



"I Was Really Gutted": Ruturaj Gaikwad Vents Out Frustration After 1st ODI Century In India vs South Africa Game

New Delhi, 8 June: Ruturaj Gaikwad smashed his first ODI century in the second India vs South Africa match on Wednesday, reaching the landmark in just 77 deliveries. After the hundred, Gaikwad said that he was gutted to have missed out on a big knock in the series opener. He also shared how batting with Virat Kohli is very helpful. Gaikwad's hundred featured 12 fours and two sixes, helping India post a formidable total of 359-5 in 50 overs against the Proteas. Notably, he and Virat Kohli, who brought up his second successive ODI century, shared a crucial 195-run stand.

Speaking during the mid-innings break, Gaikwad said he was disappointed to miss out on the previous match, especially on a good batting wicket, but was re-

lieved to make the most of the conditions this time. "Last game I was really gutted to miss out on a



knock. It was a really good wicket and the conditions were suited for me, could have easily scored a few runs. So really gutted last game and thankfully it came out really well today," Gaikwad said. Gaikwad noted that the pitch was a bit two-paced

for the first 15-20 overs but improved afterwards, allowing him to build his innings effectively.

"Today it was more suitable for me, I went out to bat around the 11th over, and I told myself to approach it as if I was already 25 or 30 balls in after powerplay and bat accordingly, look to rotate strike. Until 15-20 overs it was slightly two-paced but

after that it got better and we worked on that," he added.

Gaikwad said that batting with Kohli is a dream experience and that their partnership was immensely valuable. He explained that Kohli guided him throughout the middle overs--advising on finding gaps, anticipating bowlers' lengths and adjusting his technique to reduce dot balls. "On batting with Kohli) Obviously a dream to bat with him and have a wonderful partnership. He helped me a lot throughout the middle about how to access gaps, what lengths the bowler might be bowling and how you can adjust your technique and score some runs by playing less dot balls. So definitely very helpful and good learning for me," said the right-hand batter.

Gaikwad said he and

Virat focused on small, five-over targets to build their partnership and grew more confident once the ball stopped moving and came nicely onto the bat. At that point, he decided to trust his instincts.

"We had set small targets and we just thought that you know 5 overs we have to achieve this, 5 overs we have to achieve this and once we felt that we were really comfortable in the middle and there came a phase where the ball wasn't doing much and it was coming really nicely to the bat and I just said that I will back my instincts whatever it is and you know let's see how it goes on. But definitely after a stage we were thinking about something around 350, thankfully we got that score," he said.

Serena Williams Denies Plans Of Return Despite Registering For Drug Tests

New Delhi, 8 June: Serena Williams insisted Tuesday she had no plans to make a return to tennis after her registration with the sport's drug-testing body sparked reports of a dramatic comeback. The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion has not competed since a third-round loss at the 2022 US Open left her one short of the all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles, held by Margaret Court in the women's game and Novak Djokovic in men's tennis.

"It is correct that she is back on the Registered Testing Pool list," Adrian Bassett, a spokesman for the International Tennis Integrity Agency, the sport's drug-testing body told AFP in London on Tuesday in response to media reports the 44-year-old American had registered.

But Williams denied she was planning a return to competitive tennis by posting later Tuesday on X: "Omg (Oh My God) yall (you all) I'm NOT coming back. This wildfire is crazy."

Following her three-set defeat by Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic at Flushing Meadows three years ago, Williams said she did not want to use the word "retiring" but instead explained she was "evolving" away from tennis.

Players who decide to return to testing need to provide information about their time and locations when they are available to give samples.

They also need to complete testing for six months before they are allowed to return to competition.

Centurions Ruturaj Gaikwad, Virat Kohli Break Sachin Tendulkar-Dinesh Karthik 15-Year Old Record vs South Africa

New Delhi, 3 December: Virat Kohli and Ruturaj Gaikwad were in prime form in the second India vs South Africa ODI. At the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur on Wednesday, Gaikwad scored 105 off 83 balls, laced with 12 fours and two sixes, at a strike rate of 126.51. He reached his fifty off 52 balls before accelerating superbly to get his first ODI century in just 77 deliveries. At the other end, Virat Kohli slammed his 53rd ODI ton. The duo added 195 runs for the third wicket, which is now the highest ODI partnership for any wicket for India against South Africa. Previously, Sachin Tendulkar and Dinesh Karthik had added 194 runs for the second wicket in an ODI in Gwalior in 2010.

Right-handed batter Ruturaj Gaikwad credited Virat Kohli for guiding him brilliantly on his way to hitting his maiden ODI century in the second game against South Africa, adding that their 195-run stand was a "wonderful partner-

ship." "Obviously a dream to bat with him and have a wonderful partnership. He helped me a lot throughout the mid-



dle - about how to access gaps, what lengths the bowler might be bowling, and how you can adjust your technique and score runs by playing fewer dot balls. So definitely very helpful and a good learning experience for me."

"We had set small targets and just thought that, you know, every five overs

we have to achieve this. Once we felt really comfortable in the middle, there came a phase where the ball wasn't doing much and was coming nicely onto the bat. I just said that I will back my instincts, whatever they are, and let's see how it goes," said Gaikwad to broadcasters in a mid-innings chat.

"Last game I was really gutted to miss out on a knock. It was a really good wicket and the conditions suited me - could have easily scored a few runs. So really gutted last game, and thankfully it came out really well today."

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He signed off by saying they had a target of reaching 350 and felt grateful about it:

Shubman Gill Named In India's Squad For South Africa T20Is, But BCCI Sets Big Condition

Real Madrid, 8 June: Shubman Gill has been named as vice-captain for India's upcoming five-match T20I series against South Africa, starting December 9. However, Gill's availability will be subject to clearance from BCCI's medical team. Suryakumar Yadav will lead the 15-man squad, also comprising of the likes of Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah. Gill has been out of action since the 1st Test against South Africa in Kolkata last month. He had picked up a neck injury and was subsequently ruled out of the second Test in Guwahati and the ODI series that followed.

Fit-again all-rounder Hardik has also been named in the squad, having recently returned to competitive cricket. The 30-year-old has



been out of action of since injuring his left quadriceps against Sri Lanka in an Asia Cup Super Fours match in Dubai on September 26.

Hardik had been recuperating at the BCCI Center of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru. He made an excellent return to competitive cricket after two months, striking an

unbeaten 77 to power Baroda to a seven-wicket win over Punjab in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Tuesday.

The five-match series begins December 9 in Cuttack. The remaining matches will be played in Mullanpur (December 11), Dharamsala (December 14), Lucknow (December 17) and Ahmed-

abad (December 19), respectively.

Most of the T20I squad remains the same as to the contingent that travelled to Australia for India's most recent T20I series. However, Rinku Singh, who didn't get much of a chance in the previous tour, has been dropped.

Rinku Singh, who was part of India's previous T20I series against Australia, did not find a place in the team.

India squad for T20I series against SA: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Shubman Gill (VC)*, Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakaravarty, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Washington Sundar

Barcelona Make Atletico Comeback To Extend La Liga Lead

New Delhi, 8 June: Barcelona produced an impressive comeback to beat Atletico Madrid 3-1 on Wednesday (IST) and move four points clear at the top of La Liga, with coach Hansi Flick saying his side had taken a step forward after some shaky performances. Alex Baena fired Atletico ahead but Raphinha equalised for the champions before Dani Olmo and Ferran Torres struck to end the visitors' run of 13 straight league games without defeat. Barca might have been more comfortable had Robert Lewandowski not ballooned a first half penalty over the bar at the partially rebuilt Camp Nou.

Real Madrid, second, visit Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday aiming to peg Barca back, while Diego Simeone's Atletico are

fourth, six points behind the Catalans. "We will see (if it's a turning point) but this was one of the best matches from us, I really appreciate what I saw over the 90 minutes," Flick told reporters.

"This was the next step... we are coming back to



our best level, today was really good."

This was Barca's fifth consecutive Liga win after losing the Clasico against

Madrid in October, but they have not shone consistently in that period, and coming against a title rival this display gave Flick's side a welcome boost.

"This is the spirit we need to have to turn around games like this," Raphinha

told Movistar. "We're building confidence game by game, and these three points are going to be vital for the end of the

season, they can decide a title race." Barca were without defender Ronald Araujo, who is taking a mental health break according to Spanish reports, along with ill midfielder Frenkie de Jong and the longer-term absentees.

After a 3-0 thrashing at Chelsea last week in the Champions League, followed by a shaky win over Alaves to claim pole position in La Liga, nerves were jangling among home fans.

Following a tense start, Atletico took the lead with, predictably, a ball in behind Barcelona's persistently high defensive line. Baena scampered through on goal and beat Joan Garcia, barely celebrating because he could sense the linesman's raised flag behind him.

However a VAR review showed the Spaniard was level with Pau Cubarsi when

he broke and the goal was reinstated. Barcelona responded rapidly and levelled in the 26th minute when Pedri, back fit to start, played in Raphinha. The Brazilian winger, another player recently back from injury, took the ball around Jan Oblak and slid it into the empty net.

Barca should have gone ahead but Lewandowski spurned a penalty, blazing high and wide of Oblak's goal after Pablo Barrios brought down Dani Olmo.

The Polish veteran almost made amends moments later but Oblak brilliantly clawed out his header from Lamine Yamal's cross. In the second half Olmo, who netted twice against Alaves on Saturday, sent Barcelona ahead with a slick finish after Lewandowski managed to bundle the ball into his path.



Indian team members, that will participate in the Fireball Extreme Challenge (FXC) World Cup 2025 in Italy, pose for a photograph, in Manali, Himachal Pradesh

11 And Counting: Virat Kohli Sets Record-Extending Century-Streak ODI Record

New Delhi, 8 June: Indian batting legend Virat Kohli continued his fine run against South Africa and ate further into record books with his second successive century against the Proteas in the second ODI of the three-match series at Raipur on Wednesday. After slamming an explosive 120-ball 135 in the first ODI at Ranchi, consisting of 11 fours and seven sixes, Virat continued his sublime form in the ODIs, scoring a 93-ball 102, with seven fours and two sixes.

He struck at 109.68 while taking minimal risks, proving his mastery in the format with his risk-free accumulation, top-class speed while running between the wickets and brilliant judgement while taking singles and doubles. Virat against South Africa in ODIs is a different beast, and that beast has gone notches above statistically against the Proteas. In 33 matches and 31 innings, Virat has scored 1,741 runs at an average of 69.64 against the Proteas at a strike rate of 88.51, with seven centuries and eight fifties. This is the most centuries against Proteas in ODI format by a batter.

Also, with this second



successive ton in ODIs, this is the 11th instance when Virat has had a streak of centuries in two or more successive ODI innings, with Proteas legend AB de Villiers being his distant rival with six such instances. He has also had 13 different streaks of three or more successive innings with 50-plus scores in ODIs, the highest by any batter, and Rohit Sharma is second with 11 such streaks.

Notably, his last three ODI knocks against South Africa have been centuries, the 101* at Kolkata against them in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and two centuries in this series. In 12 ODIs this year, Virat has scored 586 runs in 12 innings at an average of 58.60, with a strike rate of 92.72, including three cen-

turies, three fifties and a best score of 135.

Notably, Virat stands just 90 runs away from joining Sachin Tendulkar and Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara in the 28,000-run club in international cricket. In 555 international matches, he has made 27,910 runs at an average of 52.46, with 84 centuries and 144 fifties in 622 innings and a best score of 254*. Coming to the Raipur ODI, India was put to bat first by the Proteas, who had the hosts down at 62/2 after dismissals of Rohit Sharma (14) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (22). Virat (102 in 93 balls, with seven fours and two sixes) and Ruturaj (105 in 83 balls, with 12 fours and two sixes) put on a 195-run stand for the third wicket, putting India in command.

Erling Haaland Century Makes Premier League History In Manchester City's Nine-Goal Thriller

Mumbai, 8 June: Erling Haaland made history as the Manchester City striker became the fastest player to reach 100 Premier League goals in a remarkable 5-4 win against Fulham on Wednesday (IST). Haaland's clinical finish in the first half at Craven Cottage took him to his century in just 111 league appearances for City. He shattered the previous record set by former Newcastle and Blackburn star Alan Shearer, who took 124 matches to reach 100 goals. After Haaland's landmark, Phil Foden scored twice to help City race into a 5-1 lead.

But Fulham scored three times in a furious second-half fightback that fell just short when Josh King's shot was cleared off the line by Josko Gvardiol in the final seconds. Second-placed City moved within two points of leaders Arsenal, who host Brentford in their game in hand on Wednesday.

"It's incredible, impressive. He was outstanding, today he was unbelievable. He made a fantastic goal. Hopefully, he's starving hungry to continue with this club to make more and more goals," City boss Pep Guardiola said of Haaland. Yet after squandering a two-goal advantage in their last-gasp 3-2 win against Leeds on Saturday, Guardiola was alarmed by the latest meltdown from his leaky defence.

"Of course, I was concerned. But this will help us

in future games. Every game is a new team for some players. You have to make a process to start to correct," he said. "I'm so old, and the players don't respect me! They don't have to treat their manager in that way."

"It only happens in this league. We played a fantastic game. Listen, there were some really positive things in what we have done. In the end, it was a question of character and resilience."

If City are to overhaul Arsenal and win the seventh English title of the Guardiola era, they will need Haaland

petitions.

Jeremy Doku's precise cut-back arrowed towards Haaland and he timed his run perfectly to unleash a ferocious blast that whistled past Fulham keeper Bernd Leno from 12 yards. Haaland turned from scorer to provider in the 37th minute as City doubled their lead with another eye-catching effort. Showing strength and poise in equal measure, Haaland worked space to clip a pin-point pass through to Reijnders and the Dutch midfielder scooped a deft chip over Leno for his first goal



to maintain his astonishingly prolific form. Haaland had failed to score in his previous three games against Newcastle, Bayer Leverkusen and Leeds.

The 25-year-old, signed from Borussia Dortmund in 2022, ended that mini-drought with the latest milestone in his glittering City career. Haaland produced a sumptuous finish to put City ahead in the 17th minute, giving him 15 league goals this term and 20 in all com-

since August. Foden notched City's third in the 44th minute, lashing a superb strike into the top corner from the edge of the area. Smith Rowe reduced the deficit in first half stoppage-time, steering a header past Gianluigi Donnarumma from Harry Wilson's cross.

But Foden, who also scored twice against Leeds, is back in form and the England star appeared to put the result beyond doubt three minutes after the interval.