

It was special

Jadeja after scoring maiden international ton



RAJKOT, OCT 5 /--/ Ravindra Jadeja finally scored his maiden century after almost a decade in international cricket and the Indian all-rounder says being calm in the nervous 90s helped him reach the 'special' milestone. Jadeja had scored an 86 and 90 in Tests against England but could never cross the hurdle in the previous 37 Tests in addition to the 140 ODIs he has featured in. Fittingly, he achieved the feat at his home ground and dedicated the innings to his late mother. He was in the 90s with number eleven Mohammad Shami but that did not put extra pressure on him.

"It is very special because in the past I had gotten to 80s and 90s but was not able to convert. Today, I was not worried, just did not want to play any loose shot. I kept talking to Umesh and Shami and told myself that I needed to play till I score 100," said Jadeja after reaching three figures in the final over before tea when India declared at 649 for nine. His famous sword celebration followed the hundred with his teammates applauding in the dressing room. Jadeja was also in the thick of things during the West Indies innings. It turned out to be a comical incident but it could have easily embarrassed the home hero. A terrible mix-up between Shimron Hetmyer and Sunil Ambrisi left both of them stranded at one end and Jadeja decided to walk than run to take the balls off. Seeing Jadeja's cheeky walk, Hetmyer ran to make his ground in desperation, confusing the Indian who suddenly stopped and threw at the stumps. Luckily for Jadeja, the ball hit the stumps and Hetmyer was run out. "You saw what happened," said Jadeja explaining his thinking. "I

saw both batsmen were at the same end and I did not think that Hetmyer would start running in towards the other end in such hot conditions. I was relaxed and so thought I will walk to take the balls off. His effort (run) was good," added Jadeja, who laughed off the incident. Talking about the last one month when he did well in the only Test he played in England before making an ODI comeback, Jadeja sounded satisfied. "When you are not playing consistently, there is pressure. You want to make every opportunity count. That is what I thought in England also. Batting and bowling in Asia Cup was also good," he said.

"I just try to develop my game with every match. I have not played a lot in 2018. So, you just have to perform whenever you get the opportunity." Asked why he needs to prove himself even after almost 10 years of international cricket, Jadeja came up with a witty response. "Good you know that I have been playing for 10 years. I must have done something right if I have managed to play for that long. I don't know if you noticed that I did well in the 13 Tests we played at home the previous season," he said. "My job is just to prove myself. Sometimes I miss out because of the team requirements. If there are more left handers in the opposition eleven, then an off-spinner is preferred, if more right handers are there than I am preferred," said the left-arm spinner. He also had words of encouragement for the struggling West Indies, saying "the young team will improve with every game". Spectator turnout for the first Test has been modest and when asked about it, Jadeja felt it could be due to the unrelenting heat in Rajkot. (PTI)

Maiden Test ton for Jadeja, No.24 for Kohli; India poised for big win

RAJKOT, OCT 5 /--/ Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja ravaged a clueless West Indian attack with strokeful hundreds as India headed towards a demolishing win with another near-perfect performance on day two of the first cricket Test here.

The hosts piled up 649/9 in their first innings before reducing West Indies to 94 for six in 29 overs when stumps were drawn for the day. After Prithvi Shaw's phenomenal ton on debut on day one, skipper Kohli (139) and Jadeja (100 not out) made hundreds as India put up a mammoth 649 for nine in their first innings before declaring at tea. It was a maiden Test ton for Jadeja, who had to wait for almost six years to reach three figures in the five-day format. In response, the West Indies were in all sorts of trouble, first against pacer Mohammad Shami before the spinners cleaned up the middle order. They trail India by 555 runs and the hosts will fancy themselves to bowl them out twice by day three. Shami bowled a fiery opening spell of four overs, conceding just five runs and removing acting captain Kraigg Brathwaite and Kieran Powell to leave the West Indies at two for seven in the fifth over. The West Indies were always going to find it tough against India, more so without their captain Jason Holder and senior pacer Kumar Roach.



(L - R) Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja celebrate at different stages of Day 2 of the first Test against WI

Their sorry batting performance came after a forgettable outing with the ball as India piled on the runs. By tea, Jadeja had struck an unbeaten 100 off 132 off balls to be the third centurion of the innings. His whirlwind effort in front of his home crowd came after skipper Kohli completed his 24th Test hundred in the morning. Jadeja had to wait till his 38th Test to reach three figures, having made his



debut back in December 2012. Playing with number eleven batsman Shami, he experienced the nervous 90s before finally getting to the milestone in the final over before tea.

It has been a good last 30 days for the southpaw, who scored a gritty 86 in the final Test in England before making an ODI comeback with the Asia Cup in Dubai. Jadeja enthralled the sparse crowd at the SCA stadium with aerial hits which came

mainly off the spinners. He ended up with five boundaries and as many sixes. India made 143 runs in the afternoon session, scoring at close to 4.5 runs an over.

Kohli did not last long post the lunch break and Jadeja gave the innings further impetus. In the morning session, Kohli and Rishabh Pant (92 off 84) had taken India to 506 for five. Kohli, who was 72 not out overnight, took time to

knock off the 28 runs needed for yet another hundred while his partner Pant, who resumed at 17, went all guns blazing. A second Test hundred in his fourth Test was for the taking but Pant, attempting another six over mid-wicket, failed to pick the googly and top-edged it for a simple catch to Keemo Paul at backward point.

His entertaining innings was laced with eight fours and four sixes. With

Pant picking boundaries at will, Kohli was in no hurry to get to the hundred and when he did get there, the India skipper became the second fastest to 24 Test hundreds behind only Donald Bradman, who took 66 innings to Kohli's 123. Pant, who made his debut series in England memorable with a hundred, played his usual attacking game from ball one, flicking it nonchalantly through square leg to get going. Kohli enjoyed his teammates' fluent strokeplay from the other end as Pant raced to his half century with a four and six off pacer Paul. He used his strong wrists to get to the desired elevation and distance. It was a display of brute power. His eyes lit up when spinners were employed after first hour of the morning and welcomed Roston Chase with a four and six. He did the same to Devendra Bishoo in the following over. Anything pitched up, he was quick to clear his one leg and deposit the ball over mid-wicket and mid-on. The way Pant was plundering the bowlers, it seemed he would get to three figures before his skipper. But that did not happen as Kohli completed his century with a flick off his pads towards fine leg. Pant was on 87 when Kohli raised his bat but the wicket-keeper batsmen ended up throwing it away as he went for another six. (PTI)

Warne backs 'Bodyline' skipper, slams Waugh

SYDNEY, OCT 5 /--/ Australian great Shane Warne has endorsed one of the most controversial figures in cricketing history, while also renewing his decades-old feud with former captain Steve Waugh.

Warne, Test cricket's second-most prolific wicket-taker with 708 scalps, revealed his admiration for Douglas Jardine, who led England's "Bodyline" tour, in his new book "No Spin" published this week. Warne said he believed Jardine was among the best captains ever to have played the game. "Douglas Jardine, of course, for what he achieved against Bradman and having the courage to change the game's parameters," Warne wrote. Jardine, an upper class Englishman, is generally regarded as a villain in Australian cricketing circles. His tactics of instructing fast bowlers, led by Harold Larwood, to aim at batsmen's bodies - in a bid to curb run machine Donald



Bradman - provoked anger amongst the host nation at the time. Jardine's tactics worked and England won the series 4-1 but Australians regarded it as unsporting and it strained relations between London and



Canberra. He was mercilessly hounded by Sydney crowds, including a famous taunt "leave those flies alone Jardine, they're the only friends you've got". But Warne, who called for Australia to use Bodyline fast-ball tactics

against England last year, backed the captain. He also criticised his former captain Steve Waugh in his book, calling him "selfish". Warne said he was disappointed when Waugh dropped him in the fourth Test in Antigua in the West Indies in 1999. "I lost a bit of respect for him after that. I believe he should have backed me - as I always believe the art of captaincy is to support your players and back them every time. This gains the respect from the players and makes them play for you. He didn't, it's history, but I never found it easy with him after that."

He accused Waugh if being more focused on his average than the team's result. "Steve Waugh was the most selfish player I ever played with and was only worried about averaging 50," he added. "It was about a lack of loyalty. Pretty childish, I know, but that's the way it was."

Focus on strikers as Chennaiyin take on Goa

CHENNAI, OCT 5 /--/ Chennaiyin FC will be aiming to make a course correction after their opening round loss to Bengaluru FC when they take on FC Goa in an Indian Super League encounter Saturday.

John Gregory's men created a few chances but were largely disappointing their 0-1 loss to Bengaluru and the coach would expect his strikers to up the ante against the Gaurs. Due to heavy rainfall during the past two days, conditions at the Nehru stadium can be expected to be sluggish, making the job a tad tougher for the forward-line. On the other hand, FC Goa drew 2-2 in an away game against NorthEast United FC. The team's coach Sergio Lobera spoke about errors committed during the previous game including one by rookie goalkeeper Mohammad Nawaz. FC Goa has made the play-offs thrice in the last four years, is chasing glory and the coach hopes the team's attacking philosophy will pay dividends. The aggressive style advocate by Lobera was in display during the draw against NEUFC and they will look to cash in against Chennaiyin, known to be slow starters. FC Goa roped in Jackichand Singh from Kerala Blasters and signed up a couple of foreign defenders in an effort to bolster the backline, which was found wanting last season. However, Goa will be betting on attacking ways to carry it forward. That is easier said than done against Chennaiyin, which has a well-organised defence and mid-field. Gregory said the team needs to improve after losing the opener while stating that they had missed a few opportunities. Though the team will be missing mid-fielder Dhanapal Ganesh, who is out injured, CFC has several others to fall back on.

Gregory Nelson and India international Jeje Lalpekhlua had a good opening game wherein they created chances. The two would like to continue in the same vein with the latter keen to get on the scoresheet. The duo along with Raphael Augusto would hold the key to CFC's chances while Goa's forwards will be wary of the rival's solid defence as both teams eye a first win of the new season. (PTI)

Neymar on form, but Di Maria key cog for Tuchel's PSG

PARIS, OCT 5 /--/ Neymar may have grabbed the headlines with a hat-trick as Paris Saint-Germain thrashed Red Star Belgrade in their midweek Champions League match, but Angel Di Maria is proving vital to the French giants' strong start to the season.

The 6-1 hammering of Red Star at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday was already the second time this term that all of Di Maria, Neymar, Edinson Cavani and Kylian Mbappe have scored in a game. That only happened twice in the entirety of last season, when the Argentinian was often overlooked by former coach Unai Emery for the biggest matches. The attacking trio dubbed 'MCN' last year has become a four-pronged front line under new boss Thomas Tuchel, with Di Maria starting both of PSG's Champions League games so far, having failed to even complete 90 minutes once in the competition in 2017/18. "It's a gift to work with a player like Angel, he's a great professional, who works hard in training, can play in multiple positions, at a top level and is totally reliable," gushed Tuchel. The 30-year-old Di Maria has scored six times in 11 appearances so far this season and is full of praise for German Tuchel. "He made me understand that he was counting on me," Di Maria told TF1. "Tuchel



brings something new, he's a more aggressive coach who likes the team to play with high pressing. "He came here to win the Champions League, it can be a great year for us." With their Group C campaign in Europe back on track after an opening 3-2 defeat at Liverpool, PSG host Lyon as they return to domestic matters on Sunday. The club's priorities clearly lie with the Champions League as

they bid to reach the final for the first time despite the heavy Qatari investment, but after eight straight wins, a sixth Ligue 1 title in seven years already looks a formality. Lyon were expected to be their closest challengers this season, but are 10 points off the pace, while last year's runners-up Monaco are languishing in the relegation play-off place. Bruno Genesio's Lyon claimed a stunning 2-1 win over PSG in January,

but have lost on their last seven visits to the capital. Monaco's dreadful season took another turn for the worse in midweek as they slipped to a one-sided 3-0 Champions League loss at Borussia Dortmund. Leonardo Jardim's outfit are now a tame imitation of the one that claimed the French title in 2017, and have managed only six points from their first eight league games. Defeat by fellow strugglers Rennes at the Stade Louis II on Sunday could see them fall into the bottom two, with the prospect of a season spent trying to get out of trouble looming. Lille had to do just that last term to escape the drop, but have started well this time around and host fourth-placed Saint-Etienne on Saturday looking to strengthen their grip on second spot, eight points behind PSG.

The 21-year-old Lyon midfielder was handed his first international call-up by France coach Didier Deschamps on Thursday after backing up his strong form from last season in the early part of the current campaign. Ndombele has never scored in Ligue 1, though, and Sunday's match at PSG would be the perfect time to set that record straight. "He has a very good shot and should be scoring between six and 10 goals a season, given the position he's playing in and his technical skill," said Deschamps. (AFP)

IPTL mess: Accused of non-payment, Bhupathi says he isn't responsible

NEW DELHI, OCT 5 /--/ Mahesh Bhupathi was on Friday accused of non-payment of dues by the production company that was involved in the broadcast of his star-studded league IPTL but the Indian tennis ace said he was not responsible for the situation.

Bhupathi founded the International Premier Tennis League (IPTL) in 2014 and the league, which featured stars such as Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams among others, was halted after the 2016 season due to financial crunch. The veteran Indian player, also the non-playing captain of the Indian Davis Cup team, has been accused of "breaking the business code" by TV production company Broadcast Sports News. However, Bhupathi while admitting the delay in payments, said IPTL crashed not because of him but due to an alleged "fraud" committed by the Legendari group, which owned one of the teams. Broadcast Sports News issued a statement, which was shared on social media by the company's graphic designer Steph Trudel, accusing Bhupathi and IPTL of not paying many stakeholders. "Twenty two months later and the entire production crew, technology service providers, satellite uplink and distribution suppliers, chair umpires and court surface provider remain unpaid including their expenses, visas costs, per diems (daily allowance) and ground transport fees," the statement read. When contacted, Bhupathi admitted that the League owes the players and the vendors about USD five million claimed that the Legendari Group was largely responsible for the mess.

"There have been pending dues to the tune of approx USD five million from the league to players majorly, most of them are my colleagues and vendors as well. It's been extremely painful in general but we will get it done one way or another it's just this process of recovery needs time," Bhupathi



told PTI. On how the League reached this situation, the multiple-time doubles Grand Slam champion said, "In 2016, one of the IPTL team owners, the Legendari group, that owned the Japan franchise turned out to be frauds and their share of the payment, close to USD eight million, was the reason things came down."

"The management has constantly been in contact with all confirming that as and when recovery in any fashion happens, the dues will be cleared, majority of them have been cooperative since in the first two seasons the event was a success. I guess some got tired of waiting," said Bhupathi. Broadcast Sports News also stated that the organisers were aware of the financial issues, but those to go ahead with the event. "A spokesperson representing the IPTL crew explained, 'What is most frustrating is that the IPTL continued in December 2016 while the management team knew there were insufficient funds available to pay for it,' it read. While most of the players have remained silent on the issue, Croatian Marin Cilic had spoken about the non-payment early this year, without giving going into the details. It has also been reported that Singapore Slammers had sent IPTL a legal notice to recover their dues but Bhupathi denied receiving it. "It's business. There are ups and downs. It concerns just me others should keep out of it," he said. (PTI)