

Quality, not pace on Shoib's mind

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan fast bowler Shoib Akhtar is hoping to establish himself as a bowler of genuine quality, rather than one of simply raw pace.

"I am no longer just concentrating on speed. I am also thinking about line and length and sticking to a more consistent line. You can't be a quality bowler without that," he said after taking six wickets in Pakistan's crushing 153-run win over New Zealand in the first one-day international.

"I am really enjoying my cricket now. There is no pressure on me about my bowling action being suspect any longer. I have got a lot of support from the Pakistan board and my teammates and that is enough for me," he added on Sunday.

"When you enjoy your cricket then you tend to bowl well and in rhythm."

Shoib completed figures of six for 16 to reach 100 wickets in one-day internationals quicker than any player in history except his captain Waqar Younis."

Waqar believes Shoib is now a more mature bowler.

"He is not only fast, he is also bowling a consistent good line and length and trying to out-think the batsmen, which is a good sign," Waqar said.

Stand-in New Zealand captain Craig McMillan was disappointed with his team's display in the first of three matches in the series.

"We never really recovered from the loss of those three quick wickets after a good opening stand. We were always under pressure after that," he said. "I would describe this as a below-par performance."

"But I would not say that Shoib Akhtar has any psychological hold over us now. These things happen. He bowled well."

Bagan bags

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already confirmed their places in the Super Six.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League match between Kalabagan Krira Chakra and Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

KALABAGAN KC
Rafiqul b Shamsul 9
Rajin b Athar 37
Anisur b Imran 87
Ziaur not out 104
Nasir b Towhid b Mustadir 3
Mushfiq run out 6
Manzurul not out 32
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-2, w-12) 18
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs) 296
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-86, 3-189, 4-201, 5-206.

Bowler O M R W
Morshed 10 0 66 0
Shamsul 8 0 53 1
Athar 10 1 28 1
Mustadir 10 0 65 1
Imran 10 0 60 1
Aslam 2 0 20 0

BROTHERS UNION

Harun c Anisur b Talha 9
Sajjadul bwb b Musfiq 18
Athar c Ziaur b Talha 26
Mahbub c Musfiq b Talha 15
Mustadir c Luvlu b Manzurul 33
Moin c Luvlu b Mosaddek 31
Towhid run out 13
Aslam c Anisur b Manzurul 10
Shamsul bwb b Imran 0
Morshed not out 4
Imran run out 2
Extras(lb-2, w-8) 10
Total: (All out in 42.5 overs) 171
Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-31, 3-67, 4-72, 5-129, 6-144, 7-158, 8-162, 9-165.

Bowler O M R W
Musfiq 8 0 40 1
Talha 10 2 40 3
Imran 6 1 22 1
Mosaddek 10 0 39 1
Manzurul 8.5 0 28 2

Result: Kalabagan KC won by 125 runs.



IT'S ANOTHER ONE: New Zealand's Andre Adams' stumps are sent in disarray by Shoib Akhtar during the first one-day international against Pakistan in Karachi on Sunday.

It's Akhtar after Youhana

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Express paceman Shoib Akhtar and batsman Younis Youhana combined to help Pakistan record a 153-run win over New Zealand in a stormy limited-overs international here Sunday.

Akhtar, known as the Rawalpindi Express, recorded career best figures of 6-16 as New Zealand were bowled out for 122 in 30 overs at the National Stadium.

The home victory was marred by crowd trouble during the Pakistan innings however, when New Zealand's players walked off the pitch after two of their fielders were hit by objects thrown from the pavilion.

Youhana followed up his 129 against Sri Lanka in the final of the Sharjah Cup on Wednesday with 125 to provide the backbone of Pakistan's 275-6 from 50 overs.

Man-of-the-match Akhtar ripped through the New Zealand batting line-up never allowing them to settle in. Only four batsmen -- Matthew Horne, Nathan Astle, Chris Harris and Daryl Tuffey -- made double figures.

Akhtar's previous best figures were 5-19 against the Black Caps in Auckland last year.

"I am delighted with my form and I am gearing up for more wickets in the next matches," Akhtar said afterwards.

New Zealand made it to 53 without loss by the tenth over but Pakistan captain Waqar Younis

forced open the floodgates when he removed Nathan Astle for 25.

Wasim Akram then trapped Lou Vincent for five and Horne was run out for 22, leaving New Zealand at 60-3. However Akhtar dealt the knockout punch with three quick wickets to leave the tourists floundering on the ropes at 77-6.

He dismissed Craig McMillan for eight -- caught by Saqlain Mushtaq -- for his 100th one-day wicket from 60 matches, and then clean bowled Jacob Oram for a duck. Debutant Robbie Hart was next to return to the pavilion without scoring, caught behind by Rashid Latif.

The paceman then picked up three more tail end wickets to seal New Zealand's fate.

The tourists weren't helped by losing their captain Stephen Fleming and all-rounder Scott Styris to a stomach upset before the game, while wicketkeeper batsman Chris Nevin, battling a hamstring injury, also had to watch from the pavilion.

Earlier the 27-year-old Youhana, regarded as Pakistan's most elegant batsman, hit 14 boundaries and a six off 155 balls to set the ball rolling for the home team.

Daryl Tuffey struck two early blows as early as in the third over when he removed belligerent opener Shahid Afridi for one and Imran Nazir for seven to leave Pakistan at 15-2.

Inzamamul Haq and Youhana took the score to 49 before Haq holed out at deep square leg off Ian Butler for 18, maintaining his run of poor scores.

Cheered by a packed house of 34,000, Youhana and Younis Khan

did the repair work and took Pakistan past 100 in the 25th over.

The 20-minute break in play because of crowd trouble came with Pakistan sitting comfortably at 178-4.

The second day-night match will be played at Rawalpindi on April 24 and the third in Lahore on April 27.

SCORECARD

Scorecard of the first day-night limited overs international between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Karachi National stadium on Sunday:

PAKISTAN: 275 for six in 50 overs (Y Youhana 125, Y Khan 69, A Razzaq 30; D Tuffey 2-24, I Butler 2-49, J Oram 2-51)

NEW ZEALAND
Home run out 22
Astle b Waqar 25
Vincent lbw b Akram 5
McMillan c Saqlain b Akhtar 8
Harris c Younis b Saqlain 17
Oram b Akhtar 0
Hart c Latif b Akhtar 0
Adams b Akhtar 2
Walker b Akhtar 8
Tuffey not out 18
Butler b Akhtar 0
Extras: (b-1, lb-8, w-3, nb-5) 17
Total: (All out in 30 overs) 122
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-59, 3-60, 4-72, 5-74, 6-77, 7-92, 8-92, 9-105

Bowler O M R W
Akram 7 2 26 1
Waqar 6 0 32 1
Razzaq 4 1 17 0
Akhtar 9 1 16 6
Saqlain 4 0 22 1

Result: Pakistan won by 153 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Shoib Akhtar.

Majoli shocks Schnyder

Tennis

AFP, Charleston

Coatian Iva Majoli captured the eighth title of her career -- and first since the 1997 French Open -- with a 7-6, 6-4 victory over Swiss standout Patty Schnyder here Sunday.

"I am delighted with my form and I am gearing up for more wickets in the next matches," Akhtar said afterwards.

New Zealand made it to 53 without loss by the tenth over but Pakistan captain Waqar Younis

were not dampened by the loss. "Of course, I'm a little disappointed," said Schnyder, whose ranking should move up to approximately 17 in the world. "I thought I could win the whole thing, but I live so many great moments during the week."

"It has been the best week of my life."

Majoli, whose ranking is projected to move up to around 29th in the world, also had success with seeded opponents during the week, upending 13th-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa in the quarter-finals and seventh-seeded Sandrine Testud of France in the semi-finals.

Taking the one hour, 49 minute match was a major achievement for Majoli, who has struggled to return to the form that once established her at a world ranking of number four.

The Croatian's progress on tour was stalled when shoulder surgery

in 1999 kept her off-court for close to 12 months and her comeback has been anything but easy.

"Of course, it's always worth it, but it's only been the last month or two when I've been able to work hard since my injuries," Majoli said.

Majoli, who is the lowest ranked player to win a WTA Tour Tier I level event, had lost her four prior meetings against Schnyder in straight sets.

Compared to the exciting tennis

from earlier in the week, the final was an anticlimactic affair in which both players failed to perform at the standards they set in previous matches.

Part of that could be attributed to the intense humidity and heat, with an on-court thermomax equals, rather than facing higher ranked players against whom they had nothing to lose.

"I mean, I couldn't expect it from me to play a match like I did a day before or two days ago," Schnyder said. "I just tried to do my best, and I was fighting every point and trying to get some good shots."

"I think she played very smart and she kept fighting."

Eight of the first 11 games in the mostly baseline brawl were decided on service breaks as each player struggled through the error-riddled match trying to find their games.

Majoli, who turned out to be more aggressive, committed 36 unforced errors to 28 for Schnyder.

The first set tiebreaker was an important victory for Majoli, who went ahead 5-1, and kept her composure as Schnyder worked her way back into it before losing her serve on the 12th point by smacking a forehand long.

"If I lost the tiebreaker, I think she would've won the match," Majoli said. "That's how it happens in a match like this where it is so hot."

"In the first set, I was really focused. In the second set, I stayed with her and waited for my chance. I tried to be aggressive as much as I could."

As for Schnyder, she felt a certain let down in her game.

"My energy level was not there, mentally, in the first set and that was the difference. My concentration was so good the other days. I tried to improve things but it didn't work."

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe

give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

CRYPTOQUIP

