



Pant captaincy under lens as DC eye improved bowling effort against GT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant's leadership skills will be under scrutiny as a struggling Delhi Capitals would seek a much-improved performance from their bowlers when they take on an inconsistent Gujarat Titans in the IPL here on Wednesday.

It was not an ideal homecoming for Pant as after two consecutive wins, DC slumped to a 67-run loss against a marauding Sunrisers Hyderabad at home on Saturday. The loss saw DC slip to the eighth position with three wins and five defeats. They very well know they can't afford to falter if they want to keep their play-off hopes alive. Against SRH, Pant erred in his decisions a few times, starting from the toss as he misjudged the dew factor at the Arun Jaitley Stadium and decided to bowl first. Pant's decision to hand the second over to Lalit Yadav, was even more contentious as SRH were off to a blazing start, scoring a record 125 for no loss in the powerplay. On the personal front, Pant wasn't

in his element as he struggled for timing en route a painstaking 44 off 35 balls while chasing a mammoth score. To chase a target of 267, a team needs its openers to fire from ball one but Prithvi Shaw and David Warner haven't been too successful. Young Jake Fraser-McGurk smashed 65 off just 18 balls to keep DC in the hunt but he lacked support from the other end, even though Abhishek Porel (42 off 22) tried his best. DC bowlers were taken to the cleaners by SRH and they need to pull up their socks. Left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed's, whose career has been dogged by inconsistency, decision to employ short stuff in the opening over completely backfired. With short boundaries at the Kotla, DC bowlers need to pitch it up. Pace spearhead Anrich Nortje has been completely off-colour this season and DC would be desperately hoping veteran Ishant Sharma returns after missing the last game due to a back spasm.



Kuldeep Yadav has been DC's best bowler in the season so far with 10 wickets from five games at an economy rate of 7.60. But he didn't have a very good outing against SRH. Even though he had the highest number of dot balls (8) among DC bowlers, he also conceded the maximum numbers of sixes -- 7. GT have also been equally inconsistent under new skipper Shubman Gill. But the three-wicket win over Punjab Kings in their last game has helped the former champions move up slightly in the pecking order at sixth spot from four wins and as many losses. They would be hoping to continue the winning momentum to scale up the leaderboard and be in contention for a play-off berth. The onus would be on Gill to lead from the front. The likes of Sai Sudharsan, David Miller and Azmatullah Omarzai also need to let their willow do the talking while Rahul Tewatia would look to continue his pyrotechnics towards the end stage of their innings.

On the bowling front, the likes of veteran Mohit Sharma, Noor Ahmad and Rashid Khan will be expected to deliver the goods.

TEAMS (FROM):
Delhi Capitals: Rishabh Pant (c&wk), David Warner, Abhishek Porel, Ricky Bhui, Yash Dhull, Shai Hope, Prithvi Shaw, Tristan Stubbs, Kumar Kushagra (wk), Swastik Chikara, Ishant Sharma, Jhye Richardson, Rasikh Dar, Vicky Ostwal, Anrich Nortje, Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Praveen Dube, Khaleel Ahmed, Sumit Kumar, Axar Patel, Lalit Yadav, Jake Fraser-McGurk.
Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Wriddhiman Saha, Sai Sudharsan, Shikhar Khan, Matthew Wade, Kane Williamson, Azmatullah Omarzai, Abhinav Manohar, Rashid Khan, Vijay Shankar, Rahul Tewatia, Spencer Johnson, Kartik Tyagi, Joshua Little, Darshan Nalkande, Noor Ahmad, Ravirisingh Sai Kishore, Mohit Sharma, Jayant Yadav, Umesh Yadav, Sushant Mishra, Sandeep Warrier, Sharath BR, Manav Suthar.



That door is now closed: Narine rules out T20 World Cup amid purple patch in IPL

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former West Indies bowling all-rounder Sunil Narine, who is having a terrific IPL season, won't be reversing his retirement decision for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and USA, insisting that the "door is now closed".

The 35-year-old last played for the West Indies in a T20 International in August 2019 before retiring from international cricket in November last year to focus on franchise T20 leagues around the world.

But owing to his sensational form with both bat and ball for Kolkata Knight Riders this IPL season, attempts were being made to convince Narine to reverse his decision for the T20 World Cup.

"I'm truly flattered and humbled that my performances recently have moved many people to publicly express their wish for me to come out of retirement and play in the upcoming T20 World Cup," Narine wrote in Instagram post.

He asserted that he has made peace with his decision and will be supporting the team from home. "I have made peace with that decision and whilst I never wish to disappoint, that door is now closed and I will be supporting the guys who take the field in June for West Indies.

"Guys who have worked hard over the past few months and deserve to show our wonderful fans that they are capable of winning another title. I wish you all the best," he added.

Narine, who has been a key member of KKR since 2012, is seventh on the list of leading run-scorers in the ongoing IPL season, having scored 286 runs, including an unbeaten century against Rajasthan Royals last week -- his maiden T20 ton.

With the ball, the off-spinner is KKR's joint-leading wicket-taker with nine scalps at an average of 22.11 and an economy rate of 7.10. Narine's purple patch has compelled West Indies captain Rovman Powell to encourage the spinner to come out of retirement for the home World Cup.

"For the last 12 months, I've been whispering in his ears, he's blocked out everyone. Askerd (Kieron) Pollard, (Dwayne) Bravo, (Nicholas) Poonan, hopefully before they select the team, they can crack his code," Powell had said last week.

You need big heart when bowling at the death: Sandeep

PTI ■ JAIPUR

You have to have a big heart when bowling at the death while trying to execute your plans, insisted Rajasthan Royals medium pacer Sandeep Sharma after recording the ongoing IPL season's best bowling performance. Bowling after a three-week injury layoff, the 30-year-old Sharma wreaked havoc in the Mumbai Indians camp with a splendid 5 for 18 on Monday. "In this year's IPL, batters are going big and with the impact player rule, there is an extra batter so the games are high-scoring. You have to have a big heart while bowling at the death and try to execute your plans and bowl good balls," he

said after RR's nine-wicket win over MI.

Sharma, who started off as a new-ball exponent in the IPL, has been tasked to bowl the death overs by the Royals in the three games that he has played this season. "Even today you ask me where I feel comfortable, I'll say it's with the new ball. With the old ball, you have to adapt and evolve as a bowler," he said.

Sharma returned to the RR playing XI after recuperating from a side strain that kept him out for close to a month. "I was working hard towards my fitness for the last three weeks. I had two practice sessions before the game, my main focus was to execute the variations that I did tonight."



Against MI, Sharma's scalps included the dangerous Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, the big hitting Tim David, Ishan Kishan and Gerald Coetzee. He took three wickets in the final over, restricting MI to 179 despite a 99-run stand between Varma and Nehal Wadhra.

"If you're bowling at the death, it can go both ways. Sometimes, you go for runs, and when you're lucky enough you end up getting a wicket. When we started, the wicket was low and slow. My plan was to keep bowling those cutters and it came off nicely tonight," he said.

MI OPTIMISTIC DESPITE LOSS TO RR: Mumbai Indians fell to their fifth loss of the season but young batter Nehal Wadhra remained optimistic about the five-time champions' chances of qualifying for the playoffs. "MI need to win all their games from here and we need to tighten our socks. We need to raise our game and figure out where we have been going wrong or where we have been going right so that we can rectify our mistakes whenever we return," Wadhra said after the match.

The 23-year-old, who smashed a splendid 24-ball 49, pointed out that MI aren't new to being involved in a mid-table muddle, having risen from the proverbial ashes time and again. "We have been in such a situation in earlier seasons as well, and we have, you know, upped our game from there and qualified. "So, we are optimistic even right now. We will continue the process we are following and win the games for the team. We win as a team, and we lose as a team," Wadhra added.

Once we got Hasaranga that meant we could not go for Yuzi: Mike Hesson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Letting go of Yuzvendra Chahal is something Royal Challengers Bengaluru could regret for the longest time and the franchise's former director of cricket, Mike Hesson on Tuesday insisted they failed to retain the leg-spinner due to a miscalculation at the last IPL auction.

On Monday, Chahal scripted history by becoming the first player in IPL to have taken 200 wickets.

"Yuzi is one I will be frustrated with until I have finished my career and probably beyond. He is an outstanding bowler. I guess when it comes to every cycle, you have got to decide who you are going to retain.

"It was one of those things where if you only retain three players, you give yourself an extra 4 crore in the auction. That potentially gave us the chance to get both Harshal and Yuzi," Hesson told former India batter Robin

figures of 5/40. He has taken six four-wicket hauls and a five-wicket haul in his IPL career.

Chahal reached the milestone during the match against Mumbai Indians in Jaipur on Monday. Hesson served as the franchise's director of cricket from 2019-2023. Meanwhile, former Australia pacer Brett Lee praised RR seamer Sandeep Sharma for returning excellent figures of 5/18 against MI and said picking a five-fer in a T20 match is equivalent to scoring 120 runs with the bat. "They say a 4-fer is worth 100 runs in a T20, so a 5-fer for a bowler is definitely worth 120 for a batter, it's quality bowling... To pick up 5/18 in his comeback game, just makes you feel like you are part of the team again. "It will do a lot for his confidence. You can see in the list of TATA IPL 2024's best figures and he's sitting pretty on it." Lee on lavished praise on Chahal for picking his 200th IPL wicket. "What a very special moment.



Uthappa on Jio Cinema. Hesson said Chahal's name came pretty late in the auction and by that time, the franchise had already bought ace Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga. ".... Then the order of the auction came up and Yuzvendra Chahal was at no. 65. Because we had retained that many players we were going to get bullied. After

You think about all the hard work... A great way to bring in your 200th dismissal in the TATA IPL, a catch off your

own bowling, very special, well done. I have a feeling, gentleman, there's many more to come," Lee said.

Jaiswal batted with maturity against MI, played cricketing shots: Lara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Impressed with the maturity shown by Yashasvi Jaiswal, West Indies cricket legend Brian Lara said the youngster's knock against Mumbai Indians was well put together as he perfectly balanced taking his time with shots while still maintaining a high strike-rate. Jaiswal ended a barren run by his lofty stands with his first ton of this IPL to power Rajasthan Royals to a nine-wicket win over MI here.

"Yeah, beautiful. But the fact of the matter is, he's taking his time, looking at the ball right from up at the back, and he's playing cricketing shots. He's got all the stuff, he doesn't have to worry about it," Lara said on Star Sports Cricket Live. Jaiswal struck nine fours and seven sixes to make an unbeaten 104 from only 60 balls, a knock which was replete with powerful shots on the leg side and crispy drives.

"And when you do get on top of the bowlers, that's when you take it back, because that's what I love about Yashasvi.

"It was well put together, great cricketing shots, he's managed throughout the innings, and anyone knows, if you're chasing such a good total, at Jaipur and you bounce through the innings, you're soon as going to get there. "So he's shown a lot of responsibility, a lot of maturity, and I'm very happy to have him back." Medium pacer Sandeep Sharma starred with the ball of RR. He wreaked havoc in the MI camp with the ongoing IPL season's best bowling performance -- 5 for 18.

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Place : Jaipur Date : 24-04-2024

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