

Pakistan influenced

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choice because they had beaten the Indians. So they had Sri Lanka in the final of their own choice. That's not good for cricket and obviously for the spectators, for the viewers, everyone. So, I think they have to go for some changes in the points system. Plus, whenever there is an Asian Championship, the league match between India and Pakistan should be played last, so that nobody can influence the result.

DS: Don't you think the points system should be applied in both the innings?

SB: If somebody wins a match, there is no need for (bonus) points in the second innings. But you must have some incentives in the second innings so that the teams go for a result -- at least go for those points. This system in First Class cricket in Pakistan always has a problem. Whenever a team gets a chance to force a certain team out of the tournament, they play a fixed kind of a match. It's not the money which is involved, it's the strategy. They play in such a way that a good team can stay away from the final or the semifinals. So, it will always happen and it will always be like this. You have to change that and there are some people who are working on it. I am sure in the future we are going to see some good points system.

DS: Do you have any suggestions?

SB: They should have bonus points for the (first) 100 overs in the second innings also so that the teams can go and fight for the points in the second innings too. In that case the second innings will not be that dull; like somebody took a lead, got good points and played for a draw in the second innings. But if you have points, they might go for that and there might be more excitement.

DS: One-day cricket is ruining Test cricket. Do you agree with this statement?

SB: Yes, one-day cricket is affecting Test cricket. First of all, you are getting results in the one-dayers. That's the best part of it because the players will get more aggressive. But the class of batting is missing. We don't see players like Sunil Gavaskar, Geoffrey Boycott and Ian Chappell any more. Most of the batsmen who are playing are aggressive. They like to play in the air. Even five years ago, players were not used to playing in the air. They played rolling shots. That's the big difference and I think we are missing classic batting.

On the other hand, one-day matches have influenced Test matches in terms of getting results. People love to go and see result-oriented matches rather than sitting there and waiting for a draw.

DS: People are not very happy with the way Pakistan cricket is going. Even some have doubts whether Pakistan can do well in the forthcoming World Cup. Can you comment on that?

SB: Yes, of course, there was a problem as long as Wasim Akram was not captain. But now they have done a good thing -- very wisely they have appointed Wasim Akram as the captain of the side. And obviously he is the man who is leading from the front. And, whenever he is the captain, he bowls well and he is the main strike bowler for Pakistan. You have already seen that in the last three Test matches. Pakistan team is combining now and they are playing well. I'm sure they are going to surprise everyone in the World Cup.

DS: How do you see the exclusion of Salim Malik and Aamir Sohail from the World Cup probables?

SB: Salim Malik was not scoring runs and, secondly, age is not on his side. That's why he has been dropped from the side. As far as I'm concerned, his days are over. And Aamir Sohail was not attending the camp. He has been giving statements against Pakistani cricketers, which is not good. If you bring him in the side, there will be a rift in the team which is not healthy for the team. That's why the selectors kept him away from the squad.

-- to keep the team united without any problems and in-fighting. I also praise the Pakistan board for bringing in a lot of youngsters who are performing well and will gradually occupy the places of those seniors.

DS: Do you think Aamir Sohail's complaints are true?

SB: I don't know because ever since I know him, he has been making complaints and statements, which is his nature. Usually I don't pay notice to his complaints.

DS: What is the future of the Quayum Commission, which is investigating Pakistan cricket's bribery scandal?

SB: I don't know much about it. I'm not involved in it. I'm also not a part of the investigations. As I haven't seen anything, I don't believe this. I haven't seen anyone taking bribes or being involved in that. I don't think there is any truth in it. As far as the commission is concerned, it knows better than me.

Kim to accept IOC decision

SEOUL: Mar 13: The highest-ranking official implicated in the Olympic scandal said Saturday he would not contest a serious warning about his conduct recommended by IOC investigators, reports AP.

Kim Un-yong, a powerful IOC executive board member from South Korea, barely escaped expulsion when IOC investigators said Friday that they recommended severe censure against him.

"There is no regulation about 'severe censure' in the IOC charter. I understand I will get a very serious warning," Kim told The Associated Press before leaving for a special IOC general assembly in Lausanne, Switzerland.



BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury formally announcing the name of the title sponsor for the forthcoming three-nation limited-overs tournament at a press conference yesterday.

—Star photo

Rain blocks SA progress



CHRISTCHURCH, Mar 13 (Reuters/AP): Herschelle Gibbs and Jacques Kallis, unbeaten by New Zealand's bowlers, were defeated by the country's weather when just 40 balls were possible on the third day of the second Test at Lancaster Park today.

South Africa's young batting stars advanced, their second wicket partnership from their overnight 102 to 120 before the grey, clinging drizzle that prevented play from starting until 3.15 pm (0215 GMT) returned and drove the players from the field after just 29 minutes.

Gibbs, who resumed on 101 not out from 286 balls in six hours and 52 minutes, immediately tried to raise the tempo in the Test, coach Bob Woolmer said his fast bowler might produce a wicket-taking spell before packing up.

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We hope Allan will be ready for the rest of the one-day series," Woolmer said. "It will take him two weeks to be 100 per cent right. He is going nowhere and will be treated on the tour.

"It is more a fatigue-related injury," Woolmer said.

Donald, South Africa's leading wicket-taker, has struggled to finish his last three Tests after breaking down.

"It has been a concern for us and the decision taken is mainly keeping the World Cup in mind and also his future. Allan wants to take 300 wickets before he finishes," Woolmer said.

There are still around 210 overs left in the match and, although it's been badly frustrating, we believe there's still

enough time left in the match to produce a result," Hansie Cronje said when play was finally abandoned at 4.55 pm.

The tourists' hopes of winning the rain-plagued Test suffered a major blow when strike bowler Allan Donald was ruled out for two weeks with a muscle tear.

Donald, who strained his stomach muscles during the drawn first Test in Auckland, was forced to leave the field during the New Zealand first innings due to a recurrence of the injury. He picked up three wickets.

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