

Lankans on protest



REUTERS, Durban

Sri Lanka will take the field "under protest" for their crunch World Cup Pool B match against South Africa on Monday after their appeal for a review of Super Six qualification conditions was turned down.

Sri Lanka's complaint stems from their 53-run loss to Kenya in Nairobi last week, which has adversely affected their net run-rate.

New Zealand forfeited their Nairobi fixture against the Kenyans because of security concerns. The match was deemed lost and the points awarded to Kenya, but New Zealand's net run-rate was unaffected.

ected.

Qualification from Pool B is likely to come down to net run-rate, hence the Sri Lankans' application to the Event Technical Committee (ETC) to have the interpretation of the playing conditions reviewed.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL), the Team Management in South Africa and indeed the team itself, are extremely perturbed and disappointed at the interpretation that has been placed by your committee at this 11th hour....." the BCSSL said in a statement on Monday.

"The alleged 'clarification' is particularly disadvantageous to the Sri Lanka team and is indeed unfair and we feel that it is an attempt to keep the Sri Lanka team away from the Super Six stage."

The statement implied that Sri

Lanka had considered a boycott of the South Africa game.

".....it would have been advantageous for the Sri Lanka team too to forfeit the match that is to be played against South Africa in a short while, but we are refraining from doing so as we wish to maintain the 'spirit of the game' and play the game with a straight bat."

"Our team will thus take the field today under protest due to the sudden and unfair change (by way of an alleged interpretation/clarification) of the relevant rules made by the ETC midway through the World Cup."

Sri Lanka can avoid any further qualification controversy by beating South Africa, which would mean they finish top of Pool B. The hosts, however, must also win the game to advance to the Super Sixes.

'Heads you lose'



AFP, Port Elizabeth

England skipper Nasser Hussain dismissed claims from Australian captain Ricky Ponting that when it comes to battles between the old foes, his team simply lose their heads.

The two-wicket World Cup defeat here on Sunday was England's 14th in a row against the world champions but Hussain denied his men were at a mental loss how to cope with the Aussie juggernaut.

"It was just a case of someone like Andy Bichel coming into the side taking seven wickets and then scoring those runs at number ten, and scoring those runs at number ten, explained the England captain after the back-up paceman had taken 7-20 and then hit 34 runs in the Pool A encounter.

But Ponting was more than happy to open the wounds a little more.

"England performed their skills better than us for most of the day but when Andy Bichel hit a six and a four off the second to last over, we stole the game from them."

"I believe that England allowed a lot of doubts to creep into their minds and asked themselves: 'Is this going to be another day when the Australians get up and steal the game away from us just like before?'"

"I have no doubt that these thoughts came into their minds at some stage," said Ponting.

England, defending 204-8, had their old rivals on the rack at 135-8 at one stage before Michael Bevan, 74 not out, and Bichel who was also unbeaten at the end, saw their side home with two balls to spare.

"It's bloody disappointing,"

admitted Hussain. "We had it there again, we just needed another wicket."

England looked on course to end their dreadful run against the reigning champions when they had Ponting's men at 48 for four at one stage with Andrew Caddick taking four for 35.

However, Caddick wasn't called upon to complete his full ten overs at the death - instead, Hussain entrusted the penultimate over to James Anderson only to see the rookie Lancashire quick smashed for six and four by Bichel.

"James' variations had Bevan in trouble and I just thought Andy might be a bit one-paced. I thought one of Jimmy's slower balls would get 'stuck' in the wicket. It did but unfortunately the batsman hit it for six."

England's hopes of going through to the second stage now rest on Pakistan beating Zimbabwe in Bulawayo on Tuesday with Hussain hoping his team's run-rate is superior to that of the Asian giants.

"We've got nothing to be ashamed of. We've played some good cricket so far. We've got stuck on a dodgy wicket the other night (an 82-run loss against India under the Kingsmead lights on Wednesday) and we're the first team to give Australia a run for their money."

Hussain said he would have no complaints whatever the outcome of the Bulawayo match.

"You get what you deserve in this game. I don't know if I'll watch the game. We'll know at the end of the day on Tuesday."

A Zimbabwe win would end England's chances and Hussain once again insisted he had no regrets about the team's decision to boycott its World Cup match in Harare - a decision which gave the

Africans four points for victory by forfeit and could yet see the co-hosts go through.

"Not at all. England going to Zimbabwe was always different from any other country going there."

Cops on guard

AFP, Bangalore

Police kept tight clamps in place Monday in this southern Indian city following rioting that erupted after India trounced Pakistan in their weekend World Cup showdown.

Members of the Hindu and Muslim communities threw stones at each other Sunday when Indian cricket fans took to the streets shouting anti-Pakistan slogans. Police said about 20 people, including policemen, were injured in the clash.

"In three areas of the city a curfew is being enforced during the night and prohibitory orders are in place until (Tuesday)," said police commissioner M.D. Singh.

"Ninety-three people indulging in rioting were arrested on Sunday and they are in police custody now," Singh told AFP.

He said police used batons and tear gas to disperse mobs.

"People also spread rumours that Indian flags were burned and a temple idol had been stolen. But those are not true. The main intention was to whip up tensions," he said.

Singh said the rioters would be produced before a city magistrate.

The affected areas were quiet on Monday, with police stepping up patrols and general security.

"The situation is calm and under control," Singh said.

In the northern state of Punjab, 10 people were injured in stone-throwing incidents after spectators who had gathered to watch Indian and Pakistani border guards take part in a joint military ceremony traded insults.

The border guards, however, later dispersed the crowds.

Goodbye

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make a century and double century in the same

Test prompting former South African player Mike Procter to say: "He's a machine." Zimbabwe, however, as so often when Flower hit the heights, still lost the game.

His durability is also legendary. He made a record 174 consecutive one-day appearances before a finger injury ended the run.

After the 1999 World Cup, Zimbabwe lost leading lights Murray Goodwin and Neil Johnson. To lose Flower after the 2003 tournament is certain to set the side back years.

Sadly but understandably, he has not been quite at his best recently, despite two half-centuries during the World Cup.

Defeat to Pakistan on Tuesday, in his 210th one-day, will lead to Zimbabwe's first-round elimination, leaving Flower without a chance to make amends.

He will still, however, be remembered as one of the greatest players Zimbabwe or Britain, depending on your point of view, has ever produced.

Quarrelling

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wise England will take the third spot in Pool A behind defending champions Australia and India.

"There was no brawl or real physical contact," Pybus said. "It was just the normal kind of incident you get at a game of soccer. It meant nothing at all."

"They love their soccer as part of a fitness programme. I'm sure it was all in good and high spirits."

Pybus, however, did not say why Inzamam had not taken part in the net session later.

Pakistan's media manager Samiul Hasan later told AFP that Inzamam was "feeling sick" and had to return to the hotel.

"Pakistan manager Shaharayar Khan called both Inzamam and Younis and told them such a thing should not be repeated," Hasan said.

"Inzamam is a senior player and probably felt bad that Younis had got into an argument with him. Inzi was also feeling sick and that's why he went back."

Younis Khan was also involved in a brawl with Shoaib Akhtar during Pakistan's tour of Zimbabwe last December when the fast bowler sent Younis sprawling to the floor with a bouncer at the nets.

VIP backing

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15-man squad, a team official said.

"The boys were mighty proud when they were told that the Deputy Prime Minister and Army Chief had called," the official said.

"Both congratulated the team and then asked them to keep up the good work."

The Indians have received thousands of calls since Saturday from fans around the world for maintaining their unbeaten streak against Pakistan at the World Cup.

"We have only made it to the Super Sixes. Wonder what awaits us if we win the World Cup?" the official said.

Seamer Javagal Srinath and Tendulkar are the only players in the current team who have featured in all World Cup wins against Pakistan in 1992, 1996, 1999 and now.

"It's a terrific feeling, but we have a lot of hard work ahead in the tournament," said Srinath, looking forward to the start of the Super Sixes on Friday.

Anxious wait for Hussain

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an extraordinary win to sneak through.

Hussain has consistently maintained he would stand down as England captain after the World Cup, and reiterated his stance two weeks ago after becoming disillusioned with the sport's ruling bodies over the Zimbabwe fixture controversy.

A second successive first-round exit from the World Cup would follow England's disappointing Ashes tour to Australia, where they were beaten 4-1 in the Test series and failed to beat the hosts in the one-day triangular series.

However England coach Duncan Fletcher is keen for Hussain to stay on as captain for one more season, with home Test series to come against Zimbabwe and South Africa later this year.

However, Hussain said his side should not be ashamed of their World Cup Pool A performances, despite only winning three of their six matches.

"We have got nothing to be ashamed of for the way we have played so far," Hussain said. "We got stuck on a dodgy wicket the other night (against India) and we came back here and became the first team to give Australia a run for their money."

"We played well in Cape Town

(against Pakistan) and in the warm-up games but it's just a shame we couldn't get one more wicket here as that would have made it a very good first stage."

England seemed set for victory with Australia at 135 for eight chasing 205, but Andy Bichel followed his seven for 20, the second best figures in World Cup history, with an unbeaten 34 as he and Michael Bevan (74 not out) won the match with two balls to spare.

"We had them there again at eight down for not very many and it was there to be won," Hussain said. "We just needed one more wicket but whatever we tried we couldn't get it. It's very disappointing to walk off as losers against and regardless of the tournament we have just been beaten by Australia again."

"It would have been nice to have beaten them with all the support we had here and having played so well."

"By beating Australia we would have gone through with four points and ended that run so there's not a lot of consolation having lost narrowly to Australia."

Hussain defended his decision to allow James Anderson to bowl the penultimate over ahead of the more experienced.

Andy Caddick, who had taken four for 35, which backfired as

WORLD CUP STATS				
REUTERS, Johannesburg				
Leading batting and bowling statistics after 37 matches of the 2003 World Cup (* denotes hot outs):				
BATTING				
HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES				
Score	Player	Country	Opponent	Venue
172*	C Wishart	Zimbabwe	Namibia	Harare
152	S Tendulkar	India	Namibia	P'maritzburg
143*	A Symonds	Australia	Pakistan	Johannesburg
143	H Gibbs	South Africa	New Zealand	Johannesburg
141	S Styris	New Zealand	Sri Lanka	Bloemfontein
134*	S Fleming	New Zealand	South Africa	Johannesburg
120	S Jayasuriya	Sri Lanka	New Zealand	Bloemfontein
116	B Lara	West Indies	South Africa	Cape Town
BOWLING				
BEST INNINGS ANALYSIS				
Haul	Player	Country	Opponent	Venue
7-15	G McGrath	Australia	Namibia	Potchefstroom
7-20	A Bichel	Australia	England	Port Elizabeth
6-23	A Nehra	India	England	Durban
6-25	C Vaas	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	P'maritzburg
5-24	C Obuya	Kenya	Sri Lanka	Nairobi
5-27	A Codrington	Canada	Bangladesh	Durban
LEADING RUN SCORERS				
469	Sachin Tendulkar	India	16	CVaas
311	Herschelle Gibbs	SAfrica	12	ABichel
253	Sanath Jayasuriya	SLanka	12	WAkram
238	Brian Lara	WIndies	11	GMcGrath
228	Matthew Hayden	Australia	11	MMuralitharan
215	Craig Wishart	Zimbabwe	11	WDrakes
209	Ramnath Sarwan	WIndies	11	SAkhtar
LEADING WICKET-TAKERS				

Hooper ponders

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also against world champions Australia from April 10 to May 30.

Hooper, the 36-year-old veteran of 102 Tests and 226 one-day internationals, took over as captain from Jimmy Adams two years ago after returning to the game from which he retired immediately prior to the 1999 World Cup.

He was crestfallen when the West Indies' loss to Sri Lanka by six runs in their preliminary group match in Cape Town on Friday night effectively sent them out of the tournament.

Hooper told the BBC afterwards that he would "definitely be looking at my future with the team and rethinking my role as captain."

"I will sleep on some of the things that are going through my mind and make a decision on my future after that," he said. "I have to take it each game at a time. It really depends on how I feel in my body and how much more I can contribute to West Indies cricket."

Richards acknowledged that no one could dispute "whatever decision" Hooper comes to.

"I know he would be disappointed because he felt we stood a chance, as everyone else felt we stood a chance," he stated. "But these things happen in sport and I think it's important having dialogue with him to see where we go from here."

Richards emphasised that he did not want a recurrence of the past when "people have become a little disgruntled being left out of the team because they were getting a little bit older."

He himself was "disgruntled" when he was not picked in spite of his stated desire to end his distinguished career at the 1992 World Cup, six months after retiring from the captaincy and Test cricket in the 1991 series in England.

WORLD CUP STANDINGS

AFP, Johannesburg

World Cup Pool A standings after Monday's match between the Netherlands and Namibia (played, won, lost, tied/no result, points, net-run rate):

POOL A						
Australia	6	6	0	0	24	+2.04
India	6	5	1	0	20	+1.11
England	6	3	3	0	12	+0.82
Zimbabwe	5	3	2	0	12	+0.50
Pakistan	5	2	3	0	8	+0.23
Netherlands	6	1	5	0	4	-1.45
Namibia	6	0	6	0	0	-2.95

Note 1: Three teams from the group will advance to the super-six round.

Bichel hit a six to leave Australia requiring two off the last six balls.

"Variation and taking pace off the ball generally had Bevan in trouble and I thought Andy would be a little one-paced in that over," Hussain said. "I just felt that those little slower balls getting stuck in the wicket from Jimmy would lead to a bowler slogging it up in the air but instead it went for six."

Quips & Quotes

FROM PAGE 13 Pakistan captain Waqar Younis hopes to make the most of their World Cup lifeline against Zimbabwe on Tuesday.

"Cricket's a funny game, anything can happen, but really we know we are out of it."

West Indies skipper Carl Hooper doesn't believe in miracles.

"You dream of a day when you can get seven wickets in a one-day game."

Aussie back-up paceman Andy Bichel after his 7-20 ripped the heart out of the England line-up in Port Elizabeth.

"All credit to Andy. It's tough to bowl when the opposition are scoring at seven an over and then to bat when you need six an over to win a World Cup match."

Michael Bevan, who made 74, praising Bichel for his part in Sunday's two-wicket win.

The West Indies' final match in this former gold mining town tomorrow is against Kenya, the 250-1 outsiders who defeated Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, gained full points when New Zealand refused to fulfill their match in Nairobi on security grounds and lost to South Africa.

Their only previous victory in their three World Cups had been over the West Indies in 1996 but they have now again qualified among the six teams in the Super Sixes round.

Richards said it was critical that the West Indies put their anguish behind them and work humbly.

"Kenya defeated Sri Lanka and it would undo all the good work we did in Asia (winning the one-day series in India and Bangladesh) to come here and be so depressed that we don't beat them," he noted.

The signs were not encouraging yesterday.

Manager Ricky Skerritt, who noted that he hadn't seen the team as down "for a long time," said a planned morning practice session at the de Beers Oval, venue for the Kenya match, had been cancelled because "the mood was not ready."

A sightseeing tour was arranged instead. "It was a way of getting the players' minds off cricket for the day and relaxing," Skerritt said. "It's practice again tomorrow when we can refocus on the Kenya match."

While a victory is essential for the psychological well-being prior to their return to the Caribbean on Thursday, it is an opportunity to give batsman Marlon Samuels and fast bowlers Jermaine Lawson, Corey Collymore and Nixon McLean a match. Samuels, originally chosen, then withdrawn because of knee problems and finally reinstated, and Lawson had one match against New Zealand and Collymore's only chance was in the rain-out fixture against Bangladesh when he didn't face a ball and hadn't time to bowl one.

Aussies walking tall

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an unbroken 73 for the ninth wicket after slumping to 135 for eight.

The win means they enter the Super Sixes, taking a maximum 12 points with them after six wins. They have also beaten

England 14 times in a row in one-dayers, stretching back to January 1999.

Ponting defended his batsmen against charges of arrogance after several of them fell to rash shots.

"It was a difficult wicket and it was probably more the overall execution of shots that cost us, not arrogance," he said.

He said Australia's bowling had also been below par in their first 10 overs.

"Most of the batsmen would have been disappointed with the way they got out as we looked to play big shots at the start and we didn't have to," he added.

"It was always going to be toughest against the new ball on that

The World Cup so far



REUTERS, Johannesburg

Notable statistics after 22 days of the 2003 Cricket World Cup:

* The highest score of the World Cup was recorded by Zimbabwe's Craig Wishart, with a 149-ball 172 not out the 10th highest in history, 16 runs behind the World Cup record and 22 behind the one-day all-time record against Namibia in Harare (Feb 10). Canada opening batsman Ishaq Maraj, meanwhile faced 155 balls to score 53 not out against South Africa (Feb 27) in the second slowest innings in tournament history.

* The first 35 matches have produced a total of 13,614 runs, at an average of 194.48 per innings. There have been six innings scores above 300, while 22 have totalled below 150.

* Australia's Ian Harvey, a late addition to the Australia squad after Shane Watson's injury, took a wicket with his first ball of the tournament by removing Pakistan's Saleem Elahi at The Wanderers. Harvey ended with four for 58. Australia won by 82 runs and Harvey was dropped next match (February 11).

* Sachin Tendulkar became the top run-scorer in World Cup history during his 52 against the Netherlands, overhauling former Pakistan batsman Javed Miandad's total of 1,083 runs when he had reached 25 (February 12). He scored 152 in the 181-run win over Namibia (February 23) to match Australian Mark Waugh's career total of four World Cup hundreds and raised his career tally of ODI runs to beyond 12,000 with a brilliant 98 against Pakistan (March 1).

* India's Javagal Srinath

became the fifth bowler to take 300 one-day wickets when dismissing Dutchman Feiko Kloppenburg in Paarl (February 12).

* Left-armer Chaminda Vaas created cricket history with a hat-trick off the first three balls of the match against Bangladesh on the way to final figures of 6-25 in Pietermaritzburg (February 14). After five matches, Vaas boasted 16 wickets at 7.81 apiece.

* England, having refused to play in Zimbabwe, bowled their first ball of the World Cup against the Netherlands in East London (February 16) 163 hours and 30 minutes after the tournament began.

* Canada were skittled for 36, the lowest total in one-day international history, as Sri Lanka crushed them by nine wickets in Paarl (February 19). Sri Lanka eased home in only 4.4 overs, completing the second fastest run-chase ever in limited-overs internationals.

* Bangladesh's seven-wicket defeat by New Zealand in Kimberley (February 26) meant they had not won for a world record 31 one-dayers in a row, stretching back to the 1999 World Cup. Of those, 29 were defeats (including a world-record 23 in a row) with the other two rained off. They have also lost 16 of their 17 Test matches, with bad weather saving them in the other.

* Canada's John Davison scored the fastest century in World Cup history against West Indies (February 23), reaching three figures off 67 deliveries to break Indian Kapil Dev's 1983 mark by five balls. Davison's next innings, against South Africa in East London, ended after one single and two balls.

* Brian Lara hit the quickest fifty of the tournament, his half-century coming off just 23 balls.

The West Indies innings of 206 for three in 20.3 overs produced the fastest runs per over ever recorded in a one-day innings, at 10.04.