



In 1891, James Naismith, a physical education instructor, was thinking about new ways of providing exercise for the young men. He nailed peach baskets onto the balconies at either end of a gymnasium and challenged his student to throw a soccer ball into them from below. Thus modern basketball was born.



Michael Clarke
(Star Australian cricketer)
"I've been really enjoying my cricket, especially over the last 12 months -- I made my debut for Australia in Test cricket, I've been doing pretty well in one-dayers and hopefully, fingers crossed, I will continue doing well."
After he was named the country's best player over the past year.



ESPN
Football Crazy
Magazine Programme
Live at 5:00pm
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
STAR Sports
Manchester City v Newcastle
English Premiership
Same day delayed at 12:30pm
Sportsline
Sports News
Live at 7:30pm
Hyderabad Sultans v Chennai Veerans
Tier I
Indian Premier Hockey League
Live at 8:00pm

Parag stays on course

SPORTS REPORTER

Reigning champion Mehdi Hasan Parag continued his winning run in the BASIC Bank 26th National Sub-Junior Chess Championship when he beat Shiblu in the third round at the federation hall-room yesterday.

With the outcome Parag shared the top slot with Mahtabuddin Ahmed Robin, Mohammad Ali, Mahfuzur Rahman Shahin, Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan, Nazir Salehin, Nahid Parvez Sagar, Saimon Siddiqui Rahman, Kishwara Shajrin Evana, Samiun Bashir and Bakul Hossain, all on maximum three points.

In the other third round matches, Robin defeated Annie, Shahin beat Reza, Ali beat Shirin, Mostafa beat Raju, Nazir beat Jubaer, Samiun beat Anwar, Bakul beat Saif and Evana beat Hamid.

Pak captain fined

REUTERS, London

Captain Inzamamul Haq has been fined for Pakistan's slow over-rate during their one-day tri-series victory over West Indies on Tuesday.

International Cricket Council match referee Chris Broad ruled Inzamam had failed to ensure that his team played "within the spirit of the game" at the WACA in Perth, an ICC statement said.

He was fined his entire match fee for that offence and another 30 per cent of his fee for the slow over-rate itself. The rest of the team were fined 15 per cent of their match fees.

No appeals are allowed against level two breaches of the ICC code of conduct.

BCB declares cash reward for heroes



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday rewarded the victorious Bangladesh team for their brilliant Test and ODI series sweep against Zimbabwe.

The advisory committee of the Board after an informal meeting last evening at the BCB's Gulshan office, declared a lucrative bonus for the entire squad.

"We have decided to award Tk 3 lakhs to cricketers who had featured in both the series (Test and ODI). Those who were part of the squad in one series will get half of that amount," said Reazuddin Al Mamun, BCB advisor and chairman

of the media committee.

Mamun added that coach Dav Whatmore, physio Robbie Hunt and trainer Stuart Karppinen will also receive Tk 3 lakh each while manager MA Latif Khan and computer analyst Nasir Ahmed will get 1.5 lakh Taka.

"We didn't announce the bonus after the Test series victory because we thought it would be better to declare it after the end of the one-day matches. We think the cricketers have fully earned the bonus through their historic success," said Mamun.

Mamun also said that the cricketers were in line for more prizes. "As far we know they will be awarded by the government also."

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar was delighted at hearing the announcement.

"I thank the cricket board on behalf of my team. It is a really encouraging news for us but I must say the boys deserve it. We tasted our maiden Test and one-day series victory against Zimbabwe which was an occasion to savour in the history of Bangladesh's cricket."

"It was not the money rather we were waiting to hear something like this from the Board as that proves they appreciate what we have achieved. The announcement will definitely inspire us ahead of our next assignment," said Bashar.

The bonus will be in excess of the monthly benefit packages enjoyed by the cricketers.

Bangladesh won the two-Test series 1-0 and then in a memorable comeback, clinched the ODI series 3-2 after trailing 0-2.

Pieter-ton lifts England



AFP, Bloemfontein

South African-born Kevin Pietersen continued a remarkable start to his international career when he caned an unbeaten century for England in the second limited overs international against South Africa at Springbok Park Wednesday.

Pietersen hit 108 not out off 96 balls and enabled England to post 270 for five after they were surprisingly sent in on a good batting pitch.

Playing in his sixth one-day international, Pietersen, 24, celebrated his maiden century by repeatedly kissing the England badge on his helmet.

It was an emphatic riposte to South African crowds who have given him a hostile reception after he made some outspoken comments about his allegiance to his

adopted country.

Pietersen was not originally selected for the series in South Africa but was called up after some impressive performances in his debut series in Zimbabwe last November.

Wednesday's innings took his total of international runs to 234 in five innings. He has only been dismissed once.

The hard-hitting Pietersen, who started his first-class career for KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa before taking advantage of a British passport to play county cricket for Nottinghamshire and qualify for England, shared stands of 80 with skipper Michael Vaughan (42) and 92 with Paul Collingwood (40).

England made a flying start when Marcus Trescothick and Geraint Jones put on 52 for the first wicket in 10.1 overs but the South African bowlers then pegged back their opponents, who struggled to 67 for

three before Vaughan and Pietersen came together.

The pair started cautiously but kept the score moving with brisk running between wickets before picking up the tempo as the South African bowlers wilted in sweltering heat. Pietersen reached his fifty off 55 balls and his century off 91. His innings included six fours and two sixes.

South Africa made two changes from the team that was beaten by 26 runs on the Duckworth/Lewis method in the rain-interrupted first international in Johannesburg Sunday.

Batsman AB de Villiers, who was surprisingly omitted after making 92 and 109 in the final Test last week, was selected to make his one-day international debut in place of Adam Bacher, while seam bowling all-rounder Andrew Hall was preferred to left-arm spinner Nicky Boje.

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PHOTO: STAR

CONCENTRATION BELIES AGE: Soumen Saha ponders a move against Munshi Wadud during their Under-20 National Junior Chess qualifying match yesterday.

Murali heart finds Indian dame

AFP, New Delhi

Sri Lankan cricket star Muttiah Muralitharan is to marry an Indian businesswoman next month in the southern city of Madras, the bride-to-be's family said on Wednesday.

The marriage between the 32-year-old off-spinner and Madhimalar Ramamurthy, 24, was finalised by the respective families after both passed the traditional test -- matching horoscopes.

"We are happy to have Murali as our son-in-law," the girl's mother, Nithya Ramamurthy, told the Press Trust of India.

"It is like a match made in heaven. After exchange of horoscopes, Murali and his mother visited our house and the marriage was arranged."

Muralitharan, who is currently in Australia undergoing surgery on his bowling arm, was described by his

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Inzy charged up for finals

AFP, Melbourne



Preserving early wickets will be vital if Pakistan are to continue their recent run of form into the Tri-series limited-overs cricket

finals against Australia, skipper Inzamamul Haq said.

Pakistan completed back-to-back wins over Australia and West Indies on Tuesday to grab a finals berth and help erase memories of their 3-0 Test whitewash by the hosts.

Their massive 307 innings against West Indies -- highlighted by a knock of 105 from Yousuf Youhana while Inzamam himself scored 74 -- was the second highest in a one-day international at the Western Australian Cricket Association Ground.

Just as importantly, strike bowler Rana Naved-ul-Hasan grabbed 4-29 off 9.1 overs to end the Windies'

hopes of overhauling the total.

Inzamam, who has been under pressure to keep the captain's job, said Pakistan had been working on keeping wickets intact early in the innings, setting the scene for big-hitters such as Shahid Afridi later on.

"If you look at the last couple of games... if you save wickets then in the last 20 or 30 overs you can score anything," he said.

"The last game against the West Indies they had a couple of wickets in hand and they scored 340-odd runs so it is important that we apply that."

The win over the Windies prompted captain Brian Lara to declare them a big threat to world champions Australia in the best-of-three finals, starting on Friday, and Inzamam said Pakistan was optimistic of playing well.

"I know it is tough opposition but if we really work hard then well, hopefully we will perform well in the finals," Inzamam said.

He said his own form had

improved at the right time as had that of Yousuf and allrounders Afridi and Abdul Razzaq and Rana.

"My form is good, that is why I am looking good," he said.

"The last two games he (Rana) has really done well -- they (the bowlers) really feel hunger and I think he has set the example," he said.

The Australians are still under pressure over their opening combination following the continuing poor form of Matthew Hayden.

Coach John Buchanan again threw his support behind Hayden, whose position is under threat from the richly-talented Michael Clarke, who has moved up the order to open at various times with huge success.

Hayden has scores of six, 27, three and six in his four matches in the limited overs series while Clarke has a strike-rate of almost 95.

But Buchanan believes it is only a matter of time before Hayden finds his touch.

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World selector Sunny



REUTERS, Sydney

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has been appointed chairman of a six-man panel to select a World XI to play Australia later this year.

Also named on the selection panel were former Test players Michael Atherton, Richard Hadlee, Jonty Rhodes, Aravinda de Silva and Clive Lloyd.

The panel will nominate a squad of 30 players at the end of April. The squad will be trimmed to 20 in June before the final 13 Test players and 14 one-day players are announced in August.

They will play three limited-overs matches in Melbourne on October 5, 7 and 9 then a six-day "Super Test" in Sydney from October 13-18. The International Cricket Council has rejected a proposal to award Test status to the six-day match but said it would review the situation.

Australia are guaranteed to play the Test against the World XI because of their unassailable lead in the ICC Test championship standings.

They also hold a commanding lead in the one-day standings although New Zealand have a slim mathematical chance of overtaking them if Australia lose their next

seven matches before the cut-off.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said the selectors' brief would be to choose the best team possible to take on Australia.

He said they would use the ICC player rankings as a guide but would not be bound to follow them.

"It needs to be a team that has balance, a team that's in form," Speed said in a statement released after Wednesday's launch in Melbourne.

"The only restriction will be that any player who is banned under the ICC Code of Conduct will not be eligible, but otherwise all players are eligible for selection."

"They will have to make some tough decisions."

"It would be fascinating to be a fly on the wall as these former greats discuss whether to open with Sehwag and Strauss or Gibbs and Jayasuriya; whether there is space in the middle order for Lara, Dravid, Tendulkar, Laxman, Kallis and Flintoff; whether Kumble can be accommodated with Muralitharan; and whether to hand the new ball to Vaas, Akhtar, Harmison or Ntini, Hoggard and Pathan," he added.

Gavaskar and Lloyd both said they expected the selection to be a rigorous process.

"I think we've got a great balance of international experience on the panel and I'm sure there will be

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Shoaib still a concern

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan will speak to controversial fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar this week about his attitude and fitness prior to the tour of India starting this month.

Shoaib, 29, returned home early from Australia, where Pakistan were beaten 3-0 in the Test series, after sustaining a hamstring injury.

"We have concerns over his behaviour and attitude. But I am going to give him a fair chance and hear what he has to say," Khan told on Wednesday.

"We have nothing against him. But we have to take into consideration his recent behaviour problems. We are worried about his frequent breakdowns and statements. We want to sort out this thing once for all."

Shoaib took 11 wickets in the first two Tests in Perth and Melbourne but failed to take a wicket in Sydney, bowling just 15 overs as he struggled with his hamstring strain.

Australian newspapers said he had been seen in nightclubs and bars during the Sydney Test.

Last year Shoaib was subjected to a medical commission inquiry after he was injured during the third Test of the home series won by India.

The commission, which was set up to determine if his injury had been faked, cleared him for selection.



PHOTO: AFP

SEEING IS BELIEVING ! A Pakistani policeman reads a local newspaper in Islamabad recently which has pictures from an internet site showing fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar dancing in the company of girls in an Australian disco.