

Sports

Man United injuries mount

Varane ruled out for 'a few weeks'

LONDON: Raphael Varane has been ruled out for "a few weeks" as Manchester United's injury issues pile up ahead of their Premier League trip to Arsenal. Erik ten Hag's side head to north London on Sunday without several players for their final match before the international break. Mason Mount is currently out of action, while new signing Rasmus Hojlund has yet to make his debut due to a back complaint.

Tyrell Malacia, Amad Diallo, Kobbie Mainoo and Tom Heaton have missed the start of the campaign and now experienced French defender Varane faces a spell on the sidelines. "Raphael Varane will be missing from the team when Manchester United face Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday due to injury," the club said in a statement on Wednesday. "The France international came off at half-time in our 3-2

win against Nottingham Forest at Old Trafford on Saturday due to the complaint, which is expected to keep him out for a few weeks."

The 30-year-old has dealt with a number of injuries since moving to Old Trafford in 2021 and, having retired from the France set-up in February, will have the international break to work towards his return. Manchester United are eighth in the Premier League table

after two wins and a defeat in their opening three matches.

Meanwhile, Manchester United and England international left-back Luke Shaw has been ruled out of the next two Premier League games after picking up a muscle injury, the club announced. "Manchester United defender Luke Shaw has sustained an injury which will rule him out of forthcoming games," said a club statement. "The

muscle issue is still being assessed but the England left-back is expected to be out of action for a number of weeks." The 28-year-old defender started the first two Premier League matches of the season but will now miss Saturday's Old Trafford encounter against Nottingham Forest and next weekend's trip to Arsenal. He is also likely to sit out next month's round of international matches. — AFP

Now or never for France as Rugby World Cup hosts

PARIS: There used to be a lazily-used cliché about France claiming "you never knew what French team would turn up" but in the build-up to this year's Rugby World Cup that remark has been consigned to the past. Since former captain Fabien Galthie took over as head coach after the tournament in Japan four years ago, one thing has been consistent with hosts Les Bleus: they win. They have tasted defeat just eight times in 39 fixtures during Galthie's tenure. They were unbeaten in 2022, which included a first Six Nations Grand Slam in more than a decade and statement victories over Australia and World Cup holders South Africa.

France, three-time runners-up, might be below Ireland and the Springboks in the world rankings but they have seldom been in such good form before a tilt at the Webb Ellis trophy. "We've known for three years that the World Cup starts for us on September 8 against the All Blacks," Galthie told reporters on Sunday, after a warm-up victory over Australia. When he was first named boss, Galthie said his aim was to increase the number of caps for a host of players, win games, and then win titles.

Captain and talisman Antoine Dupont is set to make his 50th Test appearance against the All Blacks, more than half of those games coming under Galthie. "We've got close to what we wanted to do," Galthie said last weekend. "Which was to give as much collective experience as possible to players, work as a squad, to allow us to develop a depth of three players in each position. The motto was 'wherever, whoever, whenever'. We prepared with that vision in mind and to start the competition with a lot of ambition," he added.

'Lucky'

France's build-up to a first home World Cup since 2007 has included camps in Monaco, Capbreton in the south-west of the country and in their headquarters to the south of Paris, intertwined with two Tests against Scotland before wins over Fiji and the Wallabies. "We put in place, with the players and staff, the best preparation possible," Galthie said.

"We left nothing to luck. Often the secret to winning is in the detail. We're lucky to be in France, to be able to recover properly, the players have been able to rest up with their families at home. It was perfect as other teams travelled, spent time in airports, hotels, far from their families with jetlag. It hasn't been the case for us," he added. One cog in the works could be the pressure surrounding the side: France has caught the World Cup buzz. — AFP

Young Tongans dream of rugby's meal ticket

NUKU'ALOFA: On the rocky foreshore of Popua, the poorest area of the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa, a group of girls and boys are tossing around a rugby ball. Siua, 13, and 11-year-olds Lesieli and Sisi play catch and run across sharp stones as their families fish on the reef, searching for dinner. It used to be a pretty beach before it was destroyed by a powerful tsunami during the Hunga-Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai eruption last year.

The tsunami washed away many homes in the Popua neighborhood and damaged their fishing grounds, yet the families return on a rainy day and the kids throw the ball around, their heads spinning with hopes for a better future. For young Tongans rugby is a potential meal ticket, a way off the rocks and into the riches on offer in the professional game in Australia and New Zealand or further afield in Japan or Europe. Siua is about to join his first rugby team, playing for a small team of middle schoolers at Fanga Government Middle School.

He dreams of one day being able to represent his country like Pita Ahki or George Moala, or other legendary players who have worn the red jersey of 'Ika-ke Tahī—the national team's nickname

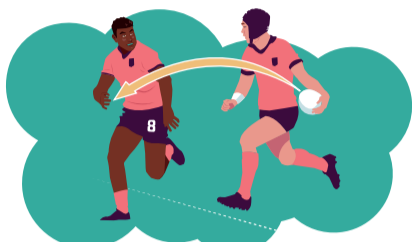
which evokes the sea eagles that soar to great heights and travel widely. Siua's determination and will to succeed has rubbed off on Lesieli and Sisi. The girls now also dream of competing for their country. Women's rugby in Tonga is still at a fledgling stage: ranked 29th in the world, they play in the annual Oceania Rugby Women's Championship, habitually finishing ahead of Papua New Guinea but a long way behind Fiji and Samoa.

Rugby arrived in Tonga in the late 19th century, when the sport was introduced by British and Irish missionaries. Over the last 100 years, however, it has become part of the national identity although many of its best players have found fame and fortune overseas rather than at home. One of the greatest of all, Jonah Lomu,

may have been born in New Zealand but he spent some of his early childhood in Holoepoka and spoke Tongan fluently. Jonah was one of their own.

Rugby is more than just a sport in Tonga, it is a way of life. From the moment they can walk, the kids are introduced to the rugby ball. Some, like Timothy Ebrahim, use it as a pillow. Timothy and his family are moving to Australia next year, another emigre perhaps who will go on to play for another country. The highlight of the Tongan rugby calendar is the annual inter-island tournament which draws families and communities from every corner of the 170-island archipelago. Tribal chants and thunderous drums resound in the stadiums, creating an electrifying atmosphere. — AFP

Main infringements in rugby



The first basic infringement in rugby is the forward pass. A player cannot pass the ball to another player in front of him. After a "forward pass", the referee calls a scrum, or sometimes a penalty, if he decides the fault was intentional



A tackled player must release the ball and is penalised if he retains it. Opposition players, however, can contest for the ball on the ground.



In general, a player is **offside** when situated in front of the offside line, taken from the last players feet in a ruck, maul or scrum or 10 metres from the middle of a lineout



The player who has tackled the ball carrier **must release the tackled player** and leave the tackle zone. If not, he is penalised.



When a player arrives in the **tackle zone** he must stay on his feet to contest the ball. If he falls over and disrupts the flow of the game, he is penalised



When a player attempts to **tackle another one**, it must be done below the shoulders of his opponent. If it is above, he is penalised.



A **high tackle and the shoulder charge** are two of the main offences leading to a yellow or red card. A **yellow card** results in the player being sent from the field for 10 minutes and for a **red card** the rest of the game.

Source: World Rugby



Classifieds

Change of Name

I'm Shaivi, holder of Indian Passport No. T8992352, to given name as Shaivi and surname as Rahangdale, I will be henceforth be known in the name Shaivi Hemchand Rahangdale and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all documents. (#4212) 31/8/2023

I Shabbir, holder of Indian Passport No. N0917739 Issued in Jaipur on 08/07/2015 and civil Id No. 293082502769, have changed my name Shabbir to Shabbir Kunwa in all dealings and documents. I will be known by the name of Shabbir (given name) and Kunwa (surname). (#4211) 31/8/2023

I, Ramandeep, holder of Indian Passport No. R5455188, S/o Chaman Lal R/O Vpo. Muthada Kalan Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) Pb, India, Pin code - 144410 residing in Kuwait, have changed my name from Ramandeep to Ramandeep Mehmi. (#4210) 30/8/2023

I, Balu Krishna Kumari, holder of Indian Passport No. T8986396, W/o Balu Kailasapathi, D.N.8-74, Kakarla-varipalli Village, Pondalur, Penagalur Mandal, Annamayya Dt, A.P., hereby change my name as Balu Krishnamumari (old name) to Balukrishna Kumari (new name) (#4209) 30/8/2023

I, Imtiaz Mohammed holder of Indian Passport No. V3749837 do hereby change my name of my daughter from Batul holding Indian Passport No. T2809933 to given name as **Batul** and Surname as **Imtiaz** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all documents.

I, Afroz Anwar Abdul Aziz holder of Passport No. M4990441 do hereby change my son's name from Mohammed Rayyan Afroz Anwar Abdul Aziz with Passport No. T2805510 to Given name as Rayyan and surname as Shaikh for

all purposes. He will henceforth be known in the name Rayyan Shaikh and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. 29/08/2023 (#4207)

I, Afroz Anwar Abdul Aziz holder of Passport No. M4990441 do hereby change my Son's name from Moahammed Hamza with Passport No. S9919755 to (given name) as Hamza and surname as Shaikh for all purposes. He will henceforth be known in the name Hamza Shaikh and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. 29/08/2023 (#4206)

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Embattled All Blacks boss to sign off with World Cup glory

WELLINGTON: A year after he faced the axe, Ian Foster will step down after four years in charge of the All Blacks following the Rugby World Cup as New Zealand look to bounce back from a record defeat to South Africa. Foster made it clear in March that he won't extend his contract past the World Cup, which kicks off on Sept 8 when New Zealand play hosts France in the opening game.

Scott Robertson, who led the Canterbury Crusaders to seven straight Super Rugby titles, has already been named as Foster's replacement to coach the All Blacks. New Zealand flew out of Auckland with high hopes of returning with the William Webb Ellis trophy. Foster was blunt when asked if he thinks New Zealand can win the World Cup. "I do. It's a well-tested group that's gone through a lot of adversity, stayed tight and found solutions."

His optimism was fueled by an 11-match unbeaten run, dating back to Aug 2022, until South Africa grabbed five tries to thrash New Zealand 35-7 in a World Cup warm-up match at Twickenham. It was the All Blacks' heaviest defeat to South Africa, a chastening night for Foster and his team. Four straights wins over Argentina, South Africa and back-to-back victories over Australia in 2023 had buoyed confidence until the Springboks avenged their defeat in Auckland the previous month.

New Zealand's ill-discipline proved costly at Twickenham as lock Scott Barrett was sent off for two early yellow cards, leaving his team a man down for 42 minutes. Foster admitted the defeat felt like "an upper cut", but was no cause for panic as the team left London for a training camp in Germany. "That performance is going to take a lot of heat off us. No one is going to rate us now which is quite nice. We'll just go and prepare quietly and get stuck in."

Turbulent 2022

Foster speaks from experience having dealt with plenty of "heat" last year after poor performances. In Aug 2022, it looked like his time was up. Back-to-back losses at home to Ireland the previous month had set alarm bells ringing in New Zealand as the All Blacks suffered a rare Test series defeat on home soil. Pressure mounted on Foster as ex-All Blacks captains Sean Fitzpatrick and Wayne Shelford questioned the team's coaching.

The axe seemed poised to fall on Foster after a third straight loss when the All Blacks were beaten by the Springboks in the first of two Tests in South Africa. Even after New Zealand rallied a week later with victory in Johannesburg, Foster said he had "no idea" whether he would still be coach for the next game. New Zealand Rugby's chief executive Mark Robinson failed to back Foster when asked if the All Blacks coach would keep his job.

Foster finally received the backing of New Zealand Rugby's board following tense talks. The All Blacks topsyturvy form continued as they lost for the first time at home to Argentina. It was their last defeat for almost exactly a year before being out-classed by the Boks at Twickenham. Foster turned things around last year by revamping his backroom staff. Jason Ryan came in as forwards coach having previously worked with the Canterbury Crusaders pack which has dominated Super Rugby. Former Ireland coach Joe Schmidt was brought in to sharpen the attack. — AFP

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