

Older and hungrier

 Cricket

AFP, Faisalabad

At an age when most elite cricketers are past their use-by date, Sri Lankan opener Sanath Jayasuriya blasted a Test century against Pakistan on Friday and declared he was as hungry as ever.

"You are motivated when you play for your country, it's something some other people don't get. Whenever I play for my country it's always unique and I am very proud and I always want to perform," the 35-year-old said after his unbeaten 131.

Jayasuriya's century was his 13th in the long version of the game and brought him to within just 229 runs of overtaking Aravinda de Silva's record as the most prolific scorer for Sri Lanka in Test cricket.

De Silva scored 6,361 runs in 93 Tests, while Jayasuriya has scored 6,133 in the same number of matches.

Jayasuriya's performance on the third day of first Test on Friday helped give Sri Lanka a commanding 264-run lead over Pakistan with seven wickets in hand.

"I think with my hundred, and I think Kumar (Sangakkara) and Mahela (Jayawardene) played good innings, we are on top at the moment," Jayasuriya said.

Jayasuriya teamed with Sangakkara, who scored 59, for a 98-run second-wicket partnership, and with Jayawardene, 57, to put on 118 runs for the third wicket.

Known as the master blaster for his hard hitting, Jayasuriya curbed his instincts after express Pakistan pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar dismissed skipper Marvan Atapattu for

a duck in the first over.

"A 100 is always important in your career and it's an important

innings for me and I am happy the way I got it," he said.

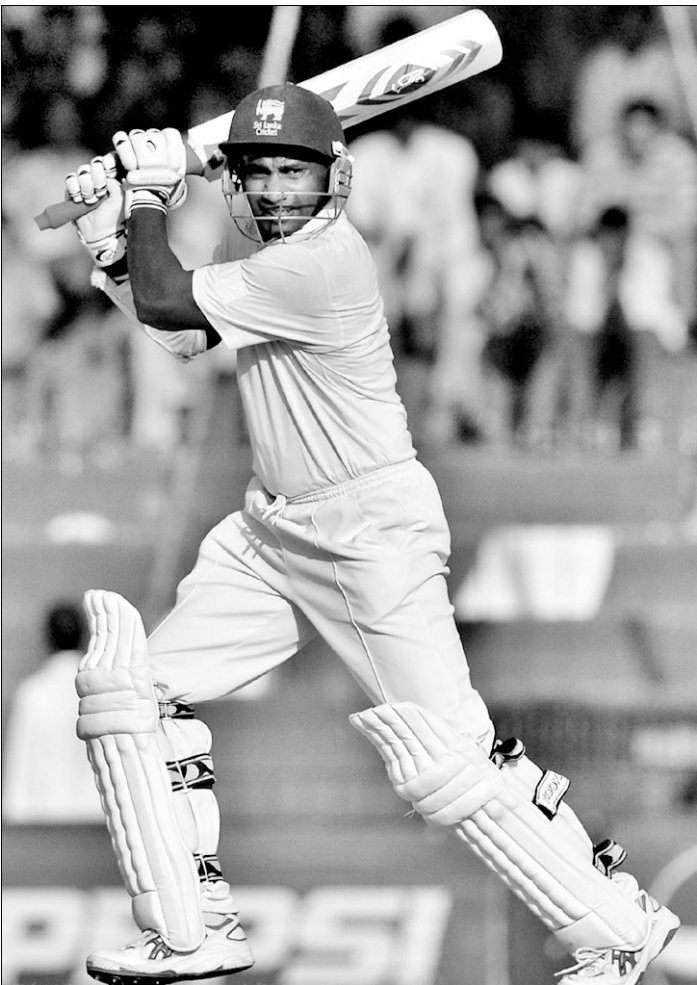


PHOTO: AFP

SUPERB SANATH: Sri Lanka opener Sanath Jayasuriya follows through on a square-drive on way to scoring an unbeaten 131 on the third day of the first Test against Pakistan at Faisalabad yesterday.

Chuckling meet next week

 Cricket

AFP/REUTERS, Faisalabad

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said Friday its "comprehensive review" of illegal bowling would begin next week in Dubai with a high-profile committee meeting involving former players.

The meeting of experts will be held on October 25-26 to review its process of dealing with suspect bowling action reports.

The meeting of experts will be held on October 25-26 to review its process of dealing with suspect bowling action reports. Sri Lanka's Aravinda de Silva, England's Angus Fraser and Tony Lewis, West Indian Michael Holding and Australian Tim May will discuss the issue with ICC general manager David Richardson and a panel of human movement specialists.

The meeting is the first for the committee, which is charged with reviewing the ICC's system for dealing with potentially flawed bowling actions, the ICC said in a statement received here during the first Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"This is the first stage of a comprehensive review of bowling

actions," the statement said.

The Dubai meeting will study a report on bowlers from last month's ICC Champions Trophy tournament as well as the findings of biomedical experts who have investigated previous suspect actions.

The statement said the committee would make recommendations on any required changes, which would be submitted to a November meeting of the full ICC Cricket Committee, of which Fraser, De Silva and May are also members.

The Cricket Committee, which is chaired by former Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar, will make the final recommendations on any changes to the ICC chief executives committee.

Throwing or 'chucking', which is illegal in bowling, has been a persistent problem for the ICC, with the ruling body's handling of the issue often a cause of controversy.

The current review is part of its determination to define a strict set of rules on the issue.

Sri Lanka's magical off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan's action has come under the closest scrutiny in recent years.

He was no-balled for throwing during games in Australia, but was finally cleared after it was scientifically proved he had a congenital deformity in his bowling arm.

Pakistan's express pacer Shoaib Akhtar, reported three times for a suspect action, was cleared on the same grounds.

"I would blame the ICC over the issue, it's chucking or it's not chucking," former Pakistan paceman Waqar Younis said last week, reflecting discontent among players over the confusion.

Pakistani off-spinner Shoaib Malik became the latest to be forced to undergo chucking corrective measures after he was reported last week.

Current rules allow spinners to bend their arms five degrees while delivering -- half that allowed for fast bowlers.

The sub-committee is expected to conclude that the current tolerance levels should be increased after analysis showed that a considerable number of international bowlers are exceeding the permitted levels of arm-bend.

Mutu took drugs to 'perform'!

AFP, London

Adrian Mutu admits he took drugs but claims it was not cocaine but a drug to improve his sex life.

"The only reason I took what I took was because I wanted to improve my sexual performance," said the 25-year-old Chelsea striker who has been linked with a string of stunning models.

"It may be funny but it is true. I did not take cocaine. I took something to make me feel good," he told the Daily Mirror. "I am not hooked on drugs. I categorically deny this."

Mutu is to begin daily one-hour counselling sessions on Friday.

Chelsea could suspend his 60,000-pound-a-week wages for the duration of any ban imposed by the Football Association, and the player believes he has no future at Stamford Bridge.

He expects to be sold or loaned to an Italian club.

"I am almost certain Chelsea will not pay my contract during any suspension period I might get. But they will not sack me," he said.

"It is true that even I find it hard to believe I have a future at Chelsea so, most probably, I'll have to go back and play in Italy again."

"In the meantime I'll just have to wait for the decision of the FA and of my club."

He also claims he was on the brink of hitting manager Jose Mourinho in a row over his decision to play for Romania against the Czech Republic in their World Cup qualifier last week.

Mourinho claimed that Mutu was suffering from a knee injury that could be seriously affected by playing for his country but the 25-year-old forward defied the Chelsea boss and was fined two weeks' wages on his return to England.

"I admit that in the heat of our confrontation I did threaten Mourinho. And, in a moment of total madness I almost hit him."

"But now I am calmer and I must say I have nothing against the coach."

It doesn't go beyond love

AFP, Brussels

Kim Clijsters and Lleyton Hewitt have broken off just four months from their marriage, the Belgian player announced Friday on her website.

Last month, Clijsters, 21, said she would marry Hewitt in Australia in February.

"Kim and Lleyton have agreed to end their relationship for private reasons. There is, of course, no longer a question of marriage," the website said.

The players said they did not intend to explain the break-up to the media.

Both players are former world number ones, but Clijsters, who has won 21 career titles, has not played since last May with a wrist injury.

Hewitt, 23, lost the US Open final to Roger Federer in September. He has won 23 titles in his career including the US Open in 2001 and Wimbledon in 2002.

Clijsters and Hewitt met at the Australian Open in 2000 when Kim's sister Elke asked her to get Hewitt's autograph and they got engaged after a romantic boat trip around Sydney Harbour last December.

Clijsters reached number one in August 2003 without winning a major title, having lost in the finals of four Grand Slams.

She said last year she was considering a change in residency because of the amount of taxes she pays in Belgium, and did not rule out becoming an Australian citizen.

Same old story

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Sweep but said they needed to polish certain areas.

"I am confident of winning the series but there are still some rooms for improvement. But the way we performed on most fronts, it was really encouraging. The confidence in this game was gained by the way Brendon McCullum played the spinners," he said.

Left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori, who was the wrecker-in-chief in the Bangladesh second innings by claiming six wickets for 28, said that the Tigers needed more patience.

"I don't think the Bangladeshi batsmen have too many technical faults but they have to be patient. They went for rash shots whenever we prevented them from scoring," he observed.

The 25-year old spinner did not agree that the pitch was unplayable.

"The wicket was quite slow and we got some bounce that helped me a lot. It was good for spinners but not the best. Patience is key to surviving on such wickets," said Vettori.

Bashar misses

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Man Tareq Aziz Khan, who had an ordinary outing in the first Test, remains a mystery. Not only that he failed to claim a single New Zealand wicket and was also wayward, conceding 59 runs in 12 overs.

The selectors also had no choice but to retain out-of-form Alo Kapali, whose contribution was 14 and 0 in two innings at the Big Bowl.

PREVIEW: Premiership

Devils stand in 50's way

 Football

AFP, London

Gary Neville has warned Arsenal that their 49-match unbeaten run in the Premiership will count for nothing when they run out at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The Manchester United full-back has been involved in enough encounters between the two biggest forces in English football over the last decade to know that form tends to have little impact on the outcome of the titanic tussles between them.

Arsenal have made a blistering start to the season and have already opened up an 11-point advantage over a United side that has struggled for goals all season.

But Neville insists the Red Devils self-belief remains intact. "We hope to beat Arsenal," he said.

"It is not a case of if we can beat them. We do believe that we're a team that can beat Arsenal at Old Trafford. We know we are going to have to handle what they throw at us, but we know we can cause them problems."

The match is being widely billed as one United must win to prevent the Gunners romping away to a second straight title.

But Neville does not believe the pressure will get to him or his teammates.

"I've not played a game at Old Trafford in 12 years that hasn't been a must-win. Sunday is no different for the players in that respect," the England defender insisted.

A less than convincing display in a goalless Champions League draw with Sparta Prague in midweek was hardly ideal preparation for United.

But Ferguson was cheered by the return of Paul Scholes to his starting line-up and, provided skipper Roy Keane recovers from a virus that forced him to miss the trip to Prague, the Scot should have a near full-strength squad to choose from.

Arsenal in contrast are currently beset by the kind of injury worries which undermined their opponents' start to the current campaign.

Midfielders Robert Pires and Edu are both doubtful with ankle injuries incurred in a bruising Champions League encounter at Panathinaikos in midweek.

Patrick Vieira is virtually certain to miss the match after limping out of last weekend's win over Aston Villa and Wenger's midfield options are further restricted by the longer-term absence of Gilberto Silva.

Thierry Henry however has

vowed to shake off his own ankle problem in time to line up in the biggest match of the season so far.

The French striker's eight goals in the Premiership so far this season mean he has scored only one less than the entire United side have managed but he shares Neville's view that the current gap between the two sides is closer than a glance at the league table would suggest.

"All the time people-try to write them off but they are always around at the end of the season," Henry said. "And it is only the tenth game of the season so it is still very early. I know it is all exciting but it is early."

Interest in the Old Trafford clash has been spiced by the memory of what happened in the corresponding fixture last season. A goalless draw was marred by a post-match fracas in which gleeful Arsenal players goaded Ruud van Nistelrooy over a late penalty miss.

The scenes resulted in record fines for the London club but Ferguson reopened old wounds this week by claiming they had been let off lightly by the Football Association.

That prompted a withering response from Wenger, who appealed to his adversary not to inflame the pre-match atmosphere unnecessarily.

PREVIEW: Serie A

Stop Adriano, win derby!

 Football

AFP, Rome

AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini believes shackling in-form Brazilian striker Adriano will be the key to success in Sunday's eagerly anticipated derby against Inter Milan.

Inter hotshot Adriano has been in irresistible form with five goals in Serie A and four in the Champions League.

"He is the one we fear the most - he has technique, extraordinary power and a powerful shot," said the 36-year-old Maldini, now in his 20th season at the club.

"It's very difficult to mark him even if you have two men on him because he's so strong."

"He favours his left foot, but he doesn't always go left. Sometimes he feints and heads off to the right."

The two Milan teams come into the match on the back of impressive Champions League victories which maintained their 100 per cent records in Europe and put them both on the brink of a place in the knock-out stages.

PREVIEW: Primera Liga

Owen without guarantee

 Football

AFP, Madrid

The inclusion of Michael Owen in the starting line-up for Real Madrid against Valencia on Saturday is the most hotly-argued topic in Spanish football at the moment.

Real coach Mariano Garcia Remon gave the England striker, and occasional captain, a starting role against Dynamo Kiev in the Champions League on Tuesday but did not guarantee him a place against the reigning Spanish champions.

"Every game is different," said Garcia Remon ominously on Thursday, after Real beat the Ukrainians 1-0 thanks to Owen's first goal since he signed from Liverpool in the summer.

"Maybe I will put out the same team that beat Dynamo but it's too soon to think about that issue," added the Real coach.

Owen has only started one league game at Real, a disastrous 1-0 defeat at Espanyol last month which led to the resignation of former coach Jose Antonio

Camacho.

Under Garcia Remon, Owen had to be content with being on the bench for the new coach's first five matches prior to Tuesday, but he is now hoping that seven will be his lucky number under the former Real goalkeeper.

"Little-by-little things are improving. Now that I have got a goal under my belt, I am feeling optimistic but I know that the game against Valencia will be tough, whether I start or not," said Owen with his usual diplomacy.

Both sides desperately need a morale boosting victory.

Nothing short of a win will satisfy Real's super-critical fans, who have seen their team slump to 11th in the Spanish first division after not winning in their last three league games.

Garcia Remon's biggest worry is over the fitness of Luis Figo.

The Portuguese winger suffered a dead leg against Kiev and was still not back to full fitness on Thursday.

"If Figo recovers, that will have a big effect on the other players I will pick," admitted Garcia Remon.

Valencia lie second in the table with 14 points from seven games



ADRIANO

Marco Beretta, in charge of a Serie A club for the first time, has been a revelation at the Verona-based club and his team are still unbeaten.

Messina and Lecce, who are tied on 11 points, meet in Sicily where goals are unlikely to be in short supply.

Together with Inter, Lecce are the league's top scorers with 14 goals, while Messina have netted 11. Between them they have leaked 15 goals.

Bottom club Livorno and fellow strugglers Parma will be looking for

"As managers we have a responsibility to prepare this game in the way it should be," the Frenchman said.

"That means as a football game, not a game with resentment and unneeded aggression. That is most important and both managers have responsibility."

Regardless of the outcome on Sunday, Arsenal will remain top of the table at the end of the weekend thanks to the five-point cushion they currently enjoy over second-placed Chelsea.

The Blues, who lost for the first time under Jose Mourinho at Manchester City last weekend, will be hoping United can end Arsenal's unbeaten run and will be confident of taking all three points against struggling Blackburn at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

FIXTURES

(1400 GMT unless stated)
Saturday: Aston Villa v Fulham, Chelsea v Blackburn, Crystal Palace v West Brom, Liverpool v Charlton (1615 GMT), Norwich v Everton (1145 GMT), Tottenham v Bolton
Sunday: Manchester Utd v Arsenal (1505 GMT), Middlesbrough v Portsmouth, Newcastle v Man City, Southampton v Birmingham (1300 GMT)

their first wins of the season at home Bologna and Lazio respectively.

Bologna will fancy their chances in Tuscany having won their last three matches, while Parma face a Lazio side who have lost their last two matches to teams who have had a man sent off.

Roma entertain Palermo with the hope of reigniting their title challenge and restoring some pride after their third successive Champions League defeat.

A 3-1 loss to Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday left Roma on the verge of an early exit from Europe's premier club competition.

FIXTURES

(all 1300 GMT kick-off unless stated)
Saturday: Atalanta v Cagliari (1700), Siena v Juventus (1830)
Sunday: AC Milan v Inter Milan (1830), Chievo v Reggina, Livorno v Bologna, Messina v Lecce, Parma v Lazio, Roma v Palermo, Sampdoria v Brescia, Udinese v Fiorentina

"The result (against Milan) was unfair but I'm sure we will be back to our winning ways in the Nou Camp," grumbled Eto'o, the African Player of the Year and joint top scorer in the Spanish first division with five goals.

Osasuna will travel to the Catalan capital without their injured striker Savo Milosevic, who suffered a left thigh strain against Albacete last Sunday.

Cameron's Pierre Webbo or Australia's John Aloisi will replace the Serb sharpshooter.

FIXTURES

Saturday (kick off GMT): Malaga v Deportivo La Coruna (2200), Real Madrid v Valencia (2000)
Sunday: Albacete v Athletic Bilbao (1500), Getafe v Real Betis (1500), Levante v Espanyol (1500), Racing Santander v Real Zaragoza (1500), Real Sociedad v Real Mallorca (1500), Villarreal v Numancia (1500), Sevilla v Atletico Madrid (1700), Barcelona v Osasuna (1900)

Afridi to lead

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Lanka but a regular member of the national one-day squad, will lead a squad of seven players, most of whom have international experience.

The other members of the team are Yasir Arafat, Amir Bashir, Kamran Akmal, Rizaf Afridi, Naved Latif and Imran Nazir, the PCB said.

Shahid Afridi holds the world record for the fastest one-day century, off 37 balls against Sri Lanka in 1997.

Pakistan is placed in Group Two alongside South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and India. Defending champions England, who beat Pakistan in the final last year, are in Group One with Sri Lanka, Kenya and Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Sixes has been a popular attraction for all the major cricket playing countries since its debut in 1992.

Each team plays with six players, all of whom have to bowl and bat. A batsman is retired after scoring 30 runs.

Pakistan won the inaugural event in 1992 with former left-arm pace bowler Wasim Akram as captain, and captured the title again in 1997 and 2001.

Zim convince

FROM PAGE 13

Home affairs, the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, and with people living in Harare."

Bevan said he was satisfied that he and ECB director of operations John Carr, the other member of the delegation, had been informed of "a good cross section of the issues".

"We're trying to understand where the political tensions have an impact on the safety and security issues," Bevan said.

"It's not something we can comment on at the moment, because we need to report back to the ECB."

Bevan and Carr are to return to England on Friday.

England, who forfeited their 2003 World Cup match against Zimbabwe in Harare because of concerns over player safety, have come under pressure to withdraw from the tour on moral grounds.

Sanath puts SL

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Day of the first Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad on Friday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 243 (Samaraweera 100; Akhtar 5-60, Sami 4-71)

PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 256-8)

Hameed c Mubarak b Fernando 58
Farhat c Mubarak b Malinga 11
Kamal c Jayawardene b Fernando 17

Inzamam c Malinga b Herath 32
Yohana c Kaluwitharana b Herath 17

Malik run out 48
Razzaq c Jayawardene b Vaas 39

Moin b Jayasuriya 5
Sami not out 5

Akhtar lbw b Herath 9
Kanerla run out 1

Extras: (b-6, lb-4, nb-12) 22
Total: (All out in 84.1 overs) 264

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-94, 3-109, 4-134, 5-188, 6-227, 7-246, 8-248, 9-262

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	26	5	62	1
Malinga	10	1	50	1
Fernando	16	0	65	2
Herath	27.1	5	68	3
S'weera	1	0	5	0

Nagpur promises

FROM PAGE 13

For sporting wickets "that would have enough bounce so as to encourage quicker bowlers and also improve strokeplay of batsmen".

Manohar had not approved of the pitches prepared for the first two Tests. "Those were very poor wickets," he said. "A little bit of grass here will help the pitch get some pace and it'll prevent it from breaking up." He emphasised that both teams would benefit from the conditions.

"In addition to the short boundaries," he said, "the wicket has even bounce, something that should suit quality batsmen. If the Indians think of themselves as a good batting unit, they should not worry ... if you are a cricket lover, you want the best team to win, and not your home team at the cost of quality cricket."