The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision
SPORT





SPORT | 02
Recovering Pogba aims to comeback stronger

SPORT | 03
Stokes relives 'great day' of Headingley for first time





MONDAY 13 APRIL 2020

Sport can play vital role in repairing hearts and minds when pandemic is over: Cahill

WWW.QATAR2022.QA – DOHA


Australian legend and SC Global Ambassador Tim Cahill shares a light moment with young players during a training session in Doha as part of the Generation Amazing programme.

The world is in a very uncertain place right now. We don't know how much longer the current situation is going to last, whether it will get worse before it gets better, or what things will look like when it's over. I want to start by acknowledging that people are all hurting in different ways, and some more than others. There are physical, mental and economic impacts being felt all over the world.

Sport has been front and centre in my life since I was old enough to kick a ball with my brothers and sister in the backyard, but something like this really puts things into perspective. It's just not that important right now. People are unwell, scared and stressed, and many have lost loved ones. Kicking a ball doesn't really register next to the life-changing circumstances that so many are experiencing.

But although now is the time for sport to take a back seat, I want to try and think forward to when this is over. Whether that's six weeks, six months, or longer, I think that sport is going to be one of the most important tools we have to help people feel normal again. I don't think that it will just be professional sport, although it will definitely have a role. I believe grassroots sport is going to be equally important in reuniting communities once the threat of coronavirus has passed.

One of the toughest things about the situation we're in now is that it has divided us. First, we were divided into countries as borders across the world were closed, then cities as movement became restricted and then in many cases we have had to divide into individual households. It's really important that we don't hold on to this mentality once we are unrestricted again and I think that sport has a role to play here.

One of the greatest powers of sport is that it unites us. In particular, big international events like the Olympics and FIFA World Cup bring the world together in a pretty incredible way. I have been fortunate enough to take part in the 2004 Athens Olympics, four FIFA World Cups and I am now an ambassador for the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy in Qatar, the organisation responsible for delivering the next World Cup, in 2022.

As an athlete, you feel such a strong atmosphere at these events of shared celebration. In Russia during the 2018 tournament, the streets of Moscow were full of fans from all countries, celebrating together. The atmosphere was infectious. Although different groups are there to support particular countries and athletes, when you get to witness history being made, like Usain Bolt at the Rio Olympics, it feels like the whole world comes together as one. I know that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar is going to be just like this, and it will be coming at a time when we need it. I've been lucky enough to see some of the stadiums coming together and they are preparing to put on a show that we will remember for a long time to come. Whether it's attending in person or watching on TV, as the 'next' truly global football event that will likely follow this testing time, the 2022 World Cup is going to be a powerful symbol and an invaluable tool for unity, togetherness and recovery across the world.

> **One of the greatest powers of sport is that it unites us. In particular, big international events like the Olympics and FIFA World Cup bring the world together in a pretty incredible way. I have been fortunate enough to take part in the 2004 Athens Olympics, four FIFA World Cups and I am now an ambassador for the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy in Qatar, the organisation responsible for delivering the next World Cup, in 2022: Tim Cahill**

The second way that I can see sport playing an important role is at a grassroots level. In the current situation we have been made to become physically distant from one another for our own safety. When I take my kids for a run around the block we have to give a wide berth to the people we would usually skip around with a smile and a wave. It's the same at the supermarket and in any other public spaces. I have to say that this feels particularly alien to me. The world just feels a bit less friendly. It's going to take a conscious effort on our part to close this space between us again once it's safe to do so.

This is where I'm hoping grassroots sport will have a role to play.

As a parent, there's nothing better than cheering on your kids when they play – whether they're following their dreams to one day play professionally, or just having fun with their mates. Sport brings us closer – high fives after goals, handshakes after games and hugs with mum and dad once it's over.

I've been involved at a grassroots level running football academies in Australia for eight years and also with the Generation Amazing programme in Qatar.

It's been great to see – as we have in so many fields of sport, industry and media across the world – the ingenuity in the face of such testing times, as so many health, fitness and social responsibility programmes go online to play their part in keeping people connected, active and healthy. Generation Amazing has been no different – with its online sessions via Instagram. Something I look forward to taking part in soon.

Before this crisis began, I saw the confidence that kids get from being a part of these programmes and how much fun they have learning new skills and making new friends. I think in a post-coronavirus world, grassroots sport – whether it's five-a-side at your local oval, in the playground at recess, or organised sport on the weekend – will help bring us closer again.

As it will for millions of others around the world. Although for now we've been forced by the circumstances to separate and be apart, I really believe that sport is one of the things that will bring us back together again.

TIM CAHILL
SC Global Ambassador

FIFA ponders third player transfer window

QNA – ZURICH

Football governing body FIFA could allow a third transfer window to enable the sport to seek flexible solutions to the coronavirus pandemic which has put league seasons on hold.

James Kitching, Director of Football Regulatory at FIFA, told Germany's broadcaster ARD a third transfer period could be a possibility for federations.

This would be dealt with flexibly as long as the current total period for transfers of 16 weeks is not extended, he said.

At present the two transfer periods are a maximum of 12 weeks between seasons and four weeks in the middle of the season.

FIFA last week approved guidelines on players' contracts and transfer deadlines to enable league seasons to be extended beyond June as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

On transfer windows FIFA said it "will be flexible and will allow the relevant transfer windows to be moved so they fall between the end of the old season and the start of the new season."

Players with contracts expiring on June 30 should be allowed to complete the season if it finishes at a later stage, FIFA said.

Most leagues are suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic and plans are being made to complete seasons - with play almost certainly going beyond that regular cut-off date.

FACT BOX
Premier League clubs which have furloughed staff due to pandemic

REUTERS

The English Premier League clubs that have furloughed staff after professional football in the country was suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Some clubs are using the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme where employers can claim for 80% of furloughed employees' monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 ($3,082) per month.

- Liverpool: Furloughed some of their non-playing staff but reversed their decision and apologised after it drew sharp criticism from the British government and supporters.
- Tottenham Hotspur: Imposed a 20% pay cut on 550 non-playing staff in April and May, with the club planning to use the government's furlough scheme where appropriate.

Spurs fans have urged the club to reverse their decision.

- Newcastle United: Non-playing staff on temporary leave but they will be paid their full salaries until the end of April.
- Bournemouth: Staff furloughed for at least three weeks. The club's chief executive Neill Blake, first team technical director Richard Hughes, manager Eddie Howe and his assistant Jason Tindall have all taken significant, voluntary pay cuts.
- Norwich City: Furloughed staff members unable to work but will receive usual salary in full after club top up money received from the government scheme.
- Sheffield United: Furloughed some permanent and casual staff but will continue to pay them in full. The club said it would assess at a later date whether or not to participate in the Job Retention Scheme.


Al Rayyan's coach Diego Aguirre with his players during a training session in this file photo.

Al Rayyan players continue training to stay fit during break from action

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Al Rayyan players continued their individual training at their homes, as per the training programmes designed by the team's technical staff led by Uruguayan Diego Aguirre and fitness coach, in order to maintain their physical fitness ahead of the return of action.

A number of Al Rayyan players are also training at the club taking precautionary measures to avoid the risks of coronavirus (Covid-19).

The technical staff set a plan for the players who perform their training at the club, as the number does not exceed five players in each session and safe distance (three metres) is kept between each player.

Aguirre is keenly monitoring the fitness levels of all players via electronic devices.

Meanwhile, three Al Rayyan players - Khaled Muftah, Mohammed Juma and Franck Kom - resumed training after recovering from their injuries.

Al Rayyan players also participated in the awareness campaign to provide advice and guidance to the fans of their club and Qatar football in general, exhorting them to maintain their safety by staying at their homes until the risks of coronavirus are over.

Meanwhile, Al Shahania's assistant coach Nabil Anwar said their technical and administrative staff were ready with alternative plan for the current football season.

Speaking to QSL website, Nabil said, "There're communications and co-ordination between members of the technical staff, led by Spaniard Jose Murcia, and we have plans A, B and C in place to act, as per any decision taken by the Qatar Football Association (QFA) and Qatar Stars League (QSL) regarding the remaining part of the season. We're ready for all possibilities and we know that such conditions are beyond anybody's control."

Nabil said Iranian fitness trainer Saeed Yunsawi had more workload at present as he had to chalk out physical training programmes for each player and we follow them every day.

"These exercises are the best option for us and all clubs to ensure players maintain a high level of physical fitness, so the teams will not need a long time to prepare before the resumption of competitions.

"We know that the QFA and QSL will give us enough time before the competitions resume, and we'll need only a short preparatory period to get down to business," he added.

African Champions League semi-finals postponed

AFP – CAIRO

Next month's two-legged semi-finals of the African Champions League have been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) announced yesterday.

"In light of growing concerns and evolving nature on COVID-19 (that has led to a) lockdown in most countries, the CAF Emergency Committee has decided to postpone the matches until further notice," a statement said.

"A new schedule will be announced in due time.

In semi-final showdowns between Moroccan and Egyptian clubs, Raja Casablanca are due to meet Zamalek while Wydad Casablanca will face record eight-time winners Al Ahly.

The two Moroccan sides were to host the first legs on the opening weekend of May with the return matches in Egypt one week later.

Also postponed were the African Confederation Cup semi-finals, to be played at the same time. Pyramids FC of Egypt take on Horoya of Guinea in one semi-final while the other game is an all Moroccan clash between Renaissance Berkane and Hassania Agadir.

Sponsors worry that they are paying for nothing

AFP – PARIS

With stadiums dark, match shirts folded in closets and most players confined at home, football's sponsors have lost all visibility and are growing restless.

European clubs are struggling to offer their 'partners' a return on their investments as sport grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're trying to do activities with our players for our sponsors, who are even more demanding since the lockdown. But it's very complicated because of the health crisis," one club marketing manager said.

The stars, the surest way for sponsors to attract an audience, are at home, many back in their native countries.

Worse, there are no games for them to play. Matches on TV display the brands on the team jerseys or around the pitch to millions of viewers.

At West Ham, one of the sponsors, high-risk finance company Basset & Gold, which the club stresses is not connected with owner David Gold, has just gone bankrupt, blaming the coronavirus crisis.

Many sponsors are in sectors hit especially hard, such as airlines and hotel and restaurant chains.

Some sponsors are beginning to cancel payments.

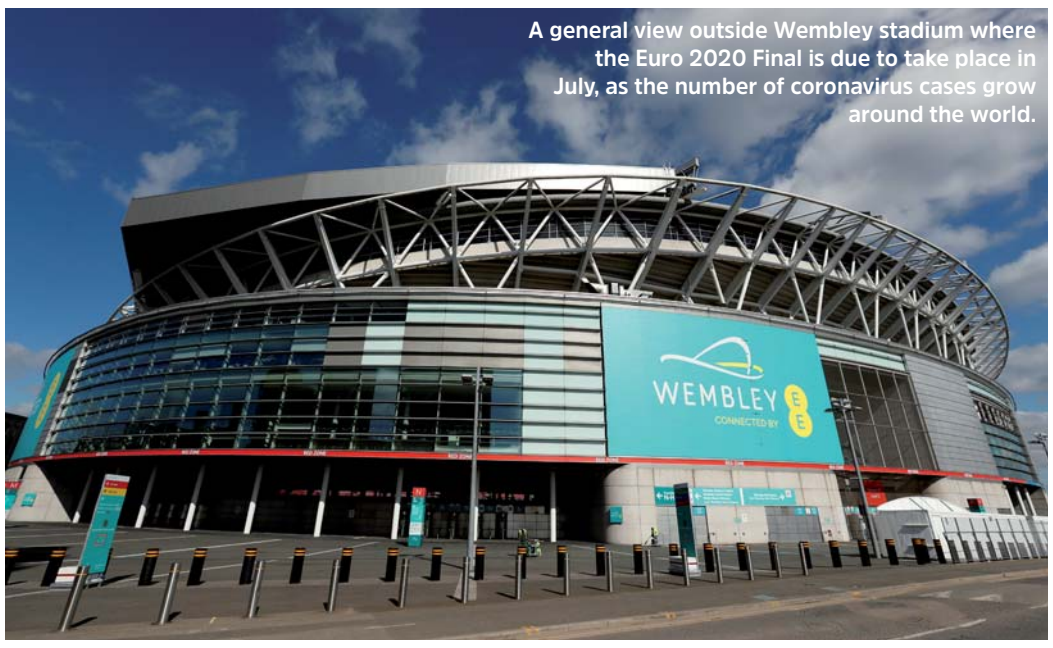
"It's quite obvious that having no more events, everything has to be suspended, it seems so logical to me. It's a case of force majeure," Marc Vanhove, the boss of the Bistro Regent restaurant chain, which sponsors the Bordeaux shirt, said.

The Bordeaux-based chain suspended its contract, which runs until 2023, he said, "until we have the dates for the resumption".

French hotel group Accor, PSG's main sponsor, left open the question of whether it would pay the full amount provided for in its contract (about $54.7m, a year), before saying two days later that it had honoured its commitments.

"When you're a sponsor, you want visibility," Accor CEO Sebastien Bazin told a French radio station.

"But at the same time, it's in bad times that you recognise your friends and those who are there for you." Sponsors can say overnight "we're stopping everything because we're in an emergency situation where we have to eliminate all the superfluous expenditure", sports economist Jean-Pascal Gayant said.



A general view outside Wembley stadium where the Euro 2020 Final is due to take place in July, as the number of coronavirus cases grow around the world.

"In the event of a crisis, the first budget item they cut is often the communications." With matches cancelled and some broadcasters, notably in France, beginning to withhold payments, club finances are already strained.

"Sponsorship is particularly important for Europe's biggest clubs," said Deloitte, the accountancy and services firm, in the 2020 edition of its 'Football Money League' which ranks clubs by income.

It said the primary source of revenue for its top five clubs (Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and PSG) is commercial and averages 49 percent of total revenue -- although that number is inflated by PSG, which reports 57 percent of revenue from sponsorship.

Lower down the Deloitte table, the proportions change.

For the clubs placed 16 to 20 (Roma, Lyon, West Ham, Everton and Napoli), 65 percent of revenue comes from broadcasting.

One market expert, who did not wish to be named, said that the risks of deserting can outweigh the financial costs, especially for companies "who are doing well" in sectors that are seen to be less affected, such as technology or the food industry.

You can go to them and say: 'You can play the white knight by investing in sport in these difficult times'," the market expert said.

It said the primary source of revenue for its top five clubs (Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and PSG) is commercial and averages 49 percent of total revenue -- although that number is inflated by PSG, which reports 57 percent of revenue from sponsorship.

The value of being seen to remain loyal is reflected in the attitude of the Iberdrola Group, the main sponsor of the Spanish women's first division.

"It is now, in this dramatic situation, that the support of sponsors is needed more than ever. You don't pull out at times like these," a spokesman for the Spanish electricity supply group said.

Even so, players in the sector estimate a 60 to 70 percent drop in investment and the prospect of several lean years.

"There is of course a risk that some companies that wanted to invest will no longer do so, but will do so later," said Bruno Bianzina, director of the Sport Market agency, a French company.

WHO SAID WHAT

I've been frustrated, a long time ago. Now I'm almost there, so I'm just thinking about getting back and training fully with the team and everything: *Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba* says his stint on the sidelines has made him more determined to succeed on his return from a layoff for a foot injury.

Everyone is in total agreement we need an end to this season. We don't want artificial means of deciding who wins the league, who gets into the Champions League, who gets relegated and promoted: *Crystal Palace manager Roy Hodgson*

We are hopeful of getting a flight from Punjab next week. So keeping our fingers crossed. Hopefully we get to Aberdeen safely: *Mason Robertson of Real Kashmir* is hoping he and the other foreign players stranded by the coronavirus lockdown in Srinagar, India, can soon leave for their home countries.

So sorry to hear that Peter Bonetti has passed away. Got to know him when he was England's goalkeeping coach and he was a delightful bloke: *Former England captain and television presenter Gary Lineker* on Former Chelsea and England goalkeeper Peter Bonetti's demise at the age of 78 yesterday after a long battle with illness.

Recovering Pogba aims to come back stronger

REUTERS – MANCHESTER

Paul Pogba's stint on the sidelines has made him more determined to succeed on his return from a layoff for a foot injury, the Manchester United midfielder has said.

Pogba's injury restricted him to eight appearances so far this season, but he was primed to return before professional football in England was suspended because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I've been frustrated, a long time ago. Now I'm almost there, so I'm just thinking about getting back and training fully with the team and everything," the 27-year-old said in an official club podcast.

"You think bad, but I've never had something like this in my career, so I always take it in a good way.

"It makes me more hungry to come back and do well."

The France international suffered a foot injury in August that he aggravated by continuing to play.

"I had a cast on it, a plaster-cast, so it went very well but too well.

"The bone got bigger and so, when I came back again, I played those two games against Watford and Newcastle, I could feel something again." He underwent surgery in January and now cannot wait to return to action.

"So I had to have an operation and now here I am. I don't feel anything, and, hopefully, I'll be back very soon."



Uncertainty spreads alongside virus in Europe's lower leagues

AFP – PARIS

The suspension to the current football season due to the coronavirus pandemic has left the game's biggest clubs arguing with star players over cuts to their multi-million euro salaries as top sides brace for huge drops in revenues.

However the potential damage is even more serious at the lower reaches, where clubs are losing out on gate receipts vital to keeping them afloat and potentially being denied planned-for financial windfalls from reaching the top table.

Italy could be the scene of legal chaos this summer as clubs desperately try to defend potential promotions which boost their coffers.

On Tuesday, Frosinone President Maurizio Stirpe threatened "legal action" if his club were not promoted to Serie A this season, despite his team only being third and not in Serie B's two automatic promotion places.

The season finishing as it stands would give Frosinone no chance of breaking into the top two, while the removal of the play-offs would open up a potential deluge of legal challenges with millions in Serie A TV revenue up for grabs.

Stirpe had already suggested last month that this season be extended until the end of June next year, extending contracts until that date but "only paying for this season".

However that would be disastrous for players in the lower leagues, in particular those in third-tier Serie C, which according to Monza CEO Adriano Galliani (formerly of AC Milan) has "basically no revenues" and "loses €120m a year".

The economic fall-out from teams being denied promotion will exacerbate an already brutal financial situation for lower-league clubs.

Real Zaragoza have been out of Spain's top flight since 2013, but are currently second in the Segunda Division, five points ahead of the play-off positions with 11 matches remaining.

The situation is similar even in England, the richest football nation of all. Last month League One and League Two clubs -- the third and fourth tiers -- said they face losses of around £50m ($63m) if the season doesn't restart.

Phil Wallace, Chairman of League Two's bottom team Stevenage, is reluctant to pull the plug on a club he has owned for 20 years but told *AFP* the current state of limbo is "a disaster".

"I would expect some casualties this year," he says.

"We get average crowds of 3,000 so we are losing £45-£50,000 per home match. We have been given an advance of money by the EFL (English Football League) which is what we would normally receive in August. However, when we get to July we have got to be thinking what on earth do we do then." The prospect of matches being played behind closed doors doesn't cut it for Stevenage either, due to the loss of income from bars, restaurants and sponsorship. "All that income is gone," he says.

Across Europe clubs have put measures in place to protect the income of non-playing staff, either through topped-up partial unemployment schemes or player donations, but many workers at the sharp end of the industry are in limbo because of the suspension of the season.

German TV station *Deutsche Welle* reported this week that in Germany nearly two thirds of some 56,000 Bundesliga matchday jobs, such as security and catering, are staffed by third-party employees rather than the clubs.

Stranded players turn to video games and gym in Kashmir

AFP – SRINAGAR

Stranded by the coronavirus lockdown in one of the world's most militarised regions, Zambia's Aaron Katebe is no longer kicking a football -- he is playing video games or working out in a hotel gym in Kashmir.

Katebe is one of four African and six British players for Real Kashmir now stuck in a hotel the region's main city of Srinagar, after Indian football's top-flight I-League was abruptly ended by the pandemic last month.

The foreign imports including Scottish coach David Robertson's son Mason, have helped turn Real Kashmir into a force after becoming the first club from the war-torn Himalayan region to play in the I-League.

"It is the first time that I have had to face such a situation," 28-year Zambian international Katebe said.

"I am in touch with my wife and parents. Connectivity is low here so it is difficult to communicate but I do talk to them over phone.

"I am not scared because I believe in God and have faith that everything will be OK. There is gym in the hotel, which I frequent, and I am also on my PlayStation a lot." Nigerian Loveday Okechukwu, Ivory Coast players Armand Bazie and Gnohere Krizo, the British players, coach Robertson and his wife and son are also living in the hotel.

Robertson is anxious to get home to Scotland to be with his ailing mother who is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer.

"We are hopeful of getting a flight from Punjab next week. So keeping our fingers crossed. Hopefully we get to Aberdeen safely," said Robertson.

"I have been in constant touch with my mum and dad despite the internet connectivity being not too good here.

"Facetime and video calls are very difficult, so most of the time it is just by voice. There is frustration."

Kashmir has been at the centre of dispute between India and Pakistan with both claiming the whole Himalayan region.

Last August, India's central government stripped Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status and imposed a communications blackout until January that virtually cut it off from the outside world.

"It has been difficult. Internet and power cuts are bad. I have got used to it and this season was good." said Robertson.

But then came the government proclamation aiming to tighten its grip on the region.

"We couldn't get back to Kashmir and when we did get back we couldn't call home for two weeks," Robertson said.

"There are 10 of us here in the hotel. And day by day we don't even talk of football any more," he added.

Against the odds, Real Kashmir were title contenders in their first I-League season, but finished third.

The current season has been abandoned with leaders Mohun Bagan of Kolkata declared champions.


Real Kashmir Football Club (RKFC) players Armand Bazie (left) and Gnohere Krizo of Ivory Coast chat at a restaurant hotel during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown, in Srinagar, India, yesterday.

THIS DAY, THAT YEAR: Brian Lara becomes first to score 400 in a Test innings

IANS - NEW DELHI



Former West Indies captain and batting star Brian Lara is seen with Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar in this file photo taken on October 2, 2013. Pic@BCCI

Exactly 16 years ago on this day, West Indies great Brian Lara became the first, and thus far the only, batsman to score 400 runs in a single innings in Test cricket.

With West Indies staring at a whitewash at home against England, captain Lara scored an unbeaten 400 off 582 balls to set his side on their way to a draw in the fourth Test in Antigua.

Lara's previous record of highest Test score was broken only six months before that match by Australia's Matthew Hayden who scored 380 against Zimbabwe in Perth. Lara himself came into the match in poor form, scoring just 100 runs in the series before that with a best score of 36.

Lara scored 86 at the end of the first day and by the end of the second, he was on 313. He survived an early appeal by Steve Harmison for caught behind, a run out call when he was on 127 and another caught behind off Gareth Batty when he was on 373.

His biggest partnerships in the innings was a 232-run stand with Ramnaresh Sarwan for the third wicket and the unbeaten 282-run partnership with Ridley Jacobs, who himself scored a century. It was after Lunch on Day 3 that Lara had reached 400.

He had faced 582 deliveries, hit 43 fours and four sixes and batted for just under 13 hours. West Indies declared on 751/5 and the match eventually headed to a draw with England batting out their two innings.

Since then, Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene came closest to the mark in 2006 when he scored 374 as part of the world record 624-run stand he shared with Kumar Sangakkara against South Africa.

Last year in December, Lara said that Australia should have let opener David Warner go for his record score of 400 in recent Test against Pakistan.

Australia declared on 589 for three with Warner on 335 -- the 10th highest Test score ever -- his first triple century.

The declaration deprived Warner of a crack at Lara's all-time high 400 not out, though Australian bowlers quickly tore through Pakistan's top order in Adelaide and the home side won the Test by an innings and 48 runs to sweep the two-match series.

"I felt that David Warner should have been given an opportunity to go for it," Lara told a charity event in Mumbai. "I happened to be in Adelaide and I thought it was kind of destiny being there," added Lara, who added that any team would have wanted to get their opponents batting to wrap up a quick victory.

Warner, who surpassed his previous Test best of 253, reached his triple century off 389 balls.

He raced to 335, one more than former Australian captain Mark Taylor's 334 against Pakistan in 1998 and Donald Bradman's 334 against England in 1930.

Australia's best individual innings is Matthew Hayden's 380 against Zimbabwe in 2003.

Lara expects Warner to get another crack at his record though.

"I believe records are meant to be broken, even David Warner may have a next chance," said Lara, who is commentating on the India-West Indies series which started Friday.

"He is an attacking player who can put your team in a winning position."

PLAYERS WITH 300 OR MORE IN A TEST INNINGS

Player	Runs	Team	Opposition	Ground	Match Date
B Lara	400*	West Indies	v England	St John's	10 Apr 2004
M Hayden	380	Australia	v Zimbabwe	Perth	9 Oct 2003
B Lara	375	West Indies	v England	St John's	16 Apr 1994
Jayawardene	374	Sri Lanka	v South Africa	Colombo (SSC)	27 Jul 2006
G Sobers	365*	West Indies	v Pakistan	Kingston	26 Feb 1958
L Hutton	364	England	v Australia	The Oval	20 Aug 1938
S Jayasuriya	340	Sri Lanka	v India	Colombo (RPS)	2 Aug 1997
H Mohammad	337	Pakistan	v West Indies	Bridgetown	17 Jan 1958
W Hammond	336*	England	v New Zealand	Auckland	31 Mar 1933
D Warner	335*	Australia	v Pakistan	Adelaide	29 Nov 2019
M Taylor	334*	Australia	v Pakistan	Peshawar	15 Oct 1998
D Bradman	334	Australia	v England	Leeds	11 Jul 1930
G Gooch	333	England	v India	Lord's	26 Jul 1990
C Gayle	333	West Indies	v Sri Lanka	Galle	15 Nov 2010
M Clarke	329*	Australia	v India	Sydney	3 Jan 2012
I-ul-Haq	329	Pakistan	v New Zealand	Lahore	1 May 2002
A Sandham	325	England	v West Indies	Kingston	3 Apr 1930
V Sehwag	319	India	v South Africa	Chennai	26 Mar 2008
K Sangakkara	319	Sri Lanka	v Bangladesh	Chattogram	4 Feb 2014
C Gayle	317	West Indies	v South Africa	St John's	29 Apr 2005
Younis Khan	313	Pakistan	v Sri Lanka	Karachi	21 Feb 2009
H Amla	311*	South Africa	v England	The Oval	19 Jul 2012
R Simpson	311	Australia	v England	Manchester	23 Jul 1964
J Edrich	310*	England	v New Zealand	Leeds	8 Jul 1965
V Sehwag	309	India	v Pakistan	Multan	28 Mar 2004
R Cowper	307	Australia	v England	Melbourne	11 Feb 1966
D Bradman	304	Australia	v England	Leeds	20 Jul 1934
K Nair	303*	India	v England	Chennai	16 Dec 2016
Azhar Ali	302*	Pakistan	v West Indies	Dubai (DSC)	13 Oct 2016
L Rowe	302	West Indies	v England	Bridgetown	6 Mar 1974
B McCullum	302	New Zealand	v India	Wellington	14 Feb 2014

Don't write off Dhoni, he still has plenty to offer: Hussain

AFP - NEW DELHI

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has backed veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni to make an international comeback despite growing uncertainty over the start of the Indian Premier League.

The 38-year-old Dhoni has not appeared for club or country since playing for India in last year's 50-over World Cup and the nationwide coronavirus lockdown is limiting his chances of getting back in the side with the IPL likely to be truncated or cancelled.

There has been speculation that Dhoni might retire from international cricket.

"What I have seen of Dhoni, I still think he has a huge amount to offer to Indian cricket," Hussain told Indian broadcaster Star Sports.

"Yes, there have been one or two occasions where he has got it wrong in run chases, like that World Cup game against England. But in general, Dhoni is still a really good talent."

Hussain warned that Dhoni was a once-in-a-generation cricketer that India would struggle to replace.

"Don't push Dhoni into retirement too early. In the end only Dhoni knows his mental state, in the end selectors select and players turn up when asked to," he added.

"I do believe that certain individuals should not just retire into the sunset without some kind of farewell."

Dhoni, who gave up Test cricket in 2014, has been busy gardening at home during the lockdown, according to an ***Instagram*** post by his wife.

The opening match of the Twenty20 tournament between the Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings and holders Mumbai Indians was pushed back to April 15 as sporting events around the world were delayed or postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former India captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth said Dhoni's comeback prospects looked "very, very bleak" if the IPL was cancelled.

Rishabh Pant is considered a natural replacement for Dhoni behind the stumps while batsman K.L. Rahul has also impressed as a stop-gap wicketkeeper.

Dhoni began training with his Chennai Super Kings team for this year's IPL but the tournament has been deferred until April 15 because of the pandemic and another postponement seems inevitable.

"I am not going to be diplomatic...If the IPL does not happen then his chances are very, very bleak," Srikkanth, also a former chief selector, told the Star Sports television channel.

"In my opinion, K.L. Rahul will be the wicket keeper-batsman...I believe Rishabh Pant is highly talented. So, I wouldn't mind taking him along with the squad.

"But definitely, if the IPL doesn't happen, then Dhoni will have a difficult time getting back into the team for the T20 World Cup."

The Twenty20 World Cup is scheduled in Australia from Oct. 18.

Dhoni led India to World Cup triumphs in both the 20-overs (2007) and 50-overs (2011) formats but speculation is rife over the future of the 38-year-old.



England's Ben Stokes celebrates after guiding his team to a win in the third Ashes Test against Australia at Headingley, Leeds, Britain in this August 25, 2019, file photo.

Stokes relives 'great day' of Headingley for first time

AFP — LONDON

It has taken him seven months but England all-rounder Ben Stokes relived his 'miracle of Headingley' for the first time, describing the Ashes nailbiter as a "great day".

In August last year, Stokes smashed a breathtaking, undefeated 135 as England beat Australia in the third Test in Leeds by one wicket.

He and bespectacled last man Jack Leach put on 76 runs for the final wicket with Stokes hitting 74 in that partnership.

With no cricket to fill the live schedules as a result of the coronavirus lockdown, British broadcasters turned to their archives to replay the dramatic finale of the Test.

Sky TV offered fans the chance to see Stokes, captain Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow and Chris Woakes dial in via videolink in what the broadcaster described as a 'watchalong'.

Staring at the screen with his fist clamped to his mouth, Stokes told fans what was going through his mind in the closing stages.

"It's the first time I've watched it ball by ball. It's always going to be great memories, isn't it? One of the great days," he said.

"Not just on the field, but the memories we'll always have together as a group. The changing room is sacred as a cricketer and that evening, after this day's play, was just sensational.

"We'll always be able to look back on what happened that day and the memories we created."

With his eyes fixed on the video, Stokes shouted "go, go, go" as his final six of the innings sailed over the head of Josh Hazlewood.

He then shrugged off an lbw appeal from off-spinner Nathan Lyon that would have handed the game to Australia had it been given.

Earlier in the innings, Australia skipper Tim Paine had wasted a review, a fact not lost on Root on Saturday.

"It's the greatest decision of all time if you ask me. You want the world to swallow you up because you know you've made an absolute goober of a mistake. It's a horrible feeling."

Taiwan bucks virus cancellations with new baseball season

AFP — TAICHUNG, TAIWAN

Taiwan swung into a new baseball season yesterday -- with one team planning to place robot mannequins in their crowdless stands -- as the island bucked the global trend for scrapping sports events during the coronavirus.

Despite its proximity and trade links with China, Taiwan has so far managed to keep a lid on the pandemic now sweeping the globe.

It enacted travel bans soon after the virus emerged publicly and rolled out comprehensive testing, contact tracing and quarantining.

Some 100 hundred days into the crisis it has fewer than 400 confirmed Covid-19 cases and just six deaths with schools, offices, restaurants and bars largely open.

Large gatherings like religious festivals have been scrapped.

But yesterday the island's 31st baseball season got underway with Chinatrust Brothers taking on the Uni-President 7-Eleven Lions in Taichung.

The games are being played to empty stadiums with fans being told to stay away.

But players are still travelling across the island for fixtures that are broadcast live.

On Saturday, Rakuten Monkeys unveiled robotic mannequins and cardboard cut-outs of fans dressed in home colours and caps at their stadium in northern Taoyuan county, reports said.

Some of the robots even banged on drums from the empty stands.

The mechanical stand-ins were ready to cheer Rakuten against Chinatrust Brothers for what would have been the first game of the season on Saturday, but heavy rain led to its cancellation.

Baseball is the most popular sport in Taiwan with some 240 games scheduled for the coming season.

"We are the first pro-baseball league to start playing in the world" during the pandemic, the league said in a statement.

"We welcome everyone to follow the new 2020 season and to relax from their tense lives because of the outbreak."

Unlike so many other places, Taiwan's national basketball and football leagues have also continued to play, albeit behind closed doors.

Some fans have expressed concerns about the safety of those on the field.

"How can the players keep social distancing? What can we do in the event of cluster infections? Please stop this farce," read one post on the baseball league's ***Facebook*** page.

"Why are they still holding the games without audiences? The US Major League Baseball and even the Olympics have been postponed," read another.

Others were happy the games can go on even in closed stadiums.

"It's great we have baseball games to watch," read one social media comment.

"We can probably set a precedent for professional baseball leagues abroad," said another.



Dummies replaced audience due to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the first professional baseball league game of the season at Taoyuan International baseball stadium in Taoyuan city, Taiwan, yesterday.



Former English Formula One driver Stirling Moss waves to spectators as he sits in his 1955 Ferrari 750 Monza during the Ennstal Classic rally near the Austrian village of Groebming in this July 20, 2013 file photo.

Motorsport 'icon and legend' Stirling Moss dies aged 90

AFP — LONDON

Motor racing great Stirling Moss has died aged 90 following a long illness, the British sporting icon's wife announced yesterday.

"It was one lap too many," Susie Moss told Britain's *Press Association*.

"He just closed his eyes."

Tributes flooded in from the world of motorsport and beyond to the gifted and revered driver who never won the Formula One title, finishing runner-up four times and third three times.

"Sad sad news that legend Sir Stirling Moss has passed. World Champion in all our eyes," tweeted retired British F1 driver Johnny Herbert.

One of his former teams Mercedes hailed "not only a true icon and a legend, but a gentleman".

Former England striker Gary Lineker posted on Instagram: "Sir Stirling Moss has reached life's checkered flag, and what a race he drove. Wonderful driver and a lovely man. RIP."

British media reported Moss had succumbed to a chest infection he caught in Singapore in December 2016 that saw him retire from public life two years later.

There is no suggestion his death was linked to the coronavirus.

In an era when it was common for drivers to race in different disciplines, Moss won 212 of the 529 races he entered over a 14-year career that started in 1948.

His victories included the 1955 Mille Miglia, where he set a course record in the 1,000 mile event, which took place on public roads in Italy.

In Formula One, Moss won 16 Grand Prix, with his first victory coming in the 1955 British Grand Prix at Liverpool that saw him become the first British winner.

One of the greatest drivers to never win the F1 title, Moss had the misfortune to compete in the same era as the great Argentine Juan Manuel Fangio, who won the F1 championship five times.

His renowned sportsmanship cost Moss the 1958 title when he defended the conduct of British rival Mike Hawthorn following a spin at the Portuguese Grand Prix.

Moss's action helped spare Hawthorn a six-point penalty, with Hawthorn winning the title by a single point.

"I had no hesitation in doing it," Moss recalled. "I can't see how this is open to debate. The fact that he was my only rival in the championship didn't come into my thinking. Absolutely not."

His top-level career in motorsport came to an end in 1962 following a crash at the Goodwood track in Sussex, southern England, that left Moss in a coma for a month and partially paralysed for six months.

But such was the enduring fame of the debonair driver that, for decades afterwards, the rhetorical phrase "Who do you think you are, Stirling Moss?" was supposedly the standard question all British policemen asked speeding motorists.

"Yes a policeman did once ask me," Moss told the *Daily Telegraph* in a 2012 interview.

"But I couldn't work out if he was taking the mick (joking)."

He was knighted in the New Year Honours list in 2000 for services to motor racing.

For F1 pundit and former driver Martin Brundle, Moss was "a mighty racer and gentleman".

"He had a press on style on the track and in life," Brundle posted on Twitter.

"Remarkable man. Survived the most dangerous era of motorsport and died today aged 90. He had such great stories to tell, and it was a privilege to know him."

Former world heavyweight boxing champion Frank Bruno revealed that Moss had "privately supported me over many years".

"My thoughts are with his family and all that had the pleasure of knowing him".

Memorial tourney to slot into British Open dates: Nicklaus

REUTERS — NEW YORK

Golf's prestigious Memorial tournament is likely to slot into the calendar on the July dates of the cancelled British Open, tournament host Jack Nicklaus said.

Nicklaus thinks it unlikely the Memorial can be staged in its original June 4 to 7 time slot due to the coronavirus outbreak gripping the United States and much of the world.

Instead, the PGA Tour is planning to postpone the event until July 16-19, Nicklaus said.

The tour's website currently lists a "potential" tournament on those dates.

"I think they're looking at probably the British Open (week)," said Nicklaus, who founded the event in 1976 at his home Muirfield Village course in Dublin, Ohio.

Speaking on a cbssports.com podcast, the 18-times major champion sounded flexible and willing to work with the tour.

"They're looking at probably British Open (week)," he said.

Nicklaus thinks it unlikely the Memorial can be staged in its original June 4 to 7 time slot due to the coronavirus outbreak gripping the United States and much of the world. Instead, the PGA Tour is planning to postpone the event until July 16-19.



Jack Nicklaus presents the trophy to Patrick Cantlay after the final round of 2019 Memorial Tournament in Dublin, Ohio in this June 2, 2019 file photo.

"Right now the Memorial tournament is still on in its regular date. Whether we'll be ready in the first of June, I seriously doubt it.

"Whether we'll be ready in the middle of July, I don't know but we certainly hope."

The Memorial is one of the biggest tournaments outside the majors, regularly attracting a stellar field and having a major feel played in front of massive and knowledgeable galleries.

It has so-called "elevated status" on tour, with the winner receiving a three-year exemption, one more than regular tournaments.

Tiger Woods has won tournament a record five times.

The PGA Tour, as with the rest of the sports world, is having difficulty planning for a resumption given the unpredictable health crisis.

It has not played since March 12, when it shut down abruptly after the first round of the Players Championship, a day after the National Basketball Association became the first American sport to halt its season.

The official schedule still has competition resuming at the Charles Schwab Challenge (formerly the Colonial tournament) in Fort Worth, Texas from May 21-24.

While the British Open, which had been scheduled for Royal St George's in Kent, has been cancelled, the other three majors have been postponed.

The PGA Championship has been rescheduled for August 6-9, with the US Open pushed back to September 17-20 and the Masters to November 12-15.

NHL: Oilers mourn Colby Cave, dead at 25 from brain bleed

AFP — MONTREAL

Edmonton Oilers centre Colby Cave has died aged just 25 after suffering bleeding in his brain, his family and the NHL team said.

Cave had been placed into a medically-induced coma at a Toronto hospital on Thursday after doctors removed a colloid cyst which was causing the bleed.

"It is with great sadness to share the news that our Colby Cave passed away early this morning," his family said in a statement on the Oilers' website.

"We thank everyone for their prayers during this difficult time."

His wife Emily had said on Thursday that because of coronavirus restrictions, the family had not been able to visit Cave in hospital.

Colby was a terrific team-mate with great character, admired and liked everywhere he played: Oilers Chairman Bob Nicholson



In this file photo taken on February 26, 2019 Colby Cave of the Edmonton Oilers skates against the Toronto Maple Leafs during an NHL game at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

"Colby was a terrific team-mate with great character, admired and liked everywhere he played," said Oilers Chairman Bob Nicholson.

NHL legend and fellow Canadian Wayne Gretzky wrote on Twitter: "He was a wonderful hockey player with a bright future, but an even better person. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Emily and his entire family."

Boston Bruins forward Jake DeBrusk was a team-mate of Cave's in junior hockey.

"It is hard to put into words," DeBrusk said.

"I was lucky to play junior hockey with Colby. He was our captain and leader. He was an amazing person, player and friend."

Six months ago Cave got into a on-ice fight with Martin Popisil, knocking the Slovakian forward out cold with a right hand.

Instead of celebrating his victory he immediately showed concern for Pospisil by frantically waving to the players' bench to alert one of the team doctors.

The next day Cave sent a text message to Pospisil wishing him a "speedy recovery".

In four NHL seasons with the Oilers and Bruins, Cave scored four goals and made five assists in 67 games.

Goodrum and Duplantier excel at MLB The Show Players League

REUTERS — NEW YORK

The Detroit Tigers' Niko Goodrum and the Arizona Diamondbacks' Jon Duplantier took the early edges in their divisions by each going 3-1, on the second day of the MLB The Show Players League.

The online tournament utilising the "MLB The Show 20" game features one player from each of the 30 major league teams.

The charity event is helping fill some time for players and fans with the baseball season shut down indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.

All players will square off once in a 29-game round robin over the next three weeks. Each regular-season game lasts three innings.

The top eight players will reach the postseason, which culminates in a May 2 World Series.

Sony Interactive Entertainment and Major League Baseball, in cooperation with the players association, will donate $5,000 on behalf of each player to a Boys and Girls Club in his community. A total of $175,000 will be donated, including the World Series prize of $25,000.

Booker sweeps Ayton in all-Suns NBA 2K final

REUTERS — NEW YORK

Devin Booker swept fellow Phoenix Suns team-mate Deandre Ayton to claim the title at the first-ever NBA 2K Players Tournament.

Booker won the first two games of a best-of-three final series, beating Ayton without playing as the Los Angeles Lakers, who are generally regarded as the best team in the game. Playing as the Houston Rockets, Booker took the first game 72-62 from Ayton, who used the Lakers.

He won the second 74-62 while playing as the Denver Nuggets against Ayton's Milwaukee Bucks. "Feels good, bro," Booker said afterward.

"It was a talented field. I said from the beginning, it was going to be me and Deandre in the championship.

"... We've played in the past, and he's definitely a gamer."

Booker, the fifth seed in the 16-player tournament, won $100,000 to donate to the coronavirus-relief charity of his choice. Ayton, the 10th seed, trailed by only four at halftime of the first game after hitting a buzzer beater with JaVale McGee. But Booker was red-hot from 3-point range throughout the game, hitting 13 of 23 attempts, and also got 30 points from his bench to close it out.

In the second game, Booker pulled away after halftime, putting the exclamation point on the victory with a three-point play on a dunk by Paul Millsap with less than 90 seconds to go.

Both finalists swept a member of the Los Angeles Clippers earlier Saturday in the semifinals, with Booker beating Montrezl Harrell and Ayton dispatching Patrick Beverley.

Booker played as the Clippers in the first game and cruised past Harrell, who played as the Rockets, capping the win with a dunk by Harrell's virtual character.

In the second game, Booker (playing as the Toronto Raptors) came up with a steal off Harrell (Milwaukee Bucks) with a two-point lead in the final minute.

Ayton took the first game from Beverley playing as the Brooklyn Nets against Beverley's Boston Celtics, hitting a 3-pointer in the final minute to put the game out of reach.

In the second game, Ayton played as his own team, the Suns, and used a few big plays from his virtual character to handle Beverley's Nuggets.



Devin Booker