

Jayawardene rues run of injuries as Mumbai miss the playoffs

Reuters

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Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene said a run of injuries to key players had derailed their Indian Premier League campaign after the five-times champions were eliminated from the playoff race.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru delivered the final blow to their season with a two-wicket victory in Raipur, Mumbai's eighth defeat in 11 matches. Mumbai spare no expense when putting together their teams and this year was no exception with India's Hardik Pandya serving as captain of a squad that also includes T20 World Cup winning India captains Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav.

However, Rohit missed six matches with a hamstring strain, Pandya sat out three with a back spasm, while spin-bowling all-rounder Mitchell Santner went

down with a shoulder injury, forcing Mumbai to frequently change their line-ups. "I don't think it was chopping and changing," Jayawardene said.

"We had a lot of injuries, a lot of niggles, players getting injured, and some players were not available. So, those were mostly forced changes. Tactically, we would have made very few changes during the season. I would have loved to have our main core guys consistently being out there. But there's no excuse. I think we had a quality squad."

It has been a lean season for all-rounder Pandya and batter Suryakumar but Jayawardene backed the decision to keep playing them. "The core group is quite valuable for us. You can't just keep changing," he added.

"We went with the trust, the confidence that we had with them. And then it is what it is ... They had a really good World Cup, winning it and all that. So I think it's just that as a unit, we haven't been good enough."