Sousa 7-5, 7-6 (7/2) and next meets Argentine Diego Schwartzman. AFP

179
Number of sixes in 143 innings hit by Mahendra Singh Dhoni - a CSK record. Suresh Raina with 171 is the next best.
Stats: Rajesh Kumar

IPL COUNTDOWN
3
DAYS TO GO



OVER TO YOU, CAPTAIN

International Retirement May Mean There's Not Much Left To Prove For Dhoni, But Pullout Of CSK Senior Pros Has Thrown Another Challenge At Him

SPOTLIGHT CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

WHEN MS Dhoni takes the field for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on September 19, he will do so as a former India cricketer. Having announced his retirement from international cricket last month, the upcoming IPL is a fresh chapter in Dhoni's long, illustrious career. There will no longer be any chatter about his India future, and his each and every move is unlikely to be dissected as much as it once was.

Given that his legacy is set in stone and he has nothing to lose from hereon, it might just free up the 39-year-old and enable him to take a bolder and less circumspect approach to his batting. If he does so, he will simply be rewinding the clock to his younger days. He, of course, has played no competitive cricket since the

50-over World Cup in July last year, but the word is that he is looking in excellent touch at the nets.

While his batting approach will be keenly observed, this season could prove to be one of his tougher assignments as captain. With the recent withdrawals of senior pros Suresh Raina and Harbhajan Singh in addition to less practice time for the team due to a longer quarantine period, CSK's preparations have hit several roadblocks.

The squad, too, contains a lot of players who are in their late 30s and need to be managed wisely. Judging by Dhoni's own record, though, these adversities are sure to get his competitive juices flowing and spur him on to try and lead CSK to their fourth IPL title. TNN

DHONI'S TOP 5 IPL KNOCKS

54* (29 balls) vs KXIP, 2010
With CSK's qualification for the semis on the line, MS Dhoni produced a captain's knock. Chasing 193, CSK were left with 16 to get from Irfan Pathan's final over. Dhoni smashed a four before hitting two mighty sixes to finish the job. A punch of the jaw showed how much the win mattered.

64* (49) vs KXIP, 2016
Dhoni's innings was a rare highlight in a poor season where Rising Pune Supergiants weren't too successful. Needing 23 from the final over

51* (20) vs MI, 2012
Another example of Dhoni's big-match temperament. In the Eliminator against Mumbai Indians in 2012, Dhoni smashed 51* off 20 balls against an attack spearheaded by Lasith Malinga. Dhoni's exploits took CSK to 187 for 5, a total which proved beyond Mumbai's reach.

70 (34) vs RCB, 2018
Chasing 206 against RCB in Bengaluru, it seemed like Dhoni had left himself too much to do when they needed 45 from the last 3 overs. But Dhoni had timed the chase to perfection. He was merely waiting to capitalize on the weaker bowlers - Mohammed Siraj and Corey Anderson - and did so as expected.

CSK'S SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths: Experienced players who have been there, done that. The likes of Dhoni, Watson and Rayudu know what it takes to deliver under pressure.

Weaknesses: With Harbhajan pulling out, CSK lack a wily off-spinner in conditions that will assist spin. Raina's departure leaves a huge void at the No. 3 position.

Opportunities: A retired Dhoni has nothing to lose now. He can bat with complete freedom.

Threats: They have had less preparation time in UAE compared to other teams due to Covid cases in the team. Cannot rely on just the senior players.

TOI's CSK XI



Shane Watson, M Vijay, Ambati Rayudu, MS Dhoni, Kedar Jadhav, Dwayne Bravo, Ravindra Jadeja, Piyush Chawla, Deepak Chahar, Lung Ngidi, Imran Tahir

Don't stigmatise virus infected, says Manpreet

Sabi.Hussain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Indian men's hockey team captain **Manpreet Singh** remembers vividly the afternoon of August 7, Friday, when he and four other players were told by the authorities that they had tested positive for Covid-19. The national campers had assembled at the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Bengaluru centre for a month-long home break. "It was quite shocking and mentally stressful. The first reaction was 'how is it possible?' How did I get it? My parents, family members and friends (in Punjab) had all tested negative. The mind was full of so many questions," Manpreet told TOI in an interview on Tuesday, opening up about his successful fight against the virus.

"When we arrived at the camp, we went into the mandatory 14-day quarantine period and were self-isolating ourselves. Later, I realised that I was losing my sense of taste and smell. It was weird. I undertook the RT-PCR test and was found to be infected by the virus. Probably, I got it from someone on the flight to Bengaluru."

However, instead of fretting over it, Manpreet took the difficult situation in his stride and began following the advice of SAI and Hockey India's (HI) medical team with a calm mind. "The officials and doctors attending to me told me there was no reason to panic and that I would be able to overcome this disease. I got relaxed and knew I would fight this virus out. The problem with this virus is the social stigma attached. To all those people infected by the virus, I would say that I am a survivor and have successfully defeated this disease. If you remain

positive in your thoughts, follow the doctor's advice, take your medicines on time, self-isolate yourself and follow masks and social distancing norms," he said.

"During the time I was hospitalised (on August 11 at the SS Spars hospital for precautionary measure), I never allowed any negative thoughts to cross my mind. I believed in the treatment just like all other hospitalised hockey players. I knew we were in able hands (read doctors). Our tele-treatment was done regularly and oxygen levels were monitored every single minute. We were regularly attending the zoom meetings and in touch with our team members."

How has been the recovery post covid-19? "A separate training programme has been prepared for us (covid-affected players). We returned to training only a couple of weeks back after clearing our ECG, blood test and chest X-ray."