

Kallis aims at Canada



AFP, East London

Jacques Kallis has pledged to rediscover his form against Canada here on Thursday and help inspire his faltering team into the Super Sixes of the World Cup.

Kallis, normally an explosive all-rounder, has yet to fire in the tournament so far but has shrugged off speculation that he is still labouring under the effects of a toe injury he picked up in the nets on the eve of the tournament.

"I'm fully fit and very happy with the way things are going. It's just a matter of having some luck and things going my way now, but I'm not at all concerned about it," said Kallis.

"There has been a lot of cricket this season and at times it has been difficult. But I wouldn't want it any other way.

"I still have that hunger or lust to take wickets and make runs. I suppose it is a big task for me but I enjoy those pressures. There's nothing new about it."

Kallis and his teammates gathered here on Tuesday for what they hope will be more than a one-week

reunion.

The host nation, who started the tournament as second favourites behind Australia, need to win their remaining two Pool B matches to ensure a place in the Super Six.

After Canada, South Africa will also need to beat Sri Lanka in Durban Monday to prolong their campaign into the second stage.

The South Africans split up after beating Bangladesh in Bloemfontein on Saturday in a planned move to give the players a two-day break from the pressures of challenging for the World Cup in their own country pressures which have been reflected in shaky performances by Shaun Pollock's team.

In a tournament in which almost every result has had a bearing on the race for qualification for the next stage, South Africa are unlikely to take Canada lightly, especially after the Canadians gave the West Indies a fright at Centurion on Sunday.

Coach Eric Simons will have taken careful note of the way hitting John Davison hammered a

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FORM GUIDE

South Africa v Canada

AFP, East London

Form guide for South Africa and Canada ahead of their World Cup Group B clash at Buffalo Park here on Thursday:

South Africa	Canada
Feb 22 2003 beat Bangladesh by 10 wickets Bloemfontein	lost to New Zealand by 9 wickets Wanderers
Feb 20 2003 beat Kenya by 10 wickets Potchefstroom	lost to West Indies by 3 runs Newlands
Feb 12 2003 beat Pakistan by 34 runs Newlands	lost to Pakistan by 9 wickets Paarl
Feb 9 2003 beat Pakistan by 62 runs East London	lost to Pakistan by 182 runs Port Elizabeth
Dec 16 2002 beat Pakistan by 9 wickets Kingsmead	lost to Pakistan by 132 runs Bloemfontein
Dec 13 2002 beat Sri Lanka by 6 wickets Bloemfontein	
Dec 11 2002	
Dec 8 2002	
Dec 6 2002	

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PHOTO: INTERNET
NO TIME TO RELAX: South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis bowls in the nets while his skipper Shaun Pollock watches at Buffalo Park, East London yesterday.

Warne won't appeal

REUTERS, Melbourne

Shane Warne announced on Wednesday he would not appeal against the 12-month suspension he received last week after testing positive to a banned diuretic.

The 33-year-old spin bowler, one of Wisden's five cricketers of the 20th Century, was sent home from the World Cup two weeks ago after being told about his positive drugs test.

He claimed he took a fluid-reducing tablet to improve his appearance without knowing it contained a banned substance.

"Although I find this penalty very harsh and I am extremely disappointed that this has happened I have decided that I no longer want to put my family under even more stress. Enough is enough," Warne said in a statement.

"I have decided to accept the decision of the committee on the

chin and try to move on and deal with it the best way I can."

He said that he would now be looking at other work opportunities over the next 12 months, but was not retiring from cricket.

"I am definitely going to give it my best shot to get back to the top and will continue to train hard, work on my bowling and experiment with new deliveries," Warne said.

Meanwhile, Warne has been described by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) as "reckless" for taking the banned substance.

The official findings of the ACB's anti-doping tribunal, which were published on Wednesday, said the leg spinner had given "vague, unsatisfactory and inconsistent evidence" to the hearing last week.

"It was a reckless act totally disregarding the possible consequences," the ACB report said.

"Much of Warne's evidence on

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Shane Warne

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Adamant Andy

AFP, Bulawayo

Zimbabwe batsman Andy Flower revealed on Wednesday that his controversial anti-Robert Mugabe protest will continue despite enormous pressure on him to abandon the gesture.

Flower and teammate Henry Olonga both donned black armbands in their opening match against Namibia to mark what they described as the death of democracy in Zimbabwe and lashed out at the violence and famine which has ravaged the country.

"We have had meetings, been spoken to often by cricket authorities and received letters. But we are not going to back down. How can we?" Flower told the news agency here on Wednesday.

After being reported to the

International Cricket Council (ICC) by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), and cleared of any wrongdoing, Flower toned down his protest to a black wristband in the team's second game against India in Harare.

Olonga was dropped for that match and for the game with Australia in Bulawayo last Monday, while Flower continued to play.

Both men were summoned to a meeting of the ZCU last weekend where they warned to drop their protest or lose their places in the team.

Flower was going to be dropped for the game against Australia until a group of senior players said they would not play in that match if the threat was carried out.

Flower, one of the world's top

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Andy Flower

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Donald playing

REUTERS, East London

The form of fast bowler Allan Donald remains South Africa's biggest concern as they prepare for their Pool B game against World Cup minnows Canada on Thursday.

Despite calls by Donald and his supporters that he be given as many opportunities as possible to prove himself in match conditions, the bowler was dropped from the team that beat Bangladesh at his home ground in Bloemfontein on Saturday.

But convenor of selectors Omar Henry has stated categorically that

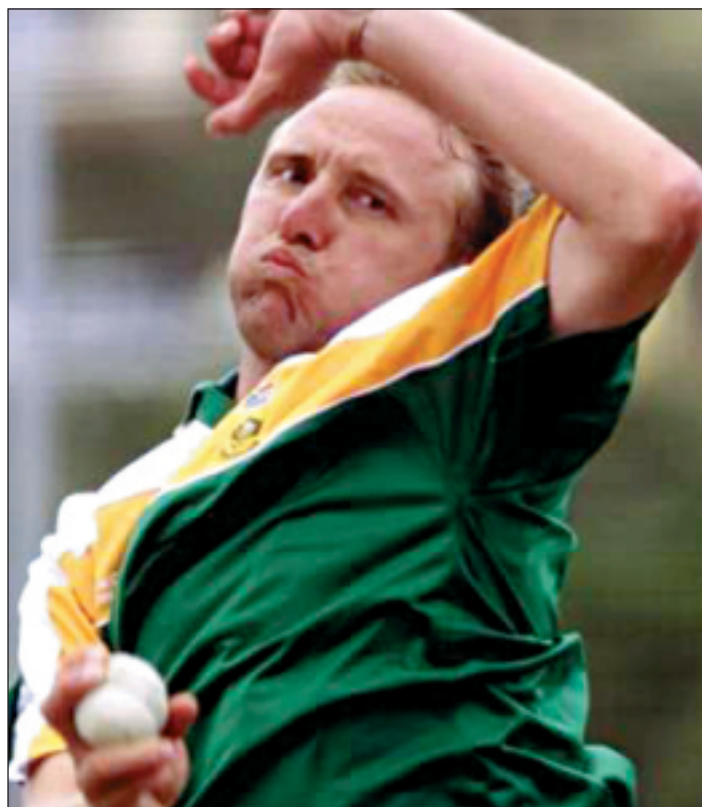
Donald will play against Canada as South Africa try to establish their best 11 ahead of the crunch showdown with Sri Lanka in Durban next Monday.

"We have to look to get him (Donald) a game," Henry told Reuters on Monday.

"We want to play him because he is a key player. If on form, he is vital but we need to find our strongest 11 for Sri Lanka."

Also vying for a place in that team are all rounder Andrew Hall, who impressed with the ball against the Bangladeshis, and 20 year-old

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Allan Donald

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Quips & Quotes

AFP, Johannesburg

Who's saying what at the World Cup:

"Yes, the tapes have been asked for. I believe it is the first match in this World Cup where the tapes have been summoned."

A tournament source tells AFP that the tape of Kenya's shock win over Sri Lanka is being viewed by the ICC's anti-corruption unit.

"I want to dedicate the 500 wickets to the spectators who have supported me throughout my 18 years in the game."

Pakistan's Wasim Akram on reaching 500 one-day wickets.

"I salute the man. It is an outstanding performance. I respect what he's achieved and I don't see anyone else taking 500 wickets. It is a helluva job he has done for the country."

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Pollock talks about pace

AFP, East London

South African captain Shaun Pollock Wednesday dropped a strong hint that the host nation would axe both their spin bowlers for crucial games coming up in the World Cup.

Neither of South Africa's left-arm spinners, Nicky Boje and Robin Peterson, has impressed in South Africa's first four matches with only one wicket between them Boje took one for 44 against Kenya, and neither has bowled a full 10-over spell.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Andrew Hall had a promising outing when he played against Bangladesh in Bloemfontein Saturday.

Speaking ahead of Thursday's match against Canada at Buffalo

Park, Pollock said: "It has been discussed that maybe we could go in without a spinner."

He said opening batsman Graeme Smith could "be an ace up our sleeve" if a spin option was required with Smith having enjoyed success at provincial level as a part-time off-spin bowler.

"If we do go in without our specialist spinners he gives us some variety," said Pollock.

Coach Eric Simons added to speculation that Hall would become a first-choice player when he said he expected pitches to become more seam-friendly in the later stages of the tournament as winter nears.

Struggling fast bowler Allan Donald remains a key player for South Africa and is expected to play

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African treats

AL-AMIN from Kimberly

Mohammad Ashraf had a dream to put his name in the list of top-ten scorers in the World Cup. But he scored a duck, 8 not out and 6 in the last three games he played.

The 18-year-old however lived up to his potential against New Zealand yesterday, scoring a fine 56. It was his first fifty in one-day internationals and also first by a Bangladeshi in this World Cup.

But he was reluctant to talk about his effort after the match.

"It is good to score a fifty. I only consider this innings as boost for our next game against Kenya," said Ashraf.

"I have tried to apply myself on the wicket. I feel that if any top-order batsman scores a fifty the team's total will automatically be a big one at the end of an innings," Ashraf said.

RAFIQUE'S NO FRACTURE

Mohammed Rafique has showed a remarkable improvement in his batting. It was refreshing to see an otherwise big-hitting batsman playing sensibly even with a bruised

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Akram the trail blazer

REUTERS, Johannesburg

"Sachin Tendulkar, bowled Wasim Akram, 0" would have read better, of course.

But, when you are 36 and slowing, and already looking to life beyond cricket, best not be too particular.

Statham, at least, is a good cricketing name.

Wasim Akram might have dismissed Klaas Jan van Noortwijk in Tuesday's World Cup Pool A match against the Netherlands in Paarl for his history-making 500th one-day international wicket.

Nick Statham will sit better in the record books, even if he is not quite Sachin.

Wasim's delight over the wicket, however he later said the emotion was more relief than ecstasy was unconditional. He ran past the departing Statham and picked up wicketkeeper Rashid Latif in a bear hug before being surrounded by the rest of his Pakistan teammates.

Everyone has his own Wasim.

In Lahore and in Pakistan's Punjab, he is a demi-god, his feats and statistics currently 414 Test wickets at 23.62 and 502 one-day victims at 23.43 recited to young children as bed-time stories.

In England's Lancashire, where he spent a cricketing decade, he is an adopted son.

There are others, however, Justice Malik Qayyum among them, who have a more jaundiced view.

Qayyum's report into match-fixing three years ago, commissioned by the Pakistan Cricket Board in the wake of Hansie Cronje's disgrace and fall in South Africa, led to two players being banned for life.

Wasim was one of another six players censured and fined for not fully co-operating with the investigation. The judge also recommended that Wasim never captain Pakistan again.

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Dare write them off

AFP, Johannesburg

Pakistan go into Saturday's high-voltage World Cup clash against India at Centurion struggling to bowl straight or put bat to ball.

Wasim Akram's marvellous 500-wicket feat or Shoaib Akhtar sending down the fastest recorded delivery in history are a few bright spots in an otherwise insipid display which has seen Pakistan lose to Australia and England.

Their only victories so far have come against minnows Namibia and the Netherlands, and they now face must-win encounters against India and Zimbabwe to qualify for the Super Sixes.

Current form may indicate Pakistan will struggle to get there. But write them off at your own peril. History says so.

The talented, but unpredictable

Pakistanis have the knack of pulling off surprises when not even their die-hard fans least expect them to.

Take, for instance, the 1992 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand when Pakistan came from the blue to win their only title under Imran Khan's leadership.

They were on the verge of elimination after losing to the West Indies, India and South Africa. They were saved an embarrassing exit by rain which washed out the game against England at Adelaide after Pakistan were shot out for 74.

But Imran regrouped his troops for the vital clash against hosts Australia at Perth which Pakistan won by 48 runs and went on to defeat Sri Lanka, New Zealand and England to win the title.

One inspired day can change the course of the World Cup as Steve Waugh's Australians found to their

joy in the last tournament four years ago in England.

Australia were down and out when they lost to both Pakistan and New Zealand at the start of the World Cup.

A victory over the West Indies after defeating minnows Scotland and Bangladesh prevented their early exit, while a century by captain Steve Waugh against South Africa booked the semifinal berth.

A thrilling semifinal tie against Hansie Cronje's Proteas saw the Australians advance to the final on the basis of a higher finish in the Super Sixes and then annihilated Pakistan in the final.

Pakistan are hoping their fortunes will turn against India, the first meeting between the two warring neighbours since June, 2000 after the Indian government banned

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PHOTO: AFP
BOWLER OF ALL BOWLERS: Pakistan superstar Wasim Akram poses with a decoration marking his 500th one-day international wicket at Paarl on February 25.