

# Ashwin clarifies retirement call, urges transparency with Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli

NEW DELHI, OCT 10

Ravichandran Ashwin has made it clear that “no one forced” him to retire from that game and that it was an absolutely personal call.

The former India off-spinner surprised all with his sudden retirement announcement after the third Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Brisbane last year. “No one told me that you should go, no one told me that there is no place for you in the team. Actually, before I took the decision, two-three people told me not to take it, but I took my decision. In fact, they wanted me to play more,” Ashwin, 39, said on his YouTube channel.

“Rohit Sharma (the then captain) also told me to think about it, Gauti bhai (Gautam Gambhir) also told me to think again. But I didn’t talk much about it (retirement) with Ajit Agarkar (chairman of selectors).”

“The decision is very personal when it comes to retirement. These are all very individual decisions,” he added.

His assertion puts an end to speculation that he was forced to take the decision by the team



management. Ashwin had stated earlier that he didn’t want to be a traveller with the team if he wasn’t going to be picked in the playing XI.

Ashwin also announced his retirement from the IPL and will be playing in the upcoming edition of the Big Bash League.

Communication key  
Talking about the senior duo of Rohit and Virat Kohli, Ashwin felt the team management and the selectors should have clear communication with them.

Both Rohit and Kohli, who have retired from Test and T20I cricket, have been included for the upcoming three ODIs against Australia.

Rohit, who was the ODI skipper, has been replaced by

Shubman Gill in the leadership role.

“Virat Kohli is a bonafide ODI legend. The way he and Rohit batted in the 2023 World Cup, they have nothing to prove. I really hope that the conversation happened. Whatever needs to be discussed with Virat and Rohit must have happened. There should be clear communication with them,” Ashwin said.

“This current situation leaves a lot of uninformed space. When there is uninformed decision-making that is put outside, you leave a lot of room for speculation. Why is the communication not coming from the players? Because there is not much communication happening, it is not going from

here to there.

“If the communication is not clean, transparent, and not done with the vision moving forward, it leaves the players in a very tender space. Considering the magnitude of Virat and Rohit’s contribution to Indian cricket, I think there should be better communication not only to them, but to everyone else.”

Ashwin said both Rohit and Kohli have a lot of cricket left in them.

“I don’t think any selector or coach will have it in them to say that Virat and Rohit’s services are no longer needed. That experience you cannot buy in a store,” he said.

“If there is any doubt as to whether they will be able to make it until the 2027 World Cup, then I think the direction they have taken seems to be fair. You cannot go leading up to the World Cup with so many question marks.

“There is no doubt that both Rohit and Virat want to be there (in the 2027 WC). The preparation that we are seeing from them, it is an investment they are putting into their bodies to be ready for the World Cup,” Ashwin added.

# Shubman Gill urges high intensity from India team vs West Indies, backs Sudharsan

NEW DELHI, OCT 10

To say that India are the overwhelming favourites going into the second and final Test against the West Indies at the Kotla will perhaps be an understatement. But that doesn’t mean the hosts can afford to be complacent.

Given India’s dominance in the series opener in Ahmedabad, where they won by an innings and 140 runs inside three days, it’s an uphill task for the Windies to turn things around in such a short period of time. Particularly, because of their pathetic batting.

But then why is this Test important for Team India? Shubman Gill and his teammates will want to win this Test handsomely because they will need to be in the best mindset possible when they host reigning Test champions South Africa for two matches next month.

Skipper Gill, too, emphasised maintaining the intensity and his team’s standards instead of looking at the opposition’s weaknesses. “I don’t think your intensity drops depending on the opposition,” he said on Thursday, the eve of the Test.



“It doesn’t matter who we are playing. We want to play at our own intensity, and we want to win.”

“When you are playing for India, you don’t need external motivation to up your intensity. We just want to maintain our own standards.”

Backing Sudharsan Sai Sudharsan was chosen for the ongoing Test despite just one 50-plus score in England.

In Ahmedabad too, he managed just seven, but he still enjoys the team management’s confidence.

“You have to give young players more opportunities. They are still trying to figure out their game. And we believe that you have to see someone’s potential first and then see their game in the entirety, not just judge someone from a few matches,” Gill said.

“Once you have given someone enough matches, you can then sit back and think over where he needs to learn or if he needs to play some more domestic or play India A games. But as of now, we think he (Sudharsan)’s the man for us at No.3.”

# IPL 2026 auction likely around December 15, retention deadline on November 15

MUMBAI, OCT 10

The IPL 2026 auction is likely to be held in the second or third week of December, with December 13-15 emerging as the probable window. Franchise officials, who have spoken to the BCCI authorities, have disclosed to Cricbuzz that discussions are centred on those dates, although the Governing Council of the league is yet to firm up the schedule.

Additionally, there is no indication, at this stage, of the auction being taken overseas, as was the case in the last two editions - first in Dubai (2023) and then in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2024). Franchise sources suggest that it would not be a surprise if the BCCI decides to hold the mini-auction in India itself. Again, that decision is yet to be concretised.

What, however, can be



said with a fair degree of certainty is that the retention deadline is November 15. By then, franchises will have to submit the names of the players they plan to release ahead of the auction. There are, though, no indications of a large-scale churn, except perhaps from Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals, who finished at the bottom last season.

Among the players reportedly on the release list are Deepak Hooda, Vijay Shankar, Rahul Tripathi, Sam Curran, and even Devon Conway

from Chennai Super Kings (CSK). The five-time champions already have INR 9.75 crore added to their purse following R Ashwin's retirement from the IPL.

At the top of the Royals' list will be Sanju Samson, unless the franchise manages to pull off a trade for the skipper. There had also been some talk of the Royals' plans to release their two Sri Lankan spinners - Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana - but with Kumar Sangakkara set for return as head coach, that thinking may well change.

# Shubman Gill replacing Rohit Sharma as ODI captain a fair call, says Sourav Ganguly

NEW DELHI, OCT 10

The team management and the selectors’ call to take the ODI captaincy away from Rohit Sharma and hand it over to Shubman Gill wasn’t the “worst” decision, believes Sourav Ganguly.

The former India captain feels Rohit’s age (38) is one of the main reasons behind his removal from captaincy. By the time the 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa begins, Rohit will already be 40, which is “a big number in sport”, Sourav pointed out. Speaking on the sidelines of a promotional at a city hotel on Thursday, the current Cricket Association of Bengal president said: “I don’t know whether it’s his (Rohit’s) sacking or anything. I am sure it’s a mutual discussion, because Rohit has been an outstanding leader. “In the last two years, he has won the T20 World Cup. He has won the Champions Trophy (earlier this year). So, performance is not the issue with Rohit.

“I think what’s gone in the



selectors’ mind is, in two years, he will be 40, when the World Cup happens in South Africa. “Rohit doesn’t play T20 cricket, so he will not be a part of the (T20) World Cup in 2026. But when they go to South Africa in 2027, he will be 40 years old. And that’s a big number in sport.

“He has played for so long. I don’t think anybody is sure whether Rohit will actually play when he is 40. So, I don’t think it’s the worst decision.”

Sourav added: “It happens to everyone. When I stopped

playing one-day cricket, I was 37 years old. It happened to Rahul Dravid too. All of us have scored more than 10,000-11,000 runs in one-day cricket. So, it happens to everyone.”

Even Gill may face a similar scenario 10 years down the line after scoring tons of runs, but at present, it’s fair to keep grooming a young captain, Sourav stated. “There will not be any exception.

“Ten years down the line, when Shubman gets close to 40 and scores 12,000-13,000 runs, he will also have to face this

situation. Because, as you know in sport, whether it’s a (Roger) Federer, whether it’s a (Pete) Sampras, a (Rafael) Nadal or a (Diego) Maradona, they will all have to finish some day.

“So, from that point of view, I think it’s not a bad decision to promote and push Shubman. He has shown a lot of talent in England, and you need to push these young boys.

“So, I think it has been done in consultation with Rohit. And somewhere down the line, I feel it’s a fair call. Rohit can keep playing, and in the meantime, you keep grooming a young captain,” the former BCCI president explained.

Does he feel both Rohit and Virat Kohli can continue till the 2027 Cup? Sourav answered: “It depends on how fit they remain and how well they keep performing.

“Whatever opportunity they get, they have to play domestic cricket. Because cricket is a sport where you have to keep playing. Otherwise, you lose the touch, the form and the contact.”

# Information suggests Cummins is going to play some part in the Ashes - McDonald

NEW DEHI, OCT 10: Pat Cummins will play some part during the Ashes this summer. And there's even an unlikely chance that he might don the captain's blazer for the first Test in Perth. This according to head coach Andrew McDonald who contradicted recent reports that ruled Cummins out for a large chunk of the Test summer. He also then revealed next Friday (October 17) to be the decisive day with regards to ascertaining whether Australia will have to go in for the Ashes opener without their inspirational leader.

"We are definitely running out of time around that. He's added some variables into his training and I'm hesitant to get involved in the medical discussion around it, but what I will say around it is that I think by this time next week we'll be in a position where we're better informed to make a judgement around what that first Test match looks like," said McDonald. "He's

had a positive week so we'll just wait for that information to come in. Anyone that knows the nature of those injuries, you do add the variables in and it's about how you recover from adding the variables into your training. It's not as quick as everyone thinks it is, so we look forward to a positive outcome next Friday." McDonald also admitted having not delved into what it would look like for Australia if they'd have to go in without Cummins for the entirety of the Ashes. With the belief and confidence that the 32-year-old premier fast bowler will feature at some stage in the series, even if he does miss out at the start.

"The information and the week he's had would suggest he's going to play some part. Could that change with new information, when we had more variables to his training, could that go backwards? There is a possibility of that and for those that have had lumbar stress it's a journey to add those

variables in, then recover, and it can ebb and flow a little bit across the rehab. At this stage, not thinking he'll be ruled out of the whole series," he explained.

A lumbar stress issue in the lower back, according to physios, is the kind where the fast bowler is able to go through rehab and gym work. The clarity in terms of them being Test-match ready though only comes to light once they've started bowling at full tilt, which in some cases could even take 8-10 months. Even if that is very unlikely to be the case with Cummins. Especially since McDonald and the medical staff are pleased with the progress that their main man's been making when it comes to what the scans on his back are showing.

"(If he isn't fit in time for the first Test)... then I think it'll be a week-by-week as we add in the variables and the biggest variable that we need to add in his bowling. If you looked at a reasonable time frame

for Patty to get ready, we feel as though he can do a shortened prep unlike other bowlers that probably need a longer prep. To see if it is advantageous for us to get him up and running in a series and even if he's a little bit underdone and grow throughout the series as well," he said. McDonald though is very aware of the challenges that might crop up in case Cummins is rushed in or if there's any kind of haste involved when it comes to his recovery and readiness to start bowling again. He also then reiterated how it would work differently with Cummins than most others, and how the process can be quicker.

"My understanding of the last scan was that it was improved. Then it's about the symptoms and then the resumption of the bowling, once we start to get up to top speed that's when we'll find out more and we can get to that potentially quicker than others with Patty," he said.

# India 94/1 at lunch on Day 1 of second Test vs West Indies; KL Rahul stumped

NEW DELHI, OCT 10

India made a cautious start on the opening day of the second Test against the West Indies, reaching 94 for 1 at lunch on Friday. Electing to bat after winning his first toss as captain, Shubman Gill retained the same playing XI that had beaten the West Indies by an innings and 140 runs in the first Test at Ahmedabad.

Openers KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal put together a 58-run partnership, with Rahul looking in fine touch before a freak delivery from left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican led to his dismissal.

Batting on 38, Rahul misjudged Warrican’s length, was beaten by the turn and bounce, and was

stumped by wicketkeeper Tevin Imlach. Rahul’s innings included five fours and a six, featuring elegant strokes such as a backfoot punch through covers off Jayden Seales.

Jaiswal, unbeaten on 40 from 78 balls, played

himself in cautiously, leaving deliveries outside off-stump and gradually attacking the spinners. His innings included classy strokes, such as a straight drive off Anderson Phillips and a full-blooded sweep off Roston Chase.

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