

Finch retires from international cricket

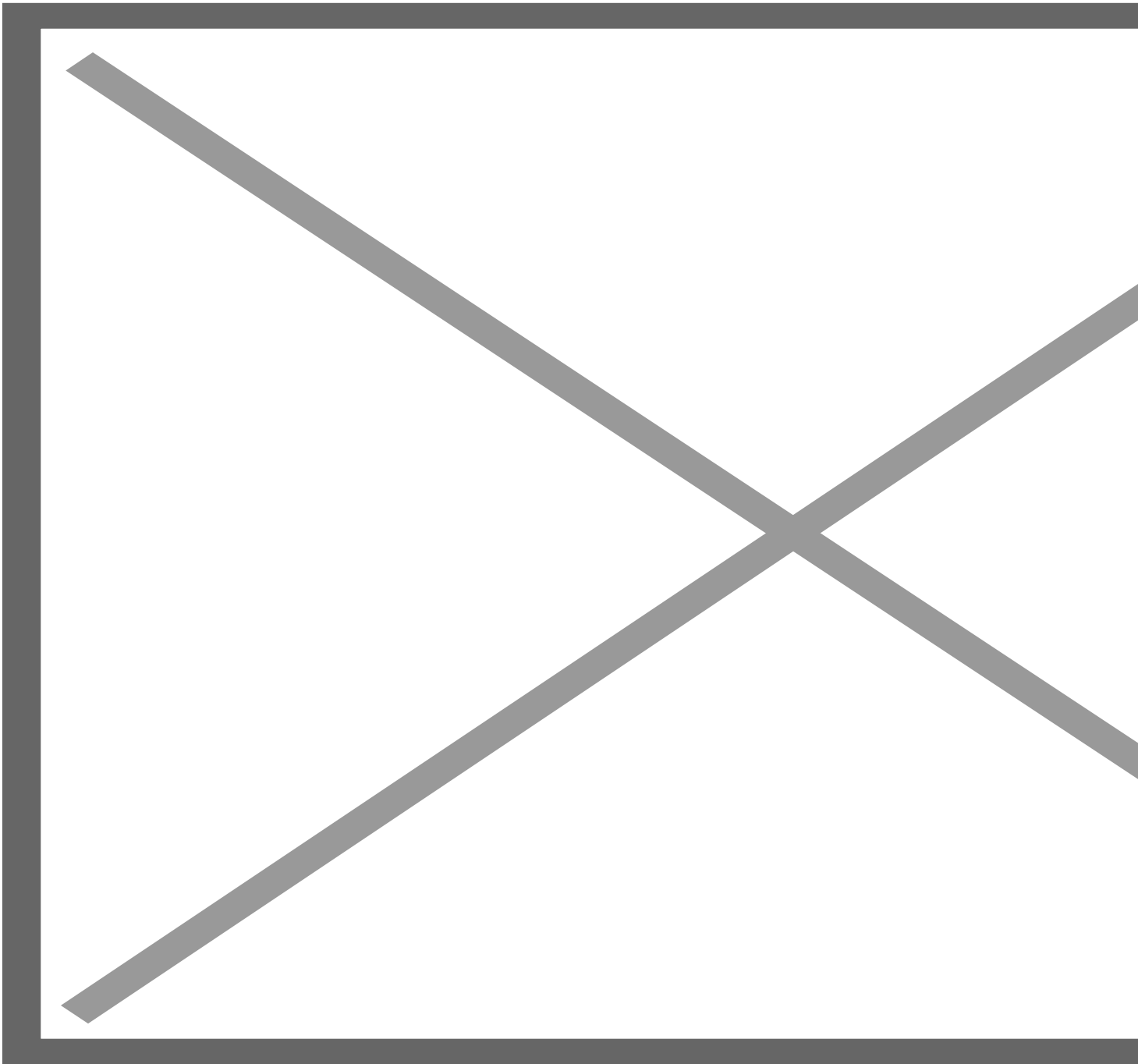
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Online Desk: Australian men's Twenty20 captain Aaron Finch retired from international cricket on Tuesday, ending his 12-year career as one of the most prolific run scorers in limited-overs formats. A destructive opening batter at his peak, Finch's position had been under a cloud since Australia failed to make the knockout stage of last year's T20 World Cup at home.

It was not immediately clear who would replace the Victoria-born batter, who has captained the team in 76 of the 103 T20s he has played since debuting against England in 2011. "Realising that I won't be playing on until the next T20 World Cup in 2024, now is the right moment to step down and give the team time to plan and build towards that event," he told reporters at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. "To be able to represent Australia for 12 years and play with and against some of the greatest players of all time has been an incredible honour."

The 36-year-old was in 2018 crowned the best T20 batter in the game, and captained Australia to their maiden T20 World Cup victory in Dubai in 2021. Only five players have scored more runs than Finch in T20 internationals. Finch retired as Australia's one-day skipper last September, replaced by 29-year-old fast bowler Pat Cummins. Cummins also leads Australia's Test squad, but selectors may be reluctant to add the T20 captaincy to his workload.

Finch said winning the T20 World Cup and the ODI World Cup in 2015 were the two cricket memories he would "cherish the most". He holds the record for the highest score in a T20 international — 172 runs off 76 balls against Zimbabwe in 2018. He also hit the third-highest T20 international score — 156 against England in 2013.



Cricket Australia chairman Lachlan Henderson said Finch was one of Australia's "finest white-ball players". "While he was a tough competitor on the field, Aaron always played the game with a smile on his face and in the right spirit," Henderson said. "As one of only four men's players to captain Australia to a World Cup victory, Aaron will always have a special place in Australian cricket's history."

Finch's Melbourne Renegades club called him a "great of Australian cricket". Although prolific in limited-overs formats — he scored 5,406 ODI runs and 3,120 in T20 internationals — Finch failed to make an impact in Tests. He played five Tests for Australia in 2018 but was dropped after failing to impress selectors. Finch is expected to continue playing T20 cricket in Australia's domestic league.