

JADEJA OUT OF ASHWIN'S SHADOW: DAV

■ The Australian coach says Kohli will not rush to play IPL

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, MARCH 28

Dav Whatmore who was the head coach when Virat Kohli led the India U-19 side to World Cup triumph in 2008 believes his former charge will not aggravate his shoulder injury by rushing to represent Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL-10 starting on April 5.

"I guess the injury must have been pretty bad for Virat to not play the series-decider in Dharamsala. And knowing him well, I'm sure he will not show urgency in coming back. Given his hard working nature and latest rehab techniques, he should be able to play the big portion of IPL-10," said the Australian who launched the CSS Whatmore Centre for Cricket in association with Sri Ramachandra Medical College here on Tuesday.

Apart from Kohli, the likes of Ravindra Jadeja and K.L. Rahul also blossomed under Whatmore

Whatmore said his countrymen's mellowed attitude has something to do with their participation in the IPL.

during their junior days. Whatmore, who has coached all the teams from the subcontinent, said India's past season proved that Jadeja was no longer under the shadow of R. Ashwin.

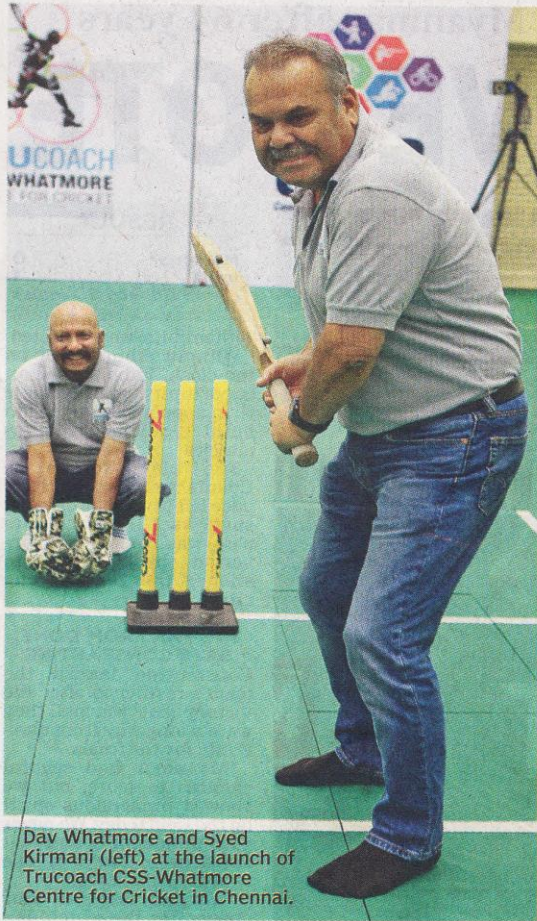
"Jadeja has made a lot of improvement in his accuracy. And it came with patience. He bowls pretty straight and operates closer to the stumps, which gives him more opportunities to hit the pads and get the LBW. Until this season, the confidence that he normally carries in limited-overs was lacking in the longest format. I'm glad he has found his feet in Test," said the 63-year-old.

Whatmore said Australia have surprised everyone by putting in a valiant fight against India. "Not many would have expected the

Aussies to win the first Test in Pune. Australia looked confident. India can argue that they could have made it 3-1 because of the huge advantage they had in Ranchi. Aussie batters Matt Renshaw, Peter Handscomb and Glenn Maxwell made a lot of difference to the team. One of the biggest positives was Maxwell's hundred. With the Ashes coming up, the bowling unit with Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood in prime form is fantastic for Australia," he added.

Not too surprised with the way Steve Smith's 'brain fade' incident was amicably settled between Cricket Australia and BCCI, Whatmore said his countrymen's mellowed attitude has something to do with their participation in the IPL.

"Not just players from Australia, everyone loves coming here and making use of the opportunity. For players, coaches and commentators, India throws up benefits in abundance," he said.



Dav Whatmore and Syed Kirmani (left) at the launch of Trucoach CSS-Whatmore Centre for Cricket in Chennai.

'Don't read too much into Kohli's friendship comment'

■ HARI KISHORE M

CHENNAI: The India-Australia series has seen some drama on and off the pitch. From the 'brain fade' incident to Glenn Maxwell mocking Virat Kohli's injury to Steve Smith calling Murali Vijay a cheat, both teams were at loggerheads giving fans the much-needed entertainment.

Talking about the way the series was fought, renowned coach Dav Whatmore said India prevailed when it mattered. "Both teams were attacking and fighting well. But to chase big totals in the first innings and get a lead speaks volumes. India fought harder and with the way Australia drew the Test in Ranchi, they can go home with a lot of positives," Whatmore said.

Whatmore didn't want to read too

Photo: Manivasagan N



Dav Whatmore

much into Kohli's comments on the friendship between the players of the two countries. "It is different when you play for the country. If Kohli has

Australians playing for RCB, he will welcome them as he wants to win every match for his franchisee," he laughed.

Commenting on the brain fade incident, Whatmore said he could understand how Smith would have felt at that moment.

"In that moment, Smith was wrong. He was misguided by his junior batting partner (Renshaw) into checking with the dressing room. It was silly, he admitted the fault and we should move on. An error was committed and we all have to learn from the mistakes we commit and I hope Smith has learnt his lesson," the 1996 World Cup winning coach of Sri Lanka added.

According to Whatmore, India clinched the series on day one, when chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav bamboozled the visitors. Kuldeep played under "He is a match winner. He has more than one string to his bow — he is

a team player, he is a good fielder and more importantly he is a wicket-taker and a positive influence on the team. It often does happen in a Test that what happens on the first or the second day shapes the match," he added.

Whatmore, who was inaugurating the Sri Ramachandra University's Centre for Sports Sciences, said working with the grassroots was his forte. Athletes in the Centre for Sports Sciences can make use of the high performance centre (used in rehab process) under the guidance of a high performance coach from the University of Pretoria. Athletes can also use the Isokinetic lab (used for muscle strength tests), thread-mill lab (used to improve aerobic capacity and is sports specific), ergometric labs and high altitude training labs for their tests and corrective measures that help an athlete hone his skills with respect to his body.

Whatmore & Kirmani laud India's stellar performance against Smith & Co

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

FORMER Australia cricketer and noted coach Dav Whatmore, and former wicketkeeper Syed Kirmani lauded India for beating Australia 2-1 in the Test series and regaining the Border-Gavaskar trophy.

"It was an incredible performance. They played as a team and several of their key members were consistent. At crucial junctures, their players stepped up in turns and contributed," said Whatmore at the launch of Trucoach-CSS Whatmore Centre for Cricket at the Sri Ramachandra

University campus on Tuesday. Kirmani too lauded Virat Kohli & Co and had some comforting words for Australia. "It was a wonderful comeback for India after losing the first Test. They are a young and competitive side, and full marks to them for their good show. Australia are in the process of building a Test side, so we need to be patient. Nevertheless, it was a closely fought series, and I am happy that the youngsters in the Indian side have lived up to the expectations," opined Kirmani, who inaugurated the coaching facility. Whatmore termed the second Test in Bengaluru as the point



Dav Whatmore (R) during the launch of Trucoach-CSS Whatmore Centre for Cricket at the Sri Ramachandra University campus on Tuesday | © SAMPATHKUMAR

when Australia lost their focus. "They had a great start in Pune. The margin of victory would have certainly demoralised the Indians. In the second Test too, India began badly. But they bounced back. Australia failed to seize the initiative," pointed out Whatmore.

"Plus, they depended too much on Steve Smith and David Warner. Smith was fabulous; Warner was inconsistent. Lack of partnerships and poor depth of lower middle-order cost Australia the series. After a great start, Steve O'Keefe failed to maintain pressure in Dharamsala."

In contrast, Indian spinners delivered when it mattered. "You take the second Test. Australia were in a good position to win. Any other team would have let the match slip, but India didn't. I was impressed with the way R Ashwin bowled in the second innings," observed Whatmore.

Speaking of the difference between both sides, Whatmore picked Ravindra Jadeja's batting. "Jadeja was a revelation as a batsman in the series. His crucial partnerships at the bottom of the order was the difference between both the sides. His effort in Dharamsala gave the hosts the edge."

But Kirmani believed that the Indian pacers too contributed. "All the medium-pacers, be it Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav, or Bhuvneshwar Kumar, gave us vital breakthroughs at various junctures. I would say that our entire attack contributed and bowled better than Australia."

Perhaps this is the first series in a long time that India has won without any major contribution from skipper Kohli. But Whatmore, who coached the Indian skipper during his formative years, believes that the dashing batsman will bounce back soon.

ashokv@hinduonlineexpress.com

'DRS: eliminate umpire's call'

Whatmore says Smith would not have asked for help

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Dav Whatmore wants umpire's call in DRS to go. "If the ball is hitting the stumps, it is hitting the stumps. Take umpire's call out," he said.

The celebrated coach, here to guide youngsters at the Trucoach CSS-Whatmore Centre for Cricket, said in a conversation with *The Hindu* on Tuesday, "A lot of heartburn is caused because of the umpire's call.

"You want a cricketer to be adjudged out if the ball is hitting any part of the stumps. The DRS will be much better off without it."

Dwelling on the India-Australia Test series, Whatmore said, "It was Kuldeep Yadav, who changed the game for India on day one. Australia

was looking on course for 450 when he broke the back of the line-up.

"Kuldeep is different, being a left-arm chinaman bowler, and is accurate."

On the verbal spats during the series, Whatmore said, "India and Australia have a history isn't it? This was bound to happen this time also since the sides were being led by confident, aggressive captains who wouldn't look back. But at the end of the day, much of the cricket too was engrossing."

Looking back at the Steve Smith DRS incident in Bengaluru, Whatmore said, "It was a total mental fade out. But I don't think the Australians did this [seeking assistance from team-mates

in the pavilion] deliberately. I would be very surprised if they did that."

Talking about the off-spinners on view in the series, Whatmore said, "Lyon has a nice action, has overspin and gets bounce.

"Ashwin is more front on, he gets drift and has side-spin and variety. Both played their parts in the series but perhaps, Lyon had more success."

Despite the series defeat, Whatmore said there were some positives for Australia. "They were up for a fight in this series. The manner Pat Cummins bowled augurs well for Australia in the Ashes."

For India, Virat Kohli will be back among the runs soon, Whatmore felt.

Trucoach CSS-Whatmore Centre for Cricket inaugurated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Trucoach CSS-Whatmore Centre for Cricket will seek to blend the technique of the game with the latest sports science and medicine.

Dav Whatmore will provide technical inputs to emerging cricketers while the Centre for Sports Science at the Sri Ramachandra Medical College will make available modern training and rehabilitation methods.

Inaugurating the centre here on Tuesday, Whatmore said, "The infrastructure here is better than what I have seen in countries such as Australia, England and South Africa. It will be a boon for the cricketers."



Whatmore and Kirmani at the launch. ■ M. VEDHAN

"I will be here full time and not fly in and fly out. This is a fine place for learning and cricket is close to all our hearts."

He revealed the idea of him coming to Chennai and

teaming up with the CSS here was floated first by former Kerala Ranji cricketer J.K. Mahendra.w

The chief guest of the evening, former Indian wicket keeper Syed Kirmani, said, "The technology today is mind-boggling. Today, you have the latest technical assistance and the support staff to assist you. I think the 1983 World Cup-winning team laid the foundation for the current cricketers."

S. Arumugam, Director, CSS, said, "We have started with cricket. We want to expand to other sports also."

A website *trucoach.in* was launched and a teaser video on Whatmore and the academy, shot by well known film-maker Bharat Bala, was screened.

Kohli wouldn't want to risk injury by playing IPL: Dav

Shilarze.Saharoy@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Battling against the odds, Australia surprised everyone with their grit and tenacity. Eventually, India prevailed 2-1 but former Australian batsman Dav Whatmore feels the Aussies will leave with their heads held high.

The 63-year-old, who has coached teams like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, on Tuesday launched Trucoach CSS Whatmore Centre For Cricket and spoke on the effect IPL had on 'cheatgate' controversy, why Kohli will not risk his injured shoulder in IPL and his retirement from international coaching. Excerpts:

● Australia put up a brave fight

but lost eventually...

Tours of India have always been a challenge. But they played hard and won the first Test to everyone's surprise. India prevailed in the end due to their mental toughness. You need mental strength to save a game or win a game in the second innings. The Aussies were up to it in Pune and Ranchi but they crumbled in the other two. India, on the other hand, fought a little bit longer. India have lost the toss thrice in the series and on most occasions, Australia put up a good total. So it has never been easy for India. But either Shujara or Rahul or Vijay showed patience to grind it out.

● Do you think the Aussies have mellowed down as they settled



TURNING BACK THE CLOCK: Dav Whatmore and Syed Kirmani indulge in some fun and games on Tuesday

'cheatgate' amicably?

Both the BCCI and CA showed good maturity by settling the issue

amicably. I believe it was a complete brainfade and Smith admitted his mistake. I don't think it will ever happen again. A lot of Aussies also play in IPL. They know that they have to play in IPL and share the dressing room with some of the Indian players. That might also have mellowed down the players' attitude.

● With Champions Trophy coming up, is it advisable for Kohli to play in IPL?

No one really knows how bad is Kohli's shoulder. As far as I know him, he doesn't want to miss any game. So his shoulder must be really hurting that he didn't play such an important Test. He must have also thought that since the Test was a

decider, India needed someone who is 100 per cent fit and sat out. With India playing several important tournaments, one of them being Champions Trophy, I don't think he would want to risk his injury by playing a few extra matches for RCB in the IPL.

● Who has been the standout India performer in the series?

It has been Ravindra Jadeja. He was living in the shadow of R Ashwin all these days. But he has slowly emerged. He has learnt to be more patient. He has got a couple of subtle variations but then his strength has been line and length. A lot of left-arm spinners try out too many things. But Jadeja has been consistent and got the results for the team.

Whatmore to coach youngsters at SRMC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Dav Whatmore, in presence of former India 'keeper Syed Kirmani, launched Trucoach-CSS Whatmore Centre for Cricket at the SRMC on Tuesday.

Also present on the occasion was Dr S Arumugam, director of the centre. At Trucoach, Whatmore will mentor and coach young talents with the help of sports scientists.

The focus will be on strength and conditioning, rehabilitation, biomechanics, nutrition among other things.