

## Sri Lanka's Malinga quits international cricket

AP | Colombo

Fast bowler Lasith Malinga, who led Sri Lanka to victory at the 2014 Twenty20 World Cup, yesterday quit T20 internationals to complete his retirement as a player.

The 38-year-old, one of the most successful limited over bowlers of all time with his distinctive 'sling' action, said he would now devote himself to supporting the next generation of cricketers.

Malinga, who was dropped for Sri Lanka's current T20 series against South Africa, had been considering giving up since leading the team when it lost 2-0 to India in January last year.

"I have decided to retire from T20I cricket marking my retirement from all formats of cricket," he said on his Facebook page.

"But, I will be continuously supporting the younger generations," he added.

"While my shoes will rest, my love for the game will never ask for rest."

Malinga has been a top attraction at the Indian Premier League and other limited overs tournaments around the world.

His greatest moment, however, was leading Sri Lanka to the T20 World Cup title in Bangladesh in 2014.

Sri Lanka beat India by six wickets in the final, with Malinga frustrating the Indian batsmen with yorkers in the death overs.

Malinga is the leading all-time T20 international wick-



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LASITH MALINGA

et-taker with 107 scalps. He took 338 wickets in one-day internationals, making him one of the top 10 bowlers in the format.

He is the only bowler with two World Cup hat-tricks to his name and one of only two players to have taken four wickets in four consecutive balls in international cricket.

Malinga has not played a match since leading Sri Lanka in a T20 series against West Indies in March last year. His side lost the series and in his final game he failed to get any wickets in his three overs that cost 46 runs.

# Tough group will be exciting, says Liverpool's Klopp

Liverpool drawn alongside AC Milan, Atletico Madrid and Porto in Group B of Champions League

**● Liverpool will open their campaign against Milan at Anfield today**

AFP | Milan

Jurgen Klopp says his Liverpool team face the "strongest" Champions League group since he joined the club, defending the competition's current format as he prepares for Wednesday's blockbuster clash against AC Milan.

Klopp's Reds will face seven-time European champions AC Milan, Spanish league title holders Atletico Madrid and 2004 Champions League winners Porto in a daunting Group B.

European football's governing body UEFA earlier this year announced a new format for the Champions League from 2024 -- replacing the 32-team group stage with a single league made up of 36 clubs.

That prompted fears that the quality of the tournament would be diluted, with managers also speaking out over player workloads.

Klopp told his pre-match press conference yesterday



Jurgen Klopp, Manager of Liverpool celebrates with the Champions League Trophy after winning it in 2019 (file photo)

that the make-up of Liverpool's group this season showed the strength of the current format.

"This is the strongest group since I'm at Liverpool, no doubt about that," said the German, whose side were crowned European champions in 2019.

"I never understand that when people talk about changes in the Champions League. It's just the right thing.

"I like the Champions League how it is. This group shows there are no games where people think, 'Do we really want to watch that?'"

Wednesday's match at An-

field features two teams who have been crowned European champions 13 times between them and is a re-match of the 2005 final in Istanbul, when Liverpool recovered from a 3-0 half-time deficit to win on penalties.

Milan gained revenge when they defeated Liverpool 2-1 in the 2007 final in Athens.

Stefano Pioli's Rossoneri are a force to be reckoned with once more after failing to qualify for Europe's top club competition for seven consecutive seasons.

Klopp predicted Liverpool's group would be "exciting from

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

Liverpool and AC Milan contested two Champions League finals in 2005 and 2007, with both sides winning one title each. Liverpool came back from 3-0 down in the 2005 final to win the match on penalties in what became known as the "Miracle of Istanbul"

the first second to the last second".

"I can't see early decisions made in this group," he said. "That keeps us on our toes -- it's exactly what we wanted."

Klopp said he relished the return of crowds after they were largely shut out last season due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Unbelievable stadiums, great crowd, passionate fanbase -- it's exactly how we want football," said the 54-year-old.

## McVeigh goes all out on Tipsaev: 'I am no chicken. I'm going to finish him'

TDT | Manama

After redeeming himself with a shock victory over Abdulmanap Magomedov five months ago, Ireland's Glenn McVeigh is ready to remind the mixed martial arts (MMA) world once again why he was once considered one of the top amateur standouts to ever come out of Europe.

McVeigh returns to action on September 25th, squaring off with Bilal "Borz" Tipsaev of Sweden in a three-round bantamweight contest on the supporting card of BRAVE CF 54—the Bahrain-based promotion's maiden venture into Konin, Poland.

The 24-year-old Belfast, Northern Ireland native hit a rough patch at the start of his professional career, dropping back-to-back losses—including a 70-second submission setback to Frieih Harahsheh at BRAVE CF 49: Super Fights last March.

Fortunately for him, he was given an opportunity to wash away the bitter taste of defeat. Maksim Trokhimchuk withdrew from the bout against Magomedov due to an injury. As a result, the matchmakers offered the spot to McVeigh who didn't think twice to accept it.

At BRAVE CF 50 in April, McVeigh pulled off the impossible, defeating Magomedov by way of unanimous decision in a three-round featherweight thriller.

"Everybody calls me chicken. I don't get it. I accept all these



Glenn McVeigh in action during a bout

**"Everybody calls me chicken. I don't get it. I accept all these fights with all these guys willingly, regardless of where they are fighting. So I am no chicken"**

GLENN MCVEIGH

fights with all these guys willingly, regardless of where they are fighting. So I am no chicken," the Fight Academy Ireland representative stated.

Now, McVeigh wants to build on his first win under the organization's banner by defeating Tipsaev, who is coming off a third-round stoppage loss to Latvia's Matiss Zaharovs in his promotional debut at BRAVE CF 36 in July 2020.

While he is fully aware that Tipsaev will bring in the same amount of desire to walk away with his hand raised, McVeigh is confident that he has the necessary tools to beat anyone in the division.

"I respect him (Tipsaev), he is a beast. His wrestling is really high level, but that is not even going to be enough. It's so tough to picture this fight without getting a finish. If we both fight, it's going to be a really tough fight," he said.

"He is just average in MMA, but his wrestling is very good. If it's a wrestling match, he will most definitely win. But we are having an MMA fight. I truly believe I'm going to finish him," McVeigh added.

"I want the best and toughest fighters in the division. Give me some tough fights after this fight."

## Kohli backed to continue as India captain in all three formats

AFP | New Delhi

Virat Kohli will continue to captain India in all three formats, a top national cricket board official said yesterday, after speculation that the batting great could be replaced as skipper for limited-overs games.

Kohli's recent sketchy form with the bat has led to reports that changes could be made after the T20 World Cup, which begins next month in the United Arab Emirates.

But Kohli received a vote of confidence from Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah.

"There is no such proposal (to replace Kohli) and the team is led by Virat and we are backing him," said Shah.

"We are sensitive to the fact that such a proposal is not in the interest of Indian team when it will take part in a World Cup," Shah told website Cricbuzz.

Indian media have reported that opening batsman Rohit Sharma could take over as Twenty20 and 50-over captain and that the change had been discussed by the BCCI.

"As long as a team is performing, the question of change in captaincy doesn't arise," Shah was reported as saying by the Indian Express newspaper.

Kohli led India to a landmark Test series win in Australia in January and they were leading 2-1 in England when the fifth and final Test was controversially cancelled last week be-



India bowler Ravichandran Ashwin (l) chats with captain Virat Kohli during India nets

**BETTER YOU KNOW**

India have not lost a Twenty20 series under Kohli, but they have failed to win either the 50-over Champions Trophy, World Cup or T20 World Cup since he became white ball captain in 2017

cause of a coronavirus outbreak in the tourists' camp.

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the 50-over Champions Trophy, World Cup or T20 World Cup since he became white ball captain in 2017.

Shah also confirmed that India have offered to play two extra T20 matches in England next July in place of the cancelled Test.

The England board suffered huge financial losses from the refusal of Indian players to take part because of coronavirus fears.

"Instead of three T20Is, we will play five T20Is. Alternately, we will be willing to play a one-off Test as well. It is up to them to choose either of the offers," said Shah.

India pulled out of the final Test at Old Trafford last week after head coach Ravi Shastri and other support staff contracted the virus and had to be isolated.