

England will hold the edge but India will push hard, feel former cricketers

With a youthful batting line-up and limited red-ball exposure in recent months, visitors will face a stern challenge

PTI, NEW DELHI: Former Australia opener Matthew Hayden believes India will have a strong chance of winning the upcoming Test series against England if they can clinch the games in Leeds and Manchester, but South African pace great Dale Steyn has backed the hosts to triumph 3-2 in the five-match contest.

ENGLAND TOUR

India and England kick off their new World Test Championship cycle with the five-match series, starting with the first game in Leeds on Friday. Manchester will host the fourth Test from July 23.

"I don't think England bowlers are that good, they have got a number of injuries and a number of retir-

Since India's last red ball tour of England, the hosts' two most experienced bowlers -- James Anderson and Stuart Broad -- have bid adieu to international cricket. Additionally, England's bowling arsenal is also considerably depleted, with speedster Mark Wood ruled out of at least the first three Tests due to injury. Fellow quick Jofra Archer will also miss the opening game, and Gus Atkinson is continuing to recover from a hamstring strain

ees as well, that will be the challenge," Hayden said on 'JioHotstar'.

"The northern Test matches when it's zipping around that will be key, win that one and it could well be a series that goes India's way," he added.

Since India's last red ball tour of England, the hosts' two most experienced bowlers -- James Anderson and Stuart Broad -- have bid adieu to international cricket.

Additionally, England's bowling arsenal is also considerably depleted, with

speedster Mark Wood ruled out of at least the first three Tests due to injury.

Fellow quick Jofra Archer will also miss the opening game, and Gus Atkinson is continuing to recover from a hamstring strain.

India, meanwhile, will take the field under new captain Shubman Gill, ushering in a fresh era following the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and R Ashwin.

With a youthful batting line-up and limited red-ball exposure in recent months, the visitors will face a stern

challenge.

Steyn didn't write India off but backed England to claim the trophy.

"It is a pretty young team. Probably going to say that England are going to win the series but it's not going to come without a fight. I feel like there are going to be one or two Tests that India will take themselves."

"All games will be close. But every game will have a result. I think it will be 3-2 in favour of England. But even that will be incredibly difficult."

Gambhir to rejoin India squad today

PTI, NEW DELHI: India head coach Gautam Gambhir, who had flown back home last week due to a family emergency, will link up with the squad on Tuesday ahead of the opening Test against England at Leeds, beginning on June 20.

Gambhir had rushed back to India after his mother suffered a heart attack, and had to be hospitalised.

"His mother is doing well now. Gautam will leave tomorrow and join the squad the same day," a BCCI source told PTI. The former India opener had missed the closed-door intra-squad match between India and India A in Beckenham that ended on Sunday.

In his absence, assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak and bowling coach Morne Morkel supervised the team's preparation ahead of the five-match rubber. The Shubman Gill-led Indian Test squad is searching for its first series win in England since 2007.

Women's ODI WC: India to face Pakistan on October 5 at Colombo

PTI, DUBAI: India's marquee women's ODI World Cup match against Pakistan will be held at the neutral venue of R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on October 5, the ICC announced on Monday.

Colombo had to be added as a neutral venue according to the 'Hybrid Model' that was accepted for the men's Champions Trophy and beyond earlier this year after India refrained from travelling to Pakistan for the ICC event.

There were speculations whether ICC will slot an Indo-Pak round robin match, which is pretty much a feature in all global tournaments post terror attacks in Kashmir's Pahalgam where 26 Indian tourists were killed.

The military escalation from both sides had raised doubts about India facing arch-rivals even at world events but ICC has cleared all doubts after the release

INDIA'S WORLD CUP SCHEDULE

- September 30: India vs Sri Lanka, Bengaluru
- October 5: India vs Pakistan, Colombo
- October 9: India vs South Africa, Visakhapatnam
- October 12: India vs Australia, Visakhapatnam
- October 19: India vs England, Indore
- October 23: India vs New Zealand, Guwahati
- October 26: India vs Bangladesh, Bengaluru

of schedule on Monday.

India will kick off their campaign against Sri Lanka at Bengaluru on September 30, and will also face Bangladesh on October 26 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, dispelling the rumours of the venue losing hosting rights of the matches after the recent stampede during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru victory celebrations.

India's contest against the Lankans is also the opening match of the ICC showpiece. India, who are seeking their maiden title triumph, will lock horns with South Af-

rica on October 9 and will meet defending champions Australia on October 12, and both the matches are at Visakhapatnam.

From there, India will move to Indore to face England on October 19 and then will proceed to Guwahati for the match with New Zealand on October 23.

With the eight best teams in the women's game descending on India, alongside incredible venues and what promises to be record-breaking crowds, we are all looking forward to an unforgettable tourna-

ment, said Jay Shah, the ICC Chairman, in a release.

However, the BCCI is yet to form the Local Organising Committee (LOC) which will be in charge of the running of the tournament.

Australia will start their campaign against New Zealand on October 1 at Indore, while the high-profile match against England in a rematch of the previous edition's final is scheduled to be played on October 22 in Indore.

Meanwhile, Pakistan will play all their matches in Colombo as per the hybrid model. The first semi-final is scheduled for October 29 either at Guwahati or Colombo depending on Pakistan's progress in the tournament. The second semi-final will be held at Bengaluru on October 30, while the final will be held at Bengaluru or Colombo on November 2 as per Pakistan's standing in the event.

I have looked up to Sundar for inspiration: Sai

PTI, BECKENHAM (UK): Washington Sundar's meteoric rise from age-group to international cricket in a quick span of time was an inspiration for his younger state-mate **B Sai Sudharsan**, who is all set to make his Test debut against England at Leeds on June 20.

In 2016, Washington was playing more as a specialist batter for India U-19 in the junior World Cup and within a year and half, he was playing his first ODI as an 18-year-old. In 2021, he made his Test debut as a 20-year-old and was one of the heroes of the Border-Gavaskar triumph.

Sai Sudharsan, who is two years junior to Washington, spoke about how his "senior's" journey goaded him to work harder in order to achieve his goal of donning India colours.

"I had played a few games against him (junior level). So, it's always special. We have looked up to him a lot and the way he went up and played for the country, it was real quick, I had that in my mind," Sai Sudharsan told BCCI.TV on sidelines of the intra-squad warm-up game with a beaming Washington by his side.

"He (Washington) did well in the IPL. Then he played for the country, so it was great motivation for me, that someone



from Chennai (is playing for India). Knowing him and playing with him since we were young, it made me feel I also want to do it the same way. He was an inspiration," the stylish southpaw's admiration for Washington was there to be seen.

Washington, who has played 9 Tests, 23 ODIs and 54 T20Is for India, also spoke about the time when Sai Sudharsan was coming through the ranks as this talented cricketer from Chennai.

"Lot of my coaches and friends as well, constantly spoke about his (Sai Sudharsan's) growth in his cricketing career, always grown, only managed to get better," Washington said.

"Every time I watched him (Sudharsan) on TV, there was a lot to take from his skill-set, kind of work ethic, which definitely inspired a lot of kids," he said.

shorttakes

Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy launch delayed due to Ahmedabad air tragedy

LONDON: The launch of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy for the upcoming Test series between India and England has been delayed due to the recent airline tragedy in Ahmedabad which led to 275 deaths. Previously called the Pataudi Trophy in honour of former India captain Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, the decision to rename it as Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy (ATT) was taken by the host England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). "Yes, the launch of ATT Trophy (which was to be held originally on June 14) has been delayed due to the recent tragedy in Ahmedabad. It has not been cancelled. Hopefully, there will be a launch in next few days just before the start of the series," a BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

India eye stronger response against Argentina

LONDON: Having started their European leg with two narrow defeats, the Indian women's hockey team will be eager to bounce back when it takes on world No. 2 Argentina in back-to-back matches in the FIH Pro League. Salima Tete and her side went down 1-2 and 2-3 to Australia over the weekend and will have little time to regroup before facing a formidable Argentine outfit that has won seven of its 12 league matches so far. "Argentina is ranked No. 2 in the world and has won 7 of their 12 FIH Pro League matches so far. Coming into this leg of the league, we knew they would be one of the toughest teams to beat," Tete was quoted as saying by Hockey India. India, currently seventh in the standings with nine points, are aiming for a turnaround. Argentina sit second on the table and will be eyeing full points to keep pressure on leaders Netherlands. India will play their first match against Argentina on Tuesday followed by the second match a day later.

Team MGD1 finishes 5th in World Blitz Team Championship

LONDON: Team MGD1, comprising predominantly of Indian players, defeated Freedom to finish fifth in the FIDE World Blitz Team Championship, days after winning the prestigious 'Rapid' title in the tournament here. WR Chess overcame KazChess to secure their second Blitz crown since the competition began in 2023. Team MGD1, with Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi playing on the top board, had earlier made it to the 16-team knockout and beaten Generation XYZA 4-0 in the first round. But the team comprising, Erigaisi, P Harikrishna, David Gujjarro, V. Pranav, Leon Luke Mendonca, Stavroula Tsolakidou and Atharva Tayade, suffered a 1-3 defeat at the hands of Hexamind Chess Team -- that had the likes of American GM Lovan Aronian and Vidit Gujrathi among others -- in the quarterfinal 2-4. The duel was decided by Hexamind's Anish Giri defeating P. Harikrishna in a tense endgame. In the fifth-place playoff, MGD1 emerged victorious defeating Freedom in both matches 4-2.

BCCI to conduct an additional bone test for age determination in junior cricket

NEW DELHI: In a significant move, the BCCI has decided to conduct an additional bone test at the junior level to ensure that no cricketer misses out on playing an extra season due to the "+1 factor" that is currently added to the calculation, which renders players ineligible by thinnest of margins. As per the existing norms, a player undergoes a bone test for age determination via the TWS method (test used for assessing bone age) and a +1 factor is added to determine his or her eligibility for the next season in the same age group. However, with the rule change, a cricketer in the Under-16 boys' category, will undergo a second bone test the following season to determine his eligibility to appear in the same age bracket in case the +1 factor rules him out in the previous year. "It is being done to have an exact age and make sure that no player loses due to arithmetical calculation rather than scientific calculation," a BCCI source told PTI. The bone age cut-off for U-16 boys is 16.5 years and 15 years for U-15 girls competition.

Chennai Open back on WTA calendar after three years

CHENNAI: India will host the Chennai Open, a WTA 250 tournament, after three years, the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association (TNTA) announced on Monday with the main draw action set to unfold from October 27. The tournament had featured on the WTA calendar back in 2022 when the Czech Republic's Linda Fruhvirtova had emerged singles champion. "Finally, our efforts to get a major international sporting /tennis event to Chennai have borne fruit, thanks to the strong support of the Government of Tamil Nadu and the SDAT (Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu)," TNTA President Vijay Amritraj said. "The event will be broadcast on a major sports channel. I look forward to enthusiastic participation of the sporting public of Chennai in making the event a grand success," he added.

Sri Lanka's Mathews hails 'dream run' in final Test against Bangladesh

GALLE: Sri Lanka are set to begin a two-Test series against Bangladesh in Galle on Tuesday that will mark the end of Angelo Mathews's "dream run" in the game's longest format, as the cricket season resumed following South Africa's World Test Championship triumph at Lord's. The red-ball matches between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will be followed by a white-ball series of three one-day internationals and three T20s. Hosts Sri Lanka begin the contest as firm favourites, eager to turn a fresh page after a stuttering end to the previous WTC cycle. Sri Lanka were firmly in the mix for a place in the WTC final until December before the wheels came off spectacularly. "We had one hand on a spot in the final but a few brain fades at crunch moments cost us dearly," Sri Lankan captain Dhananjaya de Silva told reporters on Monday. "We've learnt our lessons. A strong home start lays the foundation for success on the road." Sri Lanka's squad includes six uncapped players, with at least one debut cap set to be handed out. Spin remains Sri Lanka's strength, with Prabath Jayasuriya the key and selector also calling up off-spinner Akila Dananjaya. The second Test will begin in Colombo on June 25.

West Indies beat Ireland by 62 runs to clinch T20 cricket series

BREADY (Northern Ireland): West Indies piled up its second-highest Twenty20 international innings and beat Ireland by 62 runs to clinch a rain-marred three game series 1-0. West Indies posted 256-5 after being sent in at Bready Cricket Club -- propelled by an opening stand of 122 in 10.3 overs between Evin Lewis (91 runs in 44 balls) and captain Shai Hope (51 in 27). West Indies smashed 20 sixes in total -- Lewis hit eight maximums, with four each for Hope and Keacy Carty, who was 49 not out from 22 deliveries. Ireland replied with 194-7. Ross Adair (48 in 36) and Harry Tector (38 in 25) took the total to 114-1 before Ireland was reduced to 116-4 in 12 overs. The first and second games were abandoned because of rain. The two teams drew a three-match ODI series 1-1 in Dublin in May, before England swept West Indies 3-0 in ODI and T20 series.

PSG cruise over Atletico, Bayern thrash Auckland

AFF, LOS ANGELES (United States): Paris Saint-Germain laid down an ominous marker on their march towards global domination at the FIFA Club World Cup on Sunday as Bayern Munich showed no mercy to Auckland's amateurs with a ruthless 10-0 walloping.

The first full day of action at the inaugural edition of the 32-team club tournament saw newly crowned European champions PSG produce a scintillating 4-0 rout of Atletico Madrid after Bayern's double-digit drubbing of Auckland City.

CLUB WORLD CUP

The New Zealand minnows are one of the Cinderella stories of the tournament, made up of amateur players who had to take unpaid leave to travel to the United States.

But Bundesliga Bayern were in no mood to be charitable and duly ran riot in Cincinnati. Jamal Musiala scored a second-half hat-trick after coming off the bench while Kingsley Coman, Michael Olise and Thomas Mueller all netted twice. Sacha Boey scored



Achraf Hakimi right-back of Paris Saint-Germain FC and Clement Lenglet centre-back of Club Atletico de Madrid compete for the ball during the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 Group B match at Rose Bowl Stadium in Pasadena, California

the other goal in a Group C game that amounted to target practice for Bayern, who will face tougher tests

against Boca Juniors and Benfica. While Bayern were left satisfied with a clinical opening, PSG delivered a

statement win over Atleti in front of an 80,619 crowd at a sun-baked Pasadena Rose Bowl -- the venue for the

1994 World Cup final. The French champions shrugged off searing heat -- temperatures reached 31 degrees Celsius (88 Fahrenheit) shortly after the mid-day kick-off -- to produce the kind of adventurous, attacking display which became their calling card en route to their dazzling Champions League triumph earlier this month.

Fabian Ruiz and Vitinha gave PSG a 2-0 lead by half-time before Senny Mayulu and Lee Kang-in sealed an impressive Group B win with late goals against an Atleti team who struggled to cope with the French side's multi-faceted attacking play. PSG are bidding to crown a superb season which saw them win four trophies at home and in Europe.

On Sunday's evidence, few would bet against Luis Enrique's side from being crowned world champions.

Brazilian champions Botafogo hung on for a 2-1 win at a determined Seattle Sounders. The Copa Libertadores holders took the lead in the 28th minute when Jair Cunha rose superbly to head in a cross curled in at pace by Alex Telles.

Igor Jesus doubled the advantage on the stroke of half-time with a bullet header. It was a different story after the break.

The Sounders dominated possession and put Botafogo's defence under intense pressure, pulling a goal back through a deflected Cristian Roldan header.

Seattle pushed forward in search of the equaliser but some desperate defending and fine goalkeeping from John saw the Brazilian club over the line.

Palmeiras drew 0-0 with Portuguese giants Porto in Group A at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

RESULTS

Palmeiras 0 Porto 0, Paris Saint-Germain 4 (Ruiz 19, Vitinha 45-1, Mayulu 87, Lee 90+7-pen) Atletico Madrid 0, Botafogo 2 (Jair Cunha 28, Igor Jesus 44) Seattle Sounders 1 (Roldan 75), Bayern Munich 10 (Coman 6, 21, Boey 18, Olise 20, 45+3, Mueller 45, 89, Musiala 67, 73-pen, 84) Auckland City 0

