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EYE ON THE BALL

Faulkner lighting up Big Bash with 'special tricks'

SHWETHA SURENDRAN @Chennai

THE ninth season of the Big Bash League is going on in full swing. With snazzy new signings and fixtures, it has delivered nine times the fun. Sixty-one matches, eight teams. And yes, one shiny new AB de Villiers. But we have our eyes on someone else.

He might not have been seen in the national team or the Indian Premier League for a while now, but be sure that James Faulkner is still very much around and busy being a batsman's nightmare with the Hobart Hurricanes.

The Man of the Match of the 2015 World Cup final has started on a good note, taking 2/11 and 3/26 in the first two games. It helped his team win these matches. The run of the Hobart Hurricanes came to a screeching halt last season in the semi-finals, against the Melbourne Stars. This time around, they have a point to prove and Faulkner has polished up his bowling arsenal.

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James Faulkner, Hobart Hurricanes all-rounder

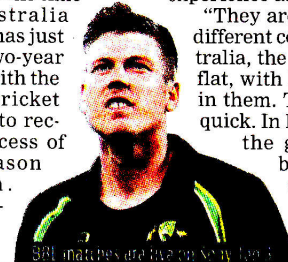
The 29-year-old all-rounder, who now splits his time between Australia and England, has just re-signed a two-year T20 contract with the Lancashire Cricket Club, hoping to recreate the success of his first season with them. Shuttling between two

countries has enhanced his experience as a cricketer.

"They are two completely different conditions. In Australia, the wickets are very flat, with bounce and pace in them. The outfields are quick. In England, some of the grounds can be bigger than others and it tends to spin a lot more. The wickets

tend to be a bit slower as well. So you have to try to create pace if you are a batsman. As a bowler, spin and slow balls come into play. That's the beauty of cricket, you get to play in different conditions around the world," he explains.

Not looking ahead to the T20 World Cup yet, Faulkner stresses that for this month, his focus will be on the Hobart Hurricanes and the Big Bash title. "I'm just trying to do what everyone else is trying to do and that is performing and playing my role in the team. I'm just enjoying the game as long as I can," he says.



3/11 matches and two on New Year's