



Huge expectations from Green within IPL, Australia; he has to balance: McDonald



SYDNEY, MAR 31: Cameron Green is dealing with huge expectations both in the IPL and in the Australian cricket set-up but the all-rounder has what it takes to balance it out for a career that "will trend upwards", his national head coach Andrew McDonald has said.

Kolkata Knight Riders' skipper Ajinkya Rahane's remark on a currently injured Green not bowling in the IPL match against

Mumbai Indians had created a mild controversy on his fitness status.

Later, Cricket Australia clarified that the KKR management is "fully aware" of the 26-year-old's back niggle, which mandates him to be away from bowling for a period 10-12 days.

"There's huge expectation within the IPL, and there's huge expectation with any all-rounder that shapes an Australian team. It's not un-

fair, but there is an expectation around all-rounders that they contribute in a certain way," McDonald to SEN Radio.

Keeping in mind his all-round prowess, Green was bought by KKR for an eye-watering Rs 25.20 crore, making him the most expensive overseas buy ever in the IPL.

"It's almost like they want them to average 45 with the bat and average less than 30

with the ball. And there's been very few that do that. I'm sure that his career will trend upwards," McDonald said.

"We know he's good enough. He's just got to balance out all those expectations, and in particular, playing all three formats, which is a significant challenge for any cricketer," he added.

However, McDonald said Green's fragile fitness will not be held against him when it comes to considering him as an all-format player, particularly in Tests, for Australia.

"I think the answer to that is, yes (all-format player). I've got to talk to the selectors around that. But if you look at the last (Australian) team, Usman (Khawaja) has retired, and he vacates the No. 5 position," the head coach said.

"But you've got (Beau) Webster and Green that potentially can play in the same team, so that gives us incredible flexibility. But I think he's (Green) good enough.

"It's only a matter of time before he gets to a situation where he's performing for Australia. I think he's got a few things to work on around his game, but that's no different to anyone else," he added.

J&K 5th Carrom Championship concludes



**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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The 5th Jammu & Kashmir UT-Level Carrom Championship 2025-26 concluded successfully today at the Sher-i-Kashmir Indoor Sports Complex, Wazirbagh, after three days of competitive play and enthusiastic participation.

The championship was organized by the Jammu & Kashmir Carrom Association and hosted by District Srinagar Carrom Association and in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council under its flagship initiative "My Youth My Pride."

The event witnessed participation of more than 350 players from over 13 districts of Jammu & Kashmir, representing various schools, colleges, and institutions from across the Union Territory.

Competitions were conducted across four categories — Cadet, Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior — for boys and girls, as well as men and women, providing a competitive platform for players across all age groups.

The closing ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Mrs Nusrat Gazala, Divisional Sports Officer Kashmir.

The ceremony was also attended by distinguished Guests of Honour, including:

Dr Altaf-ur-Rehman, Former Physical Director, Islamia College Srinagar; Dr Nissar Ahmad Paul, General Secretary PDF; Mr Sameer Ahmad, Senior Vice President; Advocate Adfar Mehraj, Vice President, J&K Carrom Association; Mr Shafkat Shafi, Judo Coach, J&K Sports Council; Mr Mudasir Khan, General Secretary, J&K Carrom Association;

and Mr Mehraj-ud-Din, Assistant Incharge, SKISC, Srinagar.

Among other dignitaries

present were Mrs Nayeema Khan, Member, J&K Carrom Association, and Ms Zubaida Ahad, Joint Secretary, Baramulla Carrom Association.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest appreciated the efforts of the organizers in successfully conducting the championship and emphasized the importance of such events in promoting sports culture and nurturing young talent across the Union Territory.

The winners, runners-up, and third-place holders in various categories were felicitated with trophies, medals, and certificates by the dignitaries.

Connolly's half-century helps PBKS to nervy three-wicket win over GT

MULLANPUR, MARCH 31: A composed 72* from Cooper Connolly helped Punjab Kings (PBKS) survive a scary spell from pacer Prasidh Krishna and secure a three-wicket win against Gujarat Titans (GT) in their Indian Premier League (IPL) opener at Mullanpur on Tuesday.

GT put up 162/6 on the board after being put to bat first, as skipper Shubman Gill (39 in 27 balls, with six fours) and Jos Buttler (38 in 33 balls, with three fours and two sixes) top-scored for GT. In chase of 163, PBKS was dominating, but a spell by Prasidh (3/15 in three overs) collapsed them from 110/2 to 118/6. Connolly (72* in 44 balls, with five fours and five sixes) stayed till the end, sealing the win with a four on the first ball of the final over.

During the run-chase, PBKS were dealt an early blow by Kagiso Rabada, who got Priyansh Arya caught for an eight-ball seven by Ashok Sharma. PBKS was 7/1 in 1.2 overs.

Prabhsimran Singh was joined by Aussie all-rounder Cooper Connolly. In the fourth over against Rabada, the duo launched an attack, with Prabhsimran starting the over with two sixes, one over cow corner and the other over third man. Connolly launched the final ball of the over over long-off, making it 19 runs off the over.

In the next over, Rajasthan's rising pacer Ashok Sharma was greeted by a six from Connolly and a four from Prabhsimran, bringing it to the 50-run mark in five overs. His debut in the IPL leaked 13 runs.

The duo reached the 50-over stand in 31 balls, and Prabhsimran-Connolly continued to get boundaries and sixes against spinners. Rashid Khan ended the 76-run partnership, remov-



ing Prabhsimran for a well-made 24-ball 37, including four and four sixes. PBKS was 83/2 in 9.3 overs.

In the 11th over, Ashok's two short deliveries were launched for two sixes. Both he and Connolly were looking to finish off early, dealing in sixes. PBKS reached the 100-run mark in 11.1 overs.

However, there was a moment of tension and pure silence in the PBKS camp, as Iyer was struck on his wrist while guarding himself from a shot by Connolly. While he decided to continue batting after medical treatment, he was dismissed on the next ball he faced by Prasidh Krishna for 11-ball 18. PBKS was 110/3 in 12.1 overs.

PBKS faced a scary slip-up as Washington Sundar removed Nehal Wadhwa for just three, while Prasidh removed Shashank Singh for four and Marcus Stoinis for a two-ball duck, reducing PBKS to 118/6 in 14.4 overs.

Connolly broke the shackles with a four, reaching a half-century on his IPL debut in 34 balls, with three fours and four sixes. A six each from him and Marco Jansen brought down the deficit.

However, there was still some twist left as Ashok got Jansen for a 10-ball nine, leaving PBKS at 144/7 in 17.4 overs.

PBKS managed to end the

run-chase in 19.1 overs, with Connolly hitting the winning four.

Krishna (3/29) delivered a fine spell of four overs, giving PBKS a scare, but Connolly guided PBKS to a win.

Earlier, bowling spells from Vijaykumar Vyshak and Yuzi Chahal helped Punjab Kings stop Gujarat Titans from putting up big partnerships, restricting them to 162/6 in 20 overs.

Skipper Shubman Gill (39 in 27 balls, with six fours) and Jos Buttler (38 in 30 balls, with three fours and two sixes) were the top two scores as Vyshak (3/34) and Chahal (2/28), and Marco Jansen (1/20) made sure that runs did not come so thick and fast.

Put to field first by PBKS, openers Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan gave the team a steady start. The GT skipper launched an attack against Xavier Bartlett in the second over, smashing him for three fours.

However, the 37-run stand was ended by Marco Jansen, who removed Sudharsan for an 11-ball 13 with a short-ball, which Sudharsan gave into the hands of PBKS skipper Shreyas Iyer at mid-off. GT was 37/1 in 3.4 overs.

Jos Buttler joined Gill, and he made his attacking intentions clear with a four each against Vijaykumar Vyshak and Jansen. GT reached the 50-run mark in

5.4 overs.

At the end of six overs, GT was 54/1, with Buttler (11*) and Gill (28*) unbeaten.

Gill and Buttler continued to rebuild for the Titans. However, Yuzi Chahal once again got Gill, caught by Cooper Connolly at deep mid-wicket. The GT skipper was gone for 27-ball 39, with six fours. GT was 83/2 in 9.3 overs.

In their ninth face-off, Chahal came out on top against Gill for the fourth time. The batter has scored just 69 runs in 57 balls at a strike rate of over 121 against an Indian spin veteran.

Halfway through their innings, GT was 84/2, with Buttler and Glenn Phillips at the crease. In the 12th over, Phillips launched Chahal for a six over long-on and a four over covers, bringing up GT's 100-run mark in 11.5 overs.

There was no keeping Jansen away from action as another promising partnership faded, with Phillips sending the ball right down the long-off's throat, giving Vijaykumar his wicket for a 17-ball 25. GT was 119/3 in 14 overs.

Chahal got his second wicket of the day, with an assist from Bartlett, sending back Buttler for a 33-ball 38, with three fours and two sixes. GT was 130/4 in 15.5 overs.

GT's struggle to build a partnership continued as Vyshak removed Washington Sundar for a 16-ball 18, with two fours. GT was five down for 144 in 18.1 overs.

Vyshak continued to deliver his magic as he ended his spell by getting a dangerous Shahrukh Khan caught near the boundary for a six-ball four. GT was 150/6 in 19 overs.

GT ended the innings at 162/6, with Rahul Tewatia (11*) and Rashid Khan (0*) unbeaten.

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 31**

The District Amateur Kabaddi Championship for the session 2025-2026 was successfully conducted on 30th and 31st March 2026 at the Indoor Stadium, Ellahi Bagh, Srinagar.

The championship witnessed enthusiastic participation from young players across the district in Sub-Junior and Junior categories for both boys and girls, reflecting the growing popularity of kabaddi at the grassroots level.

The event was graced by Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Senior Journalist, as the Chief Guest, and Mr. Iqbal, Manager Indoor Stadium Ellahi Bagh, as the Guest of Honour. The championship was organised by Mr. Gulzar Ahmad, Secretary, District Srinagar Kabaddi Association.

The championship concluded successfully with appreciation for all participat-



ing teams, officials, and organizers. The event provided a valuable platform for young athletes to show-

case their talent and further strengthened the development of kabaddi in District Srinagar.

India end Asian Cup qualifiers on a high with win in Kochi

KOCHI, MAR 31: India ended their wait for a win at Kochi, edging past Hong Kong 2-1 to end the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers final round Group C campaign on a high at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Tuesday.

Early strikes from debutant Ryan Williams and left-back Akash Mishra in either half ensured the Blue Tigers secure their first win of the qualifying campaign. India ended their campaign on five points, with a win, two draws and three losses. Singapore topped the group with 14 points to seal qualification for the Asian Cup, as per a press release.

Head Coach Khalid Amed handed a much-awaited debut to Ryan Williams, while Bijoy Varghese also made his first India appearance off the bench.

India made a perfect start

to the game, with Ryan Williams marking his debut with a goal in the fourth minute. A swift transition down the right flank saw a well-timed pass by Abhishek Singh Tekcham release Manvir Singh, who squared the ball for Williams to tap it in past the goalkeeper and open the scoring.

It was also the fastest goal scored by a debutant for India, surpassing the previous record of sixth-minute strikes by K Appalaraju against Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in a pre-Olympics match in Colombo in 1963 and Mehtab Hossain against Nepal in the 2005 SAFF Cup in Karachi.

The home side played with confidence after taking the lead, enjoying the majority of possession and looking assured on the ball and dictating the tempo.

Manvir Singh then delivered a searching cross towards Lallianzuala Chhangte inside the box, but a Hong Kong defender did well to clear the danger.

The Indian defence denied Hong Kong's attackers any space in their own half with four to five blue shirts surrounding the attackers whenever a chance opened up.

The defence were always behind the ball whenever the visitors showed any glimpse of promise in their attacks. India looked dangerous in counter attacks whenever there was an opportunity. Williams received the ball from midfield and passed it to Manvir on the right and the forward flicked it to Chhangte on the first touch.

The winger then let a shot with his weaker right foot but Hong Kong defender Shinichi Chan did well to block it and concede a corner.

Apua came close to doubling the advantage at the

25th-minute mark. The midfielder was at the end of a swift counter-attack, with Manvir Singh and Ryan Williams combining well down the left, but his right-footed effort from distance drifted just wide of the post.

At the other end, Hong Kong looked to build patiently, working the ball into wide areas and delivering crosses into the box, but the Indian defence dealt with them comfortably to ensure they went into the break with their one-goal lead intact.

The Blue Tigers began the second half just as brightly as the first. Rahul Bheke's long throw was not cleared by the opposition defence. As the ball bobbed inside the box, Akash Mishra reacted quickest at the near post, rifling a right-footed effort from a tight angle past the goalkeeper for his first international goal and double India's lead.