

NEWS BRIEF

Gujarat Titans' bet on Holder is interesting, his six-hitting abilities have improved, says Pathan

New Delhi: Former India left-arm pacer Irfan Pathan said Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 champions Gujarat Titans (GT) have shown immense faith in West Indies' fast bowling all-rounder Jason Holder, noting his improved six-hitting ability alongside his new ball bowling will benefit the side in the 2026 season.

Holder has been a familiar face in the Indian Premier League, having previously represented Chennai Super Kings, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Kolkata Knight Riders, Lucknow Super Giants, and Rajasthan Royals. In the auction held in Abu Dhabi, GT aggressively pursued Holder and eventually got him for Rs 7 crore after a prolonged tussle with the CSK.

"Their bet on Jason Holder is interesting. He is an amazing bowler with the new ball, but his batting has improved, especially his six-hitting abilities. GT has put a lot of faith in that. Their main strength is their top three batters: Shubman Gill, Sri Sudharshan, and Jos Buttler."

"How they use Washington Sundar will be important, as his batting has gotten better, too. The role of Glenn Phillips, or whoever plays at number four or five, will also be very big," said Pathan on JioStar.

Ex-India opener Abhinav Mukund explained the reasoning behind GT's preference for left-arm pacers and all-rounders like Holder in making their IPL 2026 squad. "Gujarat Titans love fast bowlers, especially left-arm pacers like Prithviraj Yarra and Luke Wood. Ashok Sharma had a great Syed Mushtaq Ali season."

"But Jason Holder is there because they need someone to bat and finish innings at number six or seven, and bowl a couple of overs. They want someone to finish at the death. The team is so strong at the top that they felt they needed this."

Had it been 2mm shorter, it might have been alright: Smith gives his take on under-fire MCG pitch

Melbourne: Australia stand-in skipper Steve Smith gave his take on the MCG wicket after the Boxing Day Test lasted just two days, with England winning by four wickets. He said that had the 10mm grass been 2mm shorter, it might have made a difference in the match.

The Melbourne Cricket Ground pitch came under the scanner after the Boxing Day Ashes Test between Australia and England finished in two days. As many as 36 wickets fell in 142 overs. It lasted for 952 balls, just five more than the series opener in Perth.

"It obviously offered a lot, 36 wickets in two days, it offered plenty. Had it been even 2mm shorter or a little less thanch with 10mm, it might have been alright, but I'm not a groundsmen, so it's hard to judge. But it did look like it was going to offer a fair amount, probably a little more than I thought it would. I think the groundsmen is always learning, but he's produced some pretty good wickets in the last two years," Smith told SEN Cricket.

The MCG has previously been criticised for producing flat wickets that favoured batting, most notably during the 2017 Ashes Test, when only 24 wickets fell over five days. That series drew widespread criticism, prompting match referee Ranjan Madugalle to issue a "poor" rating in his official assessment report.

"I think when I started, we didn't have too many wickets like this, when I started, the MCG used to be run by batsmen, but that's changed a bit over the last four or five years. It's probably changed more into a better cricket wicket where bat and ball are competing against each other. The game's changed in terms of the aggression batters use... if 10 years ago you saw Harry Brook come out and bat like that, you'd think,

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NEW DELHI : The Indian Junior Men's Hockey Team signed off 2025 as a highly successful year, marked by two major international medals and a structured build-up towards the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025 held in December.

The foundation of the campaign was laid through a series of intensive national training camps held throughout the year under the guidance of PR Sreejesh. Through these camps, the coach built a squad and prepared the players to be at their best as the season progressed towards the Junior World

Cup in December, as per a press release from Hockey India.

India's competitive build-up began with the Four Nations Tournament in June, which served as an important preparatory assignment against quality European opposition. Facing hosts Germany along with Spain, and

Australia, the Indian junior side tested their systems against heavyweights and finished the tournament third place, registering a key 2-1 victory over Australia in the 3rd/4th place match. The tournament provided valuable match exposure and clarity on combinations as the team contin-

ued its World Cup preparations.

Next, they carried the momentum and learnings into the 2025 Sultan of Johor Cup in October, where India produced a strong and consistent run to claim the Silver Medal. The team registered important victories over Great Britain, New Zealand and Malaysia and also played out a 3-3 draw against Pakistan, and progressed to the Final after a composed league stage performance. In the title clash, India conceded an unfortunate goal in the 59th minute and lost 1-2 to Australia and settled for the Silver Medal.

All the preparation led the side to the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025, the most important assignment of the season, where India delivered a memorable campaign on home soil. India began their campaign with three comfortable wins in the Pool Stage over Chile, Oman and Switzerland, respectively and entered the knockout rounds.

The Quarter-Final proved to be a defining moment, as the Indian team held their nerve and defeated Belgium 4-3 in shoot-out to book a place in the Semi-Finals. Goalkeeper Prince Deep Singh showed incredible class and valour with two crucial saves in the shoot-out to ensure India progressed ahead in the tournament.

Unfortunately, India lost 1-5 in the Semi-Final against champions Germany but responded with character in the 3rd/4th place playoff, producing an incredible comeback against Argentina to secure the bronze medal.

Jemimah unavailable for selection due to weakness from mild fever, says BCCI



Thiruvananthapuram: India batter Jemimah Rodrigues was ruled out of selection for the fourth women's T20I against Sri Lanka at the Greenfield International Stadium due to weakness from a mild fever, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Sunday.

"Ms Jemimah Rodrigues was unavailable for selection in the 4th T20I in Thiruvananthapuram due to weakness arising from mild fever. The BCCI Medical Team is closely monitoring her progress and recovery," said the BCCI in a statement. In place of Jemimah, batsman Harleen Deol has come into the playing eleven for the match, where India will bat first against Sri Lanka for the first time in the ongoing series, with the hosts having an unassailable 3-0 lead. Jemimah made scores of 69 not out, 26, and nine, and sits as the second leading run-getter in the series after opener Shafali Verma. The unbeaten 69 also led

to Jemimah jumping five places to be at number nine in the women's T20I batting rankings.

Despite missing out on Sunday's clash, Jemimah has enjoyed a standout 2025, ranking third among India's run-scorers – 771 runs in ODIs and 212 runs in T20Is. She played a pivotal role in India's maiden ODI World Cup triumph, striking an unbeaten 127 against Australia in the semi-final before the team overcame South Africa in the final to lift the title at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Earlier this month, Jemimah was appointed as captain of Delhi Capitals ahead of the fourth season of the Women's Premier League (WPL), replacing Meg Lanning in the role. Meg had led DC to the final in each of the first three editions of the tournament, where Jemimah was the vice-captain, but was not retained by the franchise for the upcoming season.



Head reveals he reached out to Duckett after Noosa backlash 'to see if he was going alright'



series, after losses in Perth and Brisbane.

It was reported that several players spent a significant amount of their time drinking on the Queensland coast and also on two prior days in Brisbane, where the second Test was held.

Although England played the second Test better than the Ashes opener, they lost the following Test in Adelaide, which led to Australia winning the series.

England ended an 18-match winless streak in Australia and prevented an Ashes clean sweep during a remarkable and bizarre two-day Test in Melbourne. During one of the most unusual matches in cricket history, England needed 175 runs to win on the second evening of the fourth Test, bringing the series to 3-1 ahead of the final match in Sydney.

In tough batting conditions, England's Bazballers thrived in the chaos, finally finding a situation in Australia that suited their freewheeling style. They achieved their target in 33 overs, with England's four-wicket win thrilling the thousands of travelling fans who now have something to celebrate after a largely disappointing tour.

AGENCY

MELBOURNE: Australia opener Travis Head said he reached out to England's Ben Duckett after a social media video surfaced before the Melbourne Test that appeared to show Duckett intoxicated.

England's managing director, Rob Key, had mentioned that the board had initiated an investigation following reports of players drinking heavily during a break in Noosa, a beach town, between the second and third Tests.

A viral social media video also appeared to show England opener

Duckett intoxicated, prompting increased scrutiny of the team and the batter in particular.

"I get on with Ducky well and reached out to him to see if he was going alright. Everyone is still human. What you do in your personal time is up to you. I know we live a high profile life and some people are more high profile than others. At the end of the day, it is a bit stiff but I don't think there is any real issue."

England's four-night trip to Noosa followed their 2-0 deficit in the Ashes

with a bogey-free five-under 66 in round four to total 19-under 265 for the week and register his second runner-up finish on the PGTI in only his third appearance on the tour. Khalin Joshi (66) and Veer Ahlawat (66) finished tied third at totals of 14-under 270.

Yuvraj Sandhu picked up the winning cheque worth INR 30 lakh to take his season's earnings to a whopping INR 1,91,67,100, thus smashing the previous record for season's earnings on the PGTI set at INR 1,56,35,724 by Veer Ahlawat in 2024. Yuvraj, who hails from the Chandigarh Golf Club, won seven titles and posted seven other top-10s this season, including three runner-up finishes.

Sri Lankan N. Thangaraja, a three-time winner on the PGTI this year, finished a distant second on the PGTI Ranking with season's earnings of INR 1,18,21,821. Thangaraja secured fifth place at Jamshedpur this week as he totalled 13-under 271. In rounds one and two, one half of the field played its 18 holes at Beldih Golf Club while the other half of the field played its 18 holes at the Golmuri Golf Club. In rounds three and four, the leading groups played their front-nine at Golmuri before moving to Beldih to play their back-nine. The par for Golmuri and Beldih combined was 71.

Yuvraj Sandhu was quick off the blocks with birdies on the first two holes. Yuvraj, who kept converting putts from a range of seven to eight feet with relative ease, then collected two more birdies on the sixth and ninth. Sandhu's two bogeys on the back nine could not upset his rhythm as he earned three birdies courtesy of his immaculate ball-striking and before delivering the knock-out punch with his 15-foot birdie conversion on the 18th.

Gurugram-based Shubham Jaglan, who

Novelty of Rashid Khan has worn off a little, not as intimidating as before, says Kumble ahead of IPL 2026



NEW DELHI: Former India captain Anil Kumble believes IPL 2022 win-

Rashid Khan, saying that the Afghanistan star's impact has diminished and the novelty factor has 'worn off a little'.

GT, who bowled out in the Eliminator of IPL 2025, boasted one of the strongest bowling units, but Rashid endured his poorest campaign in the competition. He managed to pick only nine wickets at an average of 57.11 and an economy rate of 9.35. Rashid also conceded 33 sixes - the most by any bowler in a single IPL season - as batters found ways to dominate him.

Kumble also felt the Shubman Gill-led franchise would need greater contributions from left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore, as well as off-spin bowling all-rounders Washington Sundar and Rahul Tewatia, to remain competitive in IPL 2026.

"I think the novelty of Rashid Khan has worn off a little. There are many similar bowlers available now, so he is no longer as intimidating as he was before. His workload has to be managed more, along with bowlers like Sai

Kishore. Even Rahul Tewatia and Washington Sundar can contribute more for GT this season," said Kumble, a former RCB player and ex-Punjab Kings head coach, on JioStar.

Rashid's returns for GT in IPL 2024 were also modest, picking 10 wickets in 12 matches at an average of 36.70 and an economy rate of 8.40. He started his journey in the IPL with Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in 2017, before moving to GT in 2022, and played a pivotal role in them winning the title in their debut season.

Rashid has linked his prolonged struggles in T20 cricket to the back surgery he underwent in 2023, following his participation in the Men's ODI World Cup in India. He returned to action only months after the operation, never giving himself sufficient time to regain his bowling rhythm and accuracy.

BAJAJ LIFE INSURANCE LIMITED

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AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED

(CIN:L65922JR2011PLC034297) Regd. & Corp. Office: 201-202, 2nd Floor, South End Square, Mansarovar Industrial Area, Jaipur, 302020

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Name of Borrowers/Co-Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors	Dues As on	Date & Amount of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Description of Property	Reserve Price For Property	Earnest Money For Property	Date & Time of Auction	Place of Tender Submission, Tender Open & Auction at AAvas Financiers Ltd.
GEETA GEETA, PRADEEP RAMDIYA RAMDIYA (AC NO.) LNRK00619-200123597	Rs. 9,18,501.00/- DUES AS ON 23 DEC 2025	06 JUN 2025 08:21019/- DUES AS ON 04 JUN 2025	4 NOV 25	1/3 PART OF THE MINJUMLA LAND O KANAL 10 MARLA, KH. NO-983-984 MANDAL KHEWAT NO-0-1796 JAMABANDI YEAR 2013-14 INTKAL NO-10514 , WAKA BHOMI GRAM- KEORAK TESHIL & DIST- KAITHAL HARYANA 136027 ADMEASURING 100 SQ YARDS	Rs. 1084500/-	Rs. 108450/-	11.00 AM TO 01.00 PM 29 JAN 2026	2ND FLOOR, SCO-4, SECTOR-17, KURUSHETRA-136118, HARYANA-INDIA

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Authorised Officer AAvas Financiers Limited



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JAMSHEDPUR: Yuvraj Sandhu, who had already secured the 2025 PGTI Order of Merit crown following his sixth victory of the season two weeks back, added another feather to his cap with a one-stroke triumph in the Tata Open 2025 to make it a record seven titles in the season.

The 28-year-old Yuvraj (67-64-68-65), the overnight joint leader, shot a final round score of six-under 65, highlighted by his match-winning birdie on the last hole to total 20-under 264 for the week at the INR 2

crore event, the PGTI's season finale, played at the Beldih and Golmuri Golf Courses in Jam