

Roy, Stone to make Test debuts against Ireland



Australia's Marnus Labuschagne bats during day one of the Tour Match, with Australia playing Australia A team, at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, England on July 23. (AP)

Anderson ruled out

LONDON, July 23, (RTRS): Opening batsman Jason Roy and fast bowler Oly Stone will make their England Test debuts in a one-off match against Ireland starting at Lord's on Wednesday.

Surrey batsman Roy becomes the latest player to have a crack at England's problem position of opener in the longest format, having racked up an impressive 443 runs in his country's triumphant 50-overs World Cup campaign.

Roy is poised to bat at the top of the order with Surrey team mate Rory Burns in a four-day match against Ireland and will have an opportunity to impress the selectors ahead of the Ashes

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series against Australia starting on Aug 1.

"With Jason, we want him to be himself, express himself and trust his instincts as much as possible," England captain Joe Root told a news conference on Tuesday.

"He brings something different to our Test batting side, he's a proven performer in international cricket and fully capable of making big contributions.

"There were occasions in the World Cup when he had to trust his defence and he might have to draw that out a bit longer in Test cricket - but he can put pressure back on the opposition, he's one of the best in the world at that."

Warwickshire paceman Stone will make his debut having recovered from a back injury that forced him to return home from England's tour of West Indies earlier this year.

The 25-year-old edged out Somerset's Lewis Gregory in the battle to deputise for the experienced James Anderson, who failed to recover from a calf injury.

Jack Leach has also been called up for the Ireland Test giving England the option of two spinners in the lineup with



Australia's James Pattinson bowls during day one of the Tour Match, with Australia playing Australia A team, at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, England on July 23. (AP)

Moen Ali also named in the team.

"Olly's got good pace, that's one thing he brings to this squad, and it's a good opportunity to see him play this week," Root added. "Lewis is the unfortunate one to miss out, along with Jimmy, (but) it gives us good balance and plenty of options with the ball."

Anderson, England's leading wicket-taker in Tests, is one of several England bowlers struggling with injury ahead of the five-Test Ashes series against Australia.

Fast bowlers Mark Wood and Jofra Archer, part of the World Cup-winning one-day team, were not available for selection for the Ireland Test because both have suffered side strains.

Wood has been ruled out for four to six weeks, while Archer will have a period of rest before being considered for Ashes selection.

Having been awarded Test status in 2017, Ireland are chasing their first win in the longest format after losses to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

England team v Ireland: Joe Root (captain), Moen Ali, Rory Burns, Sam Curran, Jonny Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Joe Denly, Jack Leach, Jason Roy, Olly Stone, Chris Woakes

England's Stokes 'turns down' nomination, backs Williamson

LONDON, July 23, (RTRS): England all-rounder Ben Stokes says he was flattered to be nominated for New Zealander of the Year but the country's beaten World Cup cricket captain Kane Williamson should win it.

Stokes, 28, was born in New Zealand but moved to England at the age of 12 when his father Gerard took a rugby league coaching job.

A man-of-the-match performance in England's dramatic super over victory against New Zealand in this month's World Cup final earned Stokes some early nominations for New Zealander of the Year, according to the nation's media.

In a statement issued through his management on Tuesday, Stokes said that while he was proud of his New Zealand and Maori heritage the nomination "would not sit right".

"I feel the whole country should align their support to New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. He

should be revered as a Kiwi legend. He led his team in this World Cup with distinction and honour," Stokes said.

"He was the player of the tournament and an inspirational leader of men. He shows humility and empathy to every situation and is an all-round good bloke. He typifies what it is to be a New Zealander."

"He would be a worthy recipient of this accolade. New Zealand,

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fully support him. He deserves it and gets my vote."

Nominations for the award opened on July 1 and close on Sept 15. A shortlist is confirmed in December, with the winner named next February.

The last sportsman to win the award was former All Blacks captain Richie McCaw in 2016 after he led the side to their second successive Rugby World Cup title in late 2015.

Mani to head ICC's financial & commercial affairs committee

Malinga to retire from ODIs after first Bangladesh match

COLOMBO, July 23, (Agencies): Sri Lanka fast bowling ace Lasith Malinga will retire from 50-over internationals after Friday's first match against Bangladesh in Colombo, the 35-year-old has said.

Malinga played his last Test in 2010 but continued playing the shorter formats and has taken 335 wickets from 225 one-day internationals for Sri Lanka, the third highest for the island country behind Muttiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas.

"I have already informed Sri Lanka Cricket authorities that I will be retiring during the first match of the Bangladesh tour," Malinga said in a video posted on his wife's Facebook account on Monday. "Today, I have confirmed this to cricket authorities. They have responded positively and accepted my request."

Malinga requested his fans to head to the venue of the match on Friday.

"I had the support of all of you to play for the cricket team for the last 16 years, overcoming a lot of challenges and fights to remain in the team," he said.

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The paceman with blond-tinted hair and the distinctive slingshot action had previously said he would retire from international cricket following next year's World Twenty20 in Australia.

Since his 2004 debut against United Arab Emirates, Malinga has been a formidable bowler in limited overs cricket with his ability to execute toe-crushing yorkers at will, especially in the death overs.

While the pace has undoubtedly dropped over the years, the former captain was still Sri Lanka's most successful bowler at the recent World Cup in England with 13 wickets from seven outings to finish third in the list of most successful bowlers in the history of the World Cup with 56 wickets.

He has also taken three ODI hat tricks and is the only player to have achieved the milestone twice during a World Cup.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ehsan Mani has been appointed as the head of the ICC's financial and commercial affairs committee.

The committee is one of the cricket body's most powerful as it looks after the budgets for ICC events and distributing money to its member countries.

It will be Mani's second stint as chairman of the committee. He held the post from 1996-2002 when the ICC secured broadcasting rights worth \$550 million.



In this Feb 10, 2019 file photo, Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ehsan Mani listens to a question during an interview with the Associated Press in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

'Founding Mothers'

Storm sponsor 3-on-3 team to help USA qualify for Olympics

NEW YORK, July 23, (AP): Alexis Peterson and her Force 10 teammates see themselves as the "Founding Mothers".

They are the first group of women to be sponsored by a WNBA team to play 3-on-3 basketball. They hope it's just the beginning.

The Seattle Storm ownership group put together a pilot program with Peterson, Cierra Burdick, Linnae Harper and Megan Huff to travel the country and play in USA Basketball Red Bull

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3x3 Tournaments. By doing so, the team will earn points for the US to help them qualify for the 2020 Olympics. It will also earn the four players on the Force 10 team points to potentially qualify them to Tokyo next summer to play in those games.

"I think it's amazing. First group of women to do it at this level," Peterson said. "It's not often you can say you are a part of something at the beginning. We were a part of that. Ten, 20 years from now, we can say we were the ones who started that and we were the ones who led the way and got women more of a chance to play."

The Storm ownership group of Lisa Brummel, Ginny Gilder and Dawn Trudeau began researching the possibility of fielding a team about a year ago. Force 10 CEO and Storm general manager Alisha Valavanis said it was a no-brainer for them to get involved.

"We wanted to start something and it is an investment in this sport," Valavanis said. "Not only for these players,

but for the game to grow, the business of basketball to grow. That is what this is about. We received the WNBA's support in this pilot program."

The Force 10 players were honored to be chosen and definitely are inspired by the fact that the team was started by women.

"There's something really special that the first team is being sponsored by a WNBA team that is owned by women," Burdick said.

Valavanis sees the possibility that teams across the WNBA could sponsor 3-on-3 teams. Right now, there are 144 potential roster spots on WNBA teams. If each team were to sponsor a 3-on-3 team, that would add another 48 potential jobs for women.

"Absolutely, we test this and grow a model that makes sense for the WNBA and other teams to follow," she said.

The Force 10 program also helps USA Basketball. Unlike 5-on-5, where teams like the US can just choose from its pool of players to put forth a very good team, the Americans first must earn enough points to qualify as a country for the Olympics next year. Only seven countries will join Japan on the men's and women's side in the new event.

Qualifying as a country is based on a point system, which can be earned by playing in FIBA-sanctioned tournaments around the world. The top three point-earning countries by Nov 1 will automatically qualify for Tokyo. The US women are currently 21st. If the Americans aren't in the top three by that date, there will be a last-chance tournament held next spring for the final few spots.



In this June 13, 2012 file photo, Sri Lankan bowler Lasith Malinga celebrates the wicket of Pakistan batsman Mohammad Hafeez (unseen), during the third one day international cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

Wizards expected to offer All-Star G Beal extension

Spurs hire Duncan as assistant coach

NEW YORK, July 23, (RTRS): Tim Duncan will return to the San Antonio Spurs as an assistant coach in 2019-20.

The team made the announcement Monday, also noting that Will Hardy joined head coach Gregg Popovich's coaching staff. Duncan, 43, played 19 seasons with the Spurs and won five NBA championships playing for Popovich from 1997-2016.

"It is only fitting, that after I served



In this Dec 2, 2015 file photo, San Antonio Spurs head coach Gregg Popovich (left), talks with forward Tim Duncan (21) during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Milwaukee Bucks in San Antonio. (AP)

All-Star in each of the past two seasons.

Wizards owner Ted Leonsis made official the leadership structure of Monumental Basketball, the newly formed umbrella organization for the Wizards, Washington Mystics of the WNBA, Capital City Go-Go and Wizards District Gaming.

The group made it official that Tommy Sheppard will serve as general manager of the Wizards, while announcing that Sashi Brown will be the chief planning and operations officer for Monumental Basketball, and Daniel Medina will have the title of chief of athlete care and performance.

The Washington Wizards are expected to offer All-Star guard Bradley Beal a three-year, \$111 million extension this week, although there are no indications he will accept immediately, ESPN reported.

Beal, 26, still has two years and \$55.8 million remaining on his current contract. He will be able to receive an extension offer on Friday and then would have until Oct 21 to sign it. Beal's agent Mark Bartelstein told ESPN that careful consideration would be given to any extension offer.

Beal scored a career-best 25.6 points per game with 5.5 assists last season. In seven seasons with the Wizards, the former No. 3 overall selection in the 2012 draft has averaged 19.8 points and 3.7 assists. He was an

ompo of the Milwaukee Bucks spent much of last season in the NBA G League. He was waived by the Dallas Mavericks.

Philadelphia 76ers forward Tobias Harris became the latest player to withdraw from the Team USA roster for the upcoming World Cup in China. Harris, the sixth player to pull out, said he wanted to focus on preparing for the 2019-20 season, according to published reports. Harris signed a five-year, \$180 million deal with the 76ers earlier this month.

Zion Williamson withdrew from the Team USA Select Team, closing the door on any chance he had of being promoted to the departure-ravaged main roster.

No reason for Williamson's exit was given by The Athletic, the entity that first reported the withdrawal. The Athletic cited managing director Jerry Colangelo as its source.

The NBA 2K League has partnered with internet giant Tencent to stream games in China for the first time.

The league announced the deal Tuesday. Tencent is the league's first distribution partner in China and will offer condensed postseason and finals games for the 2019 season. The playoffs are set to begin Wednesday.

The NBA 2K League is a basketball video game circuit operated by the NBA, and its teams are associated with NBA franchises. Tencent also has a partnership with the NBA to broadcast live games and other content.