



MANCHESTER UNITED MISSING X-FACTOR AT OLD TRAFFORD SANS FANS: SOLSKJAER

NEW ZEALAND PACER LOCKIE FERGUSON IS EAGER TO RESUME STALLED TEST CAREER



KEEPING FINGERS CROSSED: ROHIT

On Injury: 'Don't Know What Was Going On, Was Constantly Communicating With BCCI And MI'

New Delhi: The hullabaloo over his hamstring was confusing as well as amusing for Rohit Sharma, who says he always knew that the injury was not that serious and he would be battle-ready for the tour of Australia.

India's white-ball vice-captain opened up about the left hamstring injury during the IPL, which became a matter of intense speculation after he returned to action within days of being left out of the Australia tour earlier this month. He was subsequently added to the Test squad.

"I don't know what was going on, to be honest and what all were people talking about. But let me put this on record, I was constantly communicating with BCCI and Mumbai Indians," Rohit said.

He hit a match-winning knock of 68 off 50 balls in the IPL final against Delhi Capitals, playing through pain. Rohit is currently doing strength and conditioning work at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru before heading to Australia.

"I told them (Mumbai Indians) that I can take the field since it is

the shortest format and I will be able to manage the situation quite nicely. Once I made my mind clear, it was all about focusing on what I needed to do," he said.

"My hamstring is feeling absolutely fine. Just started the process of getting it nice and strong. Before I play the longer format, I needed to be clear in mind that there is no stone that is left unturned, that's probably the reason, I'm at the NCA," Rohit added.

For Rohit, the chatter regarding his injury and his subsequent participation in the IPL playoffs, didn't matter much.

"So for me, it was not a concern what x, y or z was talking about like whether he would make it to Australia," he said. "Once the injury happened, the next two days all I did was to figure out what I can do in the next 10 days whether I will be able to play or not."

Unless one goes to the ground, one won't know how the body is shaping up, feels the five-time IPL champion captain.

"But every day, hamstring (degree of injury) was changing. The way it was responding was chang-



ROHIT SHARMA

ing, so I was feeling quite confident that I could play and that is the communication that I had with MI at that point. I told them that I think I will be okay to play just before playoffs. If there is any discomfort, I won't be playing the playoffs."

All Rohit needed was three and a half weeks to get ready for Tests and he fails to understand what the fuss was all about given that the series starts December 17.

"Of course, there is still some work that needs to be done on my

Bereaved Siraj decides to stay back in Oz

Kolkata: BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Saturday said that pacer Mohammed Siraj, who has lost his father, was given the option of flying back home to be with his grieving family but he decided to stay back in Australia for "national duty".

Ghouse, who was suffering from a lung ailment, died on Friday. He was 53. Board president Sourav Ganguly took to twitter to laud the Hyderabad pacer for his resilience and mental fortitude in this hour of tragedy.

hamstring. That's why I didn't go to Australia for the white-ball leg as there are back-to-back games. Around 6 games in 11 days," he said about the limited overs leg beginning November 27.

"So I thought if I get to work on my body for 25 days, I can probably go and play the Test matches. So it was an easy decision for me and I don't know why it became so complicated for others," he wondered aloud.

Rohit also spoke about his enduring relationship with his IPL franchise Mumbai Indians. The

five-time champions, he said, were not created overnight.

"Yeah, we have a (Kieron) Pollard, a Hardik (Pandya), (Jasprit) Bumrah but has anybody thought why this team is successful?" he asked. "A lot of people say that can he (Rohit) do it with other teams? Firstly, why shall I need to do it with other teams? There is a certain way this franchise wants to go and same direction I want to go as well, both as a player and leader," he explained.

"Did this team become good overnight? No. It's just that this franchise doesn't believe in chopping and changing. And every player, including Rohit Sharma, was available (2011) at auctions. Just that MI picked and believed in building a team."

He was proud of MI getting New Zealand pacer Trent Boult on board, which worked wonders for them. Boult was released by Delhi Capitals before the players auction.

"Trent Boult was with Delhi last year and before that with Sunrisers. We needed someone to provide wickets upfront and who could swing the ball," Rohit said.

"We strongly pursued him and got him from Capitals, something I am proud of." PTI

'Andhra T20 league not operated by TCM'

Reacting to TOI's story 'Andhra T20 League becomes betting and fixing hub', published on November 20, Twenty First Century Media's Carlton Saldhana said that the story suggests that the league was operated by TCM, "which is not true".

Saldhana wrote a mail clarifying TCM's position. "The league was not operated by TCM. In order to avoid any ambiguity with regard to role of TCM in the said league, we would like to provide you following factual clarity: 1. TCM was neither the operator of the league nor responsible for the conduct of the league. 2. The event was an internal event of the Andhra Cricket Association and all cricket operations were totally and solely managed by ACA. The teams were selected by the ACA, managed and owned by ACA. 3. Selection of players, composition of teams and management of teams were solely and completely managed by ACA. 4. All matters relating to conduct of match, including appointment of all match officials (Scorers, umpires, match referees etc.), commentators and anti-corruption issues were dealt with solely by ACA."

He added that TCM was granted rights of commercial nature such as sponsorship, branding and producing visual pictures of the match. In lieu of these rights TCM paid for the boarding and lodging of all teams & officials, kitting of the teams, hospitality during matches, local transport, branding at the venue, television production etc. TCM

Decoding the altered World Test Championship ranking system

Hindol.Basu@timesgroup.com

What has changed?

New Delhi: To the utter dismay of Team India, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has altered the ranking system for the ongoing World Test Championship (2019-2021). This change has resulted in India sliding to the second spot from their undisputed No. 1 position.

ICC's Cricket Committee, which is spearheaded by Anil Kumble, recommended the change to ensure Covid-19 forced cancellations of matches doesn't put a team at a disadvantage.

So what is the new system? What has changed? And, how does it affect different teams? TOI will give you the lowdown...

Now, the team rankings will be calculated according to percentage of points (POP). POP is the percentage of points won by a particular team out of the total number of points contested in a series. For example, India has played four series in the WTC so far. The total number of points at stake from them was 480. Out of which, India has garnered 360 points till date. Therefore, its percentage of points is 75 percent.

Change in ranking

Under the new system, Australia are leading the table now. How? Australia has played three series in the WTC so far, which had 360

points at stake. The Baggy Green managed to earn 296 points from them. Their POP stands at 82.22, which is better than India's.

How does the new system work?

Originally, every team was scheduled to play six series in the WTC and could get a maximum of 720 points. If a team earns a total of 480 points from the six series it participates in, then its percentage of points would be 66.67%. If a team plays five series, then the maximum points that it is contesting on is 600. Let's say out of the 600, it earns 450 points - then its percentage of points would be 75% and it would be ranked higher than the team that has played six series.

What's stayed from old system?

When ICC announced the WTC in 2019, it stated that a Test series will have a total of 120 points at stake. A team will play six series altogether - three at home and three outside. Overall, a team could earn a maximum of 720 points. In a 2-match series, a Test win would get a team 60 points. In a 3-match series, one win would get 40 points, in a 4-match series, one win would mean 30 points, and in a 5-match series one win would mean 24 points. In case of a tie, points would be equally divided among the teams, while a draw would get a team one-third of the points that's at stake in the Test.

The ICC has retained the points distribution system, which

means in the upcoming India-Australia 4-match Test series one victory would get a team 30 points. A tie 15 and a draw 10 points.

India's chances of playing final...

Although the possibility of any change in the top-2 is very less, New Zealand and England can upset India's apperant. NZ have two home series - against West Indies and Pakistan. Both are 2-match Test series, that means 240 points at stake. If NZ win all four matches and India's results against Australia as well as the home series (5 Tests) versus England next year isn't in their favour, then things will get tricky for Virat Kohli and his boys.

WTC TABLE (AS OF NOW)

TEAM	PLAYED SERIES	TOTAL POINTS	EARNED POINTS	%	SERIES LEFT	MISSED SERIES
Aus	3	360	296	82.22	Ind, SA	B'desh
Ind	4	480	360	75.00	Aus, Eng	None
Eng	4	480	292	60.83	Ind	SL
NZ	3	360	180	50.00	WI, Pak	B'desh
Pak	3.5	420	166	39.52	NZ, SA	B'desh*
SL	2	240	80	33.33	SA, WI	Eng, B'desh
WI	2	240	40	16.67	NZ, SL, B'desh	SA
SA	2	240	24	10.00	SL, Aus, Pak	WI
B'desh	1.5	180	0	0.00	WI	Pak, Aus, NZ, SL

*One match of the Pak-Bangladesh series couldn't be played due to the pandemic

GALLERY

PSG squander two-goal lead to lose in Monaco

Paris: Leaders Paris St Germain wasted a two-goal halftime lead as they lost 3-2 at Monaco in Ligue 1 on Friday ahead of a crucial Champions League game against RB Leipzig. Kylian Mbappe's double was cancelled out by two goals from Kevin Volland before Cesc Fabregas gave the hosts all three points with a penalty six minutes from time. Monaco are now second in the standings with 20 points from 11 games, four behind PSG, who host Leipzig in Group H on Tuesday trailing the German side and Manchester United by three points.

Arteta furious after Arsenal training ground bust-up leaked to media: Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta may have improved the club's defence to concede fewer goals but he now has the task of plugging a leak at his club after a clash between team mates in training was reported by the media in vivid detail. British media reports said defender David Luiz and midfielder Dani Ceballos had clashed in a training session following a late challenge earlier this week, with Luiz drawing blood after hitting Ceballos in the face.

Gangjee at Tied-49th in Japan: Rahul Gangjee staged a superb comeback on his back-nine to card an even par 71 in the third round of the Dunlop Phoenix Open at Miyazaki in Japan. Gangjee now has rounds of 71-72-71 and at one-over for 54 holes and he is Tied-49th in only his second event in Japan in 2020. Former world No. 1 amateur, Takumi Kanaya shot a third straight round in 60s and moved into sole third place. Kanaya is one shot behind co-leaders, Tomoharu Otsuki (66) and Tomohiro Ishizaka (68), who are both at 11-under.

Shubhankar misses the cut in Joburg Open: Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma missed his first 36-hole cut in eight starts as he exited early at the Joburg Open, a tournament he won when it was last played in November, 2017. Following Sharma's triumph in 2017, the event did not take place in 2018 and 2019. After a first round 76, he struggled in the second to 8-over 79. Jacques Blaauw of South Africa, with a round of 66-63 at 13-under led by one over fellow South African Wilco Niaber (63-67) who was 12-under. AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

FOOTBALL: ISL: FC Goa vs Bengaluru FC, 7.30 pm (Star Sports 2); EPL: Fulham vs Everton, 5.30 pm; Sheffield Utd vs West Ham, 7.30 pm; Leeds Utd vs Arsenal, 10 pm; Liverpool vs Leicester, 12.45 am Monday (Star Sports Select 2); SERIE A: Inter Milan vs Torino, 7.30 pm; Napoli vs AC Milan, 1.15 am Monday (Sony Ten)

TENNIS: ATP Finals: Finals, 11.30 pm (Sony Six)

Motivation has never been a problem for Kohli: Stoinis

Sydney: Virat Kohli is more than hundred percent charged up every time he takes the field and the Australian team is preparing in equal measure to counter the threat posed by the Indian captain, said all-rounder Marcus Stoinis. Kohli, who is heading home for the birth of his kid, which is the right decision in his opinion. So I am sure he will be extra motivated.

Stoinis said that coach Justin Langer and his men will have foolproof strategy to counter the India skipper, who is in a league of his own when it comes to white-ball cricket. "We've definitely got our strategies, we've had things that have worked in the past, and at other times the same plans haven't worked and he's made some runs."

"Obviously, he (Kohli) is a great player, and to all these good players, you do what you want to do, you have your plans, and on the day, you get extra competitive and you hope it all falls in your side of the court."

On the personal front, Stoinis scored 352 runs and took 13 wickets for Delhi Capitals in the IPL and wants to replicate that performance against India. "I will hopefully continue to bring that form into the summer, but there's nothing really too dif-

ferent (that I have been doing)," he said

Ponting back with Aussie team after IPL

Less than a fortnight after he led Delhi Capitals to the final of the Indian Premier League (IPL) as coach of the franchise, Ricky Ponting is already back at the nets guiding the Justin Langer-coached Australian cricket team inside their Sydney quarantine hub. The former Australia captain has not wasted time and is working right from the start of the session to the end of it, throwing balls at the nets and guiding the players ahead of their white ball series against India that begins on November 27. "Ponting is in the hub and quarantine, he is so generous with his time. He has thrown ball right from the start of the sessions to the end of the sessions and he probably gets a little tired, then he has a few anti-inflammatories and then goes to bed," said Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis on Saturday.

Stoinis as a player, and Ponting as coach, had combined to take Delhi Capitals to the final of the IPL earlier this month. The Australian all-rounder said he got plenty of confidence and backing from Ponting.

"He is as good as it gets, not just as a player. We all have heard stories how good he is. When you get to know him as a person, you understand why he is so good and why he was so good as a player. The confidence he instils in you. The way he takes to you he is as good as it gets," explained Stoinis adding that Ponting's biggest strength as a coach is that he does not unnecessarily tinker with your style of play. AGENCIES

Goa begin new era with Bengaluru clash

Flavio.Lopes@timesgroup.com

Panaji: This is a new era for FC Goa, an era where their most successful coach and players are no longer around. Instead, there is a new crop of players, many of them young, and guiding them all will be Juan Ferrando.

The Indian Super League (ISL) draw does not do him any favour: He's up against the might of Bengaluru FC at the Nehru Stadium in Fatorda on Sunday.

The two teams have met on seven occasions and records don't favour FC Goa, having secured their only win three years ago at the same venue in a 4-3 thriller.

"Everyone knows that the pre-season was very short and the big problem for us and other teams is that all the players played last in March so it's not possible working like a normal team. The intensity is not so great and it is time to pay attention to the muscle of the players ahead of important games," Ferrando told TOI during an online interaction on Saturday.

"This is the situation but most important thing for us is to control the emotions and forget the stress. We have to try to play and game by game improve our team," he said.

Chelsea take their place at the top with win at Newcastle

Newcastle: Chelsea became the seventh club to top the Premier League standings this season after a 2-0 victory at Newcastle United on Saturday courtesy of an own goal by Federico Fernandez and Tammy Abraham's second-half effort.

Frank Lampard's side dominated before the break and took the lead in the 10th minute when Fernandez, under pressure from Ben Chilwell, turned in Mason Mount's cross. Chelsea really should have been out of sight with Timo Werner guilty of missing some gilt-edged chances but Newcastle came alive after the break.

Isaac Hayden squandered a great chance to equalise on the hour but a few minutes later Werner burst through on goal before passing to Abraham to double Chelsea's lead.



ON THE RUN: Chelsea's Tammy Abraham (left) scores his side's second goal against Newcastle United in their Premier League match

Sean Longstaff came close for Newcastle when his rising drive clipped the crossbar but Chelsea could have scored more with Werner having a goal ruled out for offside.

Chelsea's third successive league win lifted them level on 18 points with Leicester City but are top thanks to a better goal difference. Leicester

NEUFC shock 10-man Mumbai

Sourav.M@timesgroup.com

At the end of the first half at Goa's Tilak Maidan on Saturday, heavyweights Mumbai City FC were well ahead of their opponents NorthEast United FC on all counts, except one, in their campaign opener of Indian Super League season 7. Defensive midfielder Ahmed Jahouh's moment of madness two minutes from the breather meant the Highlanders went into the half-time with a man advantage. This proved to be the single most important incident that undid the otherwise good showing by Sergio Lobera's well-knit unit as 10-man Mumbai went down 0-1 to Gerard Nus' young and comparatively inexperienced team after Kwesi Appiah converted from the spot.

Just two minutes into the second half, NorthEast defender Dylan Fox's header off a Luis Machado centre from left was handled by Mumbai's midfield marshal Rowlin Borges' left arm near the far post. Referee R Venkatesh was spot on to award NorthEast a deserving penalty and Appiah sent Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh the wrong way before slotting home from the spot.

As for Jahouh, the straight red-card offence by the Moroccan near the centre circle, that too when the ball was far away from the danger area, was unnecessary and Mumbai's display of smooth passing was hampered by the incident.

The sophomore season: 2nd time the charm for HFC?

Aditya.Singh@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: Hyderabad FC is set to kick off their second ISL season on Monday, taking on Odisha FC at GMC Stadium, Goa.

Having completely revamped their squad and appointed a new coach, the team will aim at a better performance this season as compared to the

for practice. It's difficult in the bio-bubble. In the early days, we couldn't practice together. We can't meet anyone except during practice and meals but the preparations are going well."

Dimple Bhagat and Fran Sandaza are set to miss the first match due to injury. Marquez remarked, "I think it's the normal situation now. In-



We believe in the work of players, staff and others in the bio-bubble. In football, nothing is sure but we are optimistic for this season. For us, the most important thing is to show up for Monday's game
- Manuel Marquez | HFC HEAD COACH

2019-20 season, in which they finished at the bottom of the league table, recording just two wins.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the entire 2020-21 ISL season will be played in a bio-bubble in Goa. Tilak Maidan will serve as the home stadium for Hyderabad FC.

Discussing the shortened pre-season, Manolo Marquez, head coach, said, "It's very difficult to build a new team with a lot of new players and a short pre-season. There are players from all parts of the world and across India. They have never played together. We had only 4 weeks to train."

Hyderabad FC winger Halicharan Narzary said, "Despite the short pre-season, we are using all the time we can

juries can be a big problem for all teams this season."

Talking about the young players at the club, Marquez said, "For me, if the young players can continue, Hyderabad FC can be a good team in the future. We have many quality young players. They will play more games than people think. They will play an important role this season."

As part of their preparation, the team played against Kerala Blasters, Bengaluru FC, FC Goa and NorthEast United in pre-season games.

Former Hyderabad FC player Marcelinho will lead the attack for Hyderabad FC's first opponent, Odisha FC, who have appointed the 67-year-old Stuart Baxter as their new head coach.

Bremen end Bayern run: Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich fought back to draw with Werder Bremen 1-1 as their nine-game winning run across all competitions ended on Saturday. Maximilian Eggstein fired Bremen ahead before the break, but the visitors were unable to hold on for what would have been their first victory over Bayern since 2008. Leon Goretzka crossed for Kingsley Coman to equalize in the 62nd minute. Bayer Leverkusen scored late to beat Arminia Bielefeld 2-1 and Augsburg held Borussia Monchengladbach 1-1. AP