

Pakistan Squad announced for Champions Trophy, Saim Ayub out due to injury



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The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced the national squad for the upcoming Champions Trophy, with notable changes, including the absence of Saim Ayub due to an ankle injury. The final squad, captained by Mohammad Rizwan and vice-captained by Salman Ali Agha, features three players from the victorious 2017 Champions Trophy squad—Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, and Fakhar Zaman. Along with them, Haris Rauf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, and Saud Shakeel are also included from the 2023 ICC Men's 50-over World Cup team.

The selection sees the return of Fakhar Zaman after overcoming injury and illness, which kept him out since June 2024. Fakhar, who was instrumental in Pakistan's 2017 Champions Trophy victory, was also the third-highest run-scorer in the 2024 Champions T20 Cup. Saud Shakeel, added to bolster the batting lineup, is recognized for his strong domestic Test performances.

Key changes include the inclusion of Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, and Saud Shakeel, replacing Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Saim Ayub, and Sufyan Moqim. Faheem and Khushdil provide additional options for Rizwan, enhancing squad versatility. The selection committee emphasized a "horses for courses" approach, ensuring a balanced mix of youth and experience.

On Saim Ayub's exclusion, Asad Shafiq, a member of the National Selection Committee,

highlighted the importance of prioritizing his long-term health. The squad will assemble in Lahore ahead of the tri-nation series against New Zealand and South Africa, followed by the Champions Trophy.

Pakistan Squad: Mohammad Rizwan (c), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi.