

SL's tour tie drawn

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Feb 23: Veteran batsmen Arjuna Ranatunga and Aravinda de Silva hit form with sparkling half centuries as Sri Lanka's three-day tour game against a Pakistan XI ended in a draw here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Former skipper Ranatunga hit a punishing 86 not out while De Silva finished with an unbeaten 74.

Sri Lanka were 253-4 when the match was finished half an hour early.

The Board XI were dismissed for 290 in their first innings, taking a slender lead of 12 runs.

Sri Lanka had made 278 in their first innings.

Sri Lanka face Pakistan in the first of three Tests in Rawalpindi starting from Saturday.

Vying for a berth in the Test eleven, Ranatunga hit 15 fours and a six off 114 balls to add to his 47 in the first outing.

De Silva's innings was studied with 13 boundaries.

Both missed Sri Lanka's tour to Zimbabwe last year and were not selected for the one-day series against Pakistan.

Pakistan Test prospects Younis Khan and Faisal Iqbal failed in the morning session Wednesday. Younis, who impressed with his technique in the one-day series, was bowled by Ravinda Pushpakumara for 12.

Iqbal was caught by Arnold off left arm spinner Rangana Herath for 9.

Test discard Rashid Latif played a fiery innings of 56 off 47 balls laced with eight boundaries.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of a three-day match between a Pakistan Cricket Board XI and Sri Lanka on Wednesday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 278
PCB XI: First innings (overnight 191-3)
 Naveed Ibw Zoysa 62
 Wasti c Kaluwitharana b Herath 85
 Bazid Khan c Kaluwitharana 17
 Chandana 4
 Younis Khan b Pushpakumara 12
 Faisal Iqbal c Arnold b Herath 9
 Taufeeq Umar lb Pushpakumara 1
 Tamur Khan c Kaluwitharana b Zoysa 13
 Rashid Latif c Jayasuriya b Pushpakumara 56
 Shaifque Ahmad b Pushpakumara 10
 M Akram b Zoysa 0
 Irfan Fazil not out 4
 Extras: (lb-8, lb-3, w-1, nb-9) 21
 Total: (All out in 85.1 overs) 290
 Fall of wickets: 1-122; 2-160; 3-191; 4-193; 5-201; 6-207; 7-275; 8-286; 9-286

Bowler: O M R W
 Zoysa 14 2 53 3
 Pushpakumara 19 1 3 83 4
 De Silva 12 0 39 0
 Herath 26 7 70 2
 Chandana 10 3 18 1
 Arnold 4 0 16 0

SRI LANKA: Second innings
 R Arnold b Shaifque 39
 S Jayasuriya c Wasti b Taufeeq 25
 T Dilshan c Shaifque b Taufeeq 0
 A de Silva not out 74
 M Jayawardena c sub b Shaifque 16
 A Ranatunga not out 86
 Extras: (lb-5, lb-4, nb-3) 12
 Total (For four wickets in 71 overs) 253
 Fall of wkts: 1-50; 2-50; 3-84; 4-116.

Bowler: O M R W
 Akram 2 0 15 0
 Fazil 6 0 26 0
 Umar 8 4 13 2
 Shaifque 24 3 87 2
 Naveed 9 1 45 0
 Younis 6 1 19 0
 Bazid 8 5 9 0
 Faisal 8 1 30 0

Result: Match drawn

Harper to coach Windies



BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Feb 23 (Reuters/AP): Guyanese Roger Harper has been handed the daunting job of leading West Indies out of the cricket doldrums.

The 36-year-old former West Indies and Northamptonshire all-rounder was named on Tuesday as coach of the national side. His assistant will be Jeff Dujon, another former West Indies Test player.

Richard Skerritt, former manager of the West Indies youth team, will manage the side.

The three have three-year contracts beginning from March 1.

Harper, who played 25 Tests and 105 one-day internationals between 1983 and 1995, will take the helm with the national game at an all-time low.

West Indies lost both Tests and all five one-day matches on their recent New Zealand tour.

The side was coached on a caretaker basis by former West Indies captain Viv Richards, one of the applicants interviewed by the West Indies Cricket Board for the full-time coaching job.

Richards, who led his country in 50 Tests, took over as coach during the World Cup in June when Malcolm Marshall was taken ill. Marshall died of colon cancer in November.

West Indies captain Brian Lara had backed Richards for the coaching job, saying he would "do a tremendous job if given the time."

Skerritt said he aimed to "help maximise the potential of a team which had lost its label as the world's best."

"We have to pull a team together, we have to bring all the key ingredients required for success together. We will have to take it one step at a time and try to bring the best out of everybody, aim for success and then sustain it."

Sports psychologist Rudi



ROGER HARPER

Webster was reinstated as performance consultant and Ronald Rogers made new physiotherapist-trainer.

The West Indies will play back-to-back series of Tests and one-day internationals against Zimbabwe and Pakistan in the Caribbean starting March 16. They will join a squad of 20 at a preparation camp in St. Vincent next week.

The West Indies went unbeaten in any Test series between 1980 and 1995, but have undergone a dramatic decline in fortunes over the last five years. They have lost their last 10 Tests overseas — three in Pakistan in 1997, five in South Africa in 1998-99 and both in New Zealand last December.

FACTFILE

Roger Andrew Harper
 Born: 17 March 1963, Georgetown, British Guiana.
 Major Teams: West Indies, Northamptonshire, Guyana.
 Known As: Roger Harper.
 Pronounced: Roger Harper.
 Batting Style: Right-Hand Bat.
 Bowling Style: Right-Arm Off-Break.
 Test Debut: West Indies v India at Calcutta, 5th Test, 1983/84.
 Latest Test: West Indies v Sri Lanka at Moratuwa, Only Test, 1993/94.
 ODI Debut: West Indies v India at Srinagar, 1st ODI, 1983/84.
 Latest ODI: West Indies v Sri Lanka at Port-of-Spain, One-off ODI, 1995/96.

STATISTICAL RECORD

(Including 08/12/1993)

Batting	M	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	CI	SI
	2	32	3	536	74	18.44		3	36
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	5w	SR	Econ
	6023	183	1291	46	28.06	6/57	1	75.52	14

ONE-DAY INTERNATIONALS
 (Including 13/04/1996)

Batting	M	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50	CI	SI
	105	73	2	85	45	16.13				5
Bowling	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w	SR	Econ
	8623	47	3431	100	34.31	4/40	3		517	3.97

Profile

An experienced, level-headed campaigner for the West Indies, Harper has recently been recalled into the side for the tours of Sharjah and Australia of late 1995. Since then, he has solidified a place in the touring party with controlled, economical bowling and useful lower-order runs. Harper's experience will be invaluable during the World Cup, and with his assured fielding, he is likely to play an important role in the West Indies' chances. — Source: Internet

PCB brings in five rookies



KARACHI, Feb 23 (Reuters/AP): Pakistan named five uncapped players on Wednesday in their squad for the three-Test series against Sri Lanka starting in Rawalpindi on Saturday.

Younis Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Bazid Khan, Irfan Fazil and Imran Abbas were among the party of 18, continuing Pakistan's policy of drafting in newcomers which they opted for with their recent one-day squad.

Inzamamul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Mohammad Akram, Waqar Younis and Wajahatullah Wasti have been recalled for the Tests after being dropped for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka, who won 3-0.

Former captain Amir Sohai was also retained for the Tests despite a below-par performance in the one-dayers against Sri Lanka.

Waqar Younis, with 279 wickets in 58 Tests, joined the camp last week after getting married.

Fast bowler Shoab Akhtar

and all-rounder Azhar Mahmood were not considered because of injury, and there was no place for middle-order batsman Ijaz Ahmed, who stroked a century in Pakistan's last Test, against Australia at Perth.

The 18-member squad is for all the three Tests but there can be alterations when Shoab Akhtar and Azhar Mahmood regain fitness," Yawar Saad, Pakistan Cricket Board manager of operations told reporters.

Akhtar is nursing a groin injury. Mahmood suffered back trouble in the final one-day game in Lahore and is feared to miss the whole series.

The team management has been provided with a pool of 18 players from which they will be entitled to pick players for the Tests over the next three weeks," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) cricket operations manager Rameez Raja said from Lahore.

The second Test starts on March 5 in Peshawar and the third on March 12 in Karachi.

Younis Khan is set to make his Test debut at Rawalpindi after scoring 1,100 runs in the first-class season.

Faisal Iqbal is the nephew of Pakistan's former captain Javed Miandad and Bazid Khan is the son of another Pakistan former captain, Majid Khan.

Younis Khan, Iqbal and Imran Abbas played in the one-day series.

Inzamam, who faced a barrage of criticism for his poor performance in the triangular one-day series in Australia last month, comes back after finishing as his country's second leading scorer in Tests behind Saeed Anwar (673) in the 1999 calendar year. He scored 557 at 46.51.

SQUAD

Saeed Anwar (captain), Wajahatullah Wasti, Naveed Qureshi, Shahid Afridi, Amir Sohai, Inzamamul Haq, Younis Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Bazid Khan, Imran Abbas, Moin Khan, Abdur Razaq, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Mohammad Akram, Irfan Fazil, Saqlain Mushtaq.

Office League hockey

Blue Berry beat Bangladesh Navy

Blue Berry Travels and Tours beat Bangladesh Navy 3-1 in the lone match of the Shah Sports Metropolitan Office League at the Moulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

The winners led the first half by a solitary goal. Raju put the Blue Berry ahead in the 22nd minute by a field goal while Shamsuzzaman Khokon of Navy restored the parity in the 39th minute, also by a field goal.

Rubel confirmed the winners' victory by scoring two more field goals in the 40th and 62nd minute respectively.

Defending champions Sonali Bank Club will take on Bangladesh Air Force today.

Meanwhile, the Blue Berry declared winners against Sonali Bank Club in an ill-fated match, which was abandoned in the 39th minute on Sunday. The bankers refused to play demanding cancellation of a goal scored against them.

M'sing cricket

MYMENSINGH, Feb 23: Shapla KC defeated Ratan Sangsad by three wickets in the Begim Rimi Premier Division Cricket League here today (Wednesday), reports UNB.

Batting first, Ratan Sangsad were all out for 130 in 43.5 overs with Bishwa making highest 29 runs.

Sohel, Sunny and Mintu took two wickets each.

In reply, Shapla reached the winning target of 131 runs for seven wickets in 34.2 overs with Wakil scoring 26 runs.

4th one-dayer called off

HARARE, Zimbabwe, Feb 23: The last of four one-day international cricket matches between Zimbabwe and England was called off Wednesday after overnight rain, reports AP.

The umpires decided that with rain forecast for the entire day and a soaked outfield, no play could be expected.

England won the first three matches at the end of their four-month southern Africa tour and captain Nasser Hussain was satisfied with the 3-0 series win.

"I wanted to go home on a high note," he said.

Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower was not so content. He was keen on a final victory over England ahead of a long tour of the West Indies, beginning on March 4, which includes two Tests and a triangular series involving Pakistan.

He said he would have liked the psychological boost of a win over England.

The cancellation of the final scheduled match left the two countries all square at 6-6 in all one-day matches played between them.

England's successes on the Zimbabwe tour have been Graeme Hick, who scored 87 not out and 80. He also produced a career best 5-33 with his off-spin bowling.

Craig White played a strong secondary role. He also took five wickets, for 21 runs, a career best in one-day cricket.

Zimbabwe were much the weaker side in all departments and were prone to batting collapses. While their fielding standards remained high, their bowlers tended to give away too many extras with wides, a tendency they will have to address.

Botham pulls for Warne

MELBOURNE, Feb 23: Shane Warne's special talent would be lost to cricket if persecution of the Australian leg-spinner continued, former England captain Ian Botham said here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Botham said the Australian vice-captain's ability should be cherished, not tarnished by controversies that appear as much a part of Warne as his beautiful wristspin.

Botham, whose stellar career for England was similarly marred by frequent headline-grabbing sagas, said Warne had fallen victim to the tall poppy syndrome.

"I really don't know why. I thought it was associated with England where you have the tall poppy syndrome," said Botham, here for a series of speaking engagements.

"Someone like Shane Warne comes along once every... well, how long has cricket been going and there hasn't been another Shane Warne."

"If he stays fit, he'll be the first guy to get 500 Test wickets he's that good, so you should really look after him."

Botham related to the pressures on Warne, who last week became embroiled in another furore when a teenager photographed him smoking while touring New Zealand with the Australian side.

The smoking ruckus followed Warne being wrongly accused of sledging Test teammate Scott Muller last December, an incident which capped another year in the spotlight for the spin wizard.

Other sagas included Warne speculating about retirement last August, his feud with former Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga spilling into public before the World Cup and being dumped from the Australian Test side in the West Indies last April.

Those wrangles followed Warne's Test comeback from shoulder surgery in January last year — just weeks after he and Mark Waugh admitted taking money from a subcontinent bookmaker in return for information.

Botham said the attention thrust on Warne was part and parcel of being among the world's best cricketers.

"That comes with the territory and I'm sure Warne will handle it," Botham said.



A Blue Berry attack in front of the Bangladesh Navy goal during their Shah Sports Office Hockey League at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Confusion over quitting

From Pallab Bhattacharya



NEW DELHI, Feb 23: Master batsman Sachin Tendulkar's decision to relinquish captaincy after the two-Test series against visiting South Africa has once again underlined that he is not well with the Indian cricket team at present.

The two most disquieting features of the stunning announcement made by Tendulkar on February 19 are: 1) its timing coinciding with the recall of former skipper Mohammad Azharuddin and wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia about whose inclusion Tendulkar and coach Kapil Dev have reservations and 2) absence of Kapil Dev in the Board meeting that chose the Indian squad for the first Test against South Africa.

The two most key changes that took place in the Indian team since the 1999 World Cup in England are the appointment of Tendulkar as captain in place of Azharuddin and Kapil Dev as coach succeeding former Test opener Anshuman Gaekwad.

Azharuddin did not find a place in the team in the home series against New Zealand last year and in the tour of Australia recently.

Mongia too was kept out of the Australian tour. Although he was flown down under by the Indian cricket board as a stand-in for injured MSK Prasad, Mongia was sent back by the Indian tour management com-

mittee (that also included Tendulkar and Kapil Dev). That incident kicked up a huge uproar back home.

Tendulkar said he was stepping down as captain taking moral responsibility for India's 3-0 whitewash in Tests against Aussies and almost similar thrashing in the one-day tri-series, also involving Pakistan.

What has further triggered speculations is that the same statement in which Tendulkar announced his decision to give up captaincy also spoke of his readiness to play with any player and under anybody's captaincy. The question here again is: what was the need for expressing this "readiness"?

Kapil Dev justified his absence from the selection committee meeting in Bombay on Feb 19 saying he had "felt humiliated" by the treatment given to him by the cricket board.

He said the board had asked him at first to only brief the selectors before the meeting and then sent him a letter inviting him to attend the selection committee meeting.

"I did not go because I felt humiliated. It was too bad. Is this the way they treat cricketers?" the great all-rounder said.

Azharuddin, at the age of 37, may have a few more years of cricket left in him, while the need for younger talents is also equally important. The two are not necessarily conflicting demands and a balance can be struck.

True, the captain and the coach should have a say in team selection. But can their views override those of the selectors? Should the selection committee not have the last word on team composition?

The question being asked widely in cricket circle is what

SACHIN TENDULKAR



REMEMBERING LAMBA: A minute's silence to mark the second death anniversary of the former Indian Test player was observed before the start of the Premier Division Cricket League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

BCCSL chief changes his mind

COLOMBO, Feb 23: The head of Sri Lanka's crisis-ridden cricket control board agreed to take his job back Wednesday, a day after resigning over bitter differences with sports minister S. B. Dissanayake, reports AFP.

State radio said Chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL), Rienzie Wijetilleke, retracted his resignation and agreed to stay in the post until an audit of the board was completed.

The sudden change of heart came after the state media reported that the minister was to appoint his secretary, R. M. K. Ratnayake, as head of a new panel to run Sri Lanka's cricket administration.

The administration of the sport was plunged into turmoil Tuesday when the board, only appointed by Dissanayake last June, quit following sharp differences with the minister.

The state-run Daily News said Wednesday that Dissanayake would name Sports Ministry secretary Ratnayake as head of a new interim panel to manage the controversial board.

The Sri Lankan cricket administration has been in crisis since elections in March last year. Following allegations of vote rigging, the minister appointed an interim board in June, headed by Wijetilleke.

Officials said Wijetilleke tendered his resignation first and was followed by the other members of the ad hoc panel, but the status quo had been restored by Wednesday afternoon.

A scheduled press conference by the board's chief executive officer Dhammika Ranatunga was called off without reason.

The latest crisis comes after Dissanayake announced he was appointing a three-member panel to investigate allegations of financial mismanagement under a previous board.

The sports ministry had called for fresh elections to the board next month but suddenly put off the elections indefinitely.

Early exit for Kiefer



LONDON, Feb 23: Second seed Nicolas Pietrangeli thrashed 6-2, 6-3 by Swiss youngster Roger Federer in the first round of the \$800,000 London Indoor Championships on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The German world number four failed to keep up with the

18-year-old former world junior champion on the fast, indoor surface.

"That was definitely one of the best matches I have played," Federer said. "I felt really good out there and was hitting the ball really well."

A double break in the opening set saw Federer run away with it on the London Arena

centre court as Kiefer sprayed a series of groundstroke errors beyond the baseline and into the net.

The German rallied early in the second set as he began to move around the court better and Federer was forced to save three break points in the fourth game.

Federer immediately broke the German's service as errors again riddled Kiefer's play.

A series of huge winners from the back of the court put paid to Kiefer's challenge as Federer closed out the victory.

The former Wimbledon junior champion then switched his focus to football and said he would be going to Wembley to watch England host Argentina in a friendly. "I am really looking forward to it," he smiled.

Earlier, Swedish fourth seed Thomas Enqvist whipped Adrian Panatta 6-1, 6-4 to reach the second round.

The world number 12 wasted little time on centre court, overpowering his Romanian opponent with thunderous groundstrokes and accurate serving.

Voinea never got into his stride in the opening set as Enqvist moved him around the court before applying the killer blow.

The Romanian held his own a little better in the second set but could not stay with the Swede who plays Karol Kucera in the second round.

"I think I played pretty good," he said. "This court is a pretty fair surface, you can play most styles on it and it certainly suits my game."

"This is a very tough field here and I am looking forward to playing Kucera."

Kucera reached the second round by easing past Jiri Novak in straight sets. The Slovak needed two breaks of serve in the opening set before winning it 7-5. A single break in the second set was enough to clinch it 6-3.

France's Jerome Golmard beat Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain 6-2, 6-2 to set up a clash with British fifth seed Greg Rusedski today.

Top-seeded Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov faces Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev also today while Tim Henman, seeded third, takes on Argentine Mariano Zabaleta for a place in the second round.



State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader (in suit) declares the Premier Division Cricket League open at a ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday morning. — Star photo

Tragic

DUBAI, Feb 23: A 17-year-old Nigerian footballer on trial, John Ekorma, died of a heart attack during a friendly match in the United Arab Emirates, newspapers said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Ekorma, who was on trial for Al-Wahda, was playing against Kazakh club Astana on Monday when he collapsed 20 minutes before the final whistle. He died in hospital.

NOTICE

Due to space constraint Crossword could not be accommodated today. Any inconvenience is regretted. — Sports Editor