

The Times of India**Title : I won't seek too many opinions: Smith****Author :****Location :****New Delhi****Article Date : 03/31/2017**

The IPL is expected to reduce the acrimony prevailing between the Indians and the Australians. But that isn't going to bother Steve Smith when he leads Rising Pune Supergiant on the field this season. The Aussie skipper means business as he prepares to captain a team which is likely to have in the mix three others who have captained their national teams. The men in question are MS Dhoni (Smith's predecessor at RPSG), Faf du Plessis (South Africa captain) and Ajinkya Rahane (India's stand-in skipper in the last Test).

“I have plenty of guys to talk to but I will not seek too many opinions. Seeking too many opinions can cloud your own judgement. I want to try and stay as clear as possible. But yes, if someone sees something and feels the need to point it out to me, they are more than welcome,” Smith said as the franchise launched its big money all-rounder Ben Stokes here on Thursday . “It will be great to have so many great leaders from different countries, it's a big plus and not a hindrance.”

The change of guard at the RPSG, who finished seventh last season, created a ripple in the cricketing world. Dhoni has been an undisputed captain in every team he has played in the past decade. “There are no issues between Dhoni and me. We have shared some messages, MS is very supportive and it doesn't change my professional relationship with him or anyone else,” Smith clarified.

Sharing the dais with Smith and Stokes was Rahane. And the Mumbaikar wasted little time pitching in his support for Dhoni. “Whether he is captain or a player, Dhoni bhai is always inspirational and we get to learn a lot,” Rahane said while mentioning that the acrimony between the Indian and Australian players had no place in his upcoming assignment. “What happens on the ground, stays on the ground. I am looking forward to teaming up with Smith now,” he said to settle a few nerves.

On his new role in the team, Stokes said, “I am glad to be roped in by Pune team at the auction. I am hopeful to live up to the high expectation from fans in Pune as well as India. Playing for Rising Pune Supergiant is definitely going to be a high point of my career. This is a chance which I will (take) to work towards my team's advantage with stalwarts like MS Dhoni, Faf du Plessis, Ravichandran Ashwin and Steve Smith... to learn and enjoy the games at the same time.”



Rising Pune Supergiant captain Steve Smith (from left), team owner Sanjiv Goenka, Ben Stokes and Ajinkya Rahane in New Delhi on Thursday