

Shoaib Akhtar not to play Thursday's IPL match

Shoaib Akhtar will not be playing his first Indian Premier League (IPL) match as a [Kolkata](#) Knight Rider (KKR) against [Bangalore](#) Royal Challengers Thursday at Eden Gardens here due to a fitness problem, team coach John Buchanan said Wednesday.

'We are all excited about Shoaib playing for KKR. But he needs to spend some more days with the team so that he can gel well with all the members. Besides I need to be more sure about his fitness before allowing him play for the team,' Buchanan told IANS.

'Shoaib was his former self at Tuesday's three-hour match practice at Edens. In fact he was excellent. But still I think he needs some more time to gear up. It will not only benefit him but the entire team.'

'KKR physio-therapist Andrew Leibus has yet not given Shoaib a fitness certificate. He will have another fitness test Saturday. If he is declared match-fit that day, we can expect him to play Sunday's match against [Hyderabad](#) Deccan Chargers at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad,' the coach added.

The KKR openers for Thursday's match will be Salman Butt and Akash Chopra.

Captain Sourav Ganguly will come fourth in the batting order.

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