

Waugh vows to fight back

MELBOURNE, Oct 11 (Internet report): The knives are out for Australian star Mark Waugh, but the elegant batsman is determined to retain his place in the Test side for the upcoming home series against the West Indies.

Waugh, 35, has managed just 88 runs in his past nine ODI innings, including seven against India in Australia's loss in the ICC Knockout Trophy quarter-final in Nairobi on October 7.

Waugh averaged 30 in his past 17 Test appearances. In 103 tests he averaged 42, including 17 centuries.

A back injury has ruled him out of Sunday's domestic limited overs game between New South Wales and Victoria at North Sydney, but he says a few days rest should take care of it.

However despite his poor trot, Waugh is determined to regain his form in domestic matches over the next few weeks.

Australia, the reigning World Cup champions in the limited overs version of the game, have won their past 10 test matches and have the chance next month to equal the West Indies' record of 11 consecutive test victories.

The first Test of the five-match series between Australia and the West Indies starts in Brisbane on November 23.

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MELBOURNE, Oct 11: Champion leg-spinner Shane Warne says he has nothing extra to prove this summer despite being stripped of the Australian vice-captaincy for off-field indiscretions, reports AFP.

Warne trained lightly with Victorian teammates here Wednesday testing out the knee on which he had minor surgery two weeks ago, and declared himself excited about the coming summer season.

Warne had to defend himself after admitting to engaging in dirty phone talk with a British nurse during his off-season stint with English county Hampshire.

The controversy was the last straw for the Australian Cricket Board after a series of incidents tarnished his reputation and he was demoted from the vice-captaincy. Adam Gilchrist is the new deputy to captain Steve Waugh.

"I've got nothing to prove at all. I've played for ten years and have done pretty well on the park and I don't have to prove anything to anybody," Warne said Wednesday.

"My approach to this sum-

mer will be the same as any other summer.

"It's always exciting no matter what you've done the previous months and I'm looking forward to it, excited by it and can't wait for it to come really."

Warne was named in a 14-man squad for Sunday's one-day game against New South Wales in Sydney, but will wait to see if there is any stiffness or

swelling in the knee Thursday before committing to playing.

He bowled about 20 deliveries in the nets Wednesday, did some batting and throwing and said his knee felt fine.

"That will do it tonight then a bit more tomorrow and then gradually build up to the game on Sunday," Warne said.

"I wouldn't be letting anybody down so if it's not right I won't play but if it is right then hopefully I'll be all right."

Warne had his knee scraped after suffering discomfort in the joint for the past 12 months.

He was uncertain about the chances of returning to English county cricket, with concern the off-season work could be too much after shoulder, finger and now knee problems.

"County cricket is something I always wanted to try out and I have this year and whether I'm going to do it in the coming season I'm not sure."

"It's very demanding, there is not much time off, you're playing cricket just about every day and when you're not you're travelling."

"It's quite tough but it's very enjoyable and given the opportunity depending on schedules down the track it's something I might do in the future."

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Marsh won't talk about Sarwan

SYDNEY, Oct 11: Australian Cricket Academy coach Rod Marsh said Wednesday it was too early to predict the future for West Indian batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan, reports AFP.

Sarwan and four of his West Indian teammates are on six-week scholarships at the ACA and have taken part in three one-day matches against Tasmania in Adelaide this week.

The West Indian Cricket Board sent the five players to Australia rather than consider them for the ICC Knockout Trophy tournament in Kenya, giving the next generation of Caribbean cricketers a chance to sample Australian wickets.

With the West Indies to tour Australia later this year, the likes of Sarwan, Ricardo Powell, Darren Ganga and Chris Gayle are expected to be at the heart of any revival in the nation's cricketing fortunes.

Sarwan, who has been compared to a young Rohan Kanhai, smashed 112 off 100 balls against Tasmania on Monday, including 10 fours and two sixes.

Marsh was impressed by Sarwan's temperament and technique but said it was premature to be comparing him with Kanhai, who played 79 Tests and averaged more than 45.

"Rohan was one of the best players I ever saw," said the former Australian wicketkeeper. "I wouldn't quite put Ramnaresh in that category yet. It's too early to tell. There's a bit of a difference playing at Adelaide Oval No.2 on a flat track against Tasmania and playing in a Test match against McGrath and Lee and Gillespie and Warne."

"Time will tell whether he should be compared with Rohan. At this point in time, I wouldn't like to be making a comparison."

Earlier this year, Sarwan became only the 10th West Indian cricketer to make his debut as a teenager, joining the likes of Sir Garfield Sobers and current teammate Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

He topped the West Indies averages on the recent tour of England and boasts a Test average of 45 after five matches.

"I think it's a good move of

the West Indies to send them out here and give them experience under our conditions," Marsh said.

"He looks very organised. He hits the ball well. But I'd like to see him against the best we have to offer."

The Blues take on Victoria in a one-day match on Sunday and then a four-day fixture starting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on October 25.

Mark Waugh has been left out of the NSW side for Sunday's match after being troubled by a back injury in Kenya.

Tasmania will be missing Colin Miller, who has gone to Victoria, and Mark Ridgway (retired) when they meet Queensland in the Shield from October 26.

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