

BCCI plans to cut down wives' travel, managers excluded from team bus

PTI, NEW DELHI: The BCCI is considering a slew of disciplinary measures in the aftermath of India's disastrous tour of Australia, including limiting the presence of spouses on tours and barring managerial staff of coaches and players from the team bus.

The steps which could be taken moving forward will limit the presence of wives and other family members on assignments to a maximum of two weeks if the tour is 45 days or more. If the duration is less than that, the presence of wives could be limited to a week.

In addition, all players might have to use the team bus and not any other vehicle when on assignments. Majority of the players follow this norm but at times, some of them and the support staff use other modes of transportation as well.

LIMITING SPOUSES AND FAMILY MEMBERS ON TOURS: For tours lasting 45 days or more, the presence of wives and family members may be capped at two weeks. For shorter tours, their presence could be limited to one week.

MANDATORY USE OF TEAM BUS: All players and support staff will be required to travel by the team bus during assignments to ensure uniformity and prevent anti-corruption concerns. This rule comes after instances of individuals using alternate transportation modes.

RESTRICTIONS ON PERSONAL MANAGERS: Personal managers of players and coaches will no longer be allowed on

the team bus. This measure is to prevent potential conflicts with anti-corruption protocols.

EXTRA LUGGAGE CHARGES: Players exceeding a luggage weight of 150 kg will be responsible for the additional charges, as BCCI will not cover such expenses.

REASONS BEHIND THE MEASURES: The measures were discussed following India's 1-3 Test series loss in Australia, which marked their first loss to Australia in 10 years. Concerns about discipline, anti-corruption, and behind-the-scenes footage shared on personal YouTube channels prompted these considerations.

All these measures were discussed during the review meeting of the tour Down Under but none of them are to be immediately enforced.

The issue of managers

of players and coaches was highlighted when the personal manager of a senior coaching staff member was allowed on the team bus on the recent tour that ended with India losing 1-3.

"Personal managers travelling on the team bus also raises a red flag with the anti-corruption unit. It should be avoided going forward. As far as the presence of wives on tours is concerned,

it is being discussed in the board and a call would be taken on it soon," a Board official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Also players and coaches should only travel by team bus. It was always supposed to be the case but of late, players use other modes of transportation. That should be avoided," he added.

Former India Opener Akash Chopra was intrigued by the BCCI's new diktat on the team bus.

"All Players Will Have to Travel On The Team Bus" Finding this one most amusing. Wasn't that always the norm??? If it isn't the case anymore it's worth finding out who changed that?? And why??" wrote Chopra on X.

The disciplinary diktat comes after it came to light that the spouse of a travelling reserve in Australia

made content for her own YouTube channel and that included behind the scenes footage of the couple's and the team travels.

Another rule that could come into effect covers the luggage of the players on tours.

If the players luggage is more than 150kg, the BCCI will not pay extra luggage charges. Players will have to pay that, added the source.

The team management, including skipper Rohit Sharma and chief selector Ajit Agarkar, were a part of the review meeting of the tour Down Under.

India lost the series 1-3, their first loss to Australia in 10 years. The debacle also meant that the Indians failed to make the cut for the World Test Championship final to be held in London in June.

BCCI to evaluate Gambhir's future post Champions Trophy

PTI, NEW DELHI: Gautam Gambhir's position as head coach will be "revaluated" on the basis of India's Champions Trophy performance next month amid concerns that there is discontent in the dressing room due to his push to end the long-prevalent "superstar culture" in the team.

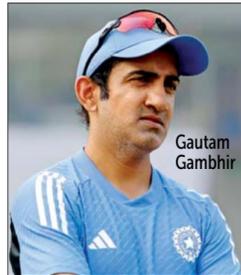
Since Gambhir took over in July last year, the Indian team has lost six out of 10 Tests and also a bilateral ODI series in Sri Lanka.

The results have left Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's international future in significant disarray thanks to their own poor form.

But Gambhir's position has also become slightly shaky. Adding to the drama is his speculated rift with prominent players during the Border-Gavaskar Test series in Australia which India lost 1-3.

"If India doesn't do well in the Champions Trophy, the head coach's position could become untenable. Yes, his contract runs till the 2027 World Cup but the process of evaluation continues.

"Sport is result-oriented and



Gautam Gambhir

RIFT IN TEAM

till now, Gambhir hasn't given any tangible results," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

There has already been a review of the team's performance in Australia by the BCCI. It is understood that Gambhir and senior players aren't on the same page on the issue of team culture.

"Gambhir wants to end the superstar culture that has been prevalent for so many years now. As captain of Kolkata Knight Riders in 2012, he had dropped Brendon McCullum from the playing XI for the IPL final against CSK.

"He has come here to dismantle the superstar culture and that's what has caused discomfort for some playing members," a source, who has seen Gambhir's functioning closely, said.

He cited another instance from his Delhi playing days to explain Gambhir's mindset.

"Once, as Delhi Ranji captain, Gambhir decided that they will play home matches at the Roshanara Ground in Delhi North-West where the pitches were green-top.

"But one huge superstar, who was also out of the Indian team, wanted to play the games at the Jamia Millia Islamia ground, which was closer to his south Delhi residence. Gambhir turned him down. Similarly, in the Indian team, he doesn't want star culture to breed," the person added.

It is learnt that the head coach was not pleased with how some star players gave specific demands about hotels and practice timings during the tour of Australia. But, on the other side, senior players have felt a lack of communication from his end.

Bumrah named ICC Men's Player of Month for December 2024



Jasprit Bumrah

DUBAI: India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was on Tuesday named ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2024 after his sensational performance during the recent tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Leading India's attack single-handedly, Bumrah relentlessly kept Australian batsmen under intense pressure, claiming 22 wickets in three Tests in December last year at an outstanding average of 14.22. He ended with 32 wickets in the five-match series which concluded on January 5. The first match was played in November.

His match-winning contributions included a nine-wicket haul in Brisbane and a five-wicket display in Melbourne as he edged out Australian skipper Pat Cummins and South African Dane Paterson for the award, stated the ICC. He also reached a significant milestone, becoming the first bowler to take 200 Test wickets at an average below 20. Bumrah's brilliance was evident from the very start, with a standout performance in Adelaide. His four-wicket haul was instrumental in minimising Australia's lead in the first innings, keeping India within striking distance.

Jemimah breaks into top-20 in ICC rankings after maiden int'l ton

PTI, DUBAI: Riding on her maiden international century, Indian middle-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues climbed three spots to enter the top-20 at 19th in the ICC Women's ODI rankings released on Tuesday.

Ending a seven-year wait, the 24-year-old struck 102 to power India to their highest

ever total of 370 in the second women's ODI against Ireland in Rajkot. India won the match by 116 runs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Jemimah now has 563 ranking points, ahead of Suzie Bates (New Zealand) in the top-20, the ICC stated in a press release.

India opening batter Smriti Mandhana,



Jemimah Rodrigues

who is leading the side against Ireland in absence of an injured Harmanpreet Kaur, stayed on the podium at third place with 723 ranking points.

She is behind Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (733) and South African star batter Laura Wolvaardt, who retained her top spot with a career-high

points tally of 773.

Australia skipper Alyssa Healy was the big mover in the latest update, climbing to fifth with 678 points.

The top three ODI bowlers were involved in the Ashes series currently, with England's Sophie Ecclestone (779) clinging to the top spot.

India aim for clean sweep in final Women's ODI vs Ireland

PTI, RAJKOT: A dominant India will fancy their chances of completing a clean sweep of the women's ODI series against Ireland in the third and final match here on Wednesday, having recorded two convincing wins in the preceding games.

With another power-packed batting performance, the Indian team will be aiming to continue their impressive run and finish on a high note.

Pratika Rawal, after scoring her third half-century in just four innings, will be eager to translate her start into a maiden hundred.

Her blistering opening partnerships with skipper Smriti Mandhana have been the biggest takeaway of the series.

The duo added 156 runs for the first wicket in their previous outing, marking their third century-plus stand in five innings.

Mandhana's consistency at the top continues to be a major highlight for India as the flamboyant left-hander has carried on her form across formats from the West Indies series.

Harleen Deol, who initially struggled for momentum, found her rhythm lat-

er in the innings, scoring an important 89.

Thanks to Jemimah Rodrigues, who displayed patience and composure before accelerating in the final stages of the innings, India smashed their highest-ever ODI total of 370/5 in the last game.

Promoted to No. 4 in Harmanpreet Kaur's absence, Rodrigues showed maturity after getting a reprieve on 34, and it took her just 28 balls to reach her second fifty.

Seasoned batter Tejal Hasanbis also made a fine comeback with an unbeat-

en fifty in the opening ODI.

In the absence of big hitters like Shafali Verma and Kaur, who has been rested, the series also highlighted the performance of the emerging talents with Pratika making the most of it.

India's bowling though has raised some concerns, as the team has struggled to take wickets consistently in home conditions and allowed Ireland to post 254/7 in pursuit of 371.

While India are missing Renuka Singh, the injury to Pooja Vastrakar has compounded their misery.

Match starts: 11 am

Teenager Fonseca in Melbourne stunner as Medvedev survives big scare

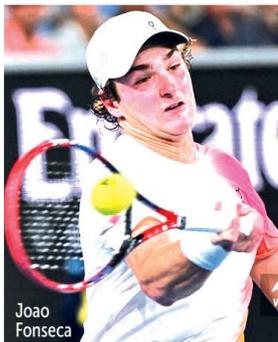
AFP, MELBOURNE: Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca stunned ninth seed Andrey Rublev in a major Australian Open shock on Tuesday as racquet-smashing 2024 finalist Daniil Medvedev narrowly avoided the same fate.

A rampant Taylor Fritz, veteran Gael Monfils and home hope Alex de Minaur also all progressed into round two at Melbourne Park.

In the women's draw, Jasmine Paolini and Elena Rybakina were both emphatic winners on day three, with Emma Navarro and Thina Raducanu also victorious.

But the day belonged to the 18-year-old Fonseca, who defeated Russia's Rublev 7-6 (7/1), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) on his Grand Slam debut.

Roared on by Brazilian fans



Joao Fonseca

decked out in yellow, Fonseca appeared totally unfazed as he set up a second-round meeting with Ita-

ly's Lorenzo Sonego.

Rublev's fellow Russian Medvedev, a three-time losing finalist in Melbourne including a year ago to Jannik Sinner, was heavy favourite against Thailand's 418th-ranked Kasidit Samrej.

But in his first match of the season, the fifth seed nearly imploded in a fit of anger before finding some measure of calm.

"Second and third set I couldn't touch the ball. I didn't know what to do," Medvedev said after finally winning 6-2, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena.

The 28-year-old mangled his racquet as he spectacularly lost his rag in the third set, slamming it into the

net camera repeatedly until they both became a broken mess.

There was no such trouble for fourth seed Fritz as he blitzed fellow American Jenson Brooksby 6-2, 6-0, 6-3 to launch his bid for a maiden Grand Slam crown.

De Minaur, nicknamed "The Demon" by Australian fans and media, eased past Dutchman Botić van de Zandschulp, 6-1, 7-5, 6-4.

Italy's Paolini breezed past Wei Sijia 6-0, 6-4 in just 73 minutes to underline her title credentials.

Former Wimbledon champion Rybakina dished out a harsh lesson of her own to 16-year-old Emerson Jones, winning 6-1, 6-1 in a ruthless statement of intent.

Bopanna, Barrientos make first-round exit

PTI, MELBOURNE: Former world number one Rohan Bopanna and his new Colombian partner Nicolas Barrientos bowed out of the Australian Open men's doubles event with an opening-round

loss to the Spanish team of Pedro Martinez and Jaume Munar here on Tuesday.

Bopanna and Barrientos went down 5-7, 6-7 (5) in a match that lasted close to two hours.

The 14th-seeded Indo-Colombian pair began on a promising note but faltered in crucial moments, allowing the

Spaniards to capitalise and secure victory.

The 44-year-old Indian had won the 2024 edition with his Australian partner Matthew Ebden. That historic victory made Bopanna, who was 43 at that

time, the oldest man in the Open Era to win a Grand Slam title.

However, the Bopanna-Ebden partnership concluded after the Turin ATP Finals in November last year leading to his new pairing with Barrientos.

Earlier, India's top ranked singles player Sumit Nagal also made a first-round exit.

sportspopup

Rohit shows up at Mumbai Ranji team practice at the Wankhede stadium

MUMBAI: Embattled India captain Rohit Sharma practised with the Mumbai team here on Tuesday as the side geared up for the resumption of Ranji Trophy from January 23.



The 37-year-old, who endured a horror run with the bat in the national team's tour of Australia recently, took part in a morning practice session at the Wankhede stadium here. The past few weeks have been tumultuous for Rohit. He managed just 31 runs across three Tests during his time Down Under and was forced to drop himself from the series-deciding fifth and final Test in Sydney due to his poor form. With his future as a red-ball cricketer hanging by a thread, Rohit attended a review meeting on Sunday to assess the team's performance. He was joined by head coach Gautam Gambhir and BCCI's new secretary Devajit Saikia during the deliberations.

Shubman Gill set to join Punjab Ranji side for game against Karnataka

NEW DELHI: India's top-order batter Shubman Gill is set to join Punjab for the team's sixth-round Ranji Trophy match against Karnataka in Bengaluru on January 23, days after a below-par show in the Test series against Australia. Gill had scored just 93 runs from three matches in Australia at an average of 18.60, with a highest score of 31. India lost the five-match series 1-3. During the series, head coach Gautam Gambhir had spoken about the need for senior players to show up in Ranji games if they were truly committed to red-ball cricket. The BCCI brass has also been vocal in insisting that stars should not opt out of domestic marquee events if the international schedule allows them a window to turn up. Gill's last Ranji Trophy appearance for Punjab was in 2022, when he played against Madhya Pradesh in the quarter-finals in Alur.

Kohli, Pant named among Delhi's Ranji probables but participation in doubt

NEW DELHI: Indian stars Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant feature among Delhi's probables for the remainder of Ranji Trophy but their participation in the premier domestic red-ball tournament remains in doubt. Former India veterans Sunil Gavaskar and Ravi Shastri are among many who want the current crop of players, especially the struggling Rohit Sharma and Kohli, to play red-ball cricket. Rohit's training with the Mumbai team on Tuesday piqued plenty of interest but it remains to be seen if he would make himself available for the next round of Ranji Trophy matches beginning January 23. There has also been intense debate around Kohli returning to Ranji Trophy to regain red ball form alongside Rohit. Kohli last played in Ranji Trophy in 2012 while Pant featured in the event last in 2017-18. Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) naming its star players in the list of probables is the norm but their inclusion in the final squad is subject to their availability.

Former Man City captain and manager Tony Book no more

LONDON: Former Manchester City captain and manager Tony Book has died at the age of 90, the Premier League club announced on Tuesday. Right-back Book captained City as they won four major trophies, including the English top-flight title and European Cup Winners' Cup, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He later led them to League Cup success as manager in 1976. Book was subsequently named as an honorary president at City as well as life president of the official supporters club. "For nearly sixty years Tony helped to shape Manchester City," said City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak. "Not just in what he contributed as a player, captain and manager, but in the way he conducted himself.

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