

Pandya has turned his career around: Dravid



NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- Former India skipper Rahul Dravid feels young all-rounder Hardik Pandya has turned his career around by playing just as the situations demand in the ongoing series against Australia. Dravid, who was Pandya's coach during an India A tour of Australia last year, hoped that the current India A players are able to emulate Pandya's batting approach. "A good example about Hardik from my perspective is, he's willing to play situations and not just the natural game we often speak about. Credit goes completely to him. It's not about playing just the one way you want to play," he said on the sidelines of India A's unofficial Test against New Zealand A in Vijayawada. "He's the one who has actually turned his career around," Dravid was quoted as saying by ESPNCricinfo.com. Pandya has become the cynosure of all eyes with his six-hitting prowess, demonstrated to good effect in the ongoing five-ODI series against Australia. He has scored two match-winning half-

centuries in three games so far. In the first ODI, he along with Mahendra Singh Dhoni had revived India's fortunes with a match-turning 83, while in the third game, where he was sent up to No. 4 after the openers put on a century stand in a chase of 294, Pandya sustained the momentum by scoring 78. "If the bats at four, he bats in a particular way. If he bats at six, he bats in a particular way. Tomorrow, he may bat at 80 for 4, like he did in the first ODI with Dhoni. That shows maturity and that's what you want to see. "This concept of 'play your natural game,' which I hear all the time, frustrates me because there's no such thing in my belief as 'natural game.' It's only about how you play different situations," Dravid, who has been coaching India's U-19 and A teams for over two years now, said. Dravid feels Pandya is a perfect example of how to bat differently in different conditions. "You have to learn to bat differently in different conditions, and if you can do that like Hardik is showing at the mo-

ment, those would be signs of a developing cricketer, someone who can make consistent contributions and not someone who is a one-off, who can produce brilliance once in a while. "The aspiration and challenges set for a lot of India A players is to be all-weather players, all-situation players, all-condition players. "Rishabh Pant is another big hitter who made his international debut earlier this year against England after graduating from the Under-19s in 2016. But his aggression has cut short a few of his promising innings and Dravid, who has worked with Pant for over two years now, stressed on the importance of providing the players with a learning environment. "It's recognition of the fact that someone like Rishabh will always be an attacking player. You don't want to take away his attacking instincts, but you want to inculcate a certain sense of smartness to be able to read situations and recognise situations where the time is hot for you to make it count," said Dravid.

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Brazil eyeing to reclaim U-17 WC title at majestic Saltlake

KOLKATA, SEP 26 /- Brazil Under-17 football team coach Carlos Amadeu wants to reclaim the FIFA U-17 World Cup title after a hiatus of 14 years at the majestic Saltlake Stadium on October 28. Having visited India and the revamped Saltlake Stadium during the World Cup draw, Amadeu said he dreams of lifting the glittering silverware here. "I've heard about the football madness in Kolkata and I've been there. It is a huge stadium with a beautiful history. Since I was there I'm dreaming about the final. I wish we could get the trophy there," Amadeu told PTI in an exclusive interview after arriving in Mumbai on Tuesday. The U-17 World Cup title has

eluded Brazil since 2003. Having won the title thrice in the past, the South American country is just behind title holders and four-time champions Nigeria, who have failed to qualify for the upcoming edition. Having done a solid job in the youth ranks at Vitoria, Amadeu took charge of the Brazil U-17 side in May 2015 in the lead-up to the U-17 World Cup in Chile that year, where he steered the team to the last-eight before being eliminated by eventual champions Nigeria. "I think that if you get the statistics of the U-17 World Cup, Africa are in front of South America and Europe. One of their countries always reach semi-finals," he said. But Amadeu feels the competi-

tion will be tough this time around. "The European teams, USA and Mexico are really strong this year. There are too many teams fighting for the title," he said. Talking about Indian football, Amadeu had some words of advice for the host nation and said they can benefit from a football powerhouse like Brazil by way of exchange programmes. "Players from India have the bio-type to play football, they are fast and have a good technique. In a country of such a huge population, I'm sure India could build a beautiful history in football," he said. "My advice is to watch closely countries like Brazil, who can bring profes-



Brazil U-17 World Cup football at Mumbai Airport.

sionals with know-how. "Also, the Indian professionals should travel around the world and participate in exchange programmes," he added. The 52-year-old has put in well-designed hard work into practice for last two years, the result of which was evident in their dominant performance in the U-17 South American Championship in March. Latest Brazilian teenage sensation Vinicius Junior was the leading goal scorer (7) and the player of the tournament as they won seven of their matches and drew the other two en route to the title. Brazil kept a clean slate in seven of their nine matches and pumped in more goals than any other side (24),

while conceding fewer (three). With his club Flamengo playing the final of the Copa do Brasil on September 27, Vinicius Jr will join the team later this month. "It's the result of hard work, two years of preparation and a well-designed philosophy," Amadeu said. "This has been our goal since we started to work for the national team. I hope we can continue playing this type of football and being competitive as well, though it's not easy as other teams are studying us," he said. Brazil will spend a week in Mumbai before landing in Kochi where they open their campaign against Spain in a mouth-watering group D contest on October 7.

Kapil Dev's 1983 Cricket WC win gets a Bollywood biopic

NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- The trend of biopic on sportspersons in Bollywood will continue as cricket legend Kapil Dev will have a film on his life with the latest news of Kabir Khan directing a biopic on the legendary cricketer. And an actor no less than Ranveer Singh will

play the lead role. Kapil is fondly remembered as India's finest all-rounder and arguably the greatest cricketer the country has produced. He was also named the Wisden Indian Cricketer of the Century at the turn of the millennium. The film will chronicle India's 1983 Cricket World Cup win under Dev's captainship, when the Men in Blue defeated West Indies in the final to clinch their first-ever World Cup trophy. The movie will reportedly be backed by Phantom films, co-owned by filmmakers Anurag Kashyap, Vikas Bahl,

Vikramaditya Motwane and Madhu Mantena. With what is being touted as the "biggest sports film", Kabir is venturing into fairly new genre, whose credits include political-drama-thrillers like "New York", "Bajranghi Bhajan", the most recent "Tubelight", among

others. Apart from this, the filmmaker is also set to helm a web series based on freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army for Amazon Prime Video. Ranveer, meanwhile, is gearing up for the release of his next, "Padmavati".



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