



INDIA

MATCHES: 33 | WON: 20 | LOST: 11 | TIED: 1 | NO RESULT: 1

CAPTAIN KOHLI'S LAST CHANCE TO BRING GLORY IN T20s

Inaugural T20 World Cup champions India will begin their bid for a second title with a blockbuster October 24 clash with arch-rivals Pakistan in Dubai. Having made it to the semi-final in the last edition of the tournament in 2016 and the final in the 2014 edition, India, led by Virat Kohli, will look to take a step further this time around. With a formidable and compact squad that includes six specialist batters, three all-rounders, three specialist spinners and three specialist fast bowlers, India, undoubtedly, remain one of the major contenders for the title. And as Kohli announced his intention of stepping down as the skipper of the T20 side after the World Cup, the 32-year-old will like to end it on a positive note by bringing his country their first ICC Trophy in eight years. Kohli, in his final showdown as the captain, will also have a point to prove as the right-handed batsman is yet to lead the team to an ICC trophy and he has had three opportunities till date with India coming agonisingly close on more than one occasion. And with MS Dhoni -- who has won India the 2007 T20 World Cup, the 2011 50-over World Cup and the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy -- overseeing the squad as their mentor, Kohli can hope to share some of his burden and be more fluent in his approach.

STRENGTHS

With the likes of Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul and Virat Kohli forming the top-order, India's batting line-up remains one of the strongest in the tournament. One of the most dynamic aspects of this Indian side is that the batting unit is not only formidable but also flexible as players like Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja can be used as floaters to match the situation of a game. Most of their players have performed well in the recent IPL in the UAE. Batting, bowling, fielding -- this is the team to beat.

WEAKNESSES

India have gone in as favourites in a number of tournaments but still have missed out on every occasion in the recent past. Since 2013 and especially after the MS Dhoni captaincy era, India, for some reason, have been failing to go the distance despite having a strong squad. For India, the main challenge will be to figure out how to go past the final hurdle after going deep in the tournament. Other than that there is hard to find a weakness in this side.



SQUAD

Virat Kohli (c), Rohit Sharma (vc), KL Rahul, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Rahul Chahar, Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Varun Chakravarthy, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammad Shami

RESERVES

Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur

SURPRISE INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

The biggest surprise was the inclusion of Ravichandran Ashwin, who has forced his way back in four years after being discarded from India's T20I set-up. Other than that, Shikhar Dhawan, who captained India in their short limited-overs tour of Sri Lanka recently, and leading leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal are the notable absentees. Instead, the selectors opted for mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar with left-arm spinner Axar Patel in the squad.

THE EXCEPTIONAL ONE

India skipper Virat Kohli is the only player in the world with an average higher than 50 in T20Is. In 90 matches, Kohli amassed a total of 3159 runs at a staggering 52.65 average. However, the right-hander is yet to score a ton in the format.



FORM GUIDE

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STATISTICS

INDIA T20 World Cup Appearances: 6
Best Result: **Champions** (2007)

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