

## **The Times of India**

**Title : Captain Cool era ends as IPL Pune team replaces Dhoni**

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**Location :**

**Kolkata:**

**Article Date : 02/20/2017**

### **He Makes Way For A Younger Steve Smith**

In December 2014, when Mahendra Singh Dhoni took the cricket world by surprise by quitting Test cricket and captaincy in the aftermath of the Melbourne Test, his declaration was hailed for its 'art of leaving' (AOL).

He again caught everyone unawares by scripting a sequel by quitting as India's limited-overs captain in January this year.

Now comes AOL-III, signalling the end of the Captain Cool era. India's most successful cricket captain is no longer a skipper of any team. He "agreed to step aside" from Rising Pune Supergiants captaincy within a year of taking on that role in the IPL franchise.

Unlike AOL's first two episodes, the latest was prompted by a gentle nudge from the Rising Pune Supergiants management, which anointed Australian captain Steve Smith as the new skipper.

"Dhoni has not stepped down. We have appointed Steve Smith as skipper for the upcoming season. Frankly speaking, we did not have a good last season and wanted someone young to lead the side and revamp it ahead of Season 10," franchise owner Sanjiv Goenka was quoted as saying by a news agency.

This means that Dhoni, 35, who led the now-suspended Chennai Super Kings from 2008 to 2015 and the Rising Pune Supergiants in 2016, will feature in IPL for the first time as a regular player - a role he is now accustomed to in Team India. I have the highest regard for MS Dhoni as a leader and a person. Dhoni will continue to be an important part of our team. He is supportive of the decision keeping the franchisee's best interests in mind," Goenka, a Kolkata-based business magnate, further said in a statement.

The concluding episode in the AOL magnum opus will be added only after Dhoni takes a final bow - as a player - from the game he has enriched with his craft and character, on and off the field. As things stand, one may have to wait till after the 2019 ICC World Cup for AOL-IV, unless, of course, Dhoni comes up with yet another declaration to leave one and all stumped.

Under Dhoni, the Rising Pune Supergiant had finished a poor seventh in the eight-team T20 league last season, and not insignificantly, the decision to replace Dhoni with Smith came on Sunday, the eve of IPL players' auction in Bengaluru.

Dhoni, of course, is one of the most successful players in IPL history, having twice won the title (2010 and 2011) and finished runners-up on four occasions with the CSK. On an individual level, Dhoni has led in 143 matches in IPL, winning 83 - the most by any captain. He also led CSK to the Champions League triumph in 2010 and 2014.

The 27-year-old Smith, who has sporadically led Pune Warriors and Rajasthan Royals - his previous two franchises - now faces a twin challenge. He will look to lead Australia to victory in upcoming four Test series in India before trying to shake the Supergiants out of their slumber.



## PLAYERS GO UNDER HAMMER TODAY

Bengaluru will host IPL auction, the last one before mega bidding next year

No. of players under hammer **354**

**62**

**118**

**144**

**30**

BATSMEN

BOWLERS

ALL ROUNDERS

WICKETKEEPERS

Maximum players who can be picked **77**

No. of overseas players who can be picked **29**

Biggest purse remaining **Kings XI** (Rs 23.35 cr)

### Likely hot picks:

Ben Stokes (in pic),  
Jason Roy (both Eng);  
Imran Tahir, Kagiso  
Rabada (S Africa)



### Uncapped Indians to look out for:

Ishank Jaggi, Prithvi Shaw,  
Ankit Bawane, Tanmay Agarwal  
(all batsmen); Basil Thampi,  
Md Siraj (both pacers)

**The Times of India**

**Title : LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUCTION!**

**Author : Manuja Veerappa**

**Location :**

**Bengaluru**

**Article Date : 02/20/2017**

### **Stokes, Roy Could Strike It Rich As 354 Players Go Under The Hammer**

Much like the format, the auction for the 10th Indian Premier League (IPL), to be held here on Monday, will be about short-term goals rather than long-term planning. The focus will be on smart spending and cautious purchases. The purse for the teams isn't much -Rs. 148.33 crore to be precise -to pick a maximum 77 players, including 29 overseas cricketers out of the 354 who will go under the hammer. With this being the last auction in the current set -the retention policy hasn't yet been outlined for the next edition -the focus of most teams will be to plug the holes in their line-up.

Most will operate on a shoestring budget, the Mumbai Indians coming in with Rs 11.555 crore, the least among the eight franchisees. Kings XI Punjab and Delhi Daredevils have the maximum, Rs. 23.35 crore and Rs. 23.1 crore respectively .

With many issues to be factored in, -tight purses, players to be picked for just one season and only a few slots to fill -strategizing will be the key. Although the English players, led by Ben Stokes, are the flavour of the auction, their unavailability for the entire duration of the six-week schedule poses a headache. The Englishmen will leave for national duty in batches with the first lot out by the beginning of May and the rest the following week. The South Africans too will head out for their international engagements in early May . This apart, most teams have a packed international schedule prior to the IPL. So injuries and burnouts will have to be factored in before picking players.

That said, the man in demand will be all-rounder Stokes (base price Rs 2 crore).The aggressive 25-year-old, who is set for his maiden IPL appearance, will go under the hammer with the reputation of being a high-utility player with both bat and ball. With an impressive strike-rate of a shade above 136 in his 21 T20 International appearances, Stokes is backed by good performances in the recent T20 series against India.

Jason Roy (base price Rs 1 crore) is another Englishman who is expected to strike it rich. Experiences in other leagues -Big Bash, the Bangladesh Premier League and the Pakistan Super League will make him a hot pick. Roy's compatriot and T20 specialist Tymal Mills (BP Rs 50 lakh), who will be available for the entire IPL, will be another player worth splurging on.

With the focus largely on allrounders, New Zealand's Colin de Grandhomme (BP: Rs 30 lakh), the heavy hitter known to generate good pace with the ball, will be a good purchase. The other overseas players who are in the reckoning are the South Africa bowling duo of Imran Tahir and Kagiso Rabada, New Zealander Mitchell Santner, Jonny Bairstow and Eoin Morgan of England, West Indies' Kesrick William and Ewin Lewis, and Mohammed Nabi of Afghanistan.

With Andre Russell serving out a doping ban and Mitchell Starc pulling out at the last minute, it will be interesting to see how Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore seek to fill these significant voids.

Among the Indians, Ishant Sharma comes in with the highest base price of Rs two crore. Given his inconsistent form, interest in Sharma at a high price is up for debate. On the other hand, Irfan Pathan (BP: Rs 50 lakh), with better credentials in the shortest format, may find a buyer after being released by Rising Pune Supergiants. Manoj Tiwary and Pragyan Ojha, who did not find buyers in the previous auction, may well find a new home. But when it comes to home grown talent, the focus of the franchisees will be on uncapped players.

Given the unpre dictable nature of the auction, one can't rule out the emergence of a new million-dollar baby .



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**SANJIV GOENKA, TEAM OWNER**

**DHONI AS IPL CAPTAIN**

For Chennai Super Kings - 2008 to 2015  
For Rising Pune Supergiants - 2016

Matches	Won	Lost	NR	%
143	83	59	1	58.45

**Captains with most matches in the IPL**

Captain	Played	Won	Lost	Winning %
MS Dhoni	143	83	59	58.45
Gautam Gambhir	107	61	45	57.47
Adam Gilchrist	74	35	39	47.29
Virat Kohli	72	36	31	53.62

WITH THE CAPTAINCY OF RPS GOING TO STEVE SMITH, MS DHONI WILL PLAY HIS FIRST IPL SEASON AS JUST A PLAYER

**Most runs as IPL Captain**

Captain	M	Runs	Ave	HS	100	50	SR
Dhoni	143	3270	39.40	70*	-	16	138.91
Gambhir	107	2935	30.57	93	-	26	122.91
Kohli	72	2708	48.36	113	4	19	136.98
Gilchrist	74	1900	26.76	106	1	11	136.59

Rajesh Kumar



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