

# Gibbs on journey of discovery



BBC ONLINE, London

South African opener Herschelle Gibbs says he is working hard at getting back into form for the Champions Trophy.

The opener has had a poor run as South Africa have lost 10 one-day internationals to that point.

"I think I've gone to look for balls to play and maybe my shot selection hasn't been that good," he told this website.

"I've had a good look at myself and analysed the last year's happenings. Maybe I haven't taken enough responsibility for my wicket."

On his day there is no doubt that Gibbs is one of the most dazzling talents in world cricket.

In 154 one-day internationals he has scored 4,815 runs at an average of 33.90, with a strike rate of 81.27.

He also has 12 hundreds but has not reached three figures since his

143 against New Zealand at the World Cup in February 2003.

Since an unbeaten 93 against Zimbabwe in Cardiff in July 2003, Gibbs has passed 50 just once in 22 innings, and his poor form has mirrored an appalling run by South

poor run.

"You've got to look at the core of the team," he said.

"If there is a problem you always look at the experienced players.

"I can only speak for my own performance and I haven't performed very well over the past year or so.

"I've got to get things going up front and set the platform for the innings."

An instinctive player by nature, Gibbs has nevertheless taken time to analyse why he has been failing to score big runs.

"If I think of the hundreds I've scored I've really just gone about the beginning part of my innings with normal cricket," he said.

"I always picked up the momentum later on in the innings."

And despite his poor run Gibbs is adamant it is not because he is not fully committed to the South African cause.

"Playing international cricket is a huge privilege and the hunger has always been there," he said.

"I've maybe just confused myself a little bit, but I think I've sorted out my approach now."

HERSCHELLE GIBBS

Despite having a powerful side on paper they have managed to lose their last 10 matches on the trot.

Gibbs says that he has to take a share of the responsibility for the

# Vaas sets his target

Cricket

CRICINFO, London

Chaminda Vaas is either a man of modest ambitions or, worryingly for Sri Lanka, is contemplating a possible early retirement from the international game.

Just 30-years-old now, Vaas has revealed that he is about 60-odd Test wickets away from hanging up his boots.

"I am looking forward to ending my cricket career with 400 ODI wickets and 325 Test wickets," Vaas, who currently has 312 ODI and 262 Test scalps to his name, told the Daily Mirror.

"If I reach that mark then I will know that the time has come for me to say goodbye to cricket."

Speaking the day after being selected for the World Test XI and World ODI XI at the inaugural ICC awards ceremony in London on Tuesday night, Vaas claimed to be surprised and delighted by the panel's decision.

"I did not expect anything," said Vaas.

"But I knew I was in with a chance

as I have played well in the past two or three years. I am delighted that they have recognised by hard work. My job is to bowl well for the team. I did just that and the rest is the result of the effort I put in."

Vaas also threw his support



CHAMINDA VAAS

behind Marvan Atapattu, revealing that the recent team revival owed much to his leadership qualities, and claiming that Atapattu was already "as good" as Arjuna Ranatunga, Sri Lanka's most effective leader since being awarded

Test status.

"Marvan is a really good captain. I would say he is as good as Arjuna Ranatunga. Marvan has ideal leadership qualities. He educates the players and encourages them. I think we have achieved our recent successes because of this," he said.

Vaas will be leading Sri Lanka's attack during the Champions Trophy and is confident that their winning run can be extended: "We play well as a team -- anyone can see that -- and we have the potential to come out on top. All XI players are contributing, not just one or two, and our cricket has reached a new level."

"Conditions here [in England] might be difficult. But I don't see it as a problem. I see this as an opportunity where we can prove a point. We want to win this tournament and prove to our critics that we can play well anywhere."

"This is an excellent opportunity. We really did well in the Asia Cup and also against the South African back at home. We are playing brilliantly as a team at the moment. There is no better chance for us to grab our chance and prove our capabilities," he added.

**Tikolo feels insulted**

BBC ONLINE, London

Kenya's Steve Tikolo has launched an attack on world cricket's governing body, saying the 2003 World Cup semifinalists have been shown no respect.

"The fifth set became a war of attrition and it was Agassi, playing in his 12th quarterfinal here, who cracked first."

He sent a forehand long in the eighth game to hand Federer a break and the Swiss player served out for the match.

"It was unbelievably windy," Federer said.

"I had one game where I served three or four double faults and completely lost my game."

"In the end it was just a case of waiting for your opponent to make a mistake."

Tikolo, though, vowed to return.

"Contrary to what it seems like you're hearing, I (have) never had an intention not to play," he told reporters.

"My game plan is to play until I can't do it."

"I came here expecting to make somebody play a great match to beat me," added the 1994 and 1999 champion.

"I mean, there's only so much you can do, you just gotta hope it falls your way."

Henman shrugged off an early setback to reach the semifinals for the first time with a 6-1, 7-5, 5-7, 6-2 triumph over Slovak Dominik Hrbaty after their match was also interrupted the previous night.

The Briton was close to victory on Wednesday, cruising two sets up before rain fell.

He held serve at 4-5 in the third when play resumed but two games later a netted approach gave Hrbaty the set and a glimmer of hope.

But Henman, 30, quickly regained control, breaking the Slovakian twice to advance.

"I'm very excited about reaching my first semifinal in New York and playing Federer will be a pretty special match," said Henman, who holds a 6-2 head-to-head lead over the Swiss.

Hewitt maintained his flawless progress through the draw, making only 10 unforced errors against a total of 59.2 metres.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman declared the two-day meet open. Ria Luminturas, an Indonesian IAAF (International Amateur Athletics Federation) official, was present as special guest.

"I could sense that he wasn't enjoying it out there."

A total of 656 athletes including 140 women are expected to compete in the competition.

# No American standing

FROM PAGE 13

"I was supposed to be playing golf with my dad in Scotland this weekend but I'll have to change my plans now."

Roddick said the match hinged on a few points.

"He converted and I didn't, that's pretty much it," said Roddick.

"But you've got to give credit to him, he serves out of a tree."

"I did not expect anything," said Vaas.

"But I knew I was in with a chance

The Swiss, bidding to become the first player since Swede Mats Wilander in 1988 to win three grand slam titles in the same year, held a two-set one lead overnight.

But Agassi, 34, launched a stirring fightback to break Federer's serve in the eighth game of the fourth set and levelled the match.

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