

Resilient Siddhesh Lad focussing on consistency

By Harit N Joshi

Siddhesh Lad's caller tune is the popular Bollywood track from the movie 'Lakshya'. True to his caller tune, the 22-year-old's only goal is to become a consistent member of the playing XI for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy.



Siddhesh Lad en route his unbeaten 94 at Wankhede yesterday. Pic/Atul Kamble

He missed out on the league stage of the limited-overs tournament at the start of the season due to a hip injury. He made a comeback in the knockout stage, but just after the Baroda match he was down with fever and had to fly back home.

He was soon detected with dengue and his world came crashing down. "I was shattered. I wanted to play a full season of Ranji Trophy, but dengue messed up everything.

"It took more than a month for me to recover and get fully fit," Lad, who is six runs away from his maiden first-class ton, told mid-day

yesterday.

However, by the time Lad could get back on the field, he had already missed three Ranji matches.

Lad went against the doctor's advice to play the last match of Dr HD Kanga Cricket League for National Cricket Club.

"The doctor said not to resume playing so soon as I was still recovering, but I was confident that my body would manage the workload. It was also important to play that match as it would give me some confidence if I got a call to join the Ranji team. I scored an unbeaten 142 in that match against Cricket Club of India," said Lad.

He scored 64 in his first Ranji match of the season against Bengal. In that match, he injured his finger, but played despite his nail coming off. Lad smashed 73 and 43 in the next match against Madhya Pradesh; 17 and 42 against Tamil Nadu and 18 and 48 versus Baroda in the last match.

Lad is thrilled at the prospect of getting to the three-figure mark. "Obviously, scoring a hundred is on my mind. But most important is what the team needs. Our first aim was to put 300 runs on the board. I feel a 400-plus total should be safe as our bowlers are in good form," signed off Lad.