

Last Aussie frontier Ponting's men leave for Lanka

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Australia skipper Ricky Ponting said his team was capable of conquering the challenges of playing in the Indian sub-continent as the world champions left for a tour of Sri Lanka.

Ponting said the Australians were coming to terms with the physical and psychological barriers presented by the conditions presented by matches in the region, which has proved an unhappy hunting ground in recent years.

"I think it's a huge challenge for us - anywhere in the sub-continent has always been a huge challenge for Australia," Ponting said before the team's departure for Sri Lanka, where they lost a Test series 1-0 in 1999.

"There are conditions over there that looking back through the records, probably Australian teams haven't performed that well."

"But saying that, a lot of the guys in the side now have played a lot of cricket in those conditions."

Australia have matched India in limited overs cricket for several years, including victories in the 2003 World Cup final and recent tri-series in both countries.

But the big challenge is the three-Test tour of India later this year.

"Looking back to the last Indian tour, we played really well on that tour but didn't win it - but we've got a better understanding of how we can play well in those conditions," said Ponting of the epic 2001 series which Australia lost 2-1.

"One thing I want the team to be able to do is to win away from home."

"What I want us to do is to play the same brand of cricket overseas as we do here in Australia."

"We've got a lot of cricket in the sub-continent coming up over the next six or eight months and the challenge is there for us."

"I know we've got the right personnel and the right approach, it's just a matter of putting that into practice when it matters."

Ponting said the side needed to avoid psyching itself out of a winning frame of mind because of the pitfalls of the sub-continent.

"As long as you've got your own game plan sorted out when you get there the rest of it will look after itself -- you'll actually go out and play well," he said.

"But if you go there expecting slow turning wickets and them to play lots of spinners you actually worry about that too much."

Shane Warne is expected to be named in the Test team next week for the three Tests against Sri

Lanka, but Ponting warned his inclusion was not automatic.

"It's just going to depend on what happens in the coming days, I think," he said.

"He's got a game against Tasmania coming up in the next couple of days."

"It's in Shane's hands now and I'm sure the selectors would be keeping a pretty close eye on him."

"You can't take anything like that for granted and I'm sure Shane won't be doing that."

"He'll be getting himself up for this game and trying to put a good performance on the board."

Ponting said Warne had shown enough in his comeback match for the Victorian Second XI to prove he was in good form after the enforced one-year layoff.

"As far as match practice goes, I know he's probably fitter than he's ever been," he said.

"I know he's been doing quite a bit of bowling as well. Shane has always been a guy who's never had to do too much bowling anyway."

"Even when he was in the team and bowling his absolute best he wouldn't be doing a lot of bowling in training."

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Clijsters back on track

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Top seed Kim Clijsters got back to winning ways after the fourth Grand Slam final loss of her career at the Australian Open by racing into the quarter-finals of the 585,000-dollar Paris Indoor Open Thursday.

The Belgian world number two showed little sign of a left ankle injury that has bothered her so far this season needing just 39 minutes to dispose of 45th-ranked Spaniard Maria Sanchez-Lorenzo 6-0, 6-1 to set up a meeting with Italian seventh seed Silvia Farina Elia for a place in the final four.

"Today I played really well. I was really looking forward to going out there," said the 20-year-old Clijsters,

who returned to Europe last week after three months spent in Australia.

Making her first appearance in the Paris tournament Clijsters is gunning to win the 20th title of her career, in the absence of defending champion Serena Williams and home favourite Amelie Mauresmo through injury.

But the day was not a good one for the seeds as Russian qualifier Dinara Safina came from behind to shock Swiss third seed Patty Schnyder 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, while another Russian Elena Bovina dispatched Serbian fourth seed Jelena Dokic 4-6, 7-6, 6-0 at the Coubertin Stadium.

Bovina next meets 1998 Paris Indoors champion Mary Pierce of France who brushed aside eighth-seeded Spaniard Magui Serna 6-2, 6-4 needful of her fourth match point to seal the tie.

Safina, 17, had been trailing after the first set but won nine games in a

row to take the tie in 1hr 38min against Australian Open semi-finalist Schnyder, the world number 15.

Fawad star

FROM PAGE 13

runs. The southern Africans dismissed the Bogra youngsters for exactly 100 while defending an impressive 237 in 50s.

KHULNAZONE WARM-UPS

Pakistani southpaw Fawad Alam cracked a sparkling 169 against Khulna Division Under-19 as the South Asian powerhouse recorded a crushing 190-run win at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

The left-hander from Sialkot slammed 15 fours and eight mighty sixes off 108 balls as the Pakistani colts amassed 362 for nine in 50 overs.

The total was definitely beyond Khulna Under-19 who managed 172.

At the Jessor District Stadium, Jessor Under-19 caused a minor upset by trouncing Papua New Guinea by nine wickets.

Jessor U-19 reached the required 124 runs in 22 overs after the visitors struggled to make 123 in 39.5 overs.

Away at the Khulna Stadium, Khulna DSA surprised Ireland by six wickets when they scored 145 for four in 22.4 overs in reply to Ireland's 142 in 40.4 overs.

Fehér moved to Portugal in 1998 from Hungary's Gyor Eto to play for FC Porto when he was just 18.

He was signed by Benfica in 2002 after loan spells at Salgueiros and Braga and had scored seven goals for Hungary in 25 international matches.

Fehér's death has raised concerns that first division footballers are being overloaded with multiple competitions.

SHER-E-BANGLA HIGH SCHOOL: 149/10 in 28.5 overs (Anwar 50, Nikhil 20, Mehrab 3-3, Rony 2-30, Turjo 2-23)

WILLS LITTLE FLOWER: 150/3 in 19.4 overs (Monirul 55, Mustafiz 21, Momin 3-52)

Result: Wills Little Flower won by seven wickets.

Big win

FROM PAGE 13

Result: Maple Leaf won by 157 runs.

AK HIGH SCHOOL: 265/5 in 35 overs (Hasan 80, Rony 55, Shaon 39, Jewel 20)

PARADISE INTERNATIONAL: 160/9 in 35 overs (Hasan 24, Salam 14, Mustafa 3-37, Jewel 3-28)

Result: AK High School won by 104 runs.

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SOUTHAFRICA

Smith b Cairns 72
Gibbs McCullum b Vettori 43

Kallis lbw Vettori 26

Dippens not out 44

Rudolph b Styris 24

Boucher b Tuffey 0

Pollock not out 5

Extras: (b-2, lb-4, w-6) 12

Total: (For five wkt in 49.4 overs) 226

Fall of wkt: 1-86, 2-149, 3-149, 4-209, 5-215

Bowler O M R W

Pollock 10 0 33 0

Ntini 10 1 41 2

Nel 10 1 42 2

Klusener 9 0 39 2

Peterson 8 0 42 0

Kallis 3 0 24 0

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Tuffey 8.4 0 34 2

Mills 7 0 42 0

Oram 10 1 44 0

Vettori 10 1 37 2

Styris 10 1 35 1

Cairns 4 0 28 5

Result: South Africa won by five wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Graeme Smith.

Toss: South Africa

Umpires: Steve Davis (AUS), Doug Cowie (NZL)

Match referee: Gundappa Viswanath (IND)

Solution: South Africa won by five wickets.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Tilt entry, often intro 5 "Monty Python" 11 Post-diet

5 Young fellows 9 The portrayer of

whole enchilada 12 Stead 37 Compass

13 Rival of Jimmy and Bjorn 14 Links location 44 Blood

45 Wet terrain 48 Billboards

comment 49 Bell 50 Sport

51 Diamond 52 Teller's

judge 52 Year 53 Met

54 Second story 55 Klusener

56 Scream 57 Piggy, light

58 self-referential 59 Alcohol

60 Soft, wet terrain 61 Shot 62 Miss

63 Billiards 64 Change

65 A Bit (Abbr.) 66 Tend

67 Settling 68 Bit

69 Bit (Abbr.) 70 Second

71 Swelled head 72 Melody

73 Some-thing about

74 Kin 75 Art song

76 Exception to the rule

77 The to the rule

78 Do some-thing

79 GATE 80 KEG

81 TELLER'S 82 GATE

83 STARR 84 EARL

85 LOLA 86 PROPE

87 ERROS 88 COOG

89 DOTE 90 GATE

91 KEG

92 Solution time: 27 mins.

TUT 93 **HOSS** 94 **FIQUL**

ANY 95 **AREA** 96 **ILSIA**</