



Bucknor feels the heat

API/AGENCIES, Kolkata



Sachin Tendulkar posted his third consecutive half-century of the series against Pakistan to leave the second Test delicately poised Friday, but fans in cricket-crazy Kolkata were angered by his controversial dismissal.

Tendulkar's 91-ball 52 and his brisk 98-run partnership for the third wicket with Rahul Dravid, who remained 54 not out, took India's second-innings score to 133 for three at stumps on Day Three. However, the talking point of the day was undoubtedly veteran West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor's surprise decision to give the superstar out when no one but the bowler appealed.

Tendulkar was adjudged caught-behind off seam bowler Abdul Razzaq by Bucknor -- officiating in his 100th Test match -- but television replays showed that Tendulkar did not edge the shortish ball which moved away after passing atleast two inches from the bat. That could have deceived Bucknor into believing that there was an edge.

"What you saw on TV, we saw the same thing," Indian spinner Anil Kumble told reporters, refraining to make any comment on the decision

in accordance with the players' code of conduct.

Criticism of umpiring decision by players invites penalties from the International Cricket Council, but the decision stunned Tendulkar who slowly walked back to the pavilion.

The spectators expressed their ire at the umpires as they walked out at the close of play -- one empty plastic water bottle was hurled at the umpires and fell short of the target. The baton-wielding police quickly moved to escort the spectators out of the Eden Gardens ground.

"Bucknor is blind. He is one of the worst umpires in world cricket," fumed Biswajit Roy while many other die-hard fans like him struggled to come to terms with the fact that the master batsman, playing one of his finest knocks in recent times, was no longer there at the crease.

The incident brought back memories of a riot-like situation in the 1999 India-Pakistan Test match at Kolkata, where another controversial Tendulkar dismissal had aroused the crowd's anger.

In 1999, protests continued into the second day, forcing the police to turn the spectators out of the stadium for the last few overs of the match. Pakistan went on to clinch victory in that match -- the opening contest of the Asian Test Championship -- in front of empty galleries.

Muktis made to sweat A stroll for Mohammedan

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Mohammedan Sporting Club and Muktiyoddha Sangsad got off to winning starts but in contrasting styles on the opening day of the Independence Day Gold Cup Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nakib scored twice while the Korean recruits struck one goal each as Mohammedan crushed Arambagh 4-0 in a embarrassingly one-sided fixture.

Later in the day's second Group A encounter, Federation Cup champions Muktiyoddha beat Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra 3-1 under lights with injury-time goals either side of the half but not before some anxious

moments against the Premier League runners-up.

Under Korean coach Man Young Kang, Mohammedan began with four forwards in the line-up with Alfaz and Manju playing in the midfield. However, the play did not cost the Black and Whites anything even though Arambagh enjoyed superior ball possession after the break.

Mohammedan went ahead before a cheering 7,000-strong holiday crowd in the 18th minute when Korean midfielder Tae Young Kim struck home after Nakib's close-range shot was blocked by Arambagh keeper Al Amin.

Kim Zeu made it 2-0 nine minutes later but the Korean forward even did not celebrate his first goal in Dhaka after his weak found the net through the legs of Al Amin.

Zeu then set up the team's third with a through from the left flank

which was side-footed into the far corner by an unmarked Nakib. The veteran striker then sealed the victory with his second goal in the 53rd minute, nodding home a perfect centre by Alfaz from the left flank.

Arambagh created ample scoring chances in the second half but guest striker Milton wasted three opportunities to snatch a consolation goal.

MUKTIYODDHA-SHEIKH RUSSEL

Abu Yusuf's Sheikh Russel looked sharp and created the first real chance after seven minutes but Moroccan striker Egir Mohammed's low drive was parried by Reds custodian Aminul for a corner following a defence lapse.

Muktiyoddha defender Belal's measured and powerful long throw-ins had little impact early in the

game as Russel skipper and goalkeeper Apel intercepted the ball timely. But Kanchan opened the account in the 33rd minute from a left-side throw by Belal with a spectacular glancing header into the top corner of the near post.

Muktis went into the breather with a two-goal cushion after Moni placed a first-time close-range shot past Apel on a low cross by Arman from the right in stoppage time.

Russel then bombarded the rival goal after the break but Bulbul failed to utilise two sitters inside the first ten minutes. Midfielder Tanvir provided both the chances but the diminutive striker's shot from six yards was saved by Belal from the goalline while Aminul easily stopped a weak shot in a one-on-one situation.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

PHOTO: AFP
IF ONLY HE HAD LISTENED! Sachin Tendulkar (R) tries to convince umpire Steve Bucknor to offer the batsmen light moments before he was controversially judged caught behind by Bucknor yesterday.

Tendulkar dismissal evens out the day

REUTERS, Kolkata



Rahul Dravid followed his first innings hundred with a fluent 54 not out to guide India to 133 for three wickets against a fighting Pakistan in the second Test on Friday.

India established a 147-run overall lead with two days left after an absorbing third day left the match evenly poised.

The visitors were restricted to 393, handing India a 14-run first innings lead.

Pakistan vice-captain Younis Khan top-scored with a fluent 147 and raised 211 runs for the third wicket with the experienced Yousuf Youhana, who hit 104.

Dravid, who smashed 110 in the first innings, added 98 runs for third wicket with Sachin Tendulkar (52) to steer India out of early trouble.

However, the day ended in controversy after Tendulkar was given out caught behind in fading light against a short delivery from medium-pacer Abdul Razzaq.

Tendulkar reacted in shock when umpire Steve Bucknor gave the ruling, walking away shaking his head. TV replays suggested he did not get a nick.

A controversial run out of India's premier batsman had resulted in fan violence at the Eden Gardens during Pakistan's victory in an Asian Test Championship match in 1999.

Play was halted 11 minutes before time on Friday due to bad light.

Fast bowler Mohammad Sami rocked the Indian innings by dismissing both openers in his first two overs.

He yorked left-hander Gautam Gambhir (1) first ball before the dangerous Virender Sehwag played on to his stumps for 15 the next over.

Tendulkar played vintage drives and flicks against Sami and drove Razzaq past point for his ninth four to

reach his 41st Test 50, his third successive half-century in the series.

Dravid negated leg-spinner Danish Kaneria's influence on the slow pitch, showing signs of wear and tear, with forcing shots to reach his 37th test 50.

He has so far hit eight fours in his 92-ball effort.

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble had grabbed three quick wickets to trigger a post-lunch collapse after Pakistan were 354 for five at the interval.

He claimed the big wicket of

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR
Mohammedan's fresh recruit from South Korea Tae Young Kim (R) trying to outsmart an Arambagh defender during their Independence Day Gold Cup encounter yesterday.

What to WATCH

DD Sports & TEN Sports
India vs Pakistan
Second Test, Day Four
Live at 10:00 am
ESPN

English Premier Football League
Blackburn Rovers vs Arsenal
Live at 6:40 pm
Man United vs Fulham
Live at 8:55 pm
Bolton Wanderers vs Norwich City
Live at 11:20 pm

New Zealand vs Australia
Second Test, Day Three
Live at 4:30 am (Sunday)

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Deportivo vs Barcelona
Live at 2:25 am (Sunday)
Indian Wells Tennis Masters Series
Semifinal
Live at 4:30 am (Sunday)

ICC call for changes Kenya's ODI member status to go

Cricket

CRICINFO

The issues surrounding Indian tax concerns, the structure of the international playing calendar and the status of Kenya and Project USA were among the matters addressed by the International Cricket Council's executive board in its two-day meeting which concluded in Delhi yesterday.

The ICC President updated directors on his discussions with Indian government officials concerning the current tax issues that are acting as a barrier to the staging of ICC events in India. He advised

that the ICC was yet to receive the undertakings that it was seeking.

The ICC board reiterated its desire to stage the ICC Champions Trophy event in India subject to its concerns regarding potential Indian tax liabilities and the impact that these would have on the ability of the game to invest money into the sport.

The board instructed the ICC to achieve finality on this issue by May 2005 to allow the directors to make a final decision on the venue for this tournament.

Should the Indian government decide that the tax exemptions will not be granted, Pakistan has been agreed as the alternate venue for the ICC Champions Trophy 2006.

The board debated alternatives to the current five-year international playing calendar that requires each country to play each other country once at home and once away during this period in a minimum of two Test matches and three ODIs in each series.

Options examined covered four, five and six years.

The board rejected any proposal to reduce the cycle length and has asked ICC management to investigate the practicalities and implications of moving to a 6 year international playing calendar.

The key principles that the board has instructed management to take into account in developing this

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2

NCL ROUND SIX

Bashar returns to action
SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar will return to action when the sixth round of the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League begins today with one-day matches at three different venues across the country.

The Khulna captain and country's premier batsman had to miss the last three rounds due to pain on his injured right thumb, which has continued to cause him discomfort for the last couple of months.

Khulna host injury-hit Chittagong in the sixth round to improve their position in the table. They are in the second slot in the one-day competition after Dhaka

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

One Milan giant to die Juve v L'pool after two decades

AFP, Nyon



A Milan derby and an emotional clash between old European rivals Liverpool and Juventus marked the quarter-finals of the Champions League here on Friday.

In the two other quarters, run-away English Premiership leaders Chelsea take on German giants Bayern Munich, while fast-improving Lyon go up against Dutch league leaders PSV Eindhoven.

In case of victory, Chelsea and

sides most notoriously last met in the 1985 final at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels where 39 fans died in clashes between the two sets of supporters.

Juventus led by Frenchman Michel Platini went on to win that tragic final 1-0 for their first European Cup triumph.

The Turin's side's director Romy Gai said the meeting of the two clubs would be a fitting way to mark this year's 20th anniversary of the disaster.

"It will be something more than a simple game. I mean in a friendly way," Gai said.

"In any case we were obliged to

do something to remember that day. It is part of the history of both clubs. We cannot forget, we are obliged to remember.

The two Milan sides were next out of the hat playing both legs in the San Siro Stadium they share. They last met in the semi-finals two years ago when AC Milan triumphed and went on to lift the trophy for the sixth time, second only to Real Madrid. Lyon and Chelsea, the only two sides out of the last eight not to have won Europe's premier trophy both were drawn to play at home in the first leg

SEE PAGE 13 COL 8

Bullying days are over

Cricket

STEVE BUSFIELD

During the 1999 cricket world cup, as England were losing to South Africa at the Oval, a couple of gents sitting in front of us were discussing another game being played that day between Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. "Of course," said one, "it's really Rhodesia versus Ceylon."

Since 2002, Zimbabwe has won only two test matches, and both of those were against Bangladesh, the newest team to international cricket. Zimbabwe's cricket team, like the country, has been ripped apart by politics. Last April, all the white players in the national cricket team withdrew in protest against alleged political interference in team selection, and there were calls from British commentators for Zimbabwe to be stripped of its international status.

Bangladesh, too, has suffered at the hands of British commentators

who claim that they should be barred from test cricket - for not being good enough.

It is true that Bangladesh, which joined the international elite in 2000, did not win an international game until their 35th test match. But historically it has been hard for new teams on the international cricket circuit to establish themselves. India did not win until its 25th test match.

Telling the little countries what they can and can't do is sometimes dressed up as being for the greater good of the game, as with Bangladesh, sometimes as pseudo-political posturing, as Zimbabwe discovered. It is notable that when Zimbabwe's white players returned to the team this month - including the former captain Heath Streak, the most vocal of the rebels - there was no rejoicing in the British press.

Every nation deserves its chance to play. That is why the Olympic games allow all countries to compete and all are free to play in the football World Cup qualifiers. Cricket needs as many teams to compete as possible: after all, few

locations outside the areas that used to be pink on imperial maps have taken much interest in this sport.

It takes time and experience to improve. The Bangladeshis are clearly better now than they were when they started out. And nobody suggests that England should be disqualified from playing against Australia because the result has been a foregone conclusion for almost two decades.

In a short time, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe will be equal competitors with their more established rivals. Instead of carping, we should celebrate the fact that cricket in Zimbabwe has once more become a multiracial sport, and look forward to the day that Bangladesh's 140 million populace produces 11 top quality cricketers - which they will if they are given the exposure and finances to grow.

The game's governing body, the International Cricket Council, recently decided to move its headquarters from Lord's in London to Dubai. The decision has been

portrayed as one based on tax concessions. Money certainly came into it, but so did the growing interest in cricket in the Middle East among a large migrant population from the Indian subcontinent.

Even more important is the shift in power away from the old colonial base. The new ICC decided that it no longer wanted to be tenants (of the Marylebone Cricket Club).

When the ICC was formed by England, Australia and South Africa in 1909 it was called the Imperial Cricket Conference. As new members joined, the founding members retained the right to veto ICC decisions. But the game's new rulers came from the former colonies.

It is time parts of England realised that the days of empire are over; that Bangladesh and Zimbabwe are new, but equal partners; and that what England says doesn't necessarily go any more.

Courtesy: The Guardian

DRAW & FIXTURES

The draw for the quarter-finals of the Champions League made here on Friday:-
Liverpool (ENG) v Juventus (ITA)
AC Milan (ITA) v Inter Milan (ITA)
Lyon (FRA) v PSV Eindhoven (NED)
Chelsea (ENG) v Bayern Munich (GER)

SEMIFINAL DRAW

Chelsea or Bayern Munich v Liverpool or Juventus
AC Milan or Inter Milan v Lyon or PSV Eindhoven

* The quarterfinals are played April 5-6 and April 12-13. The semifinals are April 26-27 and May 3-4, and the final is May 25 in Istanbul, Turkey.

Liverpool will meet up in an all-English semi-final, while AC Milan or Inter will take on the winner of the Lyon-PSV game in the other last four game.

The final will be played in Istanbul on May 25.

Three Italian sides, two English and one apiece from Germany, France and the Netherlands went into the draw with no Spanish side in the last eight for the first time in the 12 years existence of the Champions League format following the elimination of Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Liverpool were first out of the hat drawn up against Juventus. The two

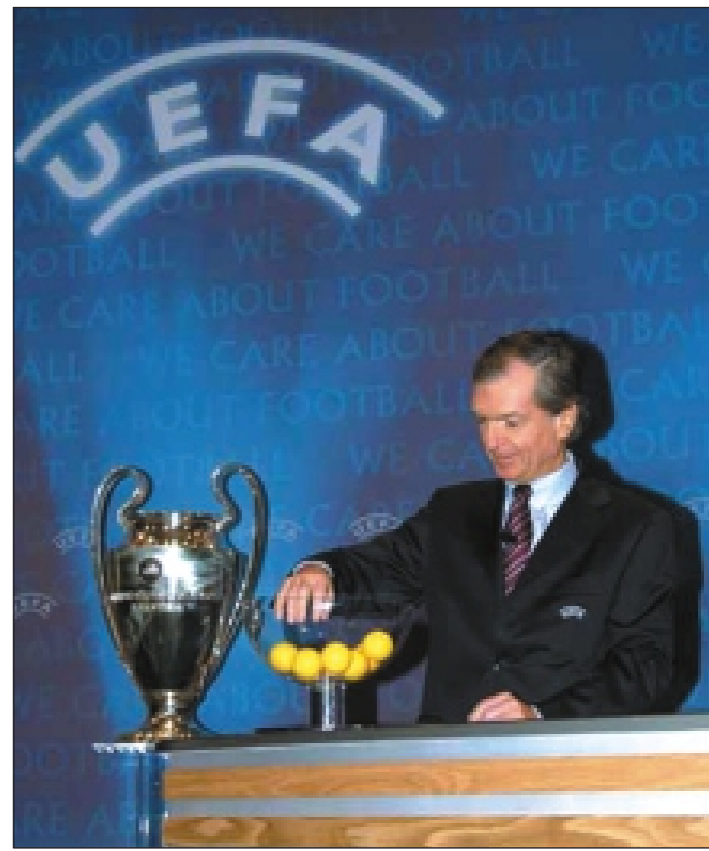


PHOTO: INTERNET SOURCE
Chairman of UEFA's Club Competitions Committee Friedrich Stickler picking up a ballot ball during the draws of the Champions League in Nyon yesterday.