



IT'S NOT ABOUT EARNING MORE SOMEWHERE ELSE. IT'S ABOUT SIMPLY RUNNING OUT OF GAS.  
— AB de Villiers ON WHY HE RETIRED FROM INTERNATIONAL CRICKET

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2018: CRICKET

## TOP SPELLS OF 2018



### LYON'S PERTH SPECIAL

On a pacy Perth pitch, Nathan Lyon — the lone spinner in the game — showed what a good finger spinner can do, taking eight wickets to finish as Man of the Match. His spells fetched him figures of 5/67 and 3/39. That he dominated a set of batsmen who are touted as experts at playing spin speaks volumes of his class. The cherry on the cake was the way he castled Indian opener Murali Vijay and dismissed Kohli off the rough.

### PAK UNLEASH NEW MISSILE

Little was known about Pakistan pacer Mohammad Abbas until he scythed through Australia in October. In the second Test in Abu Dhabi, the 28-year-old took five in each innings to bowl the hosts to a series win. Abbas isn't very quick, but his lethal accuracy gets him a lot of LBW and bowled victims. He took 17 wickets in two Tests at just 10.58 to show Pakistan's pace arsenal still packs a punch.

### YASIR SHAH HAS KIWIS IN A SPIN

The fastest man to 200 Test wickets, Yasir Shah took 8/41 to spin out the opposition for just 90, from 50 for no loss, in the second Test of the Pak-New Zealand series in Dubai. No batsman could read his leg-spinners, googlies, or the one that went straight through. Six fell for ducks. Yasir's figures, which came in only 12.3 overs, included a triple-wicket maiden. It was truly sensational stuff.

### PATEL RAP

When New Zealand beat Pakistan by just four runs in a thrilling first Test in Abu Dhabi, they had Ajaz Patel to thank. Pakistan needed 176 in the fourth innings, but the left-arm spinner took 5/59 to spoil their plans. The 30-year-old bowled with tremendous guile, tempting batsmen to their doom with flighted deliveries and clever variations.

### PANDYA SPECIAL

He wasn't rated very highly by the likes of Michael Holding but Hardik Pandya bowled India to their only Test win in England this summer, taking 5/28 in Nottingham. In helpful conditions, Pandya moved the ball around menacingly as the likes of Joe Root and Johnny Bairstow edged him repeatedly to slips. It was just a six-over spell but it swung the game.

9/129

Keshav Maharaj's bowling figures, for South Africa against Sri Lanka in Colombo (SSC) in July, the best by a bowler this year in Tests.

713/9d

Sri Lanka's total (declared) against Bangladesh in Chittagong in Jan/Feb, the highest total this year.

264\*

The highest individual score by an opening batsman while carrying his bat in Tests, scored by New Zealand's Tom Latham against Sri Lanka in Wellington in December. This was also the highest individual Test score this year.

43

The lowest Test total this year, courtesy Bangladesh, against West Indies at North Sound in July. This was the lowest Test total in 44 years, since India's dismissal for 42 against England at Lord's in 1974.

4

Rohit Sharma's tally of T20I centuries — he added two more this year, against England and West Indies — is now a world record.



0

Wickets fell in an entire day's play in the Sri Lanka-New Zealand first Test in Wellington in December, the first time this has happened in more than a decade.

1

Shikhar Dhawan became the first Indian — and the sixth in history — to post a century before lunch on the first day of a Test. The others are Victor Trumper, Charles Macartney, Don Bradman, Majid Khan and David Warner.

172

Runs scored by Aaron Finch off just 76 balls for Australia vs Zimbabwe in Harare in July, now a world record for the highest individual T20I innings. Finch broke his own record of 156 off 63 balls against England in 2013.

31

Wickets taken by Andrew Tye at 18.93 runs apiece in 19 matches, a record by a bowler for most wickets in a calendar year in T20Is.

54

Tests Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan took to complete the double of 3,000 runs and 200 wickets, the fastest ever, surpassing England's Ian Botham's tally of 55 Tests.

### PUJARA'S SPECIAL YEAR

Marathon man Cheteshwar Pujara put paid to the lingering question marks over his technique away from home in 2018, becoming the only batsman to face over 4000 balls in Test cricket since Jan 1, 2017. He scored centuries in Southampton and at the MCG too, but the one which stood out was the masterly 123 in Adelaide, a ton which proved to be the difference in a close, close game.



# THE YEAR OF KING KOHLI

In 2018, the legend of Kohli took firm root. Not content with being just an outstanding accumulator of runs, Virat Kohli in 2018 planted his bat firmly on genius territory. The Indian captain continued defying the law of averages to notch up some incredible numbers, in the process providing India a backbone and giving opposition bowlers the headache to beat all headaches. His natural abrasiveness on the field might put some off, but with bat in hand he was rarely anything but sublime. Here are just some of the peaks only the Indian captain scaled this year alone. It sure is lonely at the top...

**ONLY batsman to score 1000 runs or more in both Tests and ODIs**

Kohli achieved the feat in 2017 too, scoring 1059 in Tests and 1460 in ODIs

**ONLY batsman to score 6 ODI tons**

Next best Rohit Sharma (5)

**ONLY batsman to score 11 international tons**

All-time record 12 (Sachin Tendulkar; 1998)



## TOP TWO OF VIRAT'S FINEST...

### HAPPY PERTH DAY

The pitch for the first-ever Test at the Optus Stadium wasn't a minefield but it had its share of uneven bounce. When Kohli walked in, India were 8/2, with Australia's pacers breathing fire. However, Kohli isn't the world's best for nothing. Playing in his 75th Test, he produced arguably one of his best hundreds, cracking 123 off 214 balls, including 11 fours, in a knock for the ages. It was a combined effort of skill, patience and intense determination. It was his sixth ton in Australia — only Sachin Tendulkar has hit as many Down Under.

### TON OF EDGBASTON

Kohli had fared miserably on the 2014 tour of England, managing just 134 runs in five Tests, and it was time to make amends. In the first Test at Edgbaston, Kohli kept losing partners but retained his composure, leaving balls outside the off stump and scoring runs whenever he got an opportunity. Most importantly, he made it a point not to yield his wicket to England seamer James Anderson, who had given him a torrid time four years earlier. It was his first hundred in England, and it came in extremely trying circumstances. Point proved.

## BATTING MASTERCLASSES

### KHAWAJA THE SAVIOUR

Missing Steve Smith and David Warner, the Aussies looked certain to crash to defeat against Pakistan in the first Test in Dubai when Usman Khawaja came up with something special. Staying put for more than eight hours and 44 minutes, the left-hander stonewalled the Pakistan bowlers on the last day with his brilliant hundred as Australia pulled off a draw from the jaws of defeat. Khawaja's gallant 302-ball 141, which took 524 minutes, was the second-longest in a fourth innings in Test history.



### THE M&M SHOW

When Sri Lanka were three down for just 20 in their second innings after conceding a first innings deficit of 296 to New Zealand in the first Test in Wellington, no one would have thought what would happen next. Providing shades of what VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid did famously against Australia from a similarly hopeless position in 2001 in Kolkata, Angelo Mathews and Kusal Mendis defied the Kiwi bowlers for almost two days and 108.4 overs, adding 274 in an unbroken stand to

**ONLY** Indian captain to score 1300 runs

**ONLY batsman to manage 1000 Test runs**

Kohli's run aggregate 1322 @55.08; 13 Tests

Next best Kusal Mendis 962 @45.80; 12 Tests

Previous best by Virat Kohli 1215 (12 Tests in 2016)

**MOST runs overseas by any Indian batsman in a year**

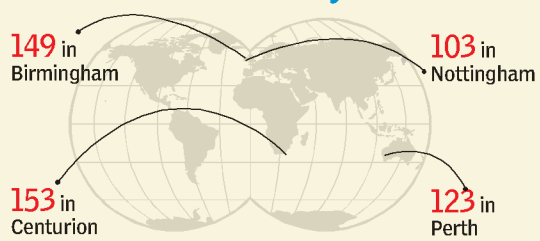
KOHLI'S AGGREGATE 1138 (@51.72 from 11 Tests; 4 tons) Previous record: Rahul Dravid 1137 (11 Tests; 2002)

**ONLY batsman to manage 1200 ODI runs**

Kohli's tally 1202 @133.5

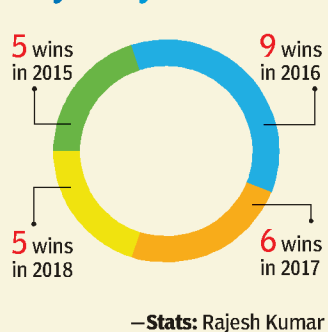
Next best Rohit Sharma 1030 @73.57

**FIRST Asian batsman to hit centuries in South Africa, England & Australia in the same year**



**ONLY Asian captain to notch up wins in SA, England and Australia in the same year** (In Johannesburg, Nottingham and Adelaide)

**FIRST Indian captain to boast 25 Test wins in only four years**



# Dutch couple going around the world on bike

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**Imphal:** People in this part of the world are often forced to sell their bicycles to fill up forms in schools or universities and that doesn't make the headline. But when you see a Dutch couple on a bicycle — or what they call a bike — tour of the world after selling all belongings, including their house, it draws your attention. With all the economic and cultural differences between us, Harry and Roelie Morskate are cycling around the world to gather knowledge about different people, countries, nature and cultures.

Entering India from Nepal on December 12 through Siliguri in West Bengal, they travelled through Assam, Nagaland and now are in Manipur. They left Imphal on Friday morning for international border town Moreh in Manipur and plan to enter Tamu in Myanmar on Sunday morning. They will stop for a night each somewhere between Imphal and Moreh.

Harry (54) has been a mountain biker since childhood while Roelie (43) was mostly into racing. They were cycling across Europe since 2012, with Tuscan in Italy being their first tour

out of their homeland. Before embarking on this trip from their hometown of Eindhoven on June 29 this year, the longest they stayed out of home was three months at a go.

Stressed out by a hectic municipality job with the local administration in Eindhoven, Harry was mulling quitting it to take up this passion trail for the last few years.

But blocked arteries opened up new roads in life for him. A open heart surgery with six bypasses three years ago made him look at life differently. Roelie, his second wife, working as a project manager with a construction company, stood as his rock.

"I was any way feeling too much stress with my job as manager in Eindhoven municipality and was thinking about a long journey. We were bored sitting on big couches in a big house, watching Netflix and all on TV and going to office all decked up every day in the morning, stressed to the core. Then this heart problem came up during



Harry (right) and Roelie Morskate in Imphal on Friday

mountain biking tour early in 2015. Thanks to my exhausting cycling habits, it was detected early and that saved me actually. Following the operation, I looked at life differently.

"Am I going to finish my life working under stress or take

my passion a bit further to enjoy life and nature? A lot of thinking went on for the last couple of years and then we decided to start afresh," said Harry with a relief in his voice.

Harry has two children with his first wife Christie, whom he

divorced around 20 years ago. Son Harjan (24) and daughter Evi (19) are studying and working simultaneously and living with their partners independently in the Netherlands, while Harry's mother, who is almost 80 now, is still going strong. Harry has been living with Roelie since 2008 after they met for an official purpose and the two got married in 2010.

Expecting to meet Harjan in Bangkok and Evi in Bali or Bangkok in the new year, Harry rued that his children are not into cycling like them. "They use cycle as a mode of transport only and always tell us to take rest and not to cycle for so long. I wish they, too, developed the love for cycling," said Harry.

However, both are fascinated to experience different types of people and culture on the road. "In Europe, no one cares what you do but here in India, wherever we stop for a coffee or a drink or when we are riding through a populated area, about 50-100 people gather around us out of nowhere. They want to take

photos, selfies, may be because we are two odd looking persons.

"It slows us down sometimes and takes us longer to complete a route but it's also good to meet people on the road, sharing their lifestyle and that's what we started this journey for. We are not in this to set any record, so we are loving the journey. People have been very kind to us, so far no trouble," said Roelie.

The Morskates completed exactly six months on the road on Friday travelling more than 800km so far through Europe and Asia and have another two years, may be, and more than 20000km through Australia, South and North America to go before they either fly home from Alaska or take a cycle route through some European countries to Eindhoven.

The route can change and they can include Africa in it if they feel like.

However, when they go back home they have to start all over again as they have nothing except some money, cycles, gears

and tents for their journey through the world. "Only our titanium cycles and touring gears are sponsored while food and lodging are on our own. We are very much looking forward to sponsors for our trip and a part of that will go to a charity we have started before starting the journey, 'Heart to Beat'. The money will be used for research purposes to detect heart blocks early, so that attacks can be avoided," said Harry.

Looks like till the hearts beat, the Morskates will do anything to beat any errant heart in their capacity.

"Many friends have told us to stay with them once we go back home. We hope to save some money so that we can rent a home for one month at least, then she can start her job again while I will look for some freelancing as I am too old to get a full time job now," said Harry as Roelie cut in with a big smile, saying:

"You don't need to take up any job anymore, I will work to support our family while you can write a book about our journey around the world. And for sure we will take up a small home this time, what we call tiny housing."