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## 'Rohit can be the next Dravid'

Gaurav Gupta | TNN

**Mumbai:** There is nothing going in favour of Rohit Sharma right now. Owing to bad form, the talented middle-order bat from Mumbai has been axed, from the ODI side that would be touring Sri Lanka for a tri-series and the Champions Trophy after that. Worse, a shoulder injury has ruled him out of the Corporate Trophy, which begins from September 1. On Tuesday, it was announced that Rohit had been replaced by Siddhesh Lad, who is ironically the son of the star bat's coach, in the Indian Oil team.

"I suffered the injury while fielding in a game in the Buchi Babu tournament. I went to the National Cricket Academy, where I was told to rest for four to six weeks," Rohit told TOI on Tuesday.

More than bad form, it is the questions being raised about his technique against the short ball that have hurt the youngster's prospects. "When I was hitting sixes off short deliveries, then nobody said anything," Rohit said. "I am disappointed, but determined to win my place back in the team through good performances in the Champions League and the Irani Trophy," he stressed.

There is one man in Team India who vouches that the boy from Borivli will emerge from this mess. Harbhajan Singh feels Rohit is nothing short of the next Rahul Dravid. "There are very few batsmen I have seen who are as talented as Rohit. He has a very, very sound technique. In fact, he could be the next Dravid," Harbhajan told TOI



**ON THE BALL:** Harbhajan Singh and actress Amrita Rao at a promotional event for the upcoming cricket season, in Mumbai on Tuesday

on Tuesday. Sound technique? But isn't he vulnerable against the short ball? "Every batsman gets caught in the slips or perishes to a bouncer. Even Sachin Tendulkar gets bowled. That doesn't make him any less a player," he retorted.

So then, was the drop justified? "*Kabhi kabhi aise jhatke chahtye hote hain.* He'll learn from this and come back a much, much better player," reasons Harbhajan, who was in town to promote Neo Sports' cricket telecast for the upcoming season. "The advantage that youngsters like Rohit and Suresh Raina is that they have age on their side," he said. Don't they deserve to be persisted with right now, instead of being ignored for a veteran like Rahul Dravid? "You can't turn the national team into an under-19 squad in the quest of breeding youth," he shot back.