

## IPL captain takes pop at Cricket Australia over record-buy Green



Cameron Green warms-up before the match

AFP | Mumbai

Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Ajinkya Rahane aimed a dig at Cricket Australia after \$2.7 million all-rounder Cameron Green was unable to bowl as they opened their IPL season with defeat.

Green was snapped up by three-time champions Kolkata in the December auction for 252 million rupees to become the most expensive overseas buy in Indian Premier League history.

Kolkata posted 220 against Mumbai Indians at Wankhede Stadium on Sunday, with Green hitting a four and a six while batting at number three before he departed for 18 off 10 balls.

The Kolkata bowlers -- minus Australian international Green -- then took a beating as the hosts chased down their target with five balls to spare.

Quizzed afterwards about not using Green as a bowling

option, Rahane replied bluntly: "The question you need to ask Cricket Australia."

Cricket Australia yesterday said Green has a lower back injury that "requires him to abstain from bowling for a short period".

"Cameron is currently rebuilding his bowling loads in India with a view to return in around 10-12 days' time," a spokesperson said.

"KKR has been communicated with and is fully aware of this information."

The 26-year-old Green has been carefully managed since having back surgery in 2024.

He bowled just seven balls at the T20 World Cup in February and featured in the Sheffield Shield's ninth round only as a batter.

Speaking later in a post-match press conference, Rahane said: "It is challenging because our bowlers are injured, but it is an opportunity for other players to show up and make a name for themselves."

# Knibb, Blummenfelt win Oceanside Ironman 70.3

TDT | Manama

Sun-drenched Oceanside, California, USA, hosted a memorable Sunday for Bahrain Victorious 13. Taylor Knibb delivered a standout performance in the women's race, while former Bahrain Victorious star Kristian Blummenfelt dominated the men's event.

Knibb extended her 2026 winning streak representing the Kingdom. She finished the 1.9 km swim just behind Brazil's Vittoria Lopes in 23:29 but quickly hit her stride on the 90 km bike leg, completing it in 2:15:27 -- smashing her previous record of 2:18:00 and building a strong lead for the 21.1 km run. She crossed the line in 4:01:39, nearly five minutes faster than her prior best, finishing almost two minutes ahead of Norway's Solveig Lovseth, with France's Audrey Merle in third. The victory earned her 2,500 Pro Series points and \$7,500, jumping 18 places to 11th on the leaderboard.

"Every race is fun when you win," Knibb said. "The first 16 kilometers went well, but the last part tested me. Sometimes you just have to go for it."

Blummenfelt, Olympic champion and former Bahrain Victorious 13 member, started outside the top 15 after the swim but steadily gained ground on the bike. In the half marathon, he launched a decisive surge in the final 2.5 kilometers, overtaking Sam Long and Jonas Schomburg to finish in 3:40:08 -- his second straight 70.3 win following Geelong six days earlier.

"I really had to work today,"



Taylor Knibb of Bahrain Victorious crosses the finish line to win the women's race



Kristian Blummenfelt crosses the finish line to win the men's race in Oceanside

Blummenfelt said. "I felt strong on the run, but I still had two minutes to Jonas and Sam. I passed them with 2.5 kilometers to go and barely made it."

With victories in Oceanside, both athletes now turn their focus to Ironman Texas on April 18, aiming to continue their early-season dominance.

Their performances highlight the depth and competitive spirit of Bahrain Victorious 13 and its alumni, signaling a strong season ahead.

## Tuchel defends Rice and Saka after England withdrawals

AFP | London

Thomas Tuchel insisted Declan Rice and Bukayo Saka were desperate to play for England against Japan after the Arsenal stars pulled out of the squad ahead of Tuesday's friendly.

Rice and Saka watched from the stands when England drew 1-1 against Uruguay on Friday, having been allowed to join up with Tuchel's group later than most of their team-mates to give them time to rest.

The pair were among five injury withdrawals on Saturday, along with Arsenal team-mate Noni Madueke.

Rice, Saka and Madueke are among 10 Arsenal players to have withdrawn from their respective national teams in recent days.

The mass exodus has raised questions about Arsenal potentially suggesting to their stars that they prioritise the club's treble bid over their countries' friendlies.

Arsenal are nine points clear at the top of the Premier League



England boss Thomas Tuchel during a press conference

as they chase a first English title since 2004, and are still in contention in the Champions League and FA Cup.

But Tuchel was adamant Rice and Saka were hoping to feature for England in their final friendlies on home soil before the World Cup in June and July.

"They joined, had a medical assessment, wanted desperately to play, to just get the narrative straight. Wanted desperately to be involved," Tuchel told report-

er John Stones left before the friendly against Japan due to a calf injury.

The centre-back has only made five appearances for City since last playing for England in November.

"It's not ideal for John and not for us, of course, and John was gutted that he had this minor incident again, which was not a big injury but given the history we had to be careful," Tuchel said.

"He has a lot of credit with me in the bank still. He is a key player for us, as a starter or as a substitute."

Tuchel admitted the withdrawals were frustrating, but the German was not surprised given the toll on players towards the end of a gruelling season.

"It's disappointing, but I'm not upset with the players. I'm not angry with the players," he said.

"I got the feeling that everyone was desperate to come. Some of the injured players even stayed to do their treatment here, start their treatment here.

ers yesterday.

"The risk for making it worse was just way too big. They were both clearly in discomfort when we did the medical assessment, so it made absolutely no sense that they stayed."

'I'm not upset'

Crystal Palace midfielder Adam Wharton pulled out with an issue that was "more discomfort than a big injury".

Manchester City defend-

## Test star Carey the hero as South Australia win Sheffield Shield final

AFP | Sydney

A gritty century from Test wicketkeeper Alex Carey helped South Australia clinch back-to-back Sheffield Shield titles yesterday with a stunning 56-run comeback win over Victoria.

Facing defeat at 79-5 in the second innings, Carey stepped up to crunch 103 in a crucial late stand with number nine Nathan McAndrew (60).



Alex Carey

Their bowlers then finished the job at Melbourne's Junction Oval to deny Victoria a first domestic red-ball crown since 2018-19.

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