

Saturday, May 30, 2020 ₹ 75

SPORTSTAR



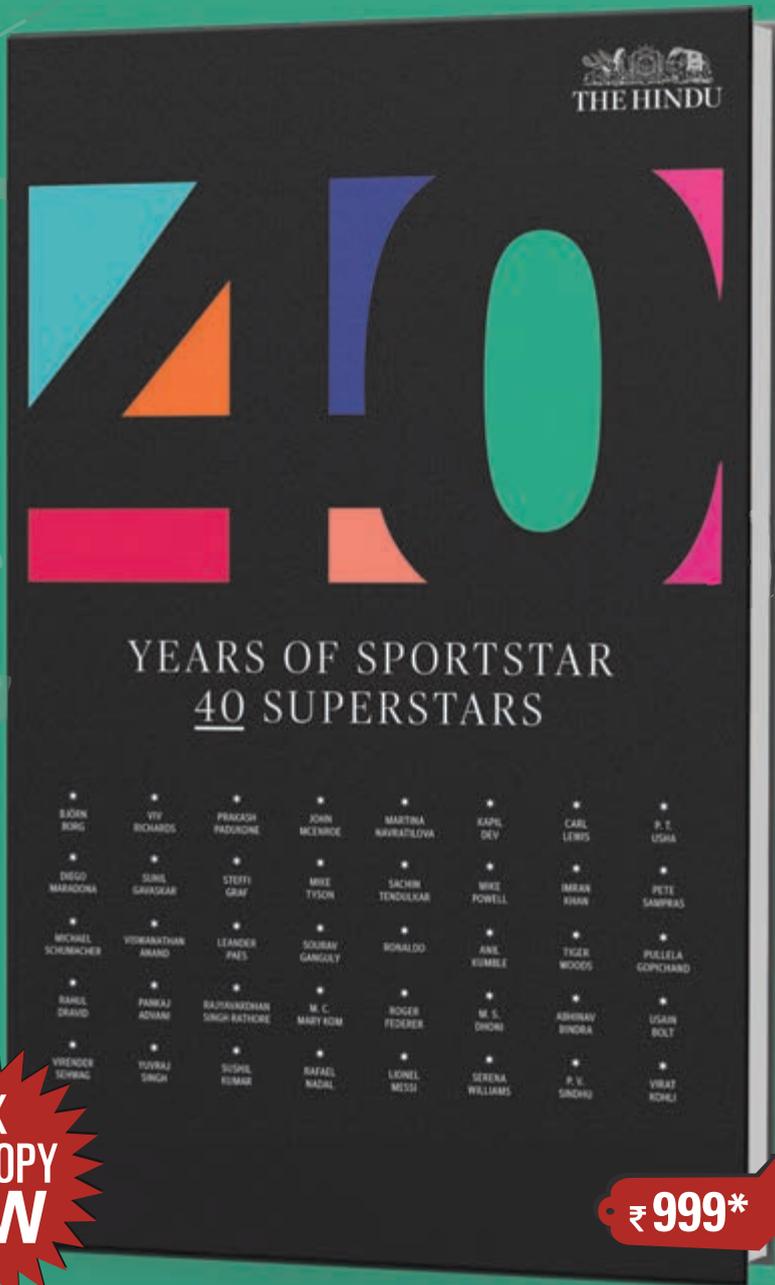
**INDIA'S
GOLDEN MEN**

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM

SPORTSTAR

Roger Federer is poetry in motion, he makes it look so simple,
writes *Sachin Tendulkar*

Sachin Tendulkar and other Super Writers pay tribute to 40 Superstars



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12 Meet the men who, buoyed by the dynamism of the great Dhyan Chand, won India's first hockey gold at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam.



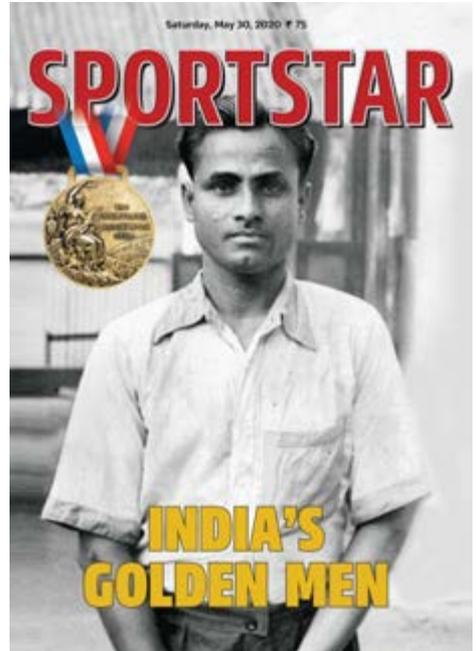
58 Sri Lanka head coach Mickey Arthur explains his routine during the coronavirus lockdown, the communication he's having with the cricketers and why he feels cricket should return.



68 Nick Webb, Team India's strength-and-conditioning coach, speaks about the players' nutrition plans during the lockdown, specific exercises for bowlers and batsmen, and the importance of mental health.



74 With the new dates for the Olympics now available, the only concern for Foaad Mirza, the first Indian to qualify in equestrian in two decades, seems to be a possible impact of the summer sun on the horses.



6 May 26 will mark 92 years since India first won gold at the Olympic Games. In this excerpt from Dhyan Chand's autobiography *Goal*, we recount the country's glory days on the world's largest sporting stage.

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Vettel quits Ferrari, to be replaced by Sainz

Carlos Sainz will drive for Ferrari from the 2021 Formula One season after being announced as the replacement for Sebastian Vettel. The 25-year-old Spaniard made his F1 debut in 2015 and finished an impressive sixth in the drivers' standings for a resurgent McLaren last year. Ferrari clearly deemed he could provide the ideal foil for Charles Leclerc, who is expected to be their lead driver for the foreseeable future. "I am very happy that I will be driving for Scuderia Ferrari in 2021 and I'm excited about my future with the team," Sainz said. "I still have an important year ahead with McLaren Racing and I'm really looking forward to going racing again with them this season." Daniel Ricciardo will step in as teammate to Lando Norris at McLaren, with his switch from Renault for 2021 confirmed shortly before Ferrari announced Sainz's signing.



Mt Fuji to be closed in summer due to pandemic

Japan's beloved Mount Fuji will be closed during this year's summer climbing season to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, officials said on May 18. Shizuoka prefecture, home to the country's tallest mountain, announced it was closing three of the four major routes to the mountain's peak. "The routes open in summer but this year we will keep them closed from July 10 to September 10," the only climbing season for Mount Fuji, a Shizuoka prefecture official said. "We're taking this measure so as not to spread the coronavirus," the official said. It will be the first time the trails of the 3,776m volcanic mountain are closed since at least 1960 when the prefecture began managing the routes, he added. The decision comes after nearby Yamanashi prefecture said it will close the Yoshida trail, the most popular hiking path among the four.



South Korean football club apologises for controversy

One of South Korea's top football clubs apologised for causing "deep concern" on May 18 after being accused of using sex dolls to fill empty seats at a weekend game. FC Seoul insisted the mannequins – used in the absence of fans, who are banned because of the coronavirus – had "no connection to sex toys." But some of the artificial spectators, deployed for May 17's game against Gwangju FC, wore T-shirts with the logo of SoloS, a sex toy seller. Other mannequins, which wore face masks and were separated according to social distancing guidelines, held placards advertising the company and some of its models. Most of them were female, but some were male. FC Seoul said the company that provided the mannequins had previously provided them to SoloS, hence the advertising in which they were clad.



In rarefied air...mountain villagers to lace up boots for Euro 2020

Despite the postponement of Euro 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, a small Swiss mountain village – thought to be home to the highest pitch in Europe – is hoping to stage a scaled-down version of the tournament this summer. The European Mountain Village Championship dates back to 2008, the same year Switzerland co-hosted the conventional tournament with neighbours Austria, and is set to return to its origins in Gspon. The competition was the brainchild of Fabian Furrer, a Gspon native and sports magazine editor, who splits his time between Bern and this idyllic village of 585 inhabitants, where in the winter “the ski slopes run across the football pitch.” Perched atop the canton of Valais in the Swiss Alps near Zermatt, Gspon sits 2km above sea level and is only accessible by cable car. Its football pitch, which bears the name of former Switzerland and Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, lies buried beneath snow each year until May. After the inaugural event won by a team from Spain, the second edition was held in 2012 in Kleinarl, Austria, at an altitude of just over 1,000m. French ski resort Morzine most recently staged the tournament in 2016. Originally planned for June, much like Euro 2020, the “Bergdorf Euro” was also forced to find new dates and pushed back until August 28-30. Nine teams are signed up to take part. Morzine will again represent France, with Kleinarl competing for Austria and Piedimulera, from the Piedmont village in Italy, also set to make the trip. The Dutch will be there too, represented by Viljen, a village that claims to be one of the highest points in the country at 200m above sea level. Sweden, Germany and Belgium will also send teams.

Sportstar magazine continues to attract new readers

LALATENDU MISHRA

Sportstar continues to dominate the sports magazine genre according to the latest report of the Indian Readership Survey.

Sportstar reported a 1.4% growth in the number of readers in the 2019 Indian Readership Survey (IRS) for the fourth quarter (Q4), the findings of which were published recently.

As per the findings, Sportstar had a readership base of 3850,000 as compared to 3796,000 readers in the previous quarter (Q3), an increase of 1.4%.

While most of the top magazines witnessed a reducing trend in readership, Sportstar continued its upward march by seeing an increase in its readers base.

The year's first quarter (Q1) started for Sportstar with a readership base of 3437,000 and there was a steady increase in the numbers. The second quarter recorded 37.13 lakh readers, a spectacular growth of 8.03% from the previous quarter.

The survey was conducted by MRUC India and Nielsen.

Among the top 10 magazines, only English language magazines showed an upward trend in readership.

Sportstar has the second highest readership in the English language category after India Today. It ranks sixth overall, taking into account all languages and genres.





Setting off for glory: The 1928 Indian Olympic team with IHF officials. THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

How India won its first Olympic gold

May 26 will mark 92 years since India first won gold at the Olympic Games. In this excerpt from Dhyan Chand's autobiography *Goal*, we recount the country's glory days on the world's largest sporting stage.

OUR OLYMPIC DEBUT

In our hockey programme in England, you must have noticed that we won all our five matches played at Merton Abbey and out of the five fixtures in the Folkestone Festival, we won four and drew the other. These pre-Olympic fixtures in England served us very well and by the time we left for Holland in quest of Olympic honours, we could claim that we were fairly conversant with English hockey. We had the added advantage that since our team consisted of the smallest number of men, it was often necessary for our teammates to play in strange positions in the various matches.

I am not very sure of the exact date we crossed the English Channel, but I remember that we arrived in Amsterdam on April 24. I have no diary and my friends who have been helping me with the particulars are unable to give more details. We played four

matches in Holland, two in Germany and one in Belgium before we actually made our debut in the Olympic stadium, where we played our first match on May 17. We opened our continental itinerary on April 26 with a match against an Amsterdam XI, winning the match by fifteen goals to two. It was only a short run from Amsterdam to Arnheim where our next event was played and which we won by eight clear goals. The Dutch hockey authorities were anxiously watching our play and were frightfully keen to get the hang of our attacking technique. They fielded their second Olympic XI on May 2 in Amsterdam and this match also proved an easy victory for us. We won by eight clear goals again. Later, we journeyed to the Hague to meet the Dutch Olympic team in a practice match. This match also we won with consummate ease but not before our goal suffered a reverse once against

How India won

Date	Opponent	Score	Scorers
May 17	Austria	6-0	Dhyan Chand (4), Maurice Gateley, Shaukat Ali
May 18	Belgium	9-0	Feroze Khan (5), Frederic Seaman (2), Dhyan Chand, George Marthins
May 20	Denmark	5-0	Dhyan Chand (4), Frederic Seaman
May 22	Switzerland	6-0	Dhyan Chand (3), Maurice Gateley (2), George Marthins
May 26	Netherlands	3-0	Dhyan Chand (2), George Marthins

the eight times we netted into theirs.

Sightseeing

We spent some time sightseeing in Holland before leaving for Germany and Belgium from where fixture invitations had come. At the Hague, we visited the famous Permanent Court of International Justice. I cannot recollect whether the court was then in session or not. We then saw the picturesque palace of Queen Wilhelmina with its well laid-out lawns and gardens and crystal-clear sparkling pools of water. Holland, as the very name Low Countries implies, you know will never suffer from scarcity of water, a good part of the interland being below sea level. A trip round these regions reminds one of Bengal or the southern state of Travancore. The country is rich in pastureland and is famous for its dairy products and fish. Our manager Mr. Rosser and we ourselves were very anxious to visit the Kaiser's Doorn home (Huis Doorn, or Doorn Manor, was the residence-in-exile of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last German emperor, between 1919 and 1941), a few miles away from Amsterdam. The Kaiser was spending his last days in exile at Doorn and we wanted very much to have a glimpse of this old man who reputedly was responsible for World War I engaged in his favourite pastime of chopping wood. We were, however, advised to desist and it was a disappointment to us all. However, we were well nigh achieving our hope during our 1932 Olympic tour. Our manager, Mr. Pankaj Gupta, took us for a drive through a small narrow village where we saw Dutch women lining up the streets peddling fresh fish caught from the dykes. The Bengali that he is – Bengalis are the most famous fish-eaters in the whole of India, you all know – Pankaj Gupta remarked the sight reminded him very much of rural villages in Bengal. These Dutch women, in their colourful national costumes and wooden shoes, presented a typical Dutch rural scene. This village lay on our way to the Doorn residence of the Kaiser. When we neared the estate, we saw a burly sentry mounting guard at the gate. His stony glare and statue-like posture were not inviting enough for us to make further progress. We all had believed the Kaiser lived in obscurity

and it would be easy for us to gatecrash into his presence. But with such precautions around him, we thought fit to retreat without completing our mission.

An invitation came from the German Hockey Association (Deutscher Hockey Bund) to play two matches in Germany which we gladly accepted, even though our players were crooked and were not hundred per cent fit. We had a keen desire to visit the Kaiser's Berlin – neither the Berliners nor Germans as a whole knew of any Adolf Hitler then. We played our first match in Germany in Hanover on May 7 beating a home team by ten clear goals. From Hanover, we travelled to Berlin where on May 8 we defeated a Berlin XI by five goals to one. It was an exciting game. Lots of burly tactics, physical force and "flogging" were features of German hockey as I saw it then.

From Berlin, we crossed over to Belgium for our fixtures there. The journey along the famous Rhine fascinated some members of our team who had a poetic frame of mind. Being a soldier, I was only interested in resting as much as possible, trying to keep fit for the next game and for the Olympics. When we reached Brussels, my teammates taunted me with being crude and unromantic. The capital of Belgium fascinated me. Brussels is a small but picturesque city. Some of its churches are old and famous. Belgium is also famous for its lacework and glassware. We met a Brussels team on May 13 beating them by ten goals to two. We had a mind to visit Antwerp, which is close to Brussels, but could not do so because the time at our disposal was too short. Antwerp is the place where the first post-War Olympics were staged in 1920. We returned to Amsterdam on May 14 and rested for three days before playing our first game in the Olympic arena on May 17.

The 1928 Olympiad was the ninth of its kind and it was at the request of the Indian Hockey Federation that hockey was reintroduced in the Games in 1928. All these years, our country was looking forward to an opportunity to demonstrate to the world her prowess in the world's finest amateur game. You, therefore, will understand how eagerly



Nearly a hundred years ago, we made our mark as a sporting nation with our first ever Olympic Gold in Amsterdam. It is no surprise that India created generations of world beaters in hockey and established a legacy that resonates with every Indian's sentiments towards sport.

– Abhinav Bindra, 10m air rifle champion at the Beijing Games, India's only individual Olympic goal medallist



The champions: The Indian hockey team that played the 1928 Olympic final. Standing (left to right): Richard Allen, Maurice Gateley, Leslie Hammond, Dhyan Chand, Eric Pinniger, George Marthins and William Goodsir-Cullen. Squatting (left to right): Rex Norris, Michael Rocque, Shaukat Ali and Frederic Seaman.

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and with what thoughts we awaited the day to dawn on May 17. The pre-Olympic short trips in Holland, Germany and Belgium gave us very good opportunities to get ourselves acclimatised to the Continental conditions. The climate in the Low Countries is not so uncertain or wet as in England. The grounds were also better in a way, but I wondered why the turf both in England and in the Continent were not kept properly trimmed. The long grass proved a handicap to us as the progress of the ball was slowed and our game of flick and push against our opponents' hit and run suffered considerably. However, we did not bother ourselves much on this score as we were always at least half dozen goals superior to any other team we had so far encountered. This confidence stood us well. The three days prior to the opening Olympic fixture we spent quietly in our hotel in Amsterdam. Language was the chief obstacle and in spite of our best efforts, we could hardly be good mixers in social circles. Fashionable Dutch lasses, hockey enthusiasts all, flocked around us and wanted to fête us. But, as I have already narrated earlier, I kept myself strictly aloof.

The Dream Day

The day of our dreams dawned. On May 17, we confidently marched into the stadium to make our Olympic debut. We had travelled thousands of miles for this. People at home –

quite a number of them hypercritical – had their doubts as to the wisdom or otherwise of India's participation in the Olympic Games. We too had our misgivings so far, but on this day we had no doubts whatsoever. We were highly strung and we were determined to show to the world that in this game our country was supreme. The weather was fine and we met an Austrian XI. The game was a tame one and we beat our opponents by six clear goals. The team was composed of:

Richard Allen; Michael Rocque and Leslie Hammond; Rex Norris, Eric Pinniger and William Goodsir-Cullen; Maurice Gateley, Shaukat Ali, Dhyan Chand, George Marthins and Frederic Seaman.

The first few minutes of the play we were not quite settled, but never was there a moment when Austria was on top of us. However much I desire to describe the 1928 Olympics, I regret I will have to disappoint your readers. My friends who have helped me so far in writing these memoirs have not been able to supply me with any detailed account of the games. How I wish our manager Rosser was alive today? He could have very well supplemented the statistical side of these memoirs. I do not know the whereabouts of one other friend who could have helped me. He is our teammate Hammond who used to maintain some sort of scrapbook. I hope Hammond will come across my



narrative and supplement it with particulars. I cannot even recollect how many goals I scored against the Austrians.

The next fixture was on May 18 when we met Belgium in the second round. We had a number of changes in our team. Jaipal Singh played his first match in the Olympic Games on this day and he partnered Rocque. S. M. Yusuf replaced Norris at right-half and Norris was transferred to left-half in place of Cullen, who was given a rest. Gateley was dropped and Shaukat Ali took his place at outside-right with the Punjab player Feroze Khan playing inside-right. The outcome of the play on this day was again in no doubt. While in Brussels, Belgium managed to score two goals against us, we beat them by nine clear goals and thus qualified to meet Denmark in the next fixture.

After a day's rest, we faced Denmark on May 20. The Danish defence gave a sterling display, particularly their goalie, the stout and hefty Dane who did give me a severe time, stopping many of my efforts when I thought I was the winner. In fact, we found that more importance was laid on an efficient goalkeeper than on the others during all our Continental tour. We beat Denmark by five

goals to nil, thus achieving a hat-trick. In three successive fixtures in the Olympics, no goal was scored against us. We kept up this tradition in the other two matches to follow also. After Denmark, we had to meet Switzerland in the semifinals. Switzerland's prowess in hockey you all know is a household word in the Continent. Against Denmark, we had fielded the same team that opposed Belgium.

The semifinal against Switzerland was played on May 22. We beat our opponents by six goals to nil. We had a new team doing duty on this day:

Richard Allen; Michael Rocque and Jaipal Singh; Rex Norris, Eric Pinniger and William Goodsir-Cullen; Maurice Gateley, George Marthins, Dhyan Chand, Frederic Seaman and S. M. Yusuf.

Allen was our only goalkeeper and therefore there was no question of replacing him or giving him rest. I wondered at times what should have happened to us if Allen happened to injure himself. Possibly Shaukat Ali who played almost in every position would have been asked to take his place. I am not sure whether Jaipal Singh or Leslie Hammond played at full-back. Norris, Pinniger and Cullen played in the intermediate line

In all grandeur: An aerial view of the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam.

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I read a lot about their illustrious feats when they won the first Olympic gold for India at the 1928 Games. I can imagine the kind of hardship they would have faced in those days when all these modern facilities were not available. Those days it was a different game altogether.

— P. V. Sindhu, 2016 badminton silver medallist



Way back in 1928, as a colonised nation, India beat the world in Olympic hockey; this in itself is a statement that answers a lot of questions and raises a few more!

— Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, 2004 silver medallist in shooting in the double trap



Warming up for the Olympics: Dhyan Chand in action during a match between the Indian Olympic team and an Anglo-Scottish XI in England in April 1928.

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and Gateley, Marthins, myself, Seamen and Yusuf formed the attacking quintet. I was surprised to see Yusuf play outside-left, but we could not help it. Feroze Khan was not fit and so also Shaukat Ali and that accounted for this strange forward line. With our victory over Switzerland, we qualified for the final, which took place on May 26. We faced Holland on that day. You will remember that in a practice match we beat the Dutch Olympic XI at the Hague on May 5 by eight goals to one. That helped us a great deal in sizing up the strength of our opponents on the day of the final. On this day, we beat Holland by three clear goals.

At this distant date, I still remember vividly the tragic circumstances in which India took the field on May 26 to win the highest laurels in world's hockey. It was a sadly depleted team that opposed Holland. Feroze Khan, Shaukat Ali and Kher Singh

were on the sick list and Jaipal Singh was not available. I myself was ill, running a high temperature which stayed all through the game. For me, there was no option. That day our manager coined a slogan for us: "Do or die." I decided I would die playing. I was a soldier by profession and when the country's honour was at stake, there was no alternative but to march boldly into the battle field. Look at the team:

Richard Allen; Michael Rocque and Leslie Hammond; Rex Norris, Eric Pinniger and S. M. Yusuf; Maurice Gateley, George Marthins, Dhyan Chand, Frederic Seaman and William-Goodsir Cullen.

You will notice that poor Kher Singh could not participate in a single game in the Olympic fixtures. He had injured his knee earlier. With such odds against us, we entered the field, led by our captain Pinniger, on whom Jaipal Singh's mantle fell, amidst

thunderous cheers from a large crowd. With their own national team playing, the Dutch turned out in large numbers and the stands were full. It was a great game and the fine traditions of Indian hockey were demonstrated to the world with a skeleton side. Holland put up a very good fight. I was amazed to see them play considerably better than they did during the previous practice match against us. They too had adopted, it appeared, “do or die” tactics. In a way we were their masters and although we scored only three goals, our superiority was much more in evidence in all departments. I could give no detailed account of the play on that red letter day. Allen, our goalkeeper, created a record, namely that not a single goal was scored against him in all the five Olympic events we participated. However, Allen could not maintain this record in the second and subsequent Olympics in which India participated. Thus, on May 26, 1928, India was acknowledged throughout the world as the hockey champions. On May 28, we lined up at the Olympic Stadium to receive our Olympic medals and believe me that day our happiness knew no bounds. Unlike the present series of Olympic Games, the 1928 hockey was played in May, although the actual Olympic ceremony and other events took place according to schedule towards the end of July. As a result, we had not the good fortune to enjoy the Olympic atmosphere, the solemn rituals of the opening ceremony, the subsequent thrills and excitement. So even here my readers will have to be content with what appeared in the press at that time.

According to our manager Rosser, who submitted a report at the end of the tour:

“The exhibition of hockey given by the Indian team impressed and fascinated the countries of Europe. Apart from their wonderful eye, nimbleness, unselfish play, quick movements and team work, their display of scientific hockey showed what was possible in the great amateur game in correct unison and sympathetic touch.

“The main features that impressed the English and the Continental players were:

Positional play;

The combination of the forwards with the half-backs and the latter with the full-backs;

The tackle back;

Quick movements and first-time passes;

Deft stickwork, both in attack and in defence;

Quickness, dash and anticipation;

Frequent use of the hand to stop the ball;

and The ‘feint’ to baffle the defence.

“Hockey as played in India is the *creme de la creme* of what really first-class hockey should be.”

Naturally, after our triumph we all felt that we had done something for our country. Something which perhaps even the politicians could not have achieved or done was gained for our country. We were fêted, entertained and lionised in Holland before we returned to England on our way back home. I could never forget the welcome on our tour of Europe. We spent a quiet holiday in London before embarking homewards.

On our way back to India, in Marseilles, we met the Australian contingent of athletes who were to participate in the Olympics in July. We fraternised and there was a ring of sincerity and comradeship on the part of the Australians which won our hearts. Needless to add that reciprocation was spontaneous.

As we neared the shores of our mother country, we were puzzled and bewildered. The three-man send-off accorded us on March 10 in Bombay did not engender much hope of a triumphant homecoming. But our apprehensions were soon belied. Bombay made amends for her lapse and she gave us a reception befitting us. At Mole station was a sea of heads cheering wildly. Dr G. V. Deshmukh, the famous surgeon and politician who was then mayor of Bombay, was present to accord us a civic reception. The governor of Bombay sent a representative with a congratulatory message. Among those present to receive us were Jamnadas Mehta, the colourful personality in Indian politics, and the late lamented Benjamin Guy Horniman. It was a brave and happy team that faced a battery of cameras on that day. We had a very pleasant time in Bombay before we dispersed. Prior to being demobilised, the Olympic champions played a friendly game with the Western India Hockey Association. We beat them by six goals to one. ❧

This excerpt was first published in the August 20, 1949, issue of Sport & Pastime, the predecessor of Sportstar. It forms the seventh chapter of Dhyan Chand's autobiography, Goal, which you can purchase by scanning the QR code or going to

<https://www.thehindu.com/publications>.



We always look up to our predecessors who paved the way for us and proved that we Indians can also become world champions. Growing up in a family where my father also won a medal in the Olympics in field hockey, has been the greatest inspiration in my life.

— Leander Paes, 1996 tennis bronze medallist at the Atlanta Olympics



The fabulous 14

These are the men who won India its first gold medal at the Olympics.

UTHRA GANESAN

JAIPAL SINGH MUNDA

Date of birth: January 3, 1903



Considered one of the best defenders ever to play for Oxford, with his clean tackling and strong hits, Jaipal Singh led India at the 1928 Olympics and was one of two players roped into the side while in England. Even before the Games, he was known in Bengal hockey circles for organising regular club and college teams' tours of India. At the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, Jaipal Singh left the Indian team after the league stage and did not play the final, and there are contrasting accounts of what happened. While some reports say he was not allowed leave as a probationer from the erstwhile Indian Civil Service, others claim he left due to a dispute with team manager A. B. Rosser. In his own memoirs, however, Jaipal Singh confirms the former version but remains silent on why he left abruptly. He did not play again for India. He resigned from the Indian Civil Service and returned home to join politics. Jaipal Singh became known more for his nationalistic activities including forming the Adivasi Mahasabha, being part of the anti-colonial movement and being a champion of Adivasi rights and a separate state even after Independence.

RICHARD ALLEN

Date of birth: June 4, 1902

Born in Nagpur, Allen, like many of his contemporaries, was an Anglo-Indian who lived all his life in India. A student of Oak Grove, Mussoorie, Allen played for Calcutta Port Commissioners in the Calcutta League, considered the strongest and most prestigious domestic competition at that time, and was India's first-choice goalkeeper at the Olympics. Not too tall for his position, Allen nevertheless made up for it with his quick reflexes and brilliant positioning. Along with Dhyan Chand, he is the only player to figure in all the matches through the first three Olympics for India - from 1928 to 1936 - and continues to hold the record for conceding the fewest goals (three) in his Olympic career, one of which was in the famous 24-1 victory against the USA in 1932 while signing autographs! He passed away in 1969 in Bangalore.



WILLIAM GOODSIR-CULLEN

Date of birth: March 29, 1907

Born in Firozpur, Punjab, and a student of St George's College, Mussoorie, Cullen was one of three from the college who participated in the 1928 Games. As was normal back then, he came from an army family and spent his time around military areas. Winning the first inter-provincial championship with the United Provinces team sealed his spot in the national side as one of the defensive midfielders and he is credited as one of the reasons India did not concede a goal through the competition. Cullen continued to play in the domestic leagues after the Olympics before joining an oil company and then the British Army during World War II. He moved to Australia in the 1950s and died on June 15, 1994.

SYED M. YUSUF

Date of birth: Not available

The other player to join the Indian team for the Olympics from a University in England, Yusuf was a student at Cambridge. Yusuf was originally an Afghan, but back then it did not matter in amateur sports. He went back to Kabul after his studies and missed the 1932 edition, but he led the Afghanistan team at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He also led the Afghan side at the maiden Western Asiatic Games, held in New Delhi in 1934. In 1948, he participated in his third Olympics, becoming one of the very few athletes to outlast World War II. Yusuf finally settled in Lahore, organising regular visits between the two Punjabs on either side of the border and participating in tournaments.



MICHAEL ROCQUE

Date of birth: Not available

A right-back, Rocque was a member of the Central Provinces team before being selected for the 1928 Games.



FEROZE KHAN

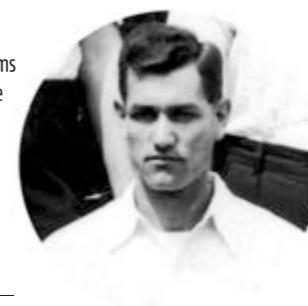
Date of birth: September 9, 1904

Perhaps the man who saw Dhyan Chand from the closest quarters, Feroze Khan was the other centre-forward in the Indian team in 1928. He played the same position in the inter-provincial championships for Punjab, making the cut for the Indian team. With the national side, however, he had to make way for Dhyan Chand and played inside-right, but the two built up a good partnership. Born in Lahore, Khan completed his education there and played for Punjab before joining Bombay Customs and representing the side in domestic tournaments. He moved to Karachi after Independence, where he died on April 21, 2005, at the age of 100 as the oldest Olympic gold medalist at that time.

ERIC PINNIGER

Date of birth: December 28, 1902

Born in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, the midfielder was part of the first two Olympic gold medal-winning hockey teams in 1928 and 1932. As vice-captain of the Indian side in 1928, he led the team in the final after Jaipal Singh Munda left the team and is often considered the best centre-half in the world of his time. One of the six players in the side from the schools of Mussoorie, Pinniger was employed by North Western Railways in Lahore and led the team for more than a decade. Selected in the national side after outstanding outings for Punjab in the inter-provincial championships, he was deputy to Lal Shah Bokhari in 1932 as well but was not included for 1936. Pinniger settled in Pakistan after Independence.



LESLIE HAMMOND

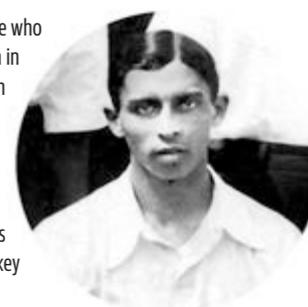
Date of birth: March 4, 1905

Yet another player from the Mussoorie stables in the team of 1928, Madras-born Leslie Hammond alternated with Jaipal Singh in the defence. Considered one of the most resilient defenders of his time, Hammond represented the victorious United Provinces, as a teammate of Dhyan Chand, in the first inter-provincial championships - the five-team tournament in Calcutta organised specially to pick the team for the Olympics. The selection process became tougher in 1932 and Hammond was named among the "Possibles" who took on the "Probables" in the trial match before earning a call-up to the national team. Hammond emigrated to Australia before passing away on June 26, 1955. His medals are preserved at the Gold Museum in Ballarat.

REX NORRIS

Date of birth: July 18, 1899

While there were quite a few India-born Britishers in the Indian side, Reginald Alexander "Rex" Norris is the only one who left behind a rich sporting legacy both in India and abroad, taking his skills across Europe as a reputed hockey coach. Born in Chikmagalur and having studied in Bangalore, Norris joined Central Railways and played a large part of his hockey years in Jabalpur. He led the railways side to victory at the Aga Khan Cup four times before representing Central Provinces as a midfielder in 1928 for a spot in the national side for the Olympics. Norris did not play again for India after the 1928 Games and moved to London in the 1950s, turning to coaching full-time. He coached the Dutch team from 1954 to 1956, the Italians in 1960 and the Mexicans just before the 1968 Olympics. He died in September 1980. Two of his sons - Havelock and Ronald - represented India in boxing, Ronald reaching the quarterfinals at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. His daughters Philomena and Wendy represented India on foreign tours in hockey in 1953 and 1956, respectively, when women's hockey was yet to be formalised as a sport.



MAURICE GATELEY

Date of birth: June 13, 1904

Maurice Gateley belonged to the Mussoorie group of Anglo-Indians who made the 1928 Olympics side. Little is known of him, but the then 24-year-old right-out etched his name into the history books on March 17, 1928, by scoring the first ever Olympic goal for India, against Austria. Gateley belonged to Delhi and played for the city on the domestic circuit and, in that sense, was a relative outsider given the fact that Delhi was not exactly known as a hockey nursery compared to other centres like Calcutta or Bombay. But his hockey skills were honed at St George's College, alongside George Marthins and William Goodsir-Cullen. In the inter-provincial competition, Gateley played for Punjab. He was known for his keen anticipation and ability to stop-dash at speed.



SHAUKAT ALI

Date of birth: October 6, 1897

Shaukat Ali's inclusion in the 1928 side was not a surprise, but him actually playing the Games was definitely dramatic. The elegant midfielder was one of two players on the drop list just before the Indian team left for the Olympics due to the lack of funds to pay for their travel - the other being Rex Norris - before public contributions helped arrange the approximately ₹15,000 shortfall. Born in Bengal and playing his entire life for Calcutta Customs on the domestic circuit, Shaukat dominated the city maidans. Dhyan Chand, in his memoirs *Goal*, gives Ali the best compliment when he writes: "Allen was our only goalkeeper and therefore there was no question of replacing him or giving him rest. I wondered at times what should have happened to us if Allen happened to injure himself. Possibly Shaukat Ali who played almost in every position would have been asked to take his place." Interestingly, Ali was designated as a forward in the official report! He was unlucky to miss out on a spot in 1932 despite impressing in the inter-provincial tournament. He died on February 25, 1960.

GEORGE MARTHINS

Date of birth: December 24, 1905

The third of the St George's triumvirate, George Eric Marthins represented United Provinces in the inter-provincial championships. In fact, between Oak Grove and St George's College, six players in India's 1928 side came from the small hill station! St George's itself provided six hockey Olympians to the Indian side over the first three editions - including Earnest Goodsir-Cullen and Lionel Emmett (both 1936) and Carlyle Tapsell (1932 and '36). Marthins' partnership as inside-right with Dhyan Chand, both for his provincial team and the national side, was instrumental in the latter scoring many of his goals. Marthins died in March 1989.



FREDERIC SEAMAN

Date of birth: January 2, 1906

Born in Allahabad to a police inspector, Frederic Stephen Seaman was a forward known for his nippiness and positioning on the right. He played for United Provinces, like William Goodsir-Cullen, Dhyan Chand and George Marthins. In fact, barring Gateley and Feroze Khan, the entire Indian forward line at Amsterdam was from the United Provinces side, and the coordination and combination showed in the games at the Olympics.

Seaman left with his family - wife and two sons - after Independence and settled in Hershey, Pennsylvania, where he passed away on September 21, 2000, at the age of 94.

DHYAN CHAND

Date of birth: August 29, 1905

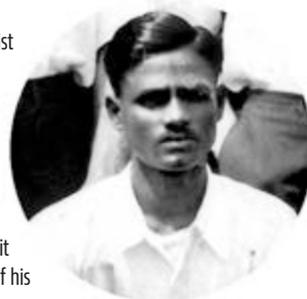
Dhyan Chand, as it was back then, is still the biggest name in Indian hockey. Keshav Dutt, the two-time gold medallist after Independence, called him "the Bradman of hockey, Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli rolled into one." Shy and diminutive, Dhyan Singh Bais became Dhyan Chand after the moniker was given to him by India team manager Pankaj Gupta. He also became not just a sporting icon but also India's identity in the pre-Independence era, separate from being a colony of the British.

Born in 1905 in Allahabad, Dhyan Chand got into hockey seriously only after joining the army, following in his father's footsteps. His rise as a player was as mercurial as his goals and he was part of the first-ever Indian hockey team to travel abroad, to New Zealand, in 1926. That tour saw India winning 18 games and losing only one, but, more importantly, it established Dhyan Chand's reputation as a player and a scorer. His selection for the 1928 side, however, was on the back of his performance for the victorious United Provinces in the inter-provincial tournament.

Dhyan Chand was the standout player for India at the 1932 Amsterdam Games as well, scoring 14 goals in five games including two in the final. Inducted into the side without trials in 1932 and captaining in 1936, Dhyan Chand set the gold standard for Indian hockey. He played domestic hockey for 28 years and became a coach at the National Institute for Sports, Patiala, after retirement before breathing his last on December 3, 1979, in Jhansi.

While all his children played the game at different levels, Ashok Kumar was the only one who reached a similar level of success, winning the 1975 World Cup. His birthday, August 29, is celebrated as National Sports Day.

Information sourced from: Profiles of Indian hockey Olympians by K. Arumugam, an initiative of Hockey India; *India and the Olympics*, by Boria Majumdar and Nalin Mehta; *Goal* by Dhyan Chand; official 1928 Olympics report by the Organising Committee.



In the home of the hero

The hockey gold medals from the Olympics have been a most precious part and possession of the Dhyan Chand family, but it pains them that there is no culture of preserving sports history in India.



VIJAY LOKAPALLY

The platform at Jhansi railway station is unbelievably spick and span. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism counter has a man at the counter who is least interested in worrying about the lack of inquiries. He is not even aware of the location of the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium in the town. One of Jhansi's most iconic figures is a forgotten man in his own backyard.

I wait for Ashok Kumar. He is on his way. I am in Jhansi to spend the day with the Dhyan Chand family, which resides in Sipri Bazar, Prem Ganj. The excitement to visit the home where the legendary hockey star lived increases with every passing minute. I am restless when Ashok Kumar arrives with a smile on his face.

We decide to visit the Senior Railway Institute. "There is a statue of Babuji (Dhyan Chand) which you must see before we go home," says Ashok. It is early March and the sun is beating down. "The heat can be unbearable here in May-June," warns Ashok as we reach the venue. The ground is in a bad shape and the statue too is neglected by the authorities.

It is time to look for shelter and Ashok decides to drive home. I, however, insist on seeing the other two statues — at the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium and the one at the Jhansi Heroes ground, which is being redeveloped by authorities. "It was once a lively place with so many matches during the season," Ashok is wistful.

A treasure: The room that displays all the hockey memorabilia of Dhyan Chand demands lot of attention. "We ensure the trophies are cleaned every month. For us, it is a museum that stores memories of Babuji," says Ashok Kumar. VIJAY

LOKAPALLY



Rich haul: (Left) The 1928 Amsterdam Olympics gold medal; (right) Dhyan Chand's Olympic medals.

THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY & VIJAY LOKAPALLY

In the distance, on a hilltop is one more statue of Dhyan Chand. "It is a beautiful spot and attracts quite a few people," says Ashok, who engages in conversation with the workers to check on the pace of construction at the Jhansi Heroes ground. "We are looking to revive some hockey activities," he remarks.

As it becomes hot, Ashok decides it is "time to go home." The house is not far and typically takes you back into time. There is a small courtyard that leads you into the house, which boasts of a room full of trophies and shields won by Dhyan Chand. "It is the best corner of the house. These medals remind us of his glory and of the great times when hockey was the most popular game in the country. It was a matter of pride that the family earned respect because of Babuji's hockey deeds," notes Ashok.

The room that displays all the hockey memorabilia of Dhyan Chand demands lot of attention.

"We ensure the trophies are cleaned every month. For us, it is a museum that stores memories of Babuji. His presence had an aura and we basked in the popularity that he had. But believe me, there was no way we could exploit the advantage of being part of a celebrity's family. The instructions to us from Babuji were strict: not to use his name to push our case."

The hockey medals from 1928, 1932 and 1936 have been a precious legacy of Dhyan

Chand. "In fact, it is Jhansi that takes pride in the fact that Babuji hailed from this town, which is far more famous for the historical contribution of Rani Lakshmibai, the queen who stood up to the British. Jhansi has a rich history of brave warriors and Babuji is considered one on the hockey turf. His exemplary performance at Berlin in 1936 and his exchanges with Adolf Hitler are folklore," Ashok says.

"The medals have never left the home. In fact, we have not kept it on public display for security reasons. These medals are an integral part of our growing-up years. There is history, passion and pride attached to the medals. It has meant so much to the nation. Three successive gold medals at the Olympics. We worship these medals and have preserved them with great care," Ashok's emotions are not to be missed.

"I have fond memories of Babuji. He was strict but also loved his family. Nothing could wean him off hockey. For my generation of hockey players, Babuji was a great source of inspiration. The hockey story that they wrote was a glorious chapter in the nation's sporting history. We were not a patch on the stars of yesteryear and we knew that well. But Babuji was always encouraging the youngsters by recounting takes from the past. He was a very popular man in the world of hockey and also very down to earth," adds Ashok.

It pains the family that there is no cul-



Remembering the hero: On a hilltop in Jhansi is a statue of Dhyani Chand. “It is a beautiful spot and attracts quite a few people,” says Ashok Kumar. “We are looking to revive some hockey activities,” he remarks.

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

ture of preserving sports history. “The medals are all we have to remember the great tradition of hockey. The medals meant the world to Babuji. Holding them in hand gives you a great sense of achievement. The medal may be just a piece of metal, but the worth can’t be measured in terms of money. We won’t trade them for all the wealth in the world,” asserts Ashok.

When I express my desire to see the medals, Ashok’s sister-in-law Meena brings them out from the closet. Ashok’s brother Umesh joins us and the gleam in their eyes as I hold the medals conveys their admiration for them.

“You get some kind of positive energy, some positive vibes, when you hold the medals. Imagine how hard the team must have worked to win the gold. We have to respect that hard work,” says Ashok.

The medals have a story to tell. A story of how a talented bunch came together on the hockey turf to win accolades in gold at Amsterdam (1928), Los Angeles (1932) and Berlin (1936).

That Dhyani Chand played a dominant role in those epic triumphs is well documented. The family lives those moments once in a while when it brings out those medals with immense pride. “The medals are part of the sweet memories that Babuji has left us with,” adds Ashok as he carefully restores the priceless belongings of the Dhyani Chand family to the safe confines of the closet.

As we take the night train back to Delhi, I wonder if the Railways can immortalise the place of Dhyani Chand’s abode by naming the railway station after one of the greatest hockey players the world has seen. ❧



Back from break: Borussia Dortmund players celebrate the first Bundesliga goal since the lockdown began, scored by Erling Haaland. REUTERS

Bundesliga's back!

ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Erling Haaland scored the first goal and Robert Lewandowski extended his lead atop the top-scorers list as the first major sporting league resumed operations since the coronavirus pandemic began.

The Bundesliga became the first major sporting league to resume operations since the coronavirus pandemic brought the world to its knees. Wunderkind Erling Haaland scored the first goal and Robert Lewandowski extended his lead atop the top-scorers list with a composed finish from the penalty spot.

Normal service resumed. Almost.

The world had its eyes on the German league like never before, not just for the football on offer, but to also make note of how it was unfolding. Sporting federations around the world are reeling under financial losses due to the cancellation or postponement of tournaments and the Bundesliga was the guinea pig based on which other leagues – and sports – could return.

Title race unchanged

Haaland was trending on social media over the weekend and it wasn't for his goal or assists. It was rather his post-match interview, where he barely mumbled a few words in English before walking away.

The Norwegian teenager did all his talking on the pitch, however. He had the first touch of the ball and the first goal after the coronavirus-enforced break. He needed less than half an hour to put Borussia Dortmund in the lead. Dortmund's fluid attack saw Schalke spend most of the game on the back

foot. Thorgan Hazard scored just before half-time and Raphael Guerreiro found the back of the net in either half and BVB registered an emphatic Rivierderby victory to go one point behind Bayern Munich.

But Bayern Munich restored its four-point lead 24 hours later in the capital. Union Berlin did better than most newly promoted sides would against the Bavarian giant, but Bayern had enough firepower in its arsenal to negotiate the tricky tie.

Lewandowski scored his 26th goal of the campaign and 40th goal of the season – for the fifth consecutive season – before Benjamin Pavard's header sealed the three points. RB Leipzig was the only team in the top four to falter. Playing at home to Freiburg, it had to come from behind to take a point from the game – while needing assistance from the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) to (rightfully) rule out a late goal for the visitor.

Borussia Monchengladbach didn't get out of second gear in its defeat of Eintracht Frankfurt. Despite being outmuscled for most of the game, Gladbach stuck to its plan and breached the Frankfurt defence thrice. It remains two points behind Dortmund but leapfrogged Leipzig to third.

Augsburg lost at home to Wolfsburg to remain four points above the relegation zone while Hertha Berlin won against mid-table rival Hoffenheim to move two spots behind the top half.

Mainz 05 scored two goals in the final 20 minutes against FC Koln to avoid a second defeat in four games and keep a four-point distance from the drop zone.

Geisterspiele

Every major league in the world has something unique about it. For the Bundesliga, it is the fan culture. With ticket prices a fraction of what Premier League clubs charge and safe standing terraces, football tourism is an actual thing that tourists can do in the country – covering multiple stadia over a weekend to experience the vibrant atmosphere in the stands more than the proceedings on the pitch.

With games going ahead without spectators, there was one buzzword that match-going fans were kept using in the count-



Too close for comfort? Hertha Berlin's Dedryck Boyata could not contain his emotions and kissed teammate Marko Grujic on the cheek, breaking the new guidelines for close contact during celebrations. AFP

down to the weekend's first game — Geisterspiele, meaning ghost games. It might be a German phrase, but fans across the world may be forced to embrace it soon.

A banner displayed at second-division side St Pauli read: "Without you, it's all worthless! Football lives through its fans!"

There were no fans, there was no atmosphere, and everyone had to unlearn everything about the matchday experience. Team buses drove through empty streets into the stadiums, pre-game warm-ups were a silent affair, and match balls were heavily disinfected.

The games also brought new viewing experiences. The microphones around the pitches picked up instructions from coaches on the touchlines as well as verbal communication between players with clarity.

Twenty-seven goals were scored and the celebrations were in tune with the times — players standing away from each other, breaking into a dance routine alone or just elbow bumps and virtual high-fives. Continuing tradition, Dortmund players celebrated with the (empty) yellow wall after their game.

The 'controversial' talking point over the weekend was not a refereeing decision or a VAR error but a goal celebration. Dedryck Boyata could not contain his emotions and kissed teammate Marko Grujic on the cheek, breaking the new guidelines for close contact during celebrations. It also happened in Mochengladbach's game when Marcus Thuram gave teammate Ramy Bensebaini a peck on the cheek after his goal.

Neither the clubs nor the players will be punished though as the league decided to give them some leeway since players are making huge adjustments to their routine to get the game going again.

Outside the pitch, substitutes had to ditch their dugouts for the empty stands to sit away from each other — armed with towels, masks and gloves. There were breaks in each half for players to catch some breath and rehydrate like they normally do in pre-season games.

It was not football as we know it. But it was football. This abnormal is the new normal. ☹

Top five scorers

26 – Robert Lewandowski (Bayern Munich)

21 – Timo Werner (RB Leipzig)

14 – Jadon Sancho (Dortmund)

12 – Robin Quaison (Mainz)

11 – Serge Gnabry (Bayern Munich)

11 – Rouwen Hennings (Fortuna Düsseldorf)

11 – Florian Niederlechner (Augsburg)

11 – Marco Reus (Dortmund)

11 – Sebastian Andersson (Union Berlin)

11 – Wout Weghorst (Wolfsburg)



Life without tennis during a pandemic

For tennis fans, about 90% of whom play or have played the game, this shutdown has proved a severe one-two punch.



Point of view: On who will benefit most from the suspension of pro competition and who will be hurt most, tennis analyst Mary Carillo cited several categories of beneficiaries.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

“What is true of all the evils in the world is true of plague as well. It helps men to rise above themselves.” — Albert Camus, French-Algerian philosopher and writer, from *The Plague*.

“We are dealing with an unprecedented health problem. If we don’t get control of it, we’ll never get back to normal.” — Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, on April 28, 2020.

The worst global health emergency in more than a century has made many Americans realise just how much they

miss sports. To prevent the spread of the dreaded coronavirus, a stay-at-home lockdown has shut down sports in the vast majority of states. High school, college, amateur and pro sports practices and games have been suspended or cancelled. That means, with very few exceptions, we can’t play sports and we can’t watch live sports in person or on TV.

For tennis fans, about 90% of whom play or have played the game, this shutdown has proved a severe one-two punch. Friends and acquaintances have told me life without tennis has left them bored, frustrated and occasionally, even a bit depressed.

The value of sports as a tonic during a crisis, especially in wartime, was noted by the great writer George Orwell. In, “Money and Guns,” his January 20, 1942 essay just after the London Blitz, Orwell wrote: “Very often as you walk down the London streets, you see side by side on a newspaper poster the news of a great battle in Russia or the Far East, and the news of a football match or a boxing contest.... And perhaps that makes you stop and ask yourself — how can a people fighting for its life find time for football matches? A people at war — and that seems, as a rule, a people that is working harder and under more trying conditions than usual — cannot get on without rest and amusement. Probably these things are more necessary in wartime than at ordinary times.”

Just five days earlier, echoing Orwell’s sentiments, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote a letter to Kenesaw Mountain Landis, commissioner of baseball. It was a reply to Landis’s inquiry whether baseball, the national pastime then, should be shut down because of World War II. Roosevelt wrote: “I honestly feel that it would be best for the country to keep baseball going. There will be fewer people unemployed [because of increased work in

war-supply factories], and everybody will work longer hours and harder than ever before. And that means that they ought to have a chance for recreation and for taking their minds off their work even more than before. Baseball provides a recreation which does not last over two hours or two hours and a half and which can be got for very little cost. And, incidentally, I hope that night games can be extended because it gives an opportunity to the day shift to see a game occasionally.”

With more than a million reported cases of Covid-19 and more than 60,000 deaths — and medical experts predicting countless more this year — Americans need sports recreation now just as much as they did during the darkest days of World War II.

Although tennis is not a high-risk, “close contact” sport such as basketball, baseball and ice hockey — whose seasons were curtailed in March — states, cities and towns increasingly locked tennis courts and removed nets during March and April. With the pandemic escalating, the United States Tennis Association said in an April 3 statement that “it is in the best interest of society to take a collective pause from playing the sport we love.”

Tennis diehards, however, scrambled to find the few remaining open courts. When they couldn’t find a court, they occasionally flouted the law by climbing over fences or squeezing between gates. To the best of my knowledge, though, no tennis players were arrested, as some golfers were for violating Rhode Island’s Covid-19 quarantine order.

On April 22, with some areas of the country, such as tennis hotbeds Georgia, Florida, California and Texas, reopening their economies, the USTA issued an optimistic statement. “The USTA recognises that the coronavirus has been affecting different parts of the country in different ways and with different timing. We therefore believe it will be possible for people to return to playing tennis safely in some cities and states sooner than others. In communities where stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders have been lifted or modified, and where the locality meets the standards in the Federal Guidelines, then tennis, if played properly, can be a great opportunity to relieve



stress, socialise with others, and provide much-needed exercise.”

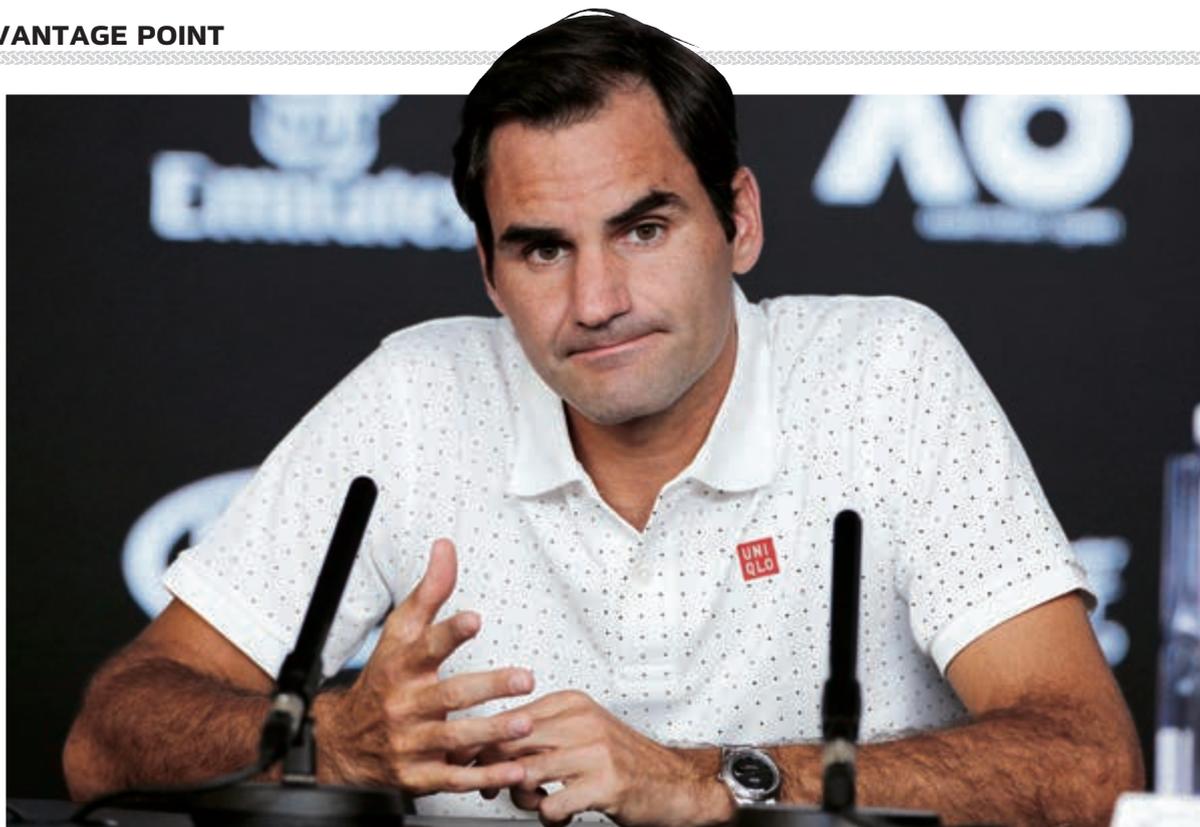
The USTA also stated that these local decisions during the phased opening will not apply to USTA-sanctioned events and programs, which will still remain suspended until at least May 31.

USTA guidelines

Concerned that opening up America’s tennis courts could backfire if not done

Helping hand: In China, where the pandemic started, two-time Grand Slam champion Li Na donated about \$500,000 for coronavirus relief.

GETTY IMAGES



Global issue:

“These are challenging times for everyone, and nobody should be left behind,” wrote Roger Federer on his *Instagram* feed.

AP

prudently, the USTA released two documents on “Playing Tennis Safely.” The first document specifically focuses on players. (<https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html>) Its valuable tips and recommendations includes eight ways to protect yourself against infection. It also has advice on life-saving social distancing when playing and after playing.

The other document is geared toward facilities and programmes. (<https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/playing-tennis-safely--facility-and-programming-recommendations.html>) These comprehensive suggestions fall into seven categories: assessing the situation; encouraging social distancing; providing a clean environment; tennis balls; equipment, coaching; and organising activities. The recommendations include the use of every second court when practical; online court bookings and payment to avoid handling cash; the return of balls from another court with a kick or with your racquet; arriving as close as possible to when you need to be there and leaving the court as soon as possible after playing.

What about the thousands of businesses and their employees in American tennis? “Tennis clubs, facilities, programs and re-

tailers are closed throughout the country,” writes editor Peter Francesconi in the May issue of *Racquet Sports Industry* magazine. “Tennis equipment is held up in the supply chain. Tournaments are cancelled or postponed. Tennis providers are not working and, indeed, many have been laid off.”

Francesconi proposes a tennis emergency response plan, an industrywide collaboration that “would include an extensive communications campaign to both connect consumers and players to facilities, CTAs, member organisations, partners, park & recs, media, etc. — but also to connect these groups and businesses with each other. It would message the health benefits of playing the game and give guidelines on how tennis can be played during this time of social distancing.”

Happily, new USTA CEO Michael Dowse has formed a task force with its many partners and stakeholders to try to keep the tennis business alive while the economy is cratering. (The U.S. unemployment rate, which stood at 3.5%, the lowest in a half-century, on December 6, 2019, had skyrocketed to around 18% in late April — the highest since the Great Depression.)

By late February, the pro tours were building momentum for what many believed would be the most exciting year this century and intriguing storylines abounded.



Would Rafael Nadal equal or even eclipse Roger Federer's record 20 major titles? Would Australian Open champ Novak Djokovic, the youngest and hottest of The Big Three, catch up to his legendary rivals? Would Serena Williams finally match Margaret Court's hallowed record of 24 majors? Or would The Next Gen — led by Naomi Osaka, Ashleigh Barty, Bianca Andreescu, Dominic Thiem, Daniil Medvedev and Stefanos Tsitsipas — thwart these ageless legends? And what about the quadrennial Olympics Games, which Federer and Djokovic had never won in singles?

Exuberant anticipation turned to dismaying shock on March 8, a day that may well go down as the one of the most portentous in tennis history. That was when the escalating coronavirus threat forced the cancellation of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells, regarded as the most prestigious annual co-ed tournament after the majors. Four days later, the Miami Open, another popular Masters 1000 event, was also scrapped. Like falling dominos, the entire European clay-court circuit was can-

celled except for the French Open, which the French Tennis Federation rescheduled for September 20, albeit with some controversy.

Next on the pandemic's path of tennis destruction was the oldest and most majestic tournament. On April Fools' Day, Federer jokingly tweeted that he would retire from pro tennis. A few hours later, though, upon learning that Wimbledon was cancelled for the first time since World War II because of the coronavirus, the eight-time champion tweeted "Devastated." That memorable one-word tweet summed up the reaction of the tennis world.

Tennis Channel tried to ease the pain by replaying the epic 2019 Wimbledon final. In that enthralling marathon match, Federer agonisingly failed to convert two championship points, and Djokovic played three spectacular tiebreakers to capture his fifth title. But that rebroadcast and other riveting Wimbledon matches were old news. It's much less fun when you already know the outcome. *Tennis Channel* also offered entertaining matches from other Grand Slam

Time running out:

Carillo has no doubt about the champion with the most to lose: "More than anyone, Serena [Williams]. She plays less and wins big matches less often than she used to," Carillo pointed out. AP



Heart-broken: “This pandemic will make Rafael Nadal’s return as difficult as anyone’s, especially with the clay court season all but gone,” says Carillo. REUTERS

events, ATP and WTA tournaments, player features and interviews and musing by determinedly upbeat analysts. For offbeat fare, we watched eye-catching segments like former doubles star Cara Black, then only 16, alternating forehand and backhand reflex volleys against a backboard with amazing precision, speed and consistency.

Tennis fans also turned to *YouTube* to find out creative ways that tennis addicts, even in pandemic ravaged Italy, managed to get their fix. During the lockdown in Liguria, northwest Italy, Vittoria, age 13, and Carola, 11, became social media sensations after they posted a video of them playing between two rooftop terraces. Seeing is believing, so go to: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/video/2020/apr/20/tennis-between-rooftops-coronavirus-lockdown-italy-video>

The Big Three’s compassion

Several pros, led, not surprisingly, by the Big Three, showed their compassion for the

victims of the pandemic scourge with generous donations. “These are challenging times for everyone, and nobody should be left behind,” wrote Federer on his *Instagram* feed on March 25. “Mirka and I have personally decided to donate one million Swiss Francs (\$1.02 million) for the most vulnerable families in Switzerland. Our contribution is just the start. We hope that others might join in supporting more families in need. Together we can overcome this crisis! Stay healthy!”

Djokovic and his wife Jelena donated a million euros (\$1.1 million) to buy ventilators and other medical equipment to fight the coronavirus in his native land, Serbia, and Italy. The latter donation elicited a touching reaction from Peter Assemergs, the director general of the local health authority in Bergamo. “We never expected to see on our bank account a donation from such a prestigious person,” Assemergs said. “Reading among the donators the name of the best tennis player in the world

... made me emotional.”

On March 27, Nadal and six-time NBA All-Star Pau Gasol launched the #NuestraMejorVictoria (Our Best Victory) campaign to encourage donations from Spanish athletes in the fight against COVID-19. The initiative, which forms part of the #CruzRojaResponde (Red Cross Responds) project, aims to raise 11 million euros and help citizens in need during this health emergency.

Women pros also stepped up to help humankind. The Women’s Tennis Association and its charitable arm WTA Charities announced the launch of WTA 4 Love, a humanitarian campaign aimed at supporting local communities impacted by the coronavirus. In China, where the pandemic started, two-time major champion Li Na donated about \$500,000 for coronavirus relief. Madison Keys, the 2017 US Open finalist, brought athletes together to raise funds for COVID-19 relief with a new initiative called Kindness Wins. And former world No. 6 Carla Suarez Navarro, who retired last year, volunteered her time to help keep the shelves stocked at a Spanish food bank in her native Gran Canaria.

Who will benefit most from the suspension of pro competition? And who will be hurt most?

Mary Carillo, the George Orwell of tennis analysts, cited several categories of beneficiaries. “Players with enough money to hold on to their teams,” said Carillo. “Players who need to recover from injury or get fitter and faster. Players who can work on a leaky stroke, or learn better tactics. Veteran players who know what to do with long breaks and who have played enough matches that when the nets go back up they can rely upon their many years of match instincts.”

Fast-rising Americans Coco Gauff, 16, and Amanda Anisimova, 18, also will likely profit from the layoff. “Coco recently opened up about how she has worried in the past that she is missing out on a normal childhood,” Carillo said. “This break will allow her to relax from all the pressure and expectation she now lives under and catch up on teenage thoughts, emotions, friends.”

Conversely, the cancellation of the European clay-court circuit, aside from the postponed French Open, had to hit Nadal hard — he amassed 12 of his 19 major titles at Roland Garros and 25 of his 35 Masters crowns there. However, as the pandemic



accelerated, his focus immediately turned to Spain, one of the European epicentres of Covid-19. In a video conversation with Federer, Nadal revealed he hasn’t even picked up a racquet since Indian Wells was cancelled.

“Rafa is heartsick over how devastating the virus has been to his country, about the loss of interaction with the people he loves,” Carillo said. “He trains and competes as hard as anyone, and has had many injuries, but never a broken heart like the one he has now. This pandemic will make his return as difficult as anyone’s, especially with the clay court season all but gone.”

Even though Djokovic lost momentum

Time to relax: “This break will allow teenage sensation Coco Gauff to relax from all the pressure and expectation she now lives under and catch up on teenage thoughts, emotions, friends,” says Carillo. AP



Noble gesture:

Novak Djokovic and his wife Jelena donated a million euros (\$1.1 million) to buy ventilators and other medical equipment to fight the coronavirus in his native land, Serbia, and Italy. AP

and a chance for a rare calendar Grand Slam this year, Carillo predicted, “Djokovic will be fine, I’m guessing. So will Federer, though he was looking to win Wimbledon and the Olympics this year and now will have to attempt both in 2021 as he crowds 40.” Carillo has no doubt about the champion with the most to lose: “More than anyone, Serena [Williams]. She plays less and wins big matches less often than she used to,” Carillo pointed out. “She and Roger are the same age, but Roger wears his greatness more lightly. Serena’s quest for even more history has become a burden, made tougher by injury. I hope she is using the break to work hard and enjoy her child and her rich life, but this unknown timeline will make things tough for her.”

Tennis pros, unlike athletes in team sports, are independent contractors without guaranteed contracts. As a result, several categories of players will suffer financial hardship. “The older athletes who may lose close to an entire season,” said Carillo. “The lesser-ranked players, especially those without college degrees. Players who don’t come from Grand Slam event countries, where wild cards into majors or its qualifying event help keep them going.

And players from countries that have weak tennis federations and host few or no tournaments will really feel this.”

Fragile tennis ecosystem

The pandemic has underscored how fragile the tennis ecosystem is. “My guess is that there will be players and tournaments who will not survive the crisis,” said Carillo. “There have been well-meaning efforts to keep the lower-ranked players afloat financially, but the biggest sports, like the NFL and the NBA, can rely on their three revenue streams — TV rights, sponsors, and attendance — to stay healthy. In tennis there aren’t a whole lot of tournaments that have those guaranteed profits year after year. Maybe there are 10 of them. The rest must be in a lot of hurt.”

The best ways to recover from tennis’s coming economic crises are cooperation and compromise, according to Carillo. “More than anything, the governing bodies, The Seven Families of Tennis — not to be confused with *The Godfather’s* Five Families — have to be willing to compromise, far more than they’ve ever shown in the past. No more stupid silos and turf wars. The Trump administration has had too many

ATP-WTA merger talks: On a lighter note, 2014 Wimbledon finalist Eugenie Bouchard more than welcomed the urge to merge with men, or at least one of them. The beautiful Canadian blonde tweeted: “Not complaining, but I feel like quarantine would be a lot more fun with a boyfriend.” AP

failures to document here, but that top Republicans consistently refuse to cross the aisle teaches us how dangerous that policy truly is. Our sport has long been guilty of the same greedy, power-hungry, short-sighted sin.”

Could some good come out of this crisis? One possibility is joint ATP-WTA television packages. That intriguing scenario would create a host of new questions and issues. “Will there be equal prize money in every event, and equal air time?” Carillo wondered. “It took decades for the majors to offer equal prize money, and I think in the end the European Grand Slam events knuckled under to avoid further criticism about the *look* of the inequity, not necessarily the disparity itself.”

A more momentous possibility is a merger between the ATP and WTA, a political game-changer that women’s rights pioneer Billie Jean King has long advocated. King recently picked up two powerful supporters in the men’s game. Federer tweeted, “Am I the only one thinking that now is the time for men’s and women’s tennis to be united and come together as one?” And Andrea Gaudenzi, chairman of the ATP Tour, told *The New York Times*, “If you only talk about the WTA and ATP together, it’s probably one plus one equals four. But if you add the Grand Slams into the equation, it’s probably one plus one plus four equals 20.”

An ATP-WTA merger would also create more questions than answers. “Will the ATP and the WTA fight hard to make deals on their own terms?” Carillo said. “If they do, there will be pushback in the locker rooms from players who still don’t like the effort. There will still be men who resent the move, and there may be women who prefer a separate economic entity, afraid that the ATP’s bigger, stronger financial muscle and savvy businessmen will overwhelm them. That is surely a concern of mine.”

On a lighter note, 2014 Wimbledon finalist Eugenie Bouchard more than welcomed the urge to merge with men, or at least one of them. The beautiful Canadian



blonde tweeted: “Not complaining, but I feel like quarantine would be a lot more fun with a boyfriend.”

That invitation, plus an image of Bouchard in a revealing bikini, produced a Twitter frenzy from eager, humorous suitors. “Not bragging, but I have 12 toilet rolls in my bathroom,” Lee wrote. Not to be outdone, Matt countered, “I’ve got 6 bottles of hand sanitizer, 18 toilet rolls and various scented soap bottles if Genie fancies a bit of quarantine and chill.”

Do you know your favourite cricketers' favourite films

Guess the all-time favourite films of the below-mentioned cricketers from the five options given for each.

Yuvraj Singh

(A) Chak De! India; (B) Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge; (C) Anand; (D) Safar; (E) Singh Is Kinng



Harbhajan Singh

(A) Sholay; (B) Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge; (C) Aashiqui; (D) Singh Is Kinng; (E) Chak De! India



Virender Sehwag

(A) Chak De! India; (B) Sholay; (C) Agneepath; (D) Lagaan; (E) Patiala House



Anil Kumble

(A) Sholay; (B) Dangal; (C) Chak De! India; (D) Bhaag Milkha Bhaag; (E) The Lunchbox



Murali Kartik

(A) The Ten Commandments; (B) Ben Hur; (C) Where Eagles Dare; (D) Lawrence of Arabia; (E) Jaws



W. V. Raman

(A) The Godfather; (B) For a Few Dollars More; (C) A Fistful of Dollars; (D) The Good, the Bad and the Ugly; (E) Lagaan



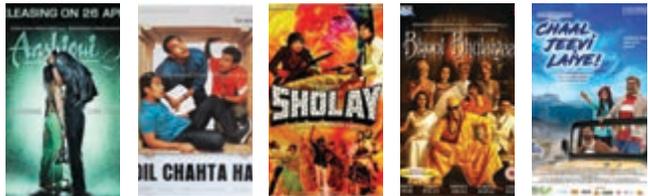
Vinod Kambli

(A) Agneepath; (B) Sholay; (C) Baazigar; (D) Mohra; (E) Waqt



Parthiv Patel

(A) Aashiqui 2; (B) Dil Chahta Hai; (C) Sholay; (D) Bhool Bhulaiyaa; (E) Chaal Jeevi Laiye!



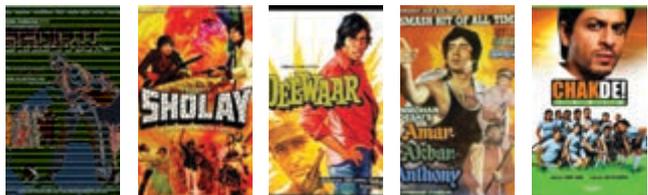
Shikhar Dhawan

(A) Paan Singh Tomar; (B) Sholay; (C) Mujhe Jeene Do; (D) Don; (E) Iqbal



Ashish Nehra

(A) Bend It Like Beckham; (B) Sholay; (C) Deewar; (D) Amar Akbar Anthony; (E) Chak De! India



For the answers, turn to Page 79.



Master and the pupil: “He (Raman) has made a huge transformation in my game. He turned me from a passive and a controlled player to an aggressive player. He made sure I developed a lethal combination of having a good defence and a good attack. Under him, I improved on the technical front, serve and receive,” says Sathiyam. S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

Sathiyam and the Raman Effect!

SHIVANSH GUPTA

Indian paddler G. Sathiyam has changed from being a defensive player to an aggressive one. And he has three ambitions!

As Indian table tennis player G. Sathiyam has locked his eyes on three achievements: winning an Olympic medal, breaking into the world’s top-10 and beating a top Chinese player.

“It is going to be very challenging to win an Olympic medal in Tokyo. It’s a herculean task for sure,” Sathiyam told *Sportstar*.

“Even the (2018) Asian Games was a herculean task for us. After winning the Commonwealth Games, we never expected to go and win an Asian Games medal,” he said.

Sathiyam’s ambitions go beyond Tokyo. He believes a strong run in Tokyo will provide a great platform for the 2024 Olympics.

The Chennai-born paddler knows the importance of beating the top-ranked Chinese players because that will get people talking.

The 2018 Commonwealth Games team gold medallist is a man of many firsts. He became the first Indian player to break into the top-25 of world rankings and will become the first Indian to feature in the Japanese league. He credits this success to his coach, former national champion, S. Raman.

“He (Raman) has made a huge transformation in my game. He turned me from a passive and a controlled player to an aggressive player. He made sure I developed a lethal combination of having a good defence and a good attack. Under him, I improved on the technical front, serve and receive.”

The 27-year-old paddler said Raman also helped him bring about a huge change in mindset. “I used to believe that the more balls I played, the better it was. He told me it was more about the quality on the ball and



the aggression with which I played. That proved to be really helpful.” The Raman Effect indeed!

The 2018 Asian Games team bronze medallist lists two incidents which helped him transition from a blocker to a finisher.

“It was at the 2014 All-India Inter-Institutional tournament in New Delhi where the change occurred. I had just finished my engineering degree before the tournament. I was still holding back and was very defensive. I almost lost to G. Vinod, but managed to save match points and make a successful comeback.

“But in the final, I let loose and expressed myself and ended up winning the title. I wanted to replicate the Sathiyam in training on match day and it worked out,” he said.

The second turning point stemmed from deep personal grief — his father’s death five years ago.

“In 2015, when dad passed away, I changed myself as a player emotionally. I played like I had nothing to lose and I stopped calculating. I started to express myself without thinking of the result. I focused

more on the process and put out all my anger and energy on the table. In 2016, when I won the Belgium Open, it strengthened my belief and I knew I was on the right path,” Sathiyam explained.

For a long time, Indian table tennis was synonymous with Achanta Sharath Kamal. Now, as Sharath Kamal says, he has passed on the baton to Sathiyam. When asked whether that’s added pressure or motivating, Sathiyam replied, “It is definitely motivating as Sharath has always been a great source of inspiration. What is even better is that he is still playing with us. So, it’s great to receive such a compliment from him.”

Sathiyam is spending most of his time during the lockdown at home in Chennai, where he has a sparring partner in his robot, the Butterfly Amicus Prime. “I am using it in a very wise way and making best use of what I can in limited space,” he said.

Incidentally, Sathiyam’s relentless ways are taking a toll on the table tennis robot. “I have been playing with it so much that sometimes the machine heats up, it also needs a break. The robot is not able to take it and keeps getting tired.”

Keeping himself engaged: Sathiyam is spending most of his time during the lockdown at home in Chennai, where he has a sparring partner in his robot, the Butterfly Amicus Prime. “I am using it in a very wise way and making best use of what I can in limited space,” he said.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

10 sports books to beat the blues

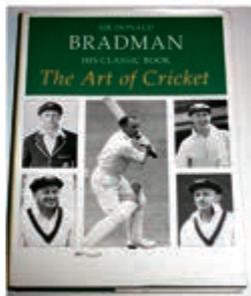
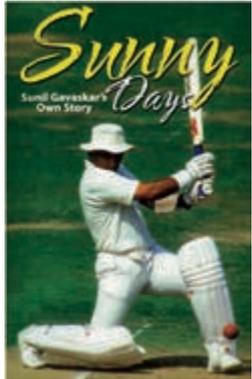
Struggling to get through the coronavirus lockdown? Here's our pick of 10 classic sports books to keep you company through these difficult times.

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Sunny Days

Sunil Gavaskar

A riveting autobiography that takes you on a thrilling journey. From the time Gavaskar was swapped with another baby at birth to his exceptional cricket journey that saw him aggregate 774 runs in his debut series against the West Indies in 1971. Published in 1976, it remains the highest selling sports book written by an Indian and it brings out the writer in Gavaskar as he recalls the standout events of the first five years of his career. In later years, he added Idols and One Day Wonders to his list of authored books.



The Art Of Cricket

Donald Bradman

This is the bible of cricket. Published first in 1958, the contents remain relevant even in modern cricket where overanalysis leaves a cricketer under intense scrutiny. The author, hailed as the greatest batsman cricket has known, offers a veritable feast for the student of the game. Bradman teaches you the basics and the nuances of the game with the authority that decorated his cricket.

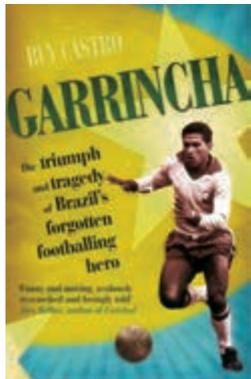
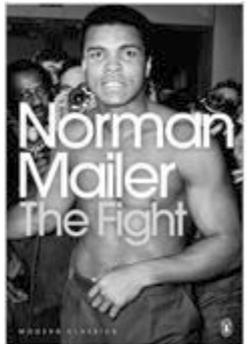


The Fight

Norman Mailer

One of the finest sports books you can get to read. Twice the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, in 1968 and 1980, the author spent quality time with the legendary Muhammad Ali, including a late-night run with the boxer, as he prepared for his epic 1975 bout with George Foreman in Kinshasa, Zaire.

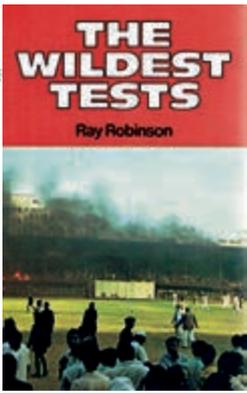
The book relives that fight for which the boxers each received \$5 million. The run-up to the fight and the aftermath are stunningly captured with prose that leaves you in love with Mailer's style.



Garrincha

Ruy Castro

It is the research for the book that leaves you in a trance as the author recreates the magic that marked Garrincha's style on the football pitch. It ranks as one of the finest biographies of a sportsperson, detailing Garrincha's rise and fall in a most poignant manner. The Brazilian ruled the football world with his amazing individual skills and then bit the dust with his wayward ways. The author takes you into the troubled world of one of football's greatest players. Was Garrincha a flawed sporting legend? Read the book to find out.



The Wildest Tests

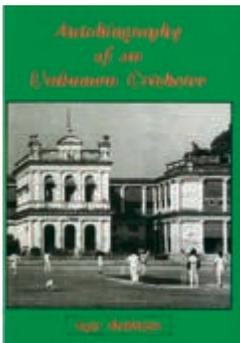
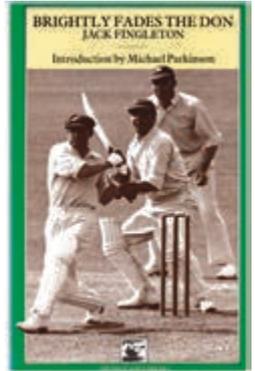
Ray Robinson

One of the most engaging cricket books where the celebrated writer from Australia delves into 14 matches that hurt the image of the game at venues as diverse as Adelaide and Trinidad. Published in 1972, the book highlights the ugly side of cricket with hair-raising anecdotes from matches that he had access to. For Indian cricket fans, there are matches in Calcutta (1967 series against the West Indies), Hyderabad (1969 against New Zealand) and two matches of the 1969 series against Australia in Bombay and Calcutta when mob violence brought disrepute to the game.

Brightly Fades The Don

Jack Fingleton

This is an all-time classic that presents a balanced portrayal of Don Bradman by a fellow cricketer. Fingleton figured in 18 Tests for Australia and spent considerable time with Bradman to assess the man and the cricketer. The beauty of the book, published after Bradman's farewell series in England in 1948, is that the author harbours no bitterness against the greatest batsman the game has known and concentrates on little-known nuggets from his life. Fingleton writes with breathtaking flair to present the best possible appraisal of a person he did not get along well with personally.



Autobiography of an Unknown Cricketer

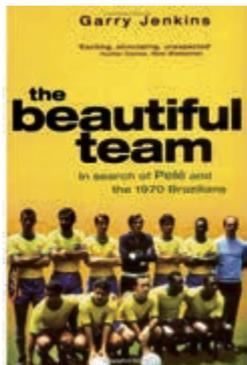
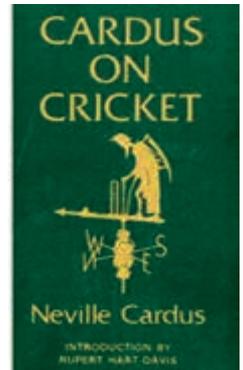
Sujit Mukherjee

The last of his five books, this was published in 1997 and is acknowledged for his love for the game. It is a fascinating account of the author's stints with cricket at various levels, including first-class. Cricket is not all about those who play at the international level and this book, as the author insists, is not about Test matches.

Cardus On Cricket

Neville Cardus

The author is arguably the finest cricket writer. This is a selection of his cricket writings with a brilliant introduction by Rupert Hart-Davis. First published in 1949, it takes the reader into a glorious past when cricket was said to be played as it ought to have been. Cardus, who was also a music critic, was revered for his lyrical writing, and his romance with the game stands out in this book.



The Beautiful Team

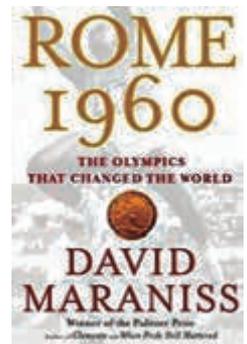
Garry Jenkins

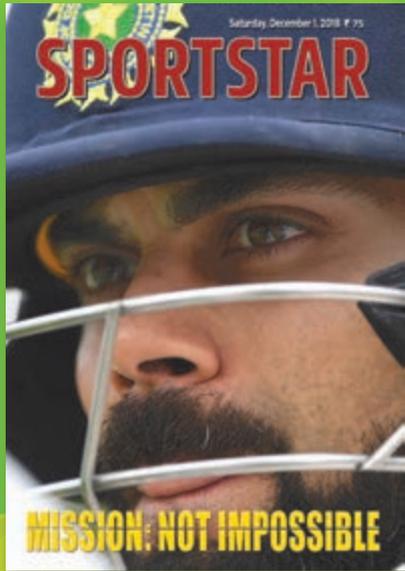
This may not be a classic of football writing, but it is a one-of-its-kind for the subject the author chose to explore. Published in 1998, the book narrates the story of the author's trip to Brazil in search of Pele and the 1970 Brazilian side. It takes you on a roller-coaster ride of a game in a country with surprises at every corner. Jenkins traces the heroes of that great team with some fascinating accounts that leave you craving for more.

Rome 1960

David Maraniss

Relive the Olympics that changed the world. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1993, Maraniss wrote this masterpiece in 2008. The book documents in minute detail some of the greatest sporting feats known to us and gives a scintillating insight into the first doping scandal at the Olympics. It was also the first commercially televised Olympic Games. It marked the arrival of boxer Cassius Clay, more famously known as Muhammad Ali. For Indians fans, the engrossing description of the 400m where Milkha Singh finished fourth is the highlight of the book.





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PAGES 35 TO 42

ERLING HAALAND SETTING THE BALL ROLLING

Battery play in three-movers

by C.G.S.Narayanan

In direct white battery the frontal piece opens up the attack directly on the enemy king and in the case of an indirect battery it aims at the adjacent squares around the black king. In two movers the battery checks end up in mates but in the case of three-movers further play after the battery checks is also ensured after the king moves out of the firing line. In the problem below the set continuations after Be8 and Bg6 involve double checks by the B+R battery after distant self blocks.

Fedor Davidenko

1 Pr, Shakmatnaya kompozitsiya 2018



Mate in three moves

Set: 1...Bd8 2.**Re5+** Kd7 3.Be6

1...Bg6 2.**Rd6+** Kf5 3.Be6

After the key **1.Qb3!** white threatens

2.Qa3.Qb4 followed by 3.Nd8/Nxd4

1...Bd8 2.**Rc5+** Kd7 3.Be6

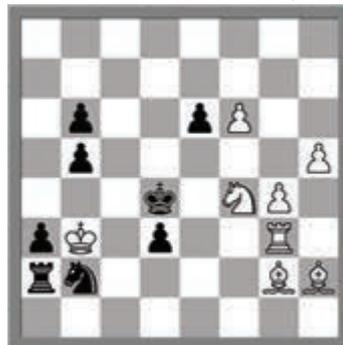
1...Bg6 2.**Rxc4+** Kf5 3.Be6

The four second moves of the WRd5 to the four lateral squares form the 'Rook-cross'. It is worthwhile studying as to why the double checks would no longer work post-key. WQ loses control of c6 and e4 but posts additional guard for e6. Elegant white pawnless construction by the Russian expert.

The second is more a conventional one with two indirect batteries with pretty mates and flight giving key.

Srecko Radovic

4 HM, 5th FIDE World Cup 2017



Mate in three moves

Key 1.Rf3! (2.Nxe6+ Kd5 3.Re3)

(2...Ke4 3.Rh3)

1...Nd1 2.Rxd3+ Ke5 3.Nd5

(2...Kc5 3.Nxe6)

1...Ke5 2.Ne2+ Ke4 3.Rh3

(2...Kd5 3.Rf5)

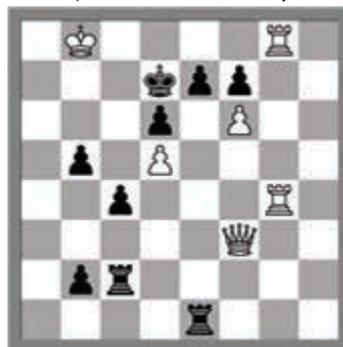
1...Ke4 2.Rxd3+Ke5 3.Nd5

1..e5 2.Bg1+ Ke4 3.Rf1

A very well constructed problem. Finally a battery problem for solving from the master of three-movers.

Alexandr Feoktistov

I Prize, Moscow Tourney 2010



Mate in three moves

Solution to problem for solving in the article 'When black sees stars': **Key**

1. Rf5! (2. Qe5+Kc5 3. Ne4) 1... f6 2. Qh2+

Kc5 3. Ne6; 1.. a5 2. Qe5+

Kc5 3. Ne4; 1... Re6 2. Nxf7+Kc5 3. Qc3; 1...

Rxg5 2. Qf6+ Kc5 3. Rxc6

Readers may send in their queries to cgsnarayanan@hotmail.com

Many challenges in bringing about a change in the system

“The AIFF president role is something I would love to consider in the future. I might not be ready right now but I think that’s a position I would love to take,” says former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia.



SHYAM VASUDEVAN

Former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia wants to run Indian football in the near future as the All India Football Federation’s (AIFF) president. The 43-year-old has begun working towards it by joining the Sikkim football association, but admits there’s a lot more to the top posting than just football acumen.

“The AIFF president role is something I would love to consider in the future. I might not be ready right now but I think that’s a position I would love to take,” Bhutia told *Sportstar*.

“But again, getting the role comes down to votes and politics and it is not easy. You don’t get into that position because of what you can contribute or the amount of knowledge and exposure you have of the game, it comes down to politics. So I will have to try and fight that out,” he said.

Talking about the changes he would bring about if he took charge of the national body, he said: “The first thing I would do is bring relegation and promotion within the next two to three years — I think it has to be brought in. I would also make sure every club has its own grassroots development programme. The AIFF has put a criterion for clubs and I would focus more on that. I would want to see how clubs can safeguard and keep their young talents with them. I would also encourage clubs to build infrastructure on their own.”

He added, “But most importantly, I would see to it that those state associations which do not organise any leagues...I would not let any of their members be a part of the AIFF executive commit-

Making a point: On the AIFF President’s post, Bhaichung Bhutia says: “Getting the role comes down to votes and politics and it is not easy. You don’t get into that position because of what you can contribute or the amount of knowledge and exposure you have of the game, it comes down to politics. So I will have to try and fight that out.” K. V. S. GIRI

tee. Because in the end, it's the state associations who need to work."

Working closely with the Sikkim football association, Bhutia also stressed on the many challenges of bringing about a change in the system. "Being here I have come to know it's not easy to handle people. You have your ideas and thoughts and you have to make sure they agree with it. People who have not even played school level football are members of the association and to convince them that this is the way we need to look forward is so challenging. They have a typical mindset that what they think is right and to change that it becomes very difficult. To deal with 60-year-olds who have been thinking like that all along is a challenge," he said.

ISL needs East Bengal

Bhutia — one of the few players to have donned the colours of both the Kolkata giants East Bengal and Mohun Bagan — feels the Kolkata clubs have failed to evolve with changing times.

"Sadly, I feel the two clubs need to do a lot more. The officials, especially, must try to become more professional as football has changed over the years. If you don't change, you will stay where you are and it's exactly (the case) with Indian football," he said.

"The world has changed, but we have stayed in our glorious years in the '60s and '70s. We have not changed with time and that is why we have been lagging. Even the game on the field has changed so much, but the management — I think you've got to change and be professional and deal with the time," he added.

Mohun Bagan, which recently won the I-League, will merge with ISL champion ATK to forge a new entity for the next season and Bhutia feels it was a necessity for Bagan. "If ATK can't utilise Mohun Bagan with this merger, then I think it will be a waste of money. For Mohun Bagan, it is a step in the right direction, but it depends on how ATK utilises it. Mohun Bagan have been struggling financially in terms of sponsors and they needed investors to come in.

"But for ATK, when they merge with Mohun Bagan, what are they taking? They are taking Mohun Bagan's identity, history and legacy and it should be utilised to the maximum," he asserted.

Elaborating on the ISL club's failure to attract fans, Bhutia said: "ATK has done well in ISL, but despite doing well the fact is



they have not had the kind of fan following that Mohun Bagan or East Bengal enjoy."

The former India striker is also hoping to see East Bengal join the top echelon of Indian football soon. "I would definitely want East Bengal to play the top league if the ISL is the top league. But at the same time, let us not forget that even ISL needs East Bengal and vice versa. Today, the La Liga cannot do without Barcelona and Real Madrid and the two clubs cannot do without the league. So, I think it is a win-win situation for both parties. If not this year, then somewhere down the line East Bengal is bound to play the top league," he said.

He added, "The AIFF president Praful Patel has said that in the next two or three years we will have promotion from the I-League to the ISL. If not automatically through promotion, East Bengal will play in the ISL. For football to do well and for ISL to do well, they require East Bengal and Mohun Bagan. They require that kind of rivalry." ❧

Pinning hope:

Bhutia in action during a friendly match. "For football to do well and for the Indian Super League (ISL) to do well, they require East Bengal and Mohun Bagan. They require that kind of rivalry," he says. PTI

Five sports-related shows to watch

With nearly the entirety of world sport either cancelled or postponed thanks to the coronavirus outbreak, the only source of action for fans is either old, recorded games or movies and documentary series. Here's our list of the best sports-related content you can stream online.

Formula One – Drive to Survive (Netflix)

Two seasons have been filmed and released so far, covering the 2018 and 2019 Formula One championships. What is interesting about this series is that it is a one-of-a-kind viewing experience for fans of the sport and the rest of the world.



Formula One is a complex, technical sport and one that cannot be understood overnight. For example, there are 10 different kinds of flags the stewards use to communicate with the drivers on the track. And once you get into the setup of the cars and the different specifications, it will feel more like a lesson in physics than a sport.

And that is where the series triumphs. It has been packaged as a drama, showing raw human emotions and making sure to skip or simplify the technical jargon that might put viewers off. While what happens on the track is also shown, it is the off-track parts that take up deep into the multiple storylines that keep unfolding before, during and after each campaign.

That the series has attracted new fans to the sport is an understatement.

Andy Murray: Resurfacing (Amazon Prime)

While most documentaries are filmed during a person or team's rise to their best, this series goes against the norm. It was filmed in 2016, when the Brit won the Olympic singles gold and Wimbledon, lost two Grand Slam finals (the Australian Open and the French Open), won the ATP World Tour Finals and three Masters 1000 titles, among others. It was Murray at his effortless best and on top of the world – looking and playing like he belonged alongside Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

However, *Resurfacing* is about the turbulent times that followed and begins around January 2018. It starts with the hip surgery in Australia that was expected to help Murray return by Wimbledon, the evident discomfort as he returns to the court and the aborted comeback a few months later. Then there's the second operation and more emotions pour out.

If the producers went ahead with the idea of showing the struggle of an athlete making his return, they got more than they bargained for. Murray's battle with fitness hit several lows, with the emotions – not all sad – captured as well as they could. A lot can also be written on Murray's candour, humour and more, but that'd only serve as spoilers.

What we can say is that the series ends like most films – on a very happy note. The redemption story is completed with his first tournament win since that operation Down Under.



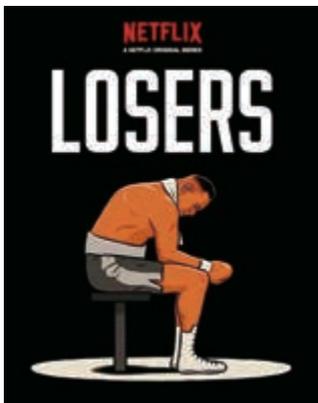
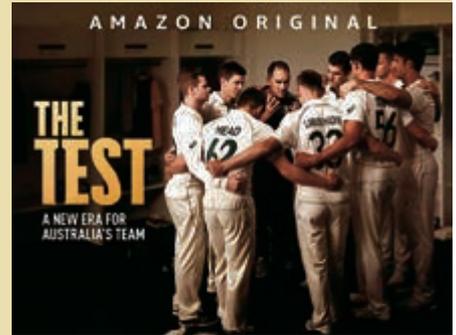
The Test: *A New Era for Australia's Team* (Amazon Prime)

Sandpaper. Steve Smith. David Warner. Cameron Bancroft. Australia.

Cricket fan or not, those were the keywords most heard – and discussed – in 2018. Australia, the then world champion, was found guilty of ball-tampering. It was caught on live television, the sport took a big hit Down Under, bans were swiftly issued and one of the dominant nations in the sport was left to rebuild its image from scratch.

While most fly-on-the-wall sports documentaries fail to capture emotions and tensions beyond the positive ones, Amazon was allowed to be present to record everything – be it triumph or failure.

In eight parts, *The Test* shows Australian cricket in the immediate aftermath of the scandal, the return of the banned players, an interesting 2019 World Cup campaign and retaining the Ashes away from home.



Losers (Netflix)

Stories of people winning are well documented. What did they do right? How did their lives change after the win? The answers to that, and more, are always available. But what about those who do not reach the top? Winning is everything in our society, so what about the losers?

This eight-part series is neither a tear-jerker nor a Greek tragedy. It deals in empathy and shows people learning from failures.

It doesn't show you fairytale endings either, because life isn't one. However, in each part, you are left with a success story being built from the failures. Each episode teaches you that life does not end when you lose – it just gets refashioned.

The Game Changers (Netflix)

"Someone asked me, How could you get as strong as an ox without eating meat?' And my answer was: 'Have you ever seen an ox eating meat?'"

This documentary is, in short, about the benefits of plant-based diets for athletes. And it is a lot more interesting than it sounds.

The film introduces you to well-known athletes who speak for it, puts out research findings that favour the idea and is all well packaged to catch your attention for close to 90 minutes.

From Arnold Schwarzenegger to Lewis Hamilton via athletes from across the world of sport, you are told about the many advantages of sticking to a plant-based diet and why meat can be skipped entirely.

However, keep an open mind while watching this as it can – in some parts – feel like an exercise in trying to get the idea across by hook or crook. It shows you a vegetarian fighter (Nate Diaz) getting the better of Conor McGregor and it is packaged in a way where the message seems like it was solely the diet that helped him win. It talks of Roman gladiators being vegetarians, but there is no research to back up the link between their diet and their famed fighting skills. There is a lot more, but this isn't an in-depth review, so the debunking ends here.

If there is a lot wrong with it, why watch it? The show is an education in how to build up an idea (a vegan lifestyle, in this case) and uses cherry-picked statistics and data to prove the point. And it is also a reminder to always have your thought process going; not everything doled out to you by famous people on a screen is true.

How can a normal viewer find out what statistics used are right or wrong? Well, you need not. What you need is Google and not a scientific mind. Everyone involved in the documentary is invested in the vegan game. Director James Cameron is a founder of Verdient Foods, which is pro plant-based protein food. There's that amorphous phrase again. Hamilton owns the Neat Burger chain of restaurants, whose food is fully plant-based. Several featured athletes have either given TED talks about this lifestyle or worked extensively with animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

Eat your greens, but not because someone told you to.



Compiled by Anirudh Velamuri

ON THE WRITE LINE

SUNIL GAVASKAR



Unfair or unlucky? Usman Khawaja, who is out of the Australian team, still feels he is among the top six Australian batsmen and his record backs him too. R. V. MOORTHY

Did Khawaja anger Langer?

Usman Khawaja seems to have paid the price for telling the coach, Justin Langer, what the players felt about him.

Usman Khawaja was Australia's most dependable batsman in the absence of Steve Smith and David Warner when the duo and Cameron Bancroft were banned by Cricket Australia for ball-tampering in South Africa two years back. He had also begun 2019 well and was expected to be among the prime batsmen for the Australians in the ICC World Cup in England and the Test series against England after the World Cup. An injury during the World Cup didn't help and by the time he recovered he seemed to have lost the fluency and rhythm he had earlier. This is something that can happen even during a game if a batsman who has been batting and stroking well suddenly finds himself deprived of the strike for some time. Suddenly, the ball doesn't quite come off the middle of the bat, the foot

which was going to the pitch of the ball is just a few inches short and unless he has a run of luck he gets out when just a few minutes earlier he was looking as if he was set to bat the whole day. Khawaja thus struggled in the first couple of Ashes' Tests and another injury meant he had to sit out of the team.

Travis Head, who had done precious little till then, got a half-century in the final Test match and that was it for Khawaja. Head kept his place for the home series against a weak Pakistan team and got his first Test century and retained his spot. Khawaja now finds himself dropped from the 20 players whom Cricket Australia gave a contract for the season. That doesn't mean that he can't be selected for the team, but for every professional cricketer a contract is



a safety net against the vagaries of form. It didn't help that the Chairman of the Australian selectors termed Khawaja a fabulous player, who was just unlucky to miss out. Khawaja said after the snub that he still feels he is among the top six Australian batsmen and his record backs him too.

Interestingly, Michael Clarke, the former Australian captain, said after Khawaja didn't get a contract that he hoped there was nothing personal in that decision. And Clarke was clearly referring to the disagreement that the left-handed Khawaja had with the team coach Justin Langer.

In a film on Australia's last year in international cricket where the makers got unprecedented access to the team, including team meetings and change rooms and bus travel on the World Cup and Ashes series, there is a shot where Khawaja says to Langer in a team meeting that the players are scared of him. Khawaja has not played for Australia since and now finds himself without a contract. Clarke, while saying he didn't think it was personal, actually gave rise to the impression that it was so. Now, unless Cricket Australia specifically gave 20 as the maximum number of players to be given a contract, there is no reason why a player who the Chairman of the selection panel thinks is fabulous could not have been the 21st player to be given a contract.

Be that as it may, it perhaps shows once again that if a player doesn't toe the management line then he could be out sooner than later. In team meetings it won't do to have a contrary opinion to that of the captain and the coach.

That also brings to the fore the question whether the captain and coach should be a part of the selection panel. For years Australia didn't have the captain in the selection panel. He was only asked by the selectors as to what and not who he wanted. Did he want a batsman or a fast bowler or an all-rounder or a spinner? The panel then would select what the captain preferred. He was given the squad and he could pick the final XI. This way nobody could complain later that he was dropped by the captain. For, the captain was not a part of the panel, and had to do well with the team given to him by the panel. Now, the Aussie coach is a part of the selection panel. That must make it extremely tough for a player to go to him with concerns about his own form leave aside telling him what the rest of the players think about him.

Khawaja seems to have paid the price for telling the coach what the players felt about him. He can of course score heaps of runs and get back into the team whenever the season starts after COVID-19. But don't bet on it. ❧

Cementing his

place: Travis Head, who replaced Khawaja, kept his place for the home series against a weak Pakistan team and got his first Test century and retained his spot. GETTY IMAGES

Victory run:

Michael Holding runs off the pitch at the end of the fifth Test at the Oval on August 17, 1976. Holding's 14 for 149 runs is still the best return in Tests for the West Indies.

THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY



Aggressive, but not angry

“... Anger can take the focus away from the job at hand,” says legendary West Indian fast bowler Michael Holding.

AYAN ACHARYA

West Indies cricket in the 1970s and '80s was synonymous with the swagger of Vivian Richards, the astute leadership of Clive Lloyd, the athleticism of wicketkeeper Jeffrey Dujon — and the tear-away pace of Michael Holding.

Holding — nicknamed “Whispering Death” for the speed he generated from his

deceptive approach to the stumps — would brutally expose the English batsmen at the Oval in 1976 with bouncers at express pace that hurt their bodies and bruised their pride.

But the West Indies great insists a pacer does not need to get angry when bowling. “Aggressive, yes. But anger can take the



focus away from the job at hand,” he said.

“I have been angry on numerous occasions and lost my cool once, which was not the right way to go. Controlled aggression is what is needed. I can only speak for myself, but if I knew a batsman was genuinely afraid, I knew I had already won the battle,” said Holding, who took 249 wickets in 61 Tests at 23.68 and was part of a fearsome quartet of pacers — with Andy Roberts, Colin Croft and Joel Garner — that made batsmen shiver in their shoes.

Holding’s rhythmic run-up was in contrast to that of another bowling great, Pakistan’s Wasim Akram, who, bowling off a short run, troubled batsmen with toe-crushing yorkers and prodigious swing.

The 66-year-old West Indian though emphasised that every individual has to do what suits them as far as a run-up is concerned. “No one size fits all. The problem with having a very short run-up is you then put a lot of pressure on the body to bowl fast. You can strengthen the body in the gym, but it’s not a machine and the massive wear and tear doing such an explosive endeavour

takes its toll,” said Holding, the Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1977.

Holding, meanwhile, echoes the view of Akram’s long-term bowling partner, Waqar Younis, who once said in an interview that bowlers today start to learn too many things too early.

“I believe the problem Waqar might have been referring to is the necessity for young fast bowlers to develop a great deal of variation for playing in the shortest form of the game. I agree that that scenario certainly doesn’t help with the proper development of the basics of bowling fast,” said Holding.

Holding also weighed in on the importance of playing county cricket in the UK. “I believe county cricket is more beneficial to batsmen than fast bowlers. When I played the game, there was too much being asked of the fast bowlers, so many of them bowled well below the pace they were capable of to preserve their bodies for long careers. I played close to the end of my career and only played half of the allotted county games per season,” he said. ☞

Hunting in a pack:

Michael Holding was part of a fearsome quartet of pacers with Andy Roberts, Colin Croft and Joel Garner that made batsmen shiver in their shoes. GETTY IMAGES



Captains courageous: The three skippers with the highest individual scores in Test cricket: Brian Lara (centre), Mahela Jayawardene (left) and Mark Taylor. GETTY IMAGES & THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

All about Test cricket captains

All about Test cricket captains – Part II

The captain of a cricket team, at times also referred to as the skipper, is the appointed leader, having several additional roles and responsibilities over and above those of the 10 others in the playing XI. In cricket, the main role of the captain is to act as a sort of intermediary between the coaching staff and the rest of the team. He becomes part player, part selector or even part coach/mentor, and must be able to successfully balance the various pressures that come with the multiple responsibilities.

As in any other sport, the captain is usually the person who is the most experienced in the squad. How-

ever, there have been several instances in Test cricket where the captain has been the least experienced member of the squad.

The captain also needs to have good communication skills and is most likely to be a certainty in the playing XI, as he is responsible for the team selection. It is his task to go out for the toss before the start of a match and then take a call as to whether his side bats or fields first. During the match, the captain decides the team's batting order, which bowler will open the bowling, who are his first and second bowling changes, and where each fielder will be positioned. While the captain has the final say, decisions taken on the field or in the dressing rooms

are often collaborative. A captain's knowledge of the complexities of cricket strategy and tactics, and shrewdness in the field may contribute significantly to the team's success. Excelling as a cricket captain requires the incumbent to have a thorough understanding of how the game is played, the ability to strategise, and at the same time lead his teammates both on and off the field.

Nowadays, with the coaching and support staff as

part of the squad, the captain's decision-making responsibilities are less of a burden. This allows him to fully concentrate on his skills, which are either batting or bowling and at times both. However, despite all that, the captain of a cricket team typically shoulders more responsibility for results than team captains in other sports.

The second part of our series on Test captains looks at their batting performances.

Highest Test scores by captains

Score	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
400*	Brian Lara	West Indies	England	St John's	April 12, 2004	Drawn
374	Mahela Jayawardene	Sri Lanka	South Africa	Colombo (SSC)	July 29, 2006	Won
334*	Mark Taylor	Australia	Pakistan	Peshawar	October 16, 1998	Drawn
333	Graham Gooch	England	India	Lord's	July 27, 1990	Won
329*	Michael Clarke	Australia	India	Sydney	January 5, 2012	Won

Progressive highest Test scores by captains – how the record changed hands

Score	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
52	Lord Harris	England	Australia	The Oval	September 6, 1880	Won
153*	Billy Murdoch	Australia	England	The Oval	September 8, 1880	Lost
211	Billy Murdoch	Australia	England	The Oval	August 12, 1884	Drawn
270	Don Bradman	Australia	England	Melbourne	January 6, 1937	Won
285*	Peter May	England	West Indies	Birmingham	June 4, 1957	Drawn
311	Bob Simpson	Australia	England	Manchester	July 25, 1964	Drawn
333	Graham Gooch	England	India	Lord's	July 27, 1990	Won
334*	Mark Taylor	Australia	Pakistan	Peshawar	October 16, 1998	Drawn
400*	Brian Lara	West Indies	England	St John's	April 12, 2004	Drawn

Highest Test scores by captain at each batting position

Position	Score	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
1	334*	Mark Taylor	Australia	Pakistan	Peshawar	October 16, 1998	Drawn
2	311	Bob Simpson	Australia	England	Manchester	July 25, 1964	Drawn
3	400*	Brian Lara	West Indies	England	St John's	April 12, 2004	Drawn
4	374	Mahela Jayawardene	Sri Lanka	South Africa	Colombo (SSC)	July 29, 2006	Won
5	329*	Michael Clarke	Australia	India	Sydney	January 5, 2012	Won
6	234	Don Bradman	Australia	England	Sydney	December 17, 1946	Won
7	270	Don Bradman	Australia	England	Melbourne	January 6, 1937	Won
8	257*	Wasim Akram	Pakistan	Zimbabwe	Sheikhupura	October 20, 1996	Drawn
9	111	Shaun Pollock	South Africa	Sri Lanka	Centurion	January 20, 2001	Won
10	74	Jack Blackham	Australia	England	Sydney	December 15, 1894	Lost
11	28*	Bob Willis	England	Pakistan	Birmingham	July 31, 1982	Won

Note: Blackham was also wicketkeeper in this match.

Leading run-getters in Tests as captain

Runs	Captain	Country	Tests as captain	Innings	Average	Period
8,659	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	109	193	47.84	April 24, 2003-March 5, 2014
6,623	Allan Border	Australia	93	154	50.95	December 7, 1984-March 29, 1994
6,542	Ricky Ponting	Australia	77	140	51.51	March 8, 2004-December 29, 2010
5,233	Clive Lloyd	West Indies	74	111	51.30	November 22, 1974-January 2-1985
5,156	Stephen Fleming	New Zealand	80	135	40.60	February 14, 1997-December 18, 2006
5,142	Virat Kohli	India	55	90	61.21	December 9, 2014-March 2, 2020

+ Includes one Test for ICC World XI.

Test run landmarks as captain

Runs	Captain	Country	Achieved on
1,000	Archie MacLaren	England	July 5, 1902
2,000	Don Bradman	Australia	November 28, 1947
3,000	Don Bradman	Australia	July 27, 1948
4,000	Greg Chappell	Australia	December 10, 1982
5,000	Clive Lloyd	West Indies	December 7, 1984
6,000	Allan Border	Australia	July 23, 1993
7,000	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	November 17, 2011
8,000	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	January 11, 2-13

+ Includes one Test for ICC World XI.

Fewest innings to aggregate landmark Test runs as captain

Runs	Innings	Tests	Captain	Country	Achieved on
1,000	11	6	Don Bradman	Australia	June 14, 1938
2,000	24	15	Don Bradman	Australia	November 28, 1947
3,000	37	23	Don Bradman	Australia	July 27, 1948
4,000	65	39	Virat Kohli	India	September 2, 2018
5,000	86	53	Virat Kohli	India	November 22, 2019
6,000	121	67	Ricky Ponting	Australia	January 17, 2010
7,000	150	85	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	November 17, 2011
8,000	175	99	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	January 11, 2-13

Note: England's Graham Gooch also took 15 Tests to reach his 2,000th run as captain.

+ Includes one Test for ICC World XI.

Most Test centuries as captain

Centuries	Captain	Country	Tests as captain	Innings	Average	Period
25	Graeme Smith	South Africa+	109	193	47.84	April 24, 2003-March 5, 2014
20	Virat Kohli	India	55	90	61.21	December 9, 2014-March 2, 2020
19	Ricky Ponting	Australia	77	140	51.51	March 8, 2004-December 29, 2010
15	Allan Border	Australia	93	154	50.95	December 7, 1984-March 29, 1994
15	Steve Waugh	Australia	57	83	52.31	March 5, 1999-January 6, 2004
15	Steve Smith	Australia	34	60	70.37	December 17, 2014-March 26, 2018

Most 200-plus scores as Test captain: 7 by Virat Kohli, 5 by Brian Lara, and 4 each by Don Bradman, Graeme Smith and Michael Clarke.

Most Test centuries by captains – how the record changed hands

Century No.1	Captain	Score	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
1	Billy Murdoch	153*	Australia	England	The Oval	September 8, 1880	Lost
2	Billy Murdoch	211	Australia	England	The Oval	August 12, 1884	Drawn
3	Warwick Armstrong	123*	Australia	England	Melbourne	February 14, 1921	Won
4	Herbie Taylor	102	South Africa	England	Durban	February 22, 1923	Lost
5-14	Don Bradman	102*	Australia	England	Lord's	June 28, 1938	Drawn
15	Allan Border	105	Australia	New Zealand	Brisbane	December 5, 1993	Won
16-19	Ricky Ponting	123	Australia	India	Bangalore	October 9, 2008	Drawn
20-25	Graeme Smith	100	South Africa	Pakistan	Dubai	November 12, 2010	Drawn

Most runs in a calendar year as captain

Runs	Captain	Country	Year	Tests	Innings	Average	Hundreds	Fifties
1,656	Graeme Smith	South Africa	2008	15	25	72.00	6	6
1,595	Michael Clarke	Australia	2012	11	18	106.33	4	5
1,544	Ricky Ponting	Australia	2005	15	28	67.13	6	6
1,381	Bob Simpson	Australia	1964	14	26	60.04	3	7
1,364	Alastair Cook	England	2015	14	26	54.56	3	8

Most hundreds in a calendar year as captain

Hundreds	Captain	Country	Year	Tests	Innings	Runs	Average	Fifties
7	Ricky Ponting	Australia	2006	10	18	1,333	88.87	4
6	Graeme Smith	South Africa	2008	15	25	1,656	72.00	6
6	Steve Smith	Australia	2017	11	20	1,305	76.76	3
6	Ricky Ponting	Australia	2005	15	28	1,544	67.13	6

Highest Test score in very first Test match as captain

Score	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
239	Graham Dowling	New Zealand	India	Christchurch	February 23, 1968	Won
203*	Shivnarine Chanderpaul	West Indies	South Africa	Georgetown	April 1, 2005	Drawn
191	Clem Hill	Australia	South Africa	Sydney	December 9, 2010	Won
190	Joe Root	England	South Africa	Lord's	July 7, 2017	Won
173	Alastair Cook	England	Bangladesh	Chittagong (DS)	March 13, 2010	Won
163	Clive Lloyd	West Indies	India	Bangalore	November 26, 1974	Won

Note: Lloyd's knock came in the second innings.

Highest Test match run aggregate in very first Test as captain

Aggregate	Scores	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Month, year	Result
256	115 and 141	Virat Kohli	India	Australia	Adelaide	December 2014	Lost
244	239 and 5	Graham Dowling	New Zealand	India	Christchurch	February 1968	Won
232	123 and 109*	Greg Chappell	Australia	West Indies	Brisbane	December 1975	Won
203	203*	Shivnarine Chanderpaul	West Indies	South Africa	Georgetown	April 2005	Drawn
212	173 and 39	Alastair Cook	England	Bangladesh	Chittagong (DS)	March 2010	Won

Note: Chappell and Kohli are the only players to make centuries in each innings in their debut Test as captain.

Captains carrying the bat through an innings as an opener

Score	Captain	Total	Match innings	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
73*	Bill Woodfull*	193a	4	Australia	England	Adelaide	January 19, 1933	Lost
127*	Jackie McGlew	292	1	South Africa	New Zealand	Durban	December 8, 1961	Won
49*	Bill Lawry	107	3	Australia	India	Delhi	November 30, 1969	Lost
60*	Bill Lawry	116a	4	Australia	England	Sydney	January 14, 1971	Lost
127*	Sunil Gavaskar	286	3	India	Pakistan	Faisalabad	January 8, 1983	Lost
154*	Graham Gooch	252	3	England	West Indies	Leeds	June 9, 1991	Won
94*	Michael Atherton^	228	2	England	New Zealand	Christchurch (LP)	February 16, 1997	Won
169*	Mark Taylor	350	2	Australia	South Africa	Adelaide	February 2, 1998	Drawn
165*	Chris Gayle	317	3	West Indies	Australia	Adelaide	December 8, 2009	Drawn

Note: Jackie McGlew is the only captain to do it on the opening day of a Test match.

a one batsman did not bat/was injured

^ batted at No. 2

Highest Test scores by captains while following on

Score	Captain	Country	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
237	Salim Malik	Pakistan	Australia	Rawalpindi	October 9, 1994	Drawn
176	Alastair Cook	England	India	Ahmedabad	November 19, 2012	Lost
164	Alec Stewart	England	South Africa	Manchester	July 6, 1998	Drawn
153*	Billy Murdoch	Australia	England	The Oval	September 8, 1880	Lost
150*	Mike Gatting	England	Pakistan	The Oval	August 11, 1987	Drawn

Note: In all, 18 centuries have been scored by captains while following on. No one has been able to do it more than once.

Expert advice: Greg Chappell interacts with Australia head coach Justin Langer and ODI skipper Aaron Finch. REUTERS



Packer, a good but demanding boss

AYAN ACHARYA

Among the prominent performers in the Packer series was Greg Chappell, who tallied over 1,400 runs at an average of 56.60 with five centuries.

The World Series Cricket tournament in the late 1970s, conceptualised by Australian media magnate Kerry Packer, ushered in television coverage, coloured kit and floodlit games, a hitherto unknown trend in the sport. Among the prominent performers in the Packer series was Greg Chappell, who tallied over 1,400 runs at an average of 56.60 with five centuries while facing the likes of Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Joel Garner and Imran Khan.

Chappell spoke to *Sportstar* about the overarching influence of Packer's innovations, the impact it had on Australian cricket and more.

Where did the idea of World Series Cricket develop?

There was a feeling among players in the mid-'70s that we were not being given

enough respect by the administration. We felt that our opinion on programming, playing conditions and remuneration was not being heard. Ian Chappell as captain had met with the board around 1975 and I, as captain, had done the same in 1977. On both occasions, we felt we were given only a cursory hearing and in the case of money we were completely disregarded. Sir Donald Bradman seemed to be the biggest stumbling block in the process.

Was WSC the closest thing to democracy that Australian cricket had in over a century?

Possibly. Kerry Packer was much more generous than the board, but he was still quite dictatorial (about) what he expected.

Although it was derided by the purists

at first, in retrospect do you see the Packer series as a tipping point in the sport?

WSC was the biggest turning point, not only in cricket but sports television in general. It was the genesis of fully professional sport in Australia and was the catalyst for the huge increase in pay, conditions and a voice in the running of the game that the players have had since.

In the days leading up to WSC, there was talk among the Australian cricketers about walking off... Was there a feeling that you guys weren't getting a fair share of the pie at the time?

We never discussed walking off, but we were frustrated with the way the board ignored our view on the game generally and how much the players were worth. We were never wanting full-time professionalism, but we did feel under-appreciated and underpaid.

How did you get on with Kerry Packer? What's your favourite story about him?

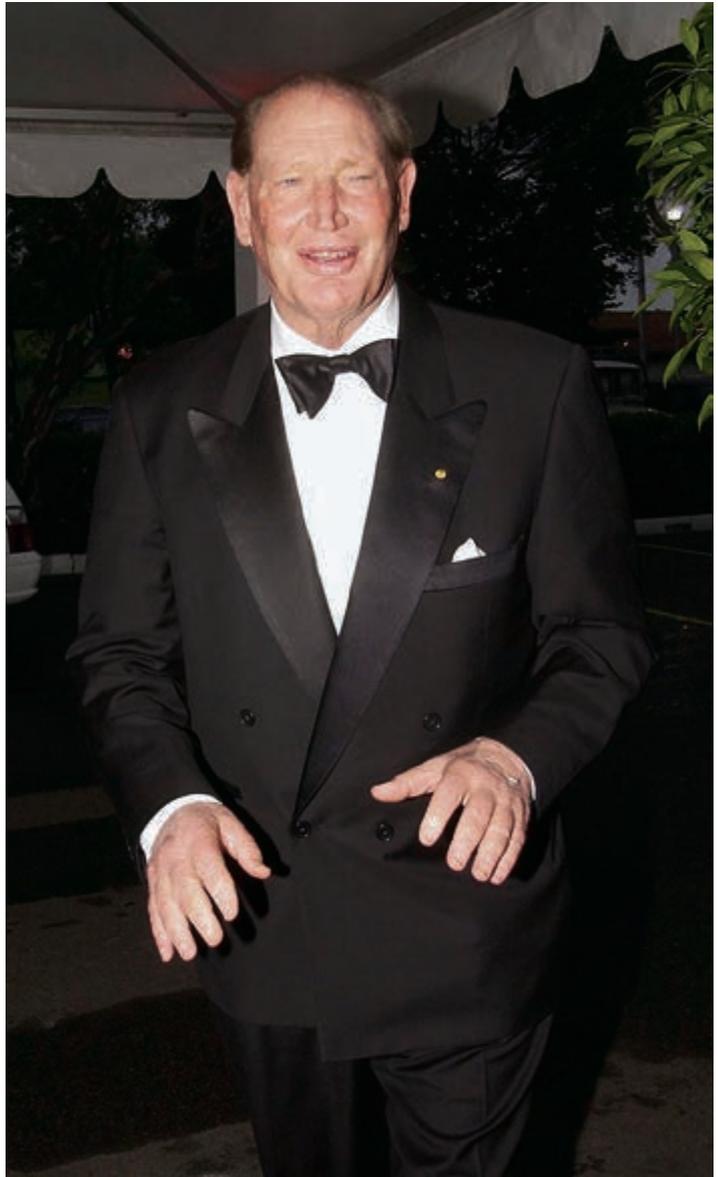
Kerry delivered everything that he promised and more. He was a good but demanding boss. My favourite story is of a meeting that he had with Ian Chappell in 1977 as WSC was being formulated. Kerry invited Ian to his office to discuss players and other aspects of the concept. During the conversation, Kerry told Ian that he would be the Australian captain. Ian had retired from Test cricket and I was the Australian captain and suggested that perhaps I should be captain. Kerry responded by saying, 'You don't think this is a flipping democracy do you?' That pretty much summed Kerry up.

Did Australian cricket suffer in the late 1970s without the Packer players?

No doubt it did. Twenty-odd of the best players had been taken out of the system, so players were thrust into positions in some cases before they were ready. It did give opportunities to some players who went on to become greats of the next era, Allan Border being a prime example.

Does the modern-day Twenty20 explosion have its roots in WSC?

No doubt it has been influenced by what happened in the late '70s. Cricket is the only sport that I can think of which has three formats that work well at the top level. Kerry



definitely showed what could be done with some imagination and promotion.

Were there any cricketing moments that stood out?

I think the overall standard of the cricket of those two years was the outstanding achievement of WSC.

Lastly, was WSC the first step towards establishing cricket as a viable profession?

No doubt. Kerry showed what could be done with imagination and promotion and showed how it could be run as a business. I have no doubt the game would not be where it is today without Kerry Packer and WSC. ❧

Bringing about a change:

Kerry Packer, who started the World Series Cricket tournament in the 1970s. "WSC was the biggest turning point, not only in cricket but sports television in general," says Chappell.

GETTY IMAGES



Addressing the media: Sri Lanka head coach Mickey Arthur . AP

Batting for cricket even without spectators

Sri Lanka head coach Mickey Arthur explains his routine during the coronavirus lockdown, the communication he's having with the cricketers and why he feels cricket should return.

SHAYAN ACHARYA

Mickey Arthur is enjoying his time in Sri Lanka. But the last few weeks have been challenging. With the country witnessing a lockdown due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the head coach of the Sri Lanka cricket team has confined himself in a hotel in Colombo.

While he is far away from home and the family, Arthur has ensured that he follows a strict routine. "It's tough to be honest," he said. "But I try and follow as much routine as possible. I wake up, hit the gym, go for swimming and then come back and do some work – communicate with the coaches and players."

Arthur analyses the opposition that Sri Lanka is scheduled to face in the next few months and reads articles that will help him "develop as a coach."

"I have done a lot of research on my computer," he said, revealing that when there is no work, he enjoys watching a few series on Netflix.

In a chat with *Sportstar*, the 51-year-old opens up on his coaching stint and also explains why it is important to resume cricket "possibly without any spectators."

With no cricketing activity, how are you keeping the players motivated?

We have got 30 boys and obviously there is a curfew at home. We have guys like Angelo Mathews, Thisara Perera – who have full-fledged gyms at their homes – whereas some of the young boys don't have so much facilities. So, our staff has put together a training programme based on what facilities are available to the players. Our boys are doing their physical training and I am spending a lot of time, communicating with the coaches and support staff and drawing up individual player plans.

Have you started any online classes for the players?

No. The guys are training and I have a lot of communication with them. They have had to share a lot of stuff with me, which has allowed me to put the player plan together along with the other coaches. I have shared my thoughts with them, and they have had their inputs. A lot of it has been done on one-on-one basis with our players. We are in a phase of unknown. The key factor in this time has been our WhatsApp group, where I send some stimulating piece of reading every other day. I have tried to keep the guys updated with where we sit at this point of time. I have forwarded them any information I have got. We have had a lot of communication and the players have been pretty actively involved in almost turning their games with the coaches, so that when we get back to start, these players are ready to go.

There is a lot of speculation on whether there will be enough cricket this year. What are your thoughts?

Look, I hope we can get as much cricket as we possibly can. Obviously, there is a bigger thing at stake. You obviously go back to player safety et cetera – all that has to be perfect. I do think that there has to be a collective will from all cricket boards to play as much cricket as they can, albeit perhaps without spectators. Otherwise, financially, every cricket board is going to take some significant strain, and that influences players, coaches, support staff, grassroots cricket.

But the fans keep the sport alive. So, how feasible will it be to play in front of empty stands?

It's certainly not ideal. There is a perception that the fans keep the game going. Yes, the fans play a massive role, but the boards make big money from the television rights –



paid by television companies to broadcast the games. So, that's the money you kind of tap into if you are playing in front of no fans. I have got a simple philosophy. I read people saying that the Australia-New Zealand ODI (which was played in closed doors at the Sydney Cricket Ground on March 13 before the coronavirus-induced lockdown came into effect) was like a warm-up game. First of all, no game for your country is a warm-up game. Secondly, you may feel that nobody is watching you, but I can promise you that world has been starved of international sport on television. So, the eyeballs watching you on television will be massive.

What's your take on the Twenty20 World Cup? Should it go ahead as per schedule?

My thought is that we should certainly try our hardest to play the T20 World Cup

Making adjustments: "We have guys like Angelo Mathews (left), Thisara Perera – who have full-fledged gyms at their homes – whereas some of the young boys don't have so much facilities. So, our staff has put together a training programme based on what facilities are available to the players," says the Sri Lanka head coach. VIVEK BENDRE

Giving his backing:

"I ensured that Babar Azam plays every game for Pakistan. He is that good a player. We had to give him the roots to grow and wings to fly. We had to give him the time and we are seeing the results now," Mickey Arthur says of the Pakistan batsman.

REUTERS



this year. There are two points: Firstly, it gives a lot of cricket boards their revenue. Secondly, people can't forget that next year there is another T20 World Cup in India. So, where does this one fit in the calendar? I think it is so important for the cricket world that we play the T20 World Cup this year.

You have been coaching in the Asian subcontinent for a while now. How has the experience of coaching teams like Pakistan and Sri Lanka been?

The experience has been incredible. It's now an open secret that I loved my three years with Pakistan. That experience was amazing. But I loved five years with South Africa. My stint with Australia ended in tears after 18 months. Sri Lanka is a total new project for me and I am loving my time in Sri Lanka. It's a beautiful country and we have some very talented young players. Somebody once said to me, and this is something I always say: As an international cricket coach, you have never coached till you have coached in the subcontinent. I can totally vouch for that. There has been something magical with coaching teams in the subcontinent. I absolutely adore it, I love the chal-

lenge of new cultures. It's been very fulfilling so far.

How is coaching a team from the subcontinent different than coaching a team in South Africa or Australia? What are the things that a foreign coach keeps in mind when he travels to this part of the world?

There are so many cultural differences. The one key aspect to coaching Pakistan was understanding the religious aspect around it, which is very prominent. It's understanding the respect level that the young Pakistan players have for the senior players. It's there in India, too. There is a real respect.

Yes, it is there in Australia or South Africa as well. I try and allow the players to be themselves, because being themselves gives you better results. I like an environment where there are challenges within the right mood. When you get players challenging each other and talking about games and having differences of opinion, that's when you start moving the team forward. Those conversations have been tougher in subcontinent than those in the Western world – if you may say so. Those conversations are differ-

ent because they are easier had in South Africa or Australia. But because of the respect level and the different cultures I find in the subcontinent, no younger players will challenge a senior player. So, it's interesting. In some way it's really good and very respectful. But in other way, to move the team forward, you need to be able to have those conversations as a group.

In Pakistan, you played a key role in creating a pool of talent. How challenging was the task, given the fact that you took over at a time when Pakistan had to play its home games in the United Arab Emirates?

It was tough. When we came in, there was no real structure. So, the first thing was to give whole cricket a bit of structure. It was important to find training sessions, find goals, find values that the team stood for. It was kind of finding the players who you felt fitted the team and then fitting those players within your team, so that you could give the team success now, but also attain sustainable success.

Also, I had to keep an eye on what was happening down the lower level. That wasn't always possible because as I said, the structure was so haphazard in Pakistan. It was tough, but I tried to keep a finger on the pulse in terms of what was happening certainly from the under-19 team all the way through.

During your stint, there were two major developments in Pakistan cricket: The team won the Champions Trophy in 2017 and Babar Azam emerged as one of the top batting talents. How do you see that?

I saw Babar Azam grow as a cricketer. That was so important. People had said that Babar Azam cannot play. I ensured that Babar Azam plays every game for Pakistan. He is that good a player. We had to give him the roots to grow and wings to fly. We had to give him the time and we are seeing the results now.

Now that you are in Sri Lanka, what are your targets? The team has failed to be consistent in all the three formats. So, what are you doing to ensure that domestic structure keeps a pace with the international standards?

We are trying to implement the national standard. I know Jerome Jayaratne (chief cricket operations officer, Sri Lanka Cricket)

has played a massive role and has put the high-performance structure in place. It's important that you have a set method, a set way. It is also important that players know where they exactly stand.

If you look at the rankings now, Sri Lanka should be higher than where they are. We should be changing, particularly in white-ball cricket, where we are ranked seventh or eighth. We should be higher than that.

What has gone wrong?

This happened because of a lack of confidence shown in the players. Players came in and after one bad innings they didn't play again. So, there was continuous chopping and changing in terms of selection. What I have tried to do in the last three months is to create some consistency in selection. So, players know where they stand. They are not chucked out after one poor performance because what happens with that is you get your players playing for themselves and not for the team.

So, we are trying to create a mentality, and I am trying to create a culture of excellence where mediocrity is not accepted. That's one thing I am tough on. (It is about) the way you prepare – physically, technically and mentally, and the goals that we set. It is about creating a brand that suits our style and players that we have available. We are thinking big. We have got talent, so it's going to be an exciting journey.

With the lockdown, there is no clarity on the future of World Test Championship. What are your thoughts?

I am part of the ICC Cricket Committee, where I represent the coaches. I think the World Test Championships and the One-Day World Championships – that was to begin around this time – have to happen for international cricket. It gives international cricket context, it gives every game in a bilateral series a context. There is no dead game. Even if the series is won, you are actually playing for championship points. That's so important. Whether that gets moved out a year or the Future Tours Programme gets changed a little bit to factor in all the lost tournaments and to factor that it might be played over a period of two years, I think it's very feasible. I would not ever like to see the concept of Test Championships or ODI championships lost because that gives Test cricket and One-day cricket real relevance now. ❧



I think the World Test Championships and the One-Day World Championships – that was to begin around this time – have to happen for international cricket. It gives international cricket context, it gives every game in a bilateral series a context.



Bringing in the bucks: The IPL is one of the major revenue-generating tournaments. K. V. S. GIRI

‘Financial trouble if no IPL’

SHAYAN ACHARYA

“There is nothing much we can do. We will just have to wait for cricket to resume,” says BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal.

The suspension of all cricketing action because of the COVID-19 pandemic has created problems aplenty for the administrators of the game.

There is no clarity on the future of big-ticket tournaments like the Twenty20 World Cup, the Asia Cup, the Indian Premier League (IPL) and scheduled bilateral meets. The cancellation or prolonged postponement of matches will certainly have an impact on the finances of cricket boards.

While Cricket Australia is in a deep financial crisis, the England and Wales Cricket Board is also fearing a heavy financial loss this season.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) treasurer Arun Dhumal admits that

the Indian board, too, will “also be in a difficult position” if cricket does not resume fast. “This is definitely a big blow for world cricket. All the boards are feeling the heat. Once the pandemic is over, everybody needs to sit across the drawing board once again and redraw their strategies, as to how they can cope with the situation,” he said.

In a chat with *Sportstar*, Dhumal spoke on a range of issues.

At a time when Cricket Australia finds itself in a tough financial situation, how secure is the BCCI?

The BCCI will also be in a difficult position in case cricket does not resume soon, especially the IPL. In that case, the BCCI will also have to face a lot of financial hardships.

The IPL is one of the major revenue-generating tournaments.

What if it doesn't happen? Is there a back-up plan?

There is nothing much we can do. We will just have to wait for cricket to resume.

How is the BCCI managing the allocation of funds to the state bodies?

It would definitely have a spiralling effect. It is not rocket science to understand. If the BCCI is in a problem, the state associations will also be facing it. We can only distribute something to the associations when (funds) are coming to the BCCI. But if there is nothing coming the BCCI's way, what's there for the board to distribute to the cricket associations? So, it's not only a problem for the board, but would also (have implications) for the state associations.

In such a scenario, how much of a challenge will it be for the state bodies to get the ball rolling?

It's as challenging as for any other organisation which is required to work without any finances to take care of their assets, machinery and equipment. It will definitely be challenging for associations to take care of the stadiums they have, to upkeep the facilities and also to take care of the staff.

Is the BCCI mulling pay cuts for its staff and stakeholders?

Nothing as of now. That would be the last resort one would want to take. We don't want to have pay cuts and hopefully we can tide over the situation and there is no need for that. But that would depend on how long this situation continues and what's the final outcome in terms of revenue generation.

Reports suggest that the England and Wales Cricket Board is looking at bio-secure venues to resume their international cricket commitments.

These are all speculative stories. There is nothing concrete that has come out so far. I can plan for anything as per my best capacity, but it has to take the holistic picture in mind. The government has to agree to that. We are not planning anything as of now because for us, the safety and health of our cricketers are paramount. The rest can wait.

As per the original calendar, 2020 was



a busy year, with too many big-ticket events like the T20 World Cup, the Asia Cup and other bilateral assignments. Do you feel that some of the tournaments might have to be shelved?

This is definitely a big blow for world cricket. All the boards are feeling the heat. Once the pandemic is over, everybody needs to sit across the drawing board and plan their strategies. The BCCI will definitely do the best possible to help world cricket at large. You can't have just one or two teams winning all the tournaments. To have competitive cricket, all the teams have to fare well so that the game becomes interesting. Keeping that in mind, we will work shoulder to shoulder with every cricket board and help international cricket revive.

A lot of appointments — like the women's selection panel — have been stalled. How do you see that?

In such a situation, it is something that you would not want to go ahead with now. Why would I make a decision now and increase my liability when there is no cricket in the foreseeable future? There are certain decisions which can be kept pending because there is no reason to take a call on that now. This is such a situation where you know decision-making wouldn't make much of a difference because in the times of COVID-19, nobody is clear as to when cricket can resume. ❧

The men in charge:
(Left to right) BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Sourav Ganguly and treasurer Arun Dhimal.

VIVEK BENDRE

Clear thought:

“Mind is so powerful that it can take over yourself, so you need to train it properly,” says Badrinath.

B. VELANKANNI RAJ



Cricket to mind skills – a new avatar

WRIDDHAAYAN BHATTACHARYYA

Former India and Tamil Nadu batsman Subramaniam Badrinath got limited opportunities in international cricket but he has no regrets; he is happy to return to action with MFORE, a mind-conditioning initiative for athletes across disciplines.

Seasoned in the elite era of Rahul Dravid and V. V. S. Laxman, middle-order batsman Subramaniam Badrinath knew that India selection wouldn't be easy. Not too different from scaling Mount Everest.

Though the hard work earned him a berth, the dream did not last long; two Tests, seven ODIs and one T20I, to be precise.

He found a friend in Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who trusted in his abilities and, thus, Chennai Super Kings happened. People still remember the right-hander for the 11 fifties he scored in the IPL. In a chat with *Sportstar*, Badrinath relished the golden days and discussed his new initiative post retirement — MFORE, a service offering mind-conditioning for athletes across disciplines.

How much of a role did mind conditioning play during your career?

If I knew a little bit of what I know today, I would have been a far better cricketer. I was not a naturally gifted player. Complete awareness of the self is very important. There is a saying that if a man is hungry, you need not feed him a fish but you have to teach him how to fish better. Mind is so powerful that it can take over yourself, so you need to train it properly.

Is that one of the reasons why you launched the enterprise?

It, definitely, is a reason. The idea occurred to me while I was playing golf. I realised I had played a poor shot. I knew I had the skill sets to play the right shot but my mind was weaving stories about a tree in front and the water. It was telling me things that was not needed.

How is MFORE going to operate? Will there be an office space in Chennai too?

It is a global initiative and it will cater to all sports, not just cricket. But now, due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is going to start with online sessions. We have a website, *mfore.in*, and any athlete or any team can go and access that for details. We will straight away get in touch to talk about their needs. Every month, we will do at least two webinars to create awareness which will help the athletes, family, the coaches and the entire sporting fraternity who are upset sitting at home at present and not feeling motivated enough. They are going through anxiety. Later, there could be an office.

Can you explain the process that your team will follow in the operations?

[If] a golfer wants our sports psychologist to

be with him throughout the four-day tournament, we will do that once COVID-19 subsides. We want our team to attend practice sessions of athletes to study their methods. We can see how they are preparing and then, we will design a programme. We will give them challenges and then, the reports to the players thereafter, as to who is best suited to handle the situation. We will be able to watch and provide information in one-on-one sessions.

In cricket, how does a batsman overcome nervousness before playing the first ball?

You are going to be nervous in the first 10 balls, not only me, it happens to Dhoni, happens to Virat Kohli, but you need to handle it. You need to understand the emotion that goes through you. For me, it could be not talking to my father also. He wants me to play well but I may not be talking to him the day before the match. It is a small thing but it can make a huge difference.

And the mindset keeps changing according to formats...

In Test cricket, the mind plays differently. You need to be aware of the conditions, wicket, which bowler will bowl at what time, where your off-stump is... from a batsman's point of view. A bowler will be bowling 20 overs a day; he needs to manage his spells. After the tea session, the conditions change and a bowler may feel like it is his turn to bowl in full boom.

What about T20 cricket? It is too quick...?

You need to react faster. The plan changes with ever ball and every match. You may have got out for a duck, but you have to close that thought and move to the next venue. You have to get used to hitting the ball in the air, get the body used to it and not worry about getting out. What positions you can pick those shots from and from where you can pick the yorkers.

Talking about Kohli, he was picked in 2008 over you. The then chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar later revealed that the decision cost him the job as it infuriated N. Srinivasan, who was the BCCI secretary...

It was easy to pick Kohli. Even in 2008, he was very good. In fact, I remember a match we were playing for India A when I was the cap-

tain, and he was in the side. Batting at No. 6, he wasn't getting runs. So I had a word with our coach, Pravin Amre, and we asked him to open. He got 130-odd runs. That innings helped him. See, it was difficult to get into that team as you had Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Dravid and Laxman.

But you did, and you scored a fifty on Test debut against South Africa...

I got a chance as Dravid was injured. As a college kid, I used to bunk class and go and watch Dravid play. He would hit the nets at Guru Nanak College in Velachery those days when he played for India Cements. He was my idol.

What's your best memory with the legendary Tendulkar?

I was nervous before my debut and I went up to Sachin *paaji* for a chat. He told me something that calmed me down. He said: 'Don't worry Badri, I am also nervous but you belong here'. Sehwag had congratulated me and said: 'Congratulations, you are now an official Test cricketer for India.'

Even Tamil Nadu was packed with stars when you made your Ranji Trophy debut...

When I made my debut, Robin Singh was captain. Then you had players like T. Kumaran, Sadagoppan Ramesh and Hemang Badani. All were India players and there was healthy competition. I was blessed to be around these guys and on top of that, the league cricket in Chennai is very good with so many grounds along with MRF Pace Foundation.

People in Chennai love Dhoni and CSK perhaps has the strongest fan base.

How was it to be part of the madness?

I am proud to be from Chennai and it was fantastic to represent CSK in the IPL. And the Chepauk crowd love MSD. But he is like still water. Even after a huge win or a bad loss, there is no change in his expression. And if you remember, the Chennai crowd had once given a standing ovation to the Pakistan team in 1999.

If you had to choose one best moment from your international career, what would that be?

Winning the man-of-the-match in my only T20I for India against the West Indies at Port of Spain in 2011 [for scoring 43 off 37 balls].



As a college kid, I used to bunk class and go and watch Rahul Dravid play. He would hit the nets at Guru Nanak College in Velachery those days when he played for India Cements. He was my idol.

Doing a fine job:

India's fielding coach R. Sridhar is more like a friend to the players in the team. AFP



Setting fielding standards high

SHAYAN ACHARYA

India fielding coach R. Sridhar talks about the challenges of multi-format coaching, captaincy styles of M. S. Dhoni and Virat Kohli, and the importance of being fearless.

R. Sridhar, over the past six years, has moulded the Indian team into a formidable fielding unit. A friend to the players, Sridhar is always there to lend an ear, helping the players overcome every obstacle.

Sridhar feels the players will come out stronger from the present crisis — the COVID-19 pandemic — and says: “All the boys are elite cricketers, so the skills will not desert them. They will, at the most, need a bit of brushing up and a bit of practice. This is a good time to develop mentally and understand life and see the big picture,” he said. In a chat with *Sportstar*, India's fielding coach spoke on a range of issues...

How has been the experience so far?

I am fortunate to be with the Indian team since 2014. This is possibly the longest gap due to the prevailing situation. But overall, it has been a fabulous journey. I have enjoyed every bit of it. It's been a great learning for me, and if I have managed to help a few players, then it's definitely worth the effort.

There was a time when fitness was not taken too seriously. But over the years, that approach has changed...

For a fielding coach or an assistant coach, the main objective is to work in sync with the vision and philosophy of the head coach

and the captain. When I came, (M.S.) Dhoni was the captain and Ravi Shastri was the Team Director. Now, Virat (Kohli) is the captain [Shastri is head coach] and the emphasis on fielding has been immense. That really worked in my favour, to push the boys, to get them out of their comfort zone. As a coach, it was important to understand what the players felt about fielding.

Ravi's vision was that we should have 11 best fielders while playing. Whenever there has been a marquee series, we have given a lot of emphasis on fielding. Be it Ravi, MS or Virat — they have all vouched for that. And Virat has immense passion on the field. It helps me go about my business in a professional and ruthless manner.

Even the boys are fitness freaks...

Look, that has happened because of the culture we have set. When M.S. took over more than a decade ago, he set a standard. And now, that has passed on to the state teams, the India A teams and also the National Cricket Academy, the India U-19s. Everyone is now aware of the standards. Subsequently, after Virat took over, the culture has only enhanced. That has brought about a revolution in fielding and fitness in our country. So, it's not that things happened suddenly, a culture had to be set first. It has been purposely created, adhered to, so that it becomes a way of life. Virat has turned the

culture into a tradition.

A habit pursued over a period of a few years becomes a culture and after a decade, the culture becomes a tradition. That's exactly what has happened. We now try to develop the tradition, which we can leave behind for the generations to come.

You spoke about the culture. If you could explain what is it all about?

It is about being fearless and honest. Any player who walks into the squad learns from the seniors around. The players ask for feedback, they follow a strict diet, a set sleeping pattern, so when someone comes in, he embraces the culture.

Having worked with both M.S. and Virat, what are your thoughts on their captaincy styles?

Each guy is different and has his own way of handling stuff, which must be respected. There is no one way to skin the cat. You can do it in many ways, and can still reach the same destination. Ravi allows the players to be themselves as much as possible. It provides confidence and security.

It was M.S. who built this team. It is because of him that the team is where it is today. He backed the youngsters and everyone in the team is aware of that. They look up to him. Virat is now taking things forward. He will do anything for the team. He is always thinking how to go ahead. Whenever we catch up for a meal or a coffee, all we discuss is how to move forward and what can be done. He is thinking about the team 24X7, throughout the year. That's a great thing and we want those kind of leaders to take Indian cricket forward.

Have you been in touch with the players during this lockdown?

We have been in touch with a few boys and we are grateful to be safe and at home. They are very compassionate and feel a lot for the migrant workers who are struggling and are also feeling for the poor people, who are struggling to make ends meet. Most of the players are young and they are doing their bit for the society, in every single way they can. This is a great development time for the players — not physically or skilfully, but in terms of mindset and in terms of becoming better people. Once they go through this, I am sure they will come out as better human beings. They will understand that life is far more important than sports. They will ap-

proach the tough situations in cricket a lot differently now. It is not only the Indian team which is in this situation, the entire world is going through this crisis. So, when things resume, it will be a level-playing field.

How do you see this much-needed break for the support staff?

We have been on the road for nine months since the World Cup and we came back home on March 14. This is something people fail to realise that due to different formats, there is a constant shifting for the support staff. It's bit of a challenge but we love it. Every time we get this summer break — during the IPL — it helps our shoulders rest. We can do some training. It gives a lot of time to reflect and learn. That's a key area of coaching. These breaks give you time to physically freshen up, and also allow you to learn something new. This is when you prepare for the next season and learn from the past. Most importantly, it gives you a chance to be with family.

How much does technology help the coaches?

There has been a rapid rise of technology and use of data in sports. When we played, we would rely mostly on senior players. The job of a coach is to soak it in, interpret it in the right way and just pass on the relevant information to the players. Excessive information is as dangerous as no information, so there should not be an overload of information. Every team has data of every player, so words spread fast. The use of data has only made the game more interesting and competitive.

The players consider you as their friend but in tough times, who is your go-to man?

Bharat Arun is my punching bag. Some of the best coaching moments for me have been on a coffee outing or dinner. Most of the time, I try to coach the person and not the player. Mistakes could have been made by the player, but I try not to attend to their mistakes and look at the emotional side of it. In times of crisis, Arun is a great guy to have in the team. He is my mentor as well, and has an extremely good sense of humour. There are days when you feel lonely and frustrated, but there is no point thinking too much about what people feel as long as you are doing your job. ☺



We have been on the road for nine months since the World Cup and we came back home on March 14. This is something people fail to realise that due to different formats, there is a constant shifting for the support staff. It's bit of a challenge but we love it.



‘Lockdown could affect mental health’

“It’s even more crucial...that we ensure the players are OK throughout the lockdown and following the release of restrictions,” says Nick Webb, India’s strength-and-conditioning coach.

AYAN ACHARYA

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a temporary stop to international and domestic cricket around the world. Such a lull in on-field activity might lead to a dropoff in the fitness levels of the players, making the task of monitoring their training schedule all the more challenging.

Sportstar caught up with Team India’s strength-and-conditioning (S&C) coach, Nick Webb, who spoke about overseeing the players’ nutrition plans during the lockdown, specific exercises for bowlers and batsmen and the importance of mental health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the suspension of international cricket across the globe. How have you been

Getting back in action: Nick Webb (left) converses with Cheteshwar Pujara during practice in Ranchi in September 2019. Webb, the physiotherapists and the medical staff have come up with a three-stage plan for the Indian players to get them ready after the pandemic restrictions are lifted. RAJEEV BHATT

monitoring the physical and mental attributes of the players?

Between myself and the NCA (National Cricket Academy) strength-and-conditioning staff, we have a collaborative reporting system up and running to ensure all players have contact throughout the week, which covers all things regarding their training routine, what’s gone well and any modifications needed.

In terms of mental health and physical attributes, I think that when you confine someone to their house (for) 24 hours a day, there is always the potential that mental health is affected. Everyone has the potential to respond differently. There certainly will be some anxiety around the virus now and as the restrictions are slowly released.

It's even more crucial from a mental health point of view that we ensure the players are OK throughout the lockdown and following the release of restrictions. They are people first and cricketers second, and their health is our No. 1 priority. This is also the reason for regular contact throughout the week.

What about nutrition in particular? Have you suggested a specific diet already, and how do you keep a tab on the players' cheat days?

Some of the guys are on individual nutrition plans. (For) other guys, it's more of an educational focus and educating them on how to fuel their body and adapt their food requirements based on the training demands while in lockdown.

I am not one to hound players regarding "cheat days or meals." All of the players are pretty health conscious and it wouldn't be often they have "cheat meals" as they are conscious of what their body-fat levels are and their effects on performance. Not everyone is perfect and that's OK... It's about guiding and educating them as we move forward. I think it's actually healthy to have a "cheat meal" as we do not want to create a negative association with food. It's OK to indulge every now and then as it keeps you sane. Most of our guys earn their cheat meals through training as well, which offsets it.

Are there tailored drills for batsmen and bowlers? For example, is someone like Yuzvendra Chahal on a different routine from a fast bowler like Jasprit Bumrah?

Yes, every player is on a different and individualised plan. This is also specific to the facilities and equipment available to them while in lockdown. Training would be even more specific if everyone had his usual training equipment available.

Pace bowlers have far different physical demands placed on them during matches compared to spinners and batsmen, so it makes sense to adapt the focus and priorities based on their roles and individual abilities. There is certainly a different framework I consider when prescribing exercises and drills for fast bowlers compared to the batsman.

For example, bowlers need to be strong enough to be able to absorb approximately eight times their body weight through their front leg on impact; there are training

methods for this that we can focus on. Batsmen require them to train with more of a focus on rotational power; there are different techniques and considerations that we make for this. Everyone is different, but we take many variables into consideration when prescribing programmes.

When there was a lockout in the NBA for 161 days in 2011, there was a spike in injuries when the athletes returned. Many were simply not match-fit on their return. Is that a genuine concern in this case?

Yes, of course. I think there is always going to be a higher risk of injury if you do not have adequate build-up time following any sort of lockout of matchplay. Particularly with pace bowlers, due to the nature of their match demands. These guys need an adequate, accumulated bowling load to be able to tolerate not only international match intensity and volume but also to be able to back up matches throughout an extended series.

Obviously, the more matches you play, you get in a rhythm and experience the intensity and pressures that are hard to replicate in training. However, we can certainly train in ways that match the demands of the games. We have utilised sports science technology such as GPS to understand these demands, which can guide how we can enhance the training environment and prepare them for the demands.

Once the players return to full-fledged training, is there a realistic time frame for how long it will take them to be match-fit?

(That's) a good question and I think it's important that we get this time frame right. As mentioned in your other question, we increase the risk of soft-tissue injury if this time frame is not long enough for adequate build-up. Between our team physiotherapists, medical staff and I, we have devised a three-stage plan which we believe is in the best interest of the player's health, wellness and performance once the pandemic restrictions are eased. Obviously, there is a lot that goes into planning future tours and tournaments with many stakeholders to consider. However, we believe between four and eight weeks' build-up before the first match, depending on the format to be played, is a safe time frame. ☺

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Walking in his father's shoes... on screen

Chirag Patil has been acting in Marathi movies for the last 10 years, but he never dreamt of being part of such a “massive project” that is the film *83*.

AYAN ACHARYA

India's fairytale World Cup final win against the West Indies is set to be celebrated in a new feature film based on the 1983 cricket World Cup. The movie, to be called *83*, had been scheduled for release on April 10 before the coronavirus pandemic intervened.

Getting it right: Sandeep Patil bowls against Australia at Trent Bridge during the 1983 World Cup. “The challenge was to try and imbibe my dad’s attitude,” says Chirag Patil. THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

“Before all this (the film), I looked at my dad as my father and his former teammates as his friends. But only after acting in the *83* movie did I fully understand the sheer enormity of their achievement and the rarity of the feat,” says Chirag Patil, who plays his father and former India cricketer Sandeep.

“The challenge was to try and imbibe my dad’s attitude. He had a very carefree approach, both on and off the field. So, to try and emulate that and his walk, we did refer to a lot of old footage. That said, being his son, a lot of it came naturally to me,” Chirag said.

‘Surreal’

Sandeep Patil finished the tournament with 216 runs in eight innings at an average of 30.85 and a strike rate of 90. In the final at Lord’s, he was caught for 27 off Joel Garner. India was bowled out for 183 in 54.4 overs, kept afloat only by slim hopes of what, at the time, looked like an unlikely fightback. But Clive Lloyd’s team was then skittled for 140 in 52 overs as Kapil Dev’s India created history on that glorious summer in 1983.

“We got permission from the Lord’s museum to use the actual ’83 trophy in the film. So, just holding that cup was surreal,” revealed Chirag.

“Not just at Lord’s, we also shot at the Oval, Tunbridge Wells... Great stories, great memories and a great experience. Everyone in my family had been to London. My childhood dream was to go there for work one day and it came true thanks to this movie.

“We had a team event. We wanted to get the guys together, just have a team-bonding session in Dharamsala before leaving for England. We had a great time over there. That’s where we became good friends and the camaraderie helped when we began shooting.”

Rigorous training

Chirag grew up in a cricket-loving household. And since his father played for India, he “used to keep meeting all the greats of the game like Kapil Dev” at house parties and outdoor events. Chirag feels playing his father’s part in the movie has got its



advantages and disadvantages. “My mannerisms are similar to my father’s, so that was my advantage. But I had never played cricket before, so at least eight months of training went into getting the basics right,” he said.

Chirag used to train for four hours every day, two hours in the morning with the 83 cast under the supervision of Balwinder Sandhu and two in the evening on his own, at Chandrakant Pandit’s cricket academy in Andheri, Mumbai.

“I still remember, during the early days of the shoot, Kabir sir (83 director Kabir Khan) compared my stance to my dad’s, and it was very similar. But the problem was I just couldn’t put bat to ball (*laughs!*) So yeah, it took me a while, but I got my head around it.”

The disadvantage, Chirag feels, is the obvious comparison to his father. “Every shot I play on the screen will be compared to my father’s. And I hope I don’t let him down. You know, all these years, he was just my father, but having played him in the movie, I was able to fully grasp just how big a name he was in Indian cricket and you want to do complete justice to your father’s achievements.”

A pleasant surprise

Chirag has been acting in Marathi movies for the last 10 years, but he never dreamt of being part of such a “massive project.” The 33-year-old narrates an interesting story behind the casting for 83. “So when they announced the movie in 2017, I tagged along with my father to the film launch where we had lunch with Kabir Sir. Neither I nor my father suggested my name for the role,” he said.

“But two months later, I got a call from Kabir sir asking me to come and audition for the movie. When I went to the set, instead of giving me a script, they gave me a bat and a ball. And when they asked to me play cricket in the audition, I was like, ‘*Ab toh pakka role nahi milega!*’

“But later, I got a call from Kabir sir, who said that I was the right guy for the role and that’s how it all began. Also, Balwinder sir happened to tell Kabir sir that Sandeep Patil’s son is an actor, so why don’t we try him? That helped, too! I was the second person to be finalised for the movie after Ranveer Singh.” Asked if he has developed an interest in cricket post-shooting, Chirag said in jest: “I think I’ve played enough cricket to last a lifetime (*laughs!*)” ☞

On top of the world:

(From left) Ravi Shastri, K. Srikanth, Yashpal Sharma, Kirti Azad, P. R. Mansingh (team manager) and Dilip Vengsarkar proudly hold the World Cup trophy after winning the final in 1983.

THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

From throwdowns with Lara to lunch with Kohli

Chris Jordan, who was playing for the Karachi Kings in PSL before the season came to an abrupt halt, was supposed to join KXIP's training camp ahead of IPL 2020.

L. DOMINIC RICHARD

After the Pakistan Super League (PSL) knockout stage came to an abrupt halt due to the coronavirus outbreak, England pacer Chris Jordan, who was playing for the Karachi Kings, returned home.

He was supposed to join the Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) training camp ahead of the 2020 Indian Premier League season, which could not begin as scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With sporting action around the world coming to a halt, most sports stars are under lockdown in their respective nations. Jordan, like anyone else, is keeping himself occupied with several activities during the quarantine period.

In a chat with *Sportstar*, he opened up on his friendship with K. L. Rahul, the IPL experience,

Passing the time: Chris Jordan says he's been playing Call of Duty almost every day with England teammate Jofra Archer. AFP

his craze for Call of Duty and more.

Can you sum up your journey with Karachi?

Karachi Kings was a brilliant experience. The highlight was the chance to work with a legend like Wasim Akram, someone I had admired from afar. I had conversations with him regarding reverse swing, seam presentation and grip. I was seeing what I can add to my game from his inputs. The team, on the whole, was bonding well. It felt so good and we made the semifinals.

Your thoughts on the PSL semifinals being postponed?

Eventually, health is more important than a game of cricket. Initially, the tournament was supposed to finish on 22nd (of March).



After things started to worsen, they stopped the tournament. The officials met us and gave assurances that they were monitoring the situation almost hourly. There was a sudden change in circumstances and they evacuated us immediately.

What's your training routine during the lockdown?

During these days, we mustn't get lazy and complacent. I try to run every day. One day I might do running on the stairs. Next, I might do longer-tempo runs. After that, it might be sprints or shuttles. I just mix it up. I've also got some weights at home, so I do full-body circuits.

Your favourite training partner?

Pollie (Kieron Pollard) is wonderful to train with both from a bowling and batting point of view. He's also a good friend. You just get clean feedback from him, whether it's about yorkers or slower balls.

Do you watch any Web series?

I'm binge-watching *24* now. I also started seeing new seasons of *Ozark* and *Homeland*. I'm a proper series guy. *The Wire*, *The Sopranos*, *Sons of Anarchy*, *Line of Duty* and *Entourage* would be my favourites. Watching series is my way of relaxing after training.

Do you play games on the phone?

Yes, I've been playing COD (Call of Duty) almost every day with Jofra Archer. He got me into it. It's quite addictive and I enjoy it.

Has Archer recovered from his elbow injury?

He's fine now. Missing so much cricket was new for him because he's a fit guy. On a positive note, he got to let his body rest, refresh his mind and spend time with family. He's itching to go again.

Who are your closest mates in the England setup?

Some of my other best mates are Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid. We speak to each other regularly and share jokes. Moeen is one of the funniest people I know. Jos (Buttler) is a big prankster. He loves to have fun. Jason Roy, Buttler and I have good camaraderie.

Having played eight Tests, are you trying to make a comeback in the longer format?

I've always said that the longer format is

something I enjoy a lot. I field at slip, bat at seven or eight and sometimes open the bowling for Sussex. So I'm constantly evaluating myself when it comes to Test cricket and we'll see where I get to.

When were you supposed to join the KXIP camp?

Our first game was on the 30th (of March, against Delhi Capitals). I would have reached there at least a week before. I was looking forward to joining the camp. We had a well-balanced squad and good management. Anil Kumble has lots of experience. He's coached the Indian team. I wanted to work with him and others.

Thoughts on being part of RCB's run to IPL 2016 final?

That experience was surreal. I enjoyed that dressing room. That was because of characters like A. B. (de Villiers), Virat (Kohli), (Chris) Gayle, (Shane) Watson and the list goes on. Bowling in India is not easy. Outfields are quick, pitches are flat and stadiums are relatively small. At Bangalore, you had to either execute everything perfectly or go out of the park and that changed my mentality. The constraint there taught me how to bowl as the margin for error was very less. As a bowler, you try to take control of your situation. Virat was very open to that. If things were to go wrong, he would come in and give his inputs. He, being one of the top batters in the world, knows how batsmen think. He and AB used to advise from that point of view. I was pretty relaxed.

Can you recall your early cricketing days in Barbados?

When I was a kid, I used to watch every game at the Kensington Oval, Barbados. I've seen Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh and Ian Bishop playing there. One evening, I stayed behind to give (Brian) Lara and (Shivnarine) Chanderpaul throwdowns. That was a special moment. I moved to England when I was 16 (2004-05). Years later, I got to interact with Lara when I was playing for the Trinbago Knight Riders in the CPL (Caribbean Premier League). He's such a nice guy.

You were friends with pop star Rihanna in school. Are you still in touch?

No, not really. However, her achievements are second to none. She was destined for it. She's a real superstar and I'm very happy and proud of her. ❧

“
When I was a kid, I used to watch every game at the Kensington Oval, Barbados. I've seen Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh and Ian Bishop playing there. One evening, I stayed behind to give (Brian) Lara and (Shivnarine) Chanderpaul throwdowns. That was a special moment.”



Raring to go: Fouaad Mirza is confident of a good show at the Tokyo Olympics. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Galloping on to the Games

LAVANYA LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

Double Asian Games silver medallist Fouaad Mirza is the first Indian to qualify for the Olympics in equestrian in two decades and is currently training in Germany.

In August 2019, right after the Arjuna Awards ceremony, Asian Games double silver medallist equestrian rider Fouaad Mirza packed his bags and made his way to the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi to catch a flight back to Germany. He was yet to book a place for the Tokyo Olympics and so his routine was entirely pointed towards that one goal.

As he checked in his luggage, the official at the counter recognised him, something he says had never happened before, and congratulated him while handing over his boarding pass.

“That was as humbling an experience as I could have ever had,” Mirza said. A few months later in November, the International Federation of Equestrian Sports released their rankings for 2019, confirming that Mirza had secured a berth for India in the Olympics for the first time in two decades.

Meanwhile, Mirza is stationed in Bergedorf, a sparsely populated village in Hamburg state, Germany, training under Sandra Auffarth, a former world champion and world No. 1.

“It’s quite bad actually. Almost every state has recorded a considerable number of cases. But it’s not a red zone where I stay. We go to the supermarket once in three weeks and going out to fetch supplies for our animals is permitted here,” Mirza told *Sportstar*.

He may have secured a berth for the Tokyo Games by topping his group in the individual event category of the qualifiers for South East Asia and Oceania, but Mirza wants to confirm his personal quota, for which the sport and competitions scheduled for the year have to find a way to resume.

The 28-year-old had earmarked the Four Star Long competition in Montelibretti,

Italy. Originally scheduled for the second week of April, the event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I was still ready to risk it all and go for this event, because I thought it's better I got this done early rather than leave it for later. However, it obviously got cancelled and set off this domino effect where all my qualification events just kept dropping off the calendar. Naturally, I had to tweak my plans. The priority then became to tend to the horses and keep them fit so that I am event-ready as soon as it's safe to resume," said Mirza.

Despite more time to secure the qualification, the delay poses a whole new set of questions.

"Peaking concerns apply to the horses too. The two horses I am competing with — Fernhill Facetime and Touching Wood — are not at the favourable parts of their prime. With good management and care, we can get another good year out of them but I probably won't campaign them as aggressively as I would have last year. They may not be able to hold up to that sort of strain," Mirza explained.

There is a silver lining though. The Embassy Group, which has supported Mirza and his campaigns internationally, has purchased a mare named Dajara 4. But the biggest shot in the arm is that his old running mate, Seigneur Medicott, may recover in time for the Olympics.

"Medicott had a disruption of his fibre ligament in the hind leg last year and had the year off. Having these two extra horses is a big plus," he added.

Does the prospect of having his Asian Games medal-winning steed make things easier for Mirza?

"I may be biased, but I don't think any of my horses have the natural ability Medicott has. Fernhill Facetime is a great horse and he tries so hard, but he just doesn't have that fluid natural ability like Medicott. Meanwhile, while having Medicott is a great and proven backup plan, he is not just in the right form. Everything in your gut is telling you to pick Fernhill Facetime, but I often find myself anxious about how to improve his jumping and what I can do to get a better showing from him," Mirza said.

Mirza identifies Touching Wood as the horse to compete with at Tokyo. However, his inexperience has him struggling to decide.

"We've got a year of competition out of him and we need to keep building. He's a horse that can do some very cool things for India, even past Tokyo but now, it feels like it's not enough. However, my gut says he will come good."

Mirza's routine

A typical day in Mirza's life begins at 6am, with exercising the horses the first order of business. Mind you, he has four of them in training for the Olympics and consequently four different routines that eat into his day.

"I live on our training base, so I don't have issues as far as preparation goes. It's not like I have much of a choice. Even if I don't want to train, I need to feed and groom them. They're like my children. So life hasn't changed drastically for me at all, and for that I am grateful," he said.

Mirza has a disciplined routine that he follows with dedication. While maintaining his weight has never been an issue, for the 28-year-old — who initially started off as an aspiring racing jockey under champion jockey and veteran trainer Pesi Shroff — maintaining flexibility, balance and core strength are paramount.

Strict social distancing policies have kept him away from the gym but he enjoys doing yoga and does heavy exercises thrice a week.

"I try not to think of the possibility of an injury. It's an unnecessary worry and all I need to do is stick to the right processes and maybe not do something stupid like fall off a horse," he said with a chuckle.

Away from family

In between all the COVID-19 anxiety and event-focused training, Mirza has not forgotten that he has not visited his parents in Bengaluru for over a year now.

"I like staying in a routine and going home would disrupt it, so while it would be nice to meet everyone, it's also a huge break in momentum. I don't mean to sound rude, but I'd like to see this through staying in my own bubble. Plus I have the horses to stay back for," he said.

With the new dates for the Olympics now available, the only concern for the rider seems to be a possible impact of the summer sun in Tokyo on the horses, an element equestrian circles were deliberating before the International Olympic Committee announcement.

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Targetting gold: Fouaad Mirza with his two 2018 Asian Games silver medals.

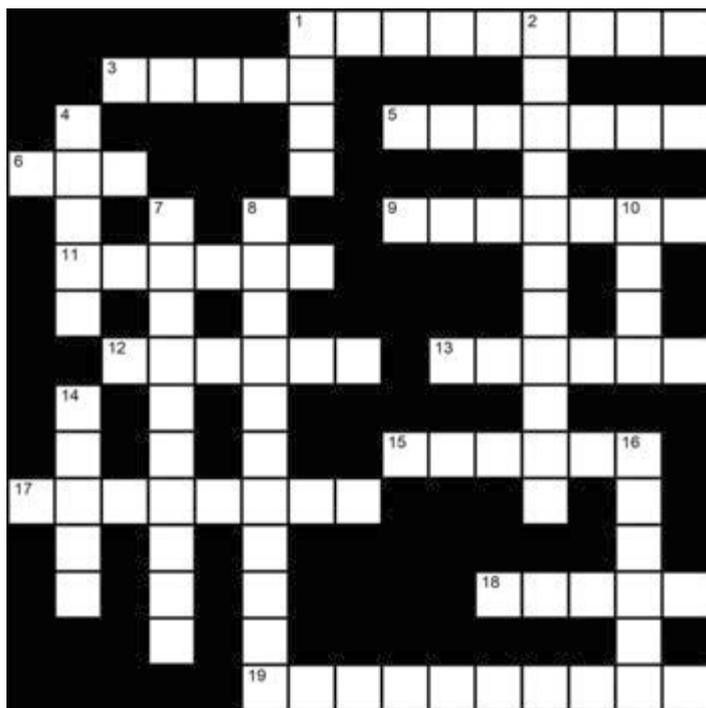
V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

While he emphasises on the welfare of the animals, Mirza isn't too worried.

"Humid conditions are not ideal for horses, but I see it as an advantage for Fernhill Facetime or Seigneur Medicott. I've competed with Medicott in Indonesia in similar conditions. Of course, the Asian Games difficulty level is slightly lower and cross-country distance is shorter too when compared to the Olympics but it gave us all a good indication that he can cope more than well.

"He ate well and travelled fine from Germany to Jakarta, too. So these are positives for us."

"(Fernhill Facetime) is New Zealand-bred. Summers there can get hot, maybe not as humid, but more testing than here in Europe, so we're sure they'll manage. Also we must remember that these are thoroughbreds — race-quality horses. They can cope with adverse conditions a lot better than we credit them for, be it pressure or weather," he added. 



SOLUTION TO LAST FORTNIGHT'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 First to run a mile in less than 4 minutes. (9)
- 3 Subimal was this footballer's first name. (5)
- 5 Born in India, played for England, coached South Africa, and died in Jamaica. (7)
- 6 ... Bacher, South Africa's cricket manager in the tour that marked their return to cricket in 1991. (3)
- 9 'Bowlology,' a book written by Damien ... (7)
- 11 Only Zimbabwe bowler to take more than 100 Test wickets. (6)
- 12 When Kapil Dev became the world's highest Test wicket-taker in 1994, he overtook the

- record of ... (6)
- 13 The 'Big Bird' who took 5-for-38 in the 1979 World Cup finals. (6)
- 15 Australian cricketer who is called by the nicknames 'Lloyd', 'the Reverend', 'Bull'. (6)
- 17 Pablo Javier ... Girod. (8)
- 18 'The Eighth King of Rome'! (5)
- 19 The first non-British president of the Marylebone Cricket Club. (10)

DOWN

- 1 Australian cricketer Jackson Munro ... (4)
- 2 The only Indian cricketer to have been born in Afghanistan. (5,6)

- 4 Only Ronaldo and Muller come close to him in the list of top World Cup goal scorers. (5)
- 7 The pinch-hitter at the top for the Kiwis in the 1992 World Cup. (10)
- 8 Brett Clarke is India's coach in this sport. (5,6)
- 10 The goddess of victory in Greek mythology. (4)
- 14 First to receive the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award. (5)
- 16 Roof support? Tennis player? (6)

Table Tennis fraternity remembers Manmeet Singh

Former National men's singles table tennis champion Manmeet Singh passed away in Montreal on May 11. Survived by wife and two daughters, Manmeet was 58.

For the past two years, Manmeet was suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a neurodegenerative disease that affects the motor nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord.

Former National champion Manjit Dua remembers Manmeet as an extremely competitive and hard working player. "It seems like yesterday when his father came to me and asked me to take time off training to impart some tips to Manmeet, then a youngster who went on to become the National junior champion. We played a lot together in Delhi, domestic events and later as part of the National team."



Vinay Chopra, Manmeet's school-mate from Manav Sthali, and partner in winning the National doubles final against favourite Kamlesh Mehta and S. Sriram describes him as "extremely temperamental, yet a go-getter."

"Once Manmeet set his eyes on something, he wouldn't rest till he got it. He was desperate to win the National title and once he did it, he turned his focus on making a sound livelihood. He shifted to Canada, where he joined his brother. From being in garment business to real estate, Manmeet did very well.

"As part of the Manav Sthali school team, Manmeet, Girish Miglani and me, never lost the inter-school final. Manmeet was a cut above the rest of us. Due to Manmeet's presence we never lost. Today, his loss has left me gutted," says Chopra.

Kamlesh, who like Chopra, stayed in touch with Manmeet and wished him on his 58th birthday on April 24th, recalls, "He was the favourite to win the Nationals in the earlier years, but was destined to win when not many expected him to.

"I remember, Manmeet's international debut was a dream one during the 1980 Asian championship where he beat two North Koreans, ranked World No. 6 and 13 to put India 4-2 ahead but eventually the Koreans won 5-4.

Kamlesh, an eight-time National champion, adds, "Manmeet was the first Indian player to execute the high-toss serves. He learnt it during one of the training stints in Japan. I remember, soon after he returned from Japan, I played him in Mumbai. Trust me, I couldn't figure out his serves. Later, we all learnt the trick."

Rinku Gupta, winner of the National women's singles title when Manmeet won the men's crown, remembers Manmeet for not only his fierce forehand top-spin and timely backhand openings but also fondly recalls his caring ways.

"Manmeet was like an elder brother, always encouraging and motivating me. That season, we won the zonal titles in Kolkata and Indore. I remember, after the National team championship final in Hyderabad, Manmeet told me, 'Everyone remembers a National champion – but not a zonal champion.' Just stay focussed, you can be a National champion here."

Rinku recalls, "In Hyderabad, match after match, Manmeet wore the same T-shirt and shorts. In fact, I also made a similar choice and it worked for me, too. After I beat Varsha Chulani in the final, Manmeet was entering the arena for the men's final. As I wished him luck, he flashed a thumbs up sign and said, 'Rinku, now that you've won, I'll also win.' Before that match, Manmeet always lost to Sriram. But that day, Manmeet's immense confidence made the difference."

The news of Manmeet's passing away cast a spell of gloom in the country's table tennis circle.

Table Tennis Federation of India secretary M. P. Singh, advisor Dhanraj Choudhary, among others, expressed shock and grief at the passing away of a "fine champion."

As Kamlesh sums up, "Manmeet was a fighter in the arena, very aggressive but off the table, he was a great pal. We were of the same age and shared a lot. It's hard to believe Manmeet is no more."

Rakesh Rao

Sports Ministry sanctions ₹5 lakh for treatment of young archer

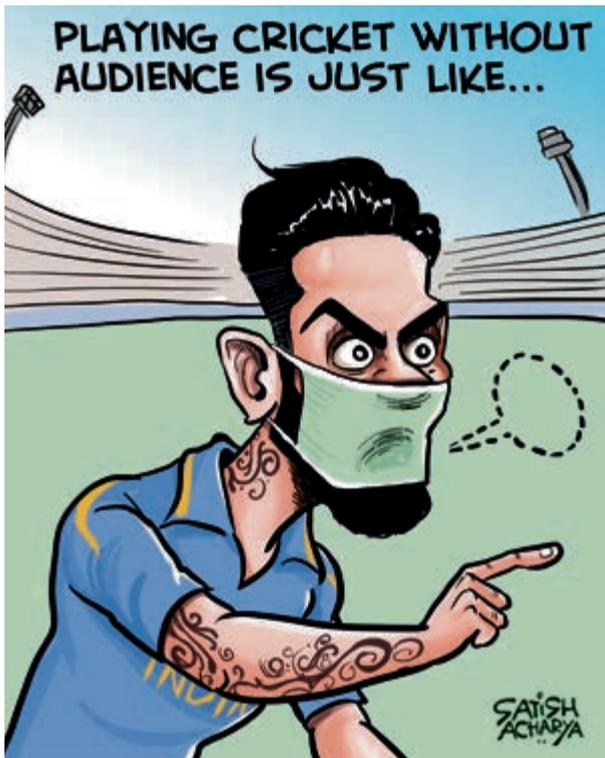


The Union Sports Ministry sanctioned a financial assistance of ₹5 lakh for the treatment of 16-year-old Delhi-based archer Pragati.

Pragati, who competed in the World youth archery championship in Madrid last year, suffered a brain haemorrhage on May 5 and went through a surgery the following day. Since then, the 2019 ISSF championship gold medalist has been on ventilator support.

According to sources, an expense of around ₹16 lakh has been incurred so far on Pragati's treatment. Of the total expenses, ₹5 lakh has been paid from the Khelo India Games insurance. An Archery Association of India (AAI) official informed *Sportstar* about the Ministry's decision.

Y. B. Sarangi

SPORTOON**Answers to Quiz on P 28, 29****Yuvraj Singh****(B) Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge**

"It shows a splendid mix of Indian and foreign cultures. [The movie] had good music too." – Yuvraj Singh

Harbhajan Singh**(B) Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge**

"Wonderful story. Hit music. The movie portrayed the culture of Punjab and UK so well. I never get tired of watching it."

– Harbhajan Singh

Virender Sehwag**(C) Sholay**

"The movie also has some iconic dialogues and a terrific debut by Amjad Khan as Gabbar Singh. The movie is a complete package."

– Virender Sehwag

Anil Kumble**(B) Dangal**

"Dangal nicely portrayed the success story of a small-town woman athlete. It documents her hard work, perseverance and determination."

– Anil Kumble

Murali Kartik**(B) Ben Hur**

"It was a sensational movie made in a most captivating manner. Massive sets and the highlight was the breathtaking chariot race."

– Murali Kartik

W. V. Raman**(D) The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**

"The dark side of human nature is projected in an engaging manner in this movie." – W. V. Raman

Vinod Kambl**(A) Agneepath**

"My favourite movie is Agneepath because of the majestic performance of Amitabh Bachchan. It was a great story and there's that iconic line from Bachchan Sir: 'Main Vijay Dinanath Chauhan.'" – Vinod Kambl

Parthiv Patel**(B) Dil Chahta Hai**

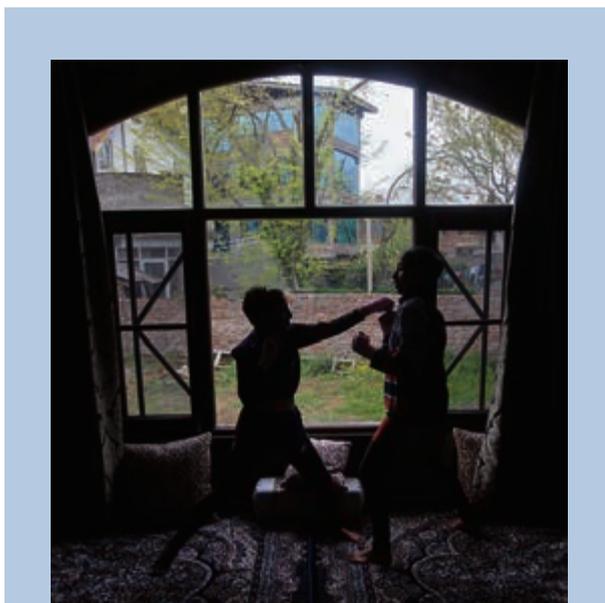
"It has all the elements - youth, friendship, family, love and fun. The movie also has some superb music." – Parthiv Patel

Shikhar Dhawan**(B) Sholay**

"It is a terrific movie with a fantastic star cast. It had the right story, acting and emotions. And of course, the legendary Amjad Khan as Gabbar." – Shikhar Dhawan

Ashish Nehra**(B) Sholay**

"It was technically so appealing. The cast was amazing. A great performance by Amjad Khan as Gabbar. To me, the film drove home the symbol of friendship." – Ashish Nehra



Keeping themselves engaged: Wushu player Aliza Shah (left) practises with her sister Kaifa Shah inside their home in Srinagar, Kashmir. Like other athletes across the globe, the coronavirus pandemic has restricted the sisters to their home. AP



What is intermittent fasting?

The lockdown diet plan for fat loss in athletes.

Strict regimen: Mayank Agarwal, the Indian cricketer, has actually lost 3kg in this lockdown by following a regimented diet. N. SUDARSHAN



The coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone including athletes. During this period, stadiums, gyms and our own colonies stand shut, thus not allowing us much physical activity. Athletes have modified their training regimes to include home workouts, Zoom sessions with their trainers, and making do with limited workout space. Adventurous athletes prepared for the quarantine have kitted out their homes with the requisite training equipment.

But during this lockdown, we have seen many athletes' sleep cycles disturbed by binge-watching TV and surfing the Internet as they no more have a wake-up call at 5am. In addition, food unavailability has haywired their meals. Meat supply has gone down. Eggs, which I endorse as safe for consumption during the outbreak, is also not being consumed. The increased consumption of unhealthy food and the lack of training and discipline have made athletes gain weight. Over the years, various types of diets have existed for athletes: high protein, high carbohydrate, high fat-keto, et cetera. As a sports nutritionist, I believe that one size doesn't fit all. What is important to focus on is bio-individuality, where an athlete has to undergo blood and gene tests and is then given a proper schedule for training and energy expenditure. In addition, an athlete has to give the nutritionist the body fat and muscle mass percentages for accurate calculation of calorie input and expenditure. This altogether allows a customised planning of calories and macro-nutrients in a diet plan.

Over the last few weeks, I have acquired many new clients who have come to me with concerns of not being able to follow "ghar ka khana" and want a tailor-made sports nutrition plan to follow at home. Mayank Agarwal, the Indian cricketer, has actually lost 3kg in this lockdown by following a regimented diet, and his entire family is amazed by his discipline. This has left him genuinely surprised that one does not need exotic fruits and vegetables and can instead rely on the

foods available during the lockdown, proving that a nutritionist can get you results with whatever is available. The key point here is that nutrition coaching should not stop, but should rather focus on guiding athletes on how to eat during the lockdown.

Many of you may know I have worked with Aamir Khan during *Dangal*, Sushil Kumar and Abhishek Bachchan. Many celebrities have graced my Qua Nutrition Clinics and we have experimented with the intermittent-fasting regime. What is intermittent fasting? Should athletes do intermittent fasting? I recently put two athletes on this approach – Mayank Agarwal was one of them – the reason being that intermittent fasting runs on the principle that you have a feeding window and a fasting window wherein, for example, the last meal of the day is at 7pm and next is at 7am, maintaining a fasting window of 12 hours. Intermittent fasting, in my opinion, works best with 16 hours of fasting.

The first point to note for athletes is that my recommendation of intermittent fasting is only for this lockdown period. Research has shown that it does not benefit athletes as there is a drop in strength, endurance and mitochondrial concentration in cells as well as loss of muscle. Intermittent fasting has, however, shown to help decrease the body-fat percentage. It is solely because of this that I am advising on a case-to-case basis whether athletes should approach intermittent fasting. Intermittent fasting is the optimal strategy for fat loss, but one must acknowledge that studies on athletes have been conducted during Ramadan and their performance evaluation for strength, stamina and recovery showed a drop during the intermittent-fasting period. My recommendation to try this is solely dependent on the fact that athletes are overeating, sleeping very late or not training enough. Adding a component of intermittent fasting to an athlete's current lockdown schedule may enable better fat loss due to lower calorie consumption.

Intermittent fasting also helps by improving insulin sensitivity. Research has also focused on mitochondrial biogenesis, where intermittent fasting or a calorie deficit produces new mitochondrial cells to adapt and enhance the athlete's performance. While

training, endurance athletes release AMPK factors in low energy state. AMPK factors stimulate positive adaptation to exercise and promote mitochondrial biogenesis. However, in a lockdown, training is limited, making mitochondrial biogenesis difficult. Another caution for athletes is that when there is carbohydrate restriction, which is normally induced by intermittent fasting, there is muscle hypotrophy. This, coupled with longer training sessions, is not the idle combination to build muscle. Hence, intermittent fasting should be done with a 1-2 hour workout around 11am-12pm, preferably in the fasted state followed by the first meal of the day after the workout. The second workout of the day can be during the feeding window, which is between 4pm and 6pm. Finish that training with a solid high-protein meal at 7pm.

It's important for athletes to understand that my recommendation of intermittent fasting is not general for all athletes but on the basis of my analysis of the first 40 days of the lockdown where I observed most of my athletes struggling to maintain discipline because they felt that they have not worked out and therefore they do not need the discipline of eating right. Intermittent fasting is an approach to control calorie consumption during the day and bring about better fat loss. A caution should be inserted in the entire intermittent-fasting approach for the following: (1) Women's menstruation cycle – weakness or iron, ferritin or vitamin B12 deficiency; (2) Diabetics or master/veteran athlete or coaches; and (3) People with eating disorders or athletes who are extremely underweight should not attempt this approach except under the guidance of a sports nutritionist or a dietitian. ☞

If any athlete wishes to avail of an intermittent-fasting diet plan at my clinic, please contact me so that we can evaluate your body fat percentage and your total energy expenditure through the day, and accordingly design the calories and macros that you need to consume in your structured feeding window.

Ryan Fernando is an award-winning celebrity sports nutrition coach and chief nutritionist at Qua Nutrition Signature Clinics. Book an intermittent fasting diet plan at www.ryanfernando.in

“Intermittent fasting is the optimal strategy for fat loss, but one must acknowledge that studies on athletes have been conducted during Ramadan and their performance evaluation for strength, stamina and recovery showed a drop during the intermittent-fasting period.”

What ifs, the alternative history of sport

When the future is uncertain, new stories emerge from history. And sometimes the past appears uncertain too!

SURESH MENON

When the future is uncertain, turn to the past. The pandemic has forced the media to go backwards, to either mark anniversaries or reassess various victories and defeats. The past, as the man said, is a foreign country; they do things differently there.

What mistakes did Tiger Woods make in 1999, should India have decided to field first on winning the toss at the 2003 World Cup final which ultimately Australia dominated?

Then there are the What Ifs, the alternative history of sport. What if Sri Lanka had not won the 1996 World Cup? What if Bob Beamon had pulled a muscle ahead of the long jump final at the 1968 Olympics? What if P. T. Usha had won the 400m hurdles at the 1984 Olympics? What if Usain Bolt had decided not to travel to Beijing for the Olympics? The range of this game is restricted only by the player's imagination.

What if a sharp-eyed relative had not noticed that the baby Sunil had been accidentally switched in his crib at the hospital with the child of a fisherman? Would we have heard of Gavaskar the great opening batsman?

All this is great fun. And can provide endless hours of fun. Like a smart jigsaw puzzle (if there is such a thing) which can be put together in different ways to make diverse pictures.

One of sport's most-often used lines is: We wuz robbed! Did a referee error cost Germany the 1966 World Cup football? England's third goal was scored by Geoff Hurst in extra time. The ball hit the crosspiece

and bounced in the goalmouth. The Swiss referee checked with the linesman who said it was a goal. England now led 3-2 in extra time, and scored again to win 4-2.

Twenty years later, those watching replays on television saw what the referee couldn't — that Argentina's Diego Maradona had scored a goal against England with his fist. He later blamed (or credited) the Almighty for it, calling it a goal scored by the head of Maradona and the hand of god. The Tunisian referee had an unusual excuse for missing the handball. He was on haemorrhoid treatment, he said, and that affected his sight.

Close calls are a part of sport, although with instant replays now available, many of these are corrected. In Delhi, 74-75, Viv Richards, playing his second Test was rerieved by the umpire at 12. He was caught behind, stayed his ground and went on to make 192. The bowler and captain in that match S. Venkatraghavan was dropped for the next Test. Poor decisions affect a whole range of players.

Travelling into the past is an occasion to acknowledge misjudgements made by experts too. Navjot Sidhu has written about how a newspaper headline calling him a strokeless wonder inspired him to blossom into an aggressive opening batsman. Other sportsmen have similar stories too.

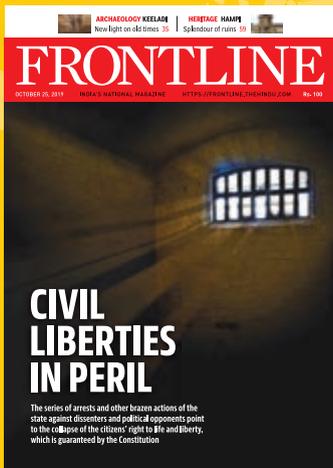
When the future is uncertain, new stories emerge from history. And sometimes the past appears uncertain too! ❧



Transformation: Former India opener Navjot Sidhu has written about how a newspaper headline calling him a strokeless wonder inspired him to blossom into an aggressive opening batsman. V. V. KRISHNAN



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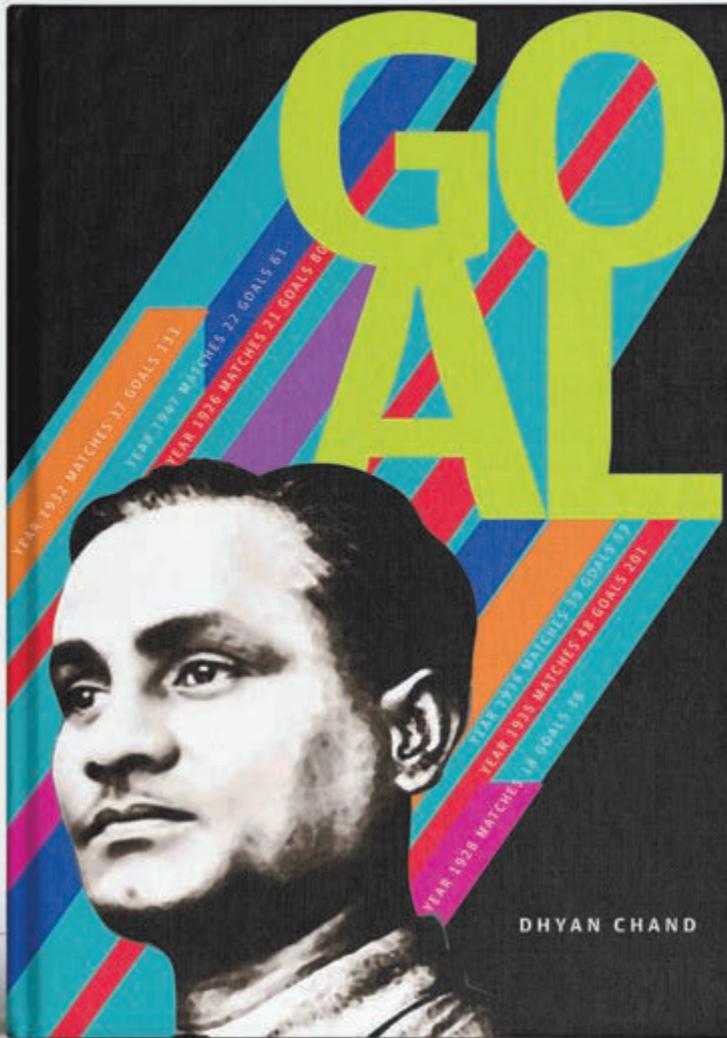
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