

Perceptions were created, was typecast but I knew my strengths: Shreyas

PTI, NEW DELHI: He fought perceptions about a so-called technical shortcoming, was 'typecast', and had his contract torn up within months of being a World Cup hero but Shreyas Iyer was indefatigable through it all, trusting his sincerity and uncomplicated mind to steer him through.

The result of the perseverance has been pleasing, to put it mildly. The 30-year-old has built himself into one of India's most consistent number four batters in recent times and was declared a 'silent hero' by his captain Rohit Sharma after the team's Champions Trophy triumph a few days ago.

"Maybe, the perception was created or maybe I was typecast. But I always knew my strengths, my abilities and (there was also) the belief (that) I had in myself," Iyer told PTI in an interview

WANTS TO 'MARK' HIMSELF AT NUMBER THREE THIS IPL

CHANDIGARH: Having performed the role of a "silent hero" at number four in the title-winning Champions Trophy campaign, Shreyas Iyer wants to make a big impact at number three position in this Indian Premier League season.

Iyer is not part of India's T20 set up but a productive debut season for Punjab Kings could revive his international career in the shortest format. He captained Kolkata Knight Riders to the title last season where he batted in the



middle-order With Punjab Kings, an under-performing franchise since IPL's inception in 2008, Iyer feels no pressure of leading the team and just wants to win another trophy.

when asked about his perceived lack of ability to play the short ball that became a talking point in the last couple of years.

The numbers back him. In the last eight ODIs, including the home games against England and the subsequent Champions Trophy, Iyer has

"We already know that IPL is an integral part of Indian cricket. And if I would want to mark myself at some position in T20, it would be number 3. And that's what I'm focusing at. I wouldn't say that we are planning and thinking about what number I will be batting. "This time I'm quite clear about that position. And I'm going to be focusing on that number. As long as coach approves of me," Iyer said at the season opening media interaction seated alongside head coach Ricky Ponting.

averaged 53 batting at number four and had only one low-scoring outing in eight knocks.

"An athlete needs to con-

stantly evolve as the sport keeps changing its dynamics. I am glad I kept a positive frame of mind, and trusted my process," he said.

Last year, he sustained a back injury during the home Tests against England and then lost his central contract after showing up for his then IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders' training instead of Ranji Trophy duties after his recovery.

He was stripped of his central contract as BCCI set out to assert the importance of domestic cricket by seemingly punishing him. Iyer kept his head down and led Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL trophy weeks later before forcing his way back into India's 50-over set-up.

His was a classic case of performance doing all the talking for him.

Indian runner Archana Jadhav gets four-year ban for failed dope test

PTI, NEW DELHI: India's long-distance runner Archana Jadhav was on Tuesday banned for four years owing to a failed dope test in January, the findings of which she did not contest despite repeated reminders, prompting World Athletics to deem her actions as acceptance of guilt.

According to World Athletics' Athletes Integrity Unit (AIU), Jadhav's sample, which was collected at the Pune Half-Marathon in December last year, contained prohibited substance Oxandrolone. This synthetic anabolic steroid promotes protein production and muscle building in the body.

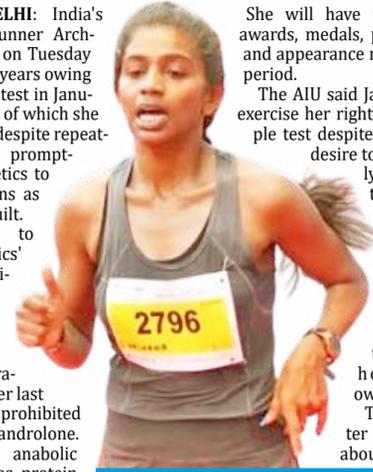
The ban came into effect from January 7. Jadhav has been under provisional suspension for the duration. On February 25, she had replied to the violation charge in an e-mail to the AIU stating "I am extremely sorry sir...I welcome your decision."

The AIU said its understanding of this communication was that Jadhav did not require a hearing and was "content" to get a decision from the body.

The AIU said Jadhav was nonetheless informed that she had time till March 3 to admit that she had committed the Anti-Doping Rule Violations, and was reminded of the same by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on February 28. The AIU, however, did not get any response from Jadhav.

The AIU said Jadhav has also not demonstrated that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations were "not intentional".

"...the Athlete is deemed to have committed the Anti-Doping Rule Violations..." the AIU stated. As a result, "a period of ineligibility of four years" commences on January 7. In addition, her results on and since December 15, 2024 stand disqualified.



She will have to forfeit all awards, medals, points, prizes and appearance money for the period.

The AIU said Jadhav did not exercise her right to a 'B' sample test despite expressing a desire to do so in early communication.

She responded well past the stipulated date of January 17 to state that she was hospitalised owing to illness. This was after she was told about the proce-

DOPING VIOLATION

■ SUBSTANCE: Oxandrolone (Anabolic Steroid)	years (January 7, 2025 – January 7, 2029)
■ SAMPLE COLLECTED: December 2024 (Pune Half Marathon)	■ DISQUALIFIED RESULTS: Since December 15, 2024
■ PROVISIONAL SUSPENSION START: January 7, 2025	■ FORFEITED ACHIEVEMENTS: All awards, medals, points, prizes, and earnings post-violation
■ BAN DURATION: 4	

Salt will take a lot of pressure off Kohli, says De Villiers

PTI, NEW DELHI: South African batting great AB de Villiers believes Virat Kohli should focus on playing smart cricket and continue controlling the game this season as RCB possess immense firepower with Phil Salt expected to ease the pressure on the Indian superstar.

Despite being one of RCB's most consistent performers, Kohli's strike rate was a topic of discussion past two seasons.

However, with the Bengaluru franchise acquiring the English duo of Salt and Liam Livingstone, along with Australian Tim David and West Indian Romario Shepherd -- all fearless strikers of the ball -- de Villiers feels Kohli can play with more freedom.

“Salt is one of the most attacking players we've ever seen. I think he's going to take a lot of pressure off Virat. Virat needs to continue what he's been doing for so many years...control the game, play smart cricket. He's got the best instinct of any player out there. He knows when to up the ante and when to lower it

— **AB de Villiers, South African batting great**

"Virat seems to be enjoying his cricket. I don't think he's going to have to up his strike rate batting with Phil Salt," de Villiers said on Tuesday.

"Salt is one of the most attacking players we've ever seen. I think he's going to take a lot of pressure off Virat. Virat needs to continue what he's been doing for so many years...control the game, play smart cricket. He's got the best instinct

of any player out there. He knows when to up the ante a bit and when to lower it."

The South African, who played for RCB for 11 seasons, said Kohli needs to ensure there are no batting collapses.

"Virat needs to be the captain of the batting department in this tournament and really just keep things together, play smart cricket to make sure they don't find those collapses in the batting order."

BCCI set to form organising panel for Women's ODI WC To ban tobacco sponsorship

PTI, NEW DELHI: The BCCI will form the organising committee of the Women's ODI World Cup besides taking a call on the venues for the ICC event it will be hosting later this year at its Apex Council emergent meeting in Kolkata on March 22.

The meeting will take place ahead of the IPL opener between defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens.

The BCCI last hosted a Women's ODI World Cup back in 2013. The exact schedule of the tournament slotted in October is yet to be worked out.

According to the agenda accessed by PTI, there will be a "discussion on formation of LOC for Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 and discussion regarding venues for Women's Cricket

World Cup 2025".

India have made two finals of the 50-over event but fell short at the final hurdle. Harmanpreet Kaur's team will be aiming to end the long ICC trophy wait at home.

The Apex Council will also finalise the structure for the 2025-26 domestic season.

As part of the home season, India are scheduled to host West Indies and South Africa and therefore, the members are likely to decide on the venues for the those Test series.

Earlier this month, the Health Ministry instructed the BCCI to ban all forms of tobacco and alcohol promotions, including surrogate advertisements, during the IPL beginning March 22.

The Apex Council will take up that matter in the meeting, including sponsorships related to tobacco as well as crypto currency.

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