

Raju treble keeps Wari on track

SPORTS REPORTER

Raju Sarker slammed a hatrick as Wari Club kept a perfect record in the Green Delta Insurance Metropolis First Division Hockey League thrashing Farashganj Sporting Club 4-1 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Wari, who have already booked a place in the super league, led the first half 3-0. Gautam Kumar Das opened the account for Wari before Raju found the mark in the 18, 26 and 68 minutes. Tariqul Islam Panna reduced the margin for Farashganj.

In the day's other match, two-goal Russel Islam helped Dhaka Wanderers come from a goal down to beat Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha 2-1.

Mafizul put Mukta Bihanga ahead but Russell struck either side of the break to give his side full three points.

School kabaddi

UNB, Dhaka

The 14th NZ Textile Mills School kabaddi competition will begin at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court today.

On the opening day, Nawabpur Government High School meet Bir Shreshtha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School and College in the boys' event while Mirpur Girls Ideal Laboratory Institute play Agargaon Adarsha High School in the girls' event.

State Minister for Youth and Sports M Fazlur Rahman will inaugurate the 40-school meet as chief guest.

Only way

FROM PAGE 17
the batting by including Mongolia. On a pitch that gave the seamers enough encouragement on Tuesday, the conservative option is likely to prevail, and Munaf should get the nod given that Sreesanth is not in the frame for the Champions Trophy.

West Indies may yet opt for the same side that competed so well with Australia for three-fourths of the match.

The bowlers all impressed in patches, though there may still be a place for the accuracy of Corey Collymore, always a worthwhile option against Indian batsmen who can be statuesque against the moving ball. For the batsmen, it's a question of getting the attitude right and forgetting what happened against Australia.

Shivnarine Chanderepaul and Chris Gayle showed what was possible if you see off the new ball's shiny coat, though batsmen on both sides would do well to remember that some swallows aren't seen on every day of summer.

WEST INDIES (likely): Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid (captain), Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Virender Sehwag, Mohammad Kaif, Suresh Raina, Dinesh Mongia, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh, Munaf Patel.

PONTING (likely): Chris Gayle, Shivnarine Chanderepaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Brian Lara (captain), Dwayne Bravo, Wavell Hinds, Dwayne Smith, Carlton Baugh, Ian Bradshaw, Jerome Taylor, Corey Collymore.

PFL in dire

FROM PAGE 17
we cannot give the sponsors a particular time, how would we make these plans? One thing is related with the other. So if we want to start talks with the sponsors we must have a date. The transfer is the first process on way to launch the league," he said adding that the federation's marketing target from sponsorship is at least Tk one crore.

"Once started, the league would become a big source of income for the clubs. If they do not realise their well being, it's unfortunate. Now everything will be decided in our next meeting."

"We are also concerned about the players who have had no transfer for more than a year. We want them to get into real action as soon as possible."

"If we cannot launch the Professional League this time, I don't know whether it has a future or not. It is a prestige issue for us because we will have to explain our failure to the Asian Football Confederation," he said.

Lennon recovers

FROM PAGE 20
Spurs manager Martin Jol had told the Spurs Web site on Sunday that Lennon's injury could require surgery but the teenager trained with the squad on Tuesday and will have a late fitness test before Tottenham open their UEFA Cup campaign.

The 19-year-old, who played in England's recent Euro 2008 qualifiers against Andorra and Macedonia, missed Spurs' 1-0 Premier League defeat at Manchester United on Saturday after picking up the injury in training on Friday.

There were initially doubts over whether he would be fit when England's Euro 2008 Group E campaign resumes on Oct. 7 against Macedonia but he should now be available.



Action from yesterday's First Division Hockey League match between Wari Club and Farashganj Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ricky full of remorse

Cricket

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Australian captain Ricky Ponting has apologised for a "serious error of judgement" after confronting umpire Asad Rauf over a wide delivery in their one-day match against the West Indies here.

Ponting was fined his entire match fee for breaching the ICC Code of Conduct during his country's 78-run victory in the first DLF Cup match on Tuesday.

He was found guilty of "showing dissent at an umpire's decision" by ICC match referee Chris Broad in a hearing after play concluded.

"Having had the opportunity to sleep on the incident, I know I made a serious error of judgement," Ponting said in a statement.

"I regret the approach I made to umpire Asad Rauf and realise I shouldn't have behaved in the way I did."

Because it was Ponting's second such incident in the past 12 months - the other took place during the second Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong in April - his punishment was automatically raised to a level 2 offence.

Level 2 breaches carry a minimum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee and a maximum penalty of their full match fee and/or a one Test match or two one-day international ban.

Ponting responded to Rauf's decision to call a wide in the 33rd over off Shane Watson's bowling by

walking up him from his fielding position to query the decision.

"A captain should set the example for his players to follow and it is not acceptable for any player, let alone a captain, to question an umpire's decision," said Broad.

Ponting said he would personally say sorry to Rauf and had called Cricket Australia's acting chief executive Michael Brown to apologise.

"International cricket matches are passionate affairs but as the captain of the Australian cricket team, I understand it is my responsibility to uphold the spirit of the game and I know that through my actions I let myself and my team down," he said.

Broad reached his conclusion after a hearing attended by the three umpires and Ponting, as well as Australia team manager Steve Bernard and coach John Buchanan.

Meanwhile, he was encouraged by Glenn McGrath's first bowling performance after an extended break from cricket and warned he is only going to get better.

McGrath, 36, fired down nine overs taking 1-30. It was the first time he had turned his arm in an international since taking a break in January to help his wife battle breast cancer.

While he took time to find his line and length, sending down four wides in his first over back, his second spell was more like the McGrath of old, and Ponting liked what he saw.

"It was his first game for nearly 12 months so he will probably have been a bit disappointed with how many wides he did in his first spell,"

said Ponting.

"But, as I said to all the players, it is going to be a little bit difficult for us to hit the right tempo straight away."

"I think Glenn was probably trying a little bit too hard to make a real impact in his first game back."

"But he is a seasoned campaigner and he bounced back even better in his second spell. He knows what he has to do. It's a matter of getting his body in the right shape to be able to do what he wants it to do."

"By the time the Champions Trophy comes around I'm sure he'll be in pretty good shape."

There had been debate whether McGrath would have been better off playing domestic cricket to ease his way back into the game ahead of the Ashes series with England in November.

But he convinced the selectors to take him to both the one-day tournaments in Malaysia and the Champions Trophy in India.

Acting vice-captain Michael Clarke, who top-scored against the West Indies with 81, said it was a massive boost to have McGrath back.

"All the boys were amazed because Glenn never bowls wides but I think his pace was up and he said he felt good, so that's all positive for Australian cricket," he said.

"It was great to have him back out there. He's an unbelievable player and any time he is on your team it makes life a lot easier."

"He's keen as mustard. Guys like Glenn are irreplaceable."

This Eng squad better: Warne

AFP, London

Australia spin wizard Shane Warne believes England's squad for the Ashes series is better than the one which earned England a series victory last year.

Andrew Flintoff's nomination as England captain has also received praise from Warne who scotched talk that too many players were injured or coming back from injury.

"One thing that leaps out of the squad is the number of players who are not fit at the moment, but I can't see why this is such an issue," Warne said in The Times.

"By my reckoning the first Test is 10 weeks away and with the cricket ahead, the break could be the best thing for the likes of Ashley Giles and Steve Harmison.

"I don't agree that England are weaker than a year ago. In a couple of areas I feel that England are actually stronger. Chris Read is the best wicketkeeper in the country and Monty Panesar is a more dangerous and aggressive spin bowler than Giles."

Warne said Flintoff had been a good appointment as England boss to replace the injured Michael Vaughan ahead of current captain Andrew Strauss.

"Freddy has become a good mate of mine and I know how much he wanted the job," Warne said. "That is always a good start."

"He will lead by example and somebody of that ability is bound to have the respect of the team. The Flintoff/Strauss combination could be pretty effective."

"They remind me a bit of Laurel and Hardy - although I saw Fred at a charity event on Monday and I probably shouldn't say that because he is rapidly fading away into a rake."

"I have some sympathy with Strauss as I know what it is like to be in the running for the job and then not get it."

"Initially I felt very down and wondered if I just wasn't good enough."

The first Ashes Test starts in Brisbane on November 23.

Lindsay prevails in heated battle

AFP, Bali

Defending champion Lindsay Davenport won her opening match while Daniela Hantuchova crashed to a 7-5, 6-2 defeat as the past came back to haunt the Slovak at the Wisnialak International Tuesday.

Davenport had a brief spat with the chair umpire after winning the first set as she protested heavily against unfavourable over-rules of two line calls in the second game of the two sets.

But the American third seed shrugged off disappointment, bearing down to post a decisive 7-5, 6-1 win over Russian Galina Voskoboeva to open her week at the beachside resort.

China next

FROM PAGE 17

part of the Asian game."

Ashrafali Huq said the long-term objective was for China to participate in future cricket World Cups, and if that happened lucrative commercial windfalls would follow.

"Funding is the key to popularity," he said.

"The ACC has set the ball rolling, the government will pick it up if cricket itself expands its competitive boundaries."

"Once cricket is a known concept in China, the marketers and sponsors lining up for access to this new audience will further fund cricket's growth in China. The potential benefits and commercial revenues from its presence in the cricket world are enormous."

"As soon as China breaks through, I foresee the total global revenues for cricket increasing by up to 30 to 40 per cent."

He forecast China would have a team capable of challenging someone like Hong Kong within 10 years and within 20 years, they could be playing in World Cups.

"Already we are impressed by the diligence, energy and strategic thinking of their administrators as well as the raw material which we are hoping to shape into cricketers," he said.

Roma breeze

FROM PAGE 20
chance, but the end product failed to match the build-up and he drilled his shot wide.

The visitors spurned another good opportunity when Brandao drove over the bar from an acute angle, and their wastefulness was punished in the 67th minute.

Tonetto drove forward and crossed from the left, and although Totti failed to get a touch, Taddei was at the back post, taking a touch before smashing a right-footed shot past Dmytro Shukhov.

Totti made it 2-0 in the 76th minute with a curling shot which went in off the underside of the bar, before De Rossi headed home Pizarro's cross to compound Shakhtar's misery.

'Aussies fear Flintoff'

Cricket

AFP, London

Australia "fear" Andrew Flintoff, selection chief David Graveney said Tuesday after unveiling the Lancashire all-rounder as the England captain for the defence of the Ashes.

Flintoff beat off competition from Andrew Strauss to lead England on their tour of Australia, starting in November, even though he has not played international cricket since the end of the home Sri Lanka Test series in June because of a left ankle injury.

Graveney, England's chairman of selectors, said it had been a tough choice but his comments to reporters indicated why Flintoff got the job.

"I think the Australians fear him, as they do quite a lot of our players," said Graveney after announcing the squad at The Oval here, a year to the day since England secured the draw at the south London ground which gave them the Ashes.

"Freddie (Flintoff) gets the best out of his team-mates," Graveney added. "I'm very confident he'll get their fullest support."

Meanwhile a modest Flintoff said of his appointment: "I don't think it has quite sunk in yet, there is a lot of emotion (about) having the chance to lead in England in Australia."

"At this moment in time it is pinch yourself," he also told Sky Sports.

"Last summer was something special and some of the lads who are going want it again, some probably watched it and want to experience that euphoria."

"There will be a lot of excited young lads."

"We're going out there to play

good cricket and compete with Australia who are the best team in the world."

The 28-year-old hard-hitting batsman and pace bowler was the hero of England's 2-1 home Ashes triumph with 402 runs and 24 wickets as his side won a Test series against Australia for the first time in 20 years.

In Flintoff's absence Strauss led England in a 5-0 one-day series defeat by Sri Lanka, a 3-0 Test series win against Pakistan and a drawn 2-2 one-day campaign against Pakistan concluded Sunday.

Flintoff, and Strauss were vying for the captaincy in the absence of last year's Ashes-winning skipper Michael Vaughan, who has been ruled out of the Australia tour with a recurrence of a longstanding knee injury.

"We have had to make a very tough decision in choosing between Andrew Flintoff and Andrew Strauss for the captaincy," said Graveney.

"Ultimately, we took the view that Andrew Flintoff had demonstrated excellent leadership skills during a difficult tour of India earlier this year (where England achieved a creditable 1-1 Test series draw), that he was the man in possession and deserved a further opportunity to continue as captain."

Flintoff will lead an unprecedented large party to Australia. As well as the 16-man squad, a further 14 players will be based in Perth on standby.

The captain is not the only currently unfit player in the squad.

Left-arm spinner Ashley Giles is included despite having been ruled out for the whole of this English season with hip and hernia injuries, although his inclusion is subject to him proving his fitness before the team arrive in Australia in

November.

Lancashire pace bowler James Anderson, out all season with a back injury was also included while Durham quick Liam Plunkett has made it into the main squad despite a side strain in the second half of the season.

Strike fast bowler Stephen Harmison is also included after missing the one-dayers against Pakistan with a lower back injury.

Meanwhile senior opening batsman Marcus Trescothick made the 16-man squad despite the stress-related illness which forced him to miss the Champions Trophy event.

Graveney, explaining the thinking behind basing such a large reserve squad in Australia, said: "Logistically, it makes sense to shift the reserves over there ... if we do have any injury problems it's only a phone call to a player who is there for cover."

But there was no place at all for Glamorgan quick Simon Jones, one of the heroes of last year's Ashes where his reverse-swing bowling troubled Australia.

The Welshman, who underwent surgery in Colorado, has been out all season with a left knee injury and has been advised not to return to first-class cricket until next year.

England's squad contains only four players - Giles, Trescothick, Matthew Hoggard and Harmison - who played in the final Test of the previous Ashes tour at Sydney four years ago.

Despite reports claiming Vaughan would shadow the squad out in Australia and continue his rehabilitation down under, the England and Wales Cricket Board have confirmed he will remain in England and not travel out to Australia until he is ready for cricket-related training.

The first Ashes Test starts at Brisbane on November 23.

FORMULA 1

Alonso blasts 'unsporting' Schumacher

AFP, Madrid

Reigning world champion Fernando Alonso believes that for all his talent, German championship rival Michael Schumacher has been the most unsporting driver in the history of Formula One.

Schumacher announced his end-of-season retirement after his victory in the Monza Grand Prix in Italy on Sunday, but not before reducing his deficit on the Spaniard to just two points with three races remaining.

It means Schumacher is now in contention for an eighth world title - however that has failed to impress Renault driver Alonso.

Schumacher's critics talk of his questionable racing ethics, and purists argue that the German

should not be included in the pantheon of greatest racing drivers alongside Juan Manuel Fangio of Argentina, Scotland's Jim Clark or Englishman Stirling Moss.

And Alonso, who had a disastrous weekend of racing at Monza, was keen to join those who have often questioned the less sporting aspects of the 37-year-old German's statistically impressive career.

"He's been the most penalised and is the most unsporting driver in the history of Formula One," Alonso said in daily sports paper Marca on Tuesday.

Alonso even claimed that French football legend Zinedine Zidane, who capped his retirement from football with an audacious World Cup final head-butt on Italian

rival Marco Materazzi, had gone out with more glory.

"Despite his head-butt, Zidane even left with more glory," added Alonso.

In Saturday's qualifying Alonso was relegated from fifth to tenth on the grid for an infringement which Renault contested vehemently, and he then failed to finish the race on Sunday when his engine blew.

Alonso now only has races in China, Japan and Brazil, the season-ender on October 22, to defend his title against Schumacher.

The Spaniard did give his German rival some credit, however.

"He's been the best driver in the sport, and competing against him has been an honour," said Alonso.

Benitez defends Gerrard omission

Football

INTERNET, undated

Rafael Benitez made it clear after Liverpool's 0-0 draw away to PSV Eindhoven in their opening Champions League Group C match that not even Steven Gerrard can be certain of a place in the side.

The Liverpool boss is imposing a rigid equality over his expensively assembled squad, and what happened to Craig Bellamy at the weekend - left at home watching the Merseyside derby on television - could just as easily happen to Gerrard.

The Anfield skipper was one of six players axed from the side that lost the Mersey derby to Everton on Saturday, and Benitez explained: "Steven was on the bench as were several other senior players, Xabi Alonso, Peter Crouch, Sami Hyypia, but people only mention Gerrard."

"We must accept that nobody can play at 100% for every match, it was a very difficult game against Everton and you can see that the players who were involved for all that game were on the bench."

"If you are not 100% fit and ready then you will be rested like that. It will happen to different players."

Liverpool secured an encour-

aging point at the Philips Stadium to get their campaign off to a good start, but Gerrard could easily have won it for them with a stunning volley against a post after coming on as substitute.

Benitez said: "He came on at the right time, we had needed to cover and work to stop their penetrating passes and that is why Momo Sissoko started. He has fantastic stamina, better than Alonso or Gerrard can reach."

"Now we have more options and we can use players in this way. We were intent on a clean sheet after that happened on Saturday, and we defended well and created enough chances to have won the match."



Atiqur Rahman Rubel (R) receives the bumper prize of the Partex-In Greek-Paan Supari-Shaptahik 2000 World Cup SMS quiz competition from acting editor of Shaptahik 2000 Golam Mortuza (L), Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik and In Greek representative Shafiq Shahin at the Bishwa Sahitya Kendra auditorium yesterday.

Punter shocked

FROM PAGE 17

way. The board is giving out the message that he is responsible for what happened at the Oval Test. This is not the way to treat a great.

"If the PCB feels the Oval incident should not have occurred, then the board officials that were there at the time are equally responsible and should have resigned."

A source close to Tuesday's ad-hoc meeting who wished to remain anonymous told Reuters that the PCB had given all more authority to control the players.

Miandad, who played 124 Tests and coached the national side three times, said the board needed to give former greats more respect.

"It is time the government took a look at how the board is run," he added.

"It is strange that the poor performance of the team is being defended now after a disappointing tour."

"Why the board has chosen to ignore the performance of coach Bob Woolmer is also surprising."

Miandad slams

FROM PAGE 17

he's showed he's an awesome batsman as well," he said.

"Any team that has an Andrew Flintoff in it is a much stronger team. But I'm not sure he's feared. He is respected."

Flintoff has not played international cricket since the end of their home Sri Lanka Test series in June because of a left ankle injury.

England's other injury concerns include left-arm spinner Giles who has been ruled out for the whole English season with hip and hernia injuries, and pace bowler Anderson, out all season with a back injury.

Durham quick Liam Plunkett also made it into the squad despite a side strain in the second half of the season, while strike fast bowler Stephen Harmison was included after missing the one-dayers against Pakistan with a side injury.

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CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh Osman Morad (C) with the winners of the Standard Chartered World Cup Fever 2006 competition yesterday.