

India's Ishant Sharma says 100 Tests just a number

India's fast bowler Ishant Sharma is set to play his 100th Test match tomorrow

● Sharma will lead India's bowling in the third Test against England in Ahmedabad

AFP | New Delhi

Veteran fast bowler Ishant Sharma says pulling India out of a tough spot remains his motivation as he goes into his 100th Test tomorrow.

Sharma, 32, is set to become India's second quick bowler -- after the legendary Kapil Dev -- to play a century of Test matches.

With the four-Test series tied at 1-1, Sharma will lead India's bowling in the third Test against England at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

Last week in Chennai, he claimed two wickets in his 99th Test with India thrashing England by 317 runs, and says he will play his 100th game with the same intent.

"Hundred is just a number for me," Sharma told reporters ahead of the pink-ball Test.



India's Ishant Sharma during nets

"It's like how I played my 99th match, with the same feeling, same intensity and same aggressiveness, I will go into my 100th match. And I will continue until I see the intent and aggressiveness in my bowling."

He added, "I don't play for numbers, I play to win. How can I make the team win, how can I become an impactful player?"

"How can I pull out the team from tough situations, that is the only motivation. If there is a partnership, how to break it,

that is only my focus."

Sharma reached 300 Test wickets in his team's opening loss to enter India's exclusive 300-wicket club, which includes pace greats Dev (434) and Zaheer Khan (311).

'One game at a time'

From a lanky quick bowler, struggling with injuries, to a warhorse, who has averaged around 19 since 2018, Sharma has come a long way and credits the progress to understanding

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his body.

"I just go one game at a time, I just don't think too far ahead because you never know what comes next," said Sharma, who made his Test debut in 2007 in Dhaka.

"I understand my body, what kind of training I need to do. As you grow older and you have to bowl long spells, you need to look after yourself."

Sharma played a one-day international in 2016 and a Twenty20 match for India in 2013 before he fell out of favour in the limited-overs format.

Raikkonen ready for F1 season as Alfa Romeo launch new car



Alfa Romeo's Finnish driver Kimi Raikkonen (R) takes a walk (file photo) AFP | London

Former Formula One champion Kimi Raikkonen was full of enthusiasm yesterday as the veteran racer's Alfa Romeo team unveiled their new car for the coming season.

The 41-year-old said the next campaign was a leap in the dark, but that the Italian team would make the most of it.

"First of all it's nice to see the new car," Raikkonen said at the launch in Warsaw.

"We are in an area of unknown, there's some rule changes and how's that going to impact everybody and where we are going to be," added the veteran of well over 300 Grands Prix.

"Hopefully we are better off than we were last year and we'll get some idea in testing in a couple of weeks, and in

1 Formula One World championship have been won by Kimi Raikkonen in 2007 with Ferrari

one month's time in the first race we'll really know where we are.

The Finnish driver, the 2007 F1 champion with Ferrari, would not speculate on results but promised top performances.

"We'll do our best wherever we end up," he said.

Raikkonen and his 27-year-old stablemate Antonio Giovinazzi came 16th and 17th last season with four points each.

Dy braces for Brave title eliminator bout

TDT | Manila

Filipino warrior Rolando "Dy Incredible" Dy is set to plunge back into action next month against Kyrgyzstan's Abdisalam Kubanychbek in a Brave Combat Federation (CF) lightweight title eliminator.

The Dy-Kubanychbek fight will topbill Brave CF 47 on March 11, which kicks off the promotion's "Kombat Kingdom" offering, the Bahrain-based organization announced.

The 29-year-old Dy is the reigning Brave Fighter of the Year and son of Filipino boxing legend Rolando Navarette.

He decided to stay with Brave as he sealed a fresh and exclusive three-year contract that also guarantees him five bouts under the promotion.

Dy is seeking to build on his good showing last year and continue his push to the summit of the division and get a shot at the title currently held by Frenchman Amin Ayoub.

The Philippines' pride has thrust himself to the fore after a fruitful season in 2020 notwithstanding the limitations presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

The veteran mixed martial arts fighter defeated Maciej Gierszewski and John Brewin within a two-month span and had Brave impressed to make him the top fighter for last year.

Kubanychbek arrived at Brave in 2019 and has steadily become one of the most prominent lightweight fighters in the promotion.

He earned back-to-back knockouts, against João Paulo Rodrigues and Vagif Askerov, and recently, at Brave CF 46, last January, submitted Jahon-



Dy determined to stay on top



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gir Saidjamolov in the second round.

The full slate of fights for Brave CF 47 will be announced in the days ahead.

Kombat Kingdom happens within a 21-day span and will feature a series of fight nights until April 1, when Brave hosts its 50th event.

Brave was founded in 2016

and has staged events in different parts of the world, including the Philippines.

2020 was, indeed, an incredible year for Dy capped by BRAVE Combat Federation bestowing upon him the prestigious 2020 Fighter of the Year award.

Dy's 2020 was sent into overdrive when the promotion offered him to step in for an injured Sam Patterson in a lightweight title eliminator versus John Brewin at BRAVE CF 44 last November.

On just 14 days' notice, Dy accepted the match and flew to Bahrain to duke it out with Brewin.

It was a unanimous decision win against the 2019 Breakout Fighter of the Year who was a natural lightweight and in pole position for a championship crack.

"Let this be a reminder to all to never give up in the face of adversity. Challenges are made to make us grow and strong. Just hang in there and keep on fighting," said Dy.

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